

CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Top Ten Blues CDs for 2005

Siegel-Schwall's Flash Forward #6

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

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BLUES

Some highlights

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It's a sad year when almost as many blues artists die as release great new albums — in 2005, we lost blues-and-soul singer Little Milton, northern Mississippi hill-country hero R.L. Burnside, experimental electric-guitar tinkerer Chris Whitley and unclassifiable one-time R&B star Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown. The genre is in a holding pattern, with flashy guitarists doing the same old thing and few new stars emerging to replace the fallen idols. Having said that, there's still some vitality out there.

Here are the year's 10 best blues albums:

6. The Siegel-Schwall Band: "Flash Forward" (Alligator)

Harpist Corky Siegel and guitarist Jim Schwall have been playing folksy blues since they teamed up in the mid-'60s in Chicago, but they've rarely sounded this funky. Drummer Sam Lay and ex-Sun Ra bassist Rollo Radford turn the partnership into a tight rock 'n' roll band.