

Chris Beard - Eye Of The Witch (2015)

Written by bluesever

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01. Let The Chips Fall 03:14 02. Eye Of The Witch 04:15 03. House Of Shame 05:04 04. One More Cry For Love 04:19 05. Older Fool 03:16 06. Crime Of The Century 04:05 07. Glad You're Gone 01:06 08. Your Good Thing 04:17 09. When Love Comes Knocking 03:57 10. I'm Free 04:43 11. Keeps Me Believing 04:49

Rochester, New York, guitarist Chris Beard's career got off to a promising start with two Cds for JSP in 1997 and in 2001, but it was derailed when he suffered a stroke shortly after the release of his 2005 recording for Northern Blues. Forced to adapt his guitar style to compensate for the residual effects of the stroke, he arrived back on the scene in impressive fashion with 2010's *Who I Am* and *What I Do* for Electro Glide. Another five years passed before this latest release on his own Destin imprint.

Like its predecessor, this album was produced by Carlton Campbell, a member of the sacred steel Campbell family, who also contributes some of the keyboard, bass and drum parts. In contrast to his JSP debut, Beard's guitar work is more reminiscent of Albert King than B.B., as is evident from the opening original *Let the Chips Fall*. The title track that follows is appropriately atmospheric, and *House of Shame*, one of several tracks penned by Alan Mirikitani and Dennis Walker, keeps things at a low simmer before the sinuous mid-tempo *One More Cry for Love*. Beard's dad, Joe, the reigning patriarch of the Rochester blues scene, joins in to boogie with the young folks on his son's *Older Fool*, and there's a touch of James Brown on *Love Comes Knocking*. The downtempo *Glad You're Gone* and *I'm Free* show the Albert King influence, and *Crime of the Century* is a sardonic slice of modern funk, while *Good Thing's About to Run Out* is an updated stop-time shuffle, and *Keeps Me Believing* closes the set on a reflective note.

Though no longer one of the music's young guns—he was born in 1957—*Eye of the Witch* is further proof that Chris Beard remains a force to be reckoned with on today's blues scene. ---

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