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CHICK HALL JR. WITH THE MUSTANGS
"Nuke the Juke"

Signature songs with a twist

Kindred spirits: Danny Gatton, Roy Buchanan, Roy Clark
Show: Friday and Saturday at the Quarry House Tavern. Show starts at 8:30 p.m. 301-587-8350. www.quarryhousetavern.com.

Sure, "Nuke the Juke" is stocked with jukebox favorites — vintage pop, jazz, country and R&B gems that still sparkle in the right setting. But as the album's title suggests, guitarist Chick Hall Jr. isn't taking listeners on a purely sentimental journey. Surprising mood shifts and improvised tangents lurk around every twangy chorus, or so it seems, with Hall in a playfully subversive mood much of the time.

That's not to say he isn't a sucker for a potent melody. "Nuke the Juke" is packed

with them, and whether it's the jazz perennial "Poinciana" or the Santo and Johnny classic "Sleep Walk," Hall nimbly underscores the lyricism. By contrast, the up-tempo performances, ranging from a brassy rendition of Willie Mitchell's soul strut "20-75" to a rhythmically buoyant version of "Oh! Lady Be Good," stomp, glide and swing. Supporting Hall are the Mustangs, a road-tested, horn-powered soul band, and several guests, including vocalist Skip Mahoney. The son of another great area guitarist, Hall also completes the family circle by recruiting his daughter Rachel to sing on the album's final cut, a warmly evocative take on Don Gibson's "Sweet Dreams."

— Mike Joyce



DEAN EVANGELISTA

Chick Hall Jr. deftly navigates his way through shifting moods and sounds on his latest.