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After a couple decades as a band, some developments are largely inevitable: You'll have reached a certain comfort level with your music and your fellow musicians, you'll have achieved a degree of technical prowess, and you'll run out of album titles.

All three describe The Blue Band, the six-piece Cedar Falls outfit that – to commemorate its 20th anniversary – has finally exhausted everything but the requisite self-titled album.

It's an easy-on-the-ears pleasure, steady and workmanlike. My only criticism is that this much talent has a more exciting and bracing record in it, with a little more inspiration and effort.

The Blue Band is led by singer and harmonica player Bob Dorr and violinist and bassist Molly Nova, but they don't hog the spotlight. The band's subtitle might as well be "Spreading the Wealth," because Dorr and Nova seem motivated by music alone, without a trace of ego. Anyone who wants it can have a turn at the mic, the solos, or songwriting duties.

Such egalitarianism can be forced – a tool to keep from ruffling feathers – but not here. These are musicians who clearly enjoy each other's company and skills, and the joy of friendship is evident and infectious.

All this results in boogie blues that sounds like old, well-fed married couples look: comfortable, satisfied, and enveloped in warmth. There's no sense of adventure or risk in the union, but they don't care.

That's another way of saying that *The Blue Band* feels a touch sleepy. There's not a stinker to be found, but without any real valleys, the peaks feel too much like mere swells.

The band's sound is creamy, with the backing players on any given track providing the basic beat and groove steadily but unspectacularly, and the vocalist and lead instruments doing the hard work of creating a memorable song. That frequently falls to Bryce Janey's well-honed guitar, and as blues axes go, you'd have difficulty finding one more able that doesn't push everybody else out of the picture.

With so much well-tuned songcraft, other elements and songs still stand out: the clever lyrical conceit and smoky vocals of "The Richest Man on Lonely Street" set against a funky guitar backdrop, the lush sax work on "Flashback," the matched guitar and harmonica hook of "Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde," and the quiet rockabilly of "Baby Baby (Every Night)."

The most exciting element on *The Blue Band*, though, is Nova's screeching violin, a welcome note of dissonance that unfortunately isn't heard nearly enough. Just when things teeter on tired about halfway through the album, Nova lets loose with her Mahivishnu Orchestra-like electric five-stringer on "Whatever (Are You Talking About)" and takes her turn at the mic. It's exactly the kind of jolt the record needs a little more frequently.

The ever-busy, shamefully productive Blue Band (and many offshoots) can be seen regularly in eastern Iowa. The band's lead guitarist, Bryce Janey, will be playing at O'Meara's on February 3. For show listings for The Blue Band, visit (http://www.theblueband.com).