

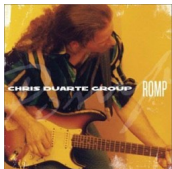
## Chris Duarte Group - Romp (2003)

Written by bluesever

Saturday, 30 July 2011 08:31 - Last Updated Friday, 16 October 2020 15:30

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## Chris Duarte Group - Romp (2003)



01. *Do the Romp* (Kimbrough) 4:13 [play](#) 02. *101* (Duarte) 5:18 03. *Fire's Gone Out* (Duarte) 4:15 04. *Like Eric* (Duarte) 3:49 05. *My, My* (Duarte, Herring, Jordan, Miles) 4:53 06. *One More Cup* (Dylan) 6:17 07. *B Flat Blues* (Duarte) 3:34 08. *Last Night* (Duarte) 9:26 09. *Mr. Neighbor* (Duarte) 4:55 10. *Take It to the Lord* (Duarte) 4:21  
[play](#)

Chris Duarte- Guitar, Vocals John Jordan- Bass Ed Miles- Drums

Although he doesn't totally transcend his Stevie Ray Vaughan/Hendrix influences, Chris Duarte attempts to progress beyond them -- occasionally -- on his fourth release, *Romp*. Kicking off with the greasy Junior Kimbrough-penned title track, he then moves into a sizzling Hendrix-fueled instrumental, "101," which shows his hot-dog guitar prowess but could have been on any of his previous discs. Similarly, the flashy "Like Eric" doesn't hide the fact that if you wanted to hear Eric Johnson, you'd buy an Eric Johnson album. Things finally settle into a more unique groove on "My My." Here his haunting Hendrix-styled distorted fuzz tone nudges a mechanical beat that's creepy and edgy. Better still is a version of Dylan's "One More Cup of Coffee," the album's six-minute centerpiece that transforms the original into a dreamy, ominous ode, utilizing near spoken lyrics against a subtle and stark backing. With a slinky guitar solo that reflects the tune's longing, it's where the guitarist finally establishes a distinctive approach, albeit with someone else's song. On the nine-minute "Last Night," Duarte mines similar territory with a brooding, mesmerizing poem of devils and inner demons that sounds like something Jim Morrison conjured up in a heroin-fueled nightmare. His guitar skitters and snakes around the melody, exploding then suddenly pulling back in a dazzling display of restraint and fret shredding that makes you wish he would have maintained this level of menacing intensity for the entire album. "Mr. Neighbor" revisits Hendrix again in a tune that is structured so closely to "Bold as Love" -- right down to the guitar tone -- you'd think Jimi would get a co-writing credit. The closing, spiritually based "Take It to the Lord" shows that Duarte can compose a religious ballad that doesn't pander to lowest common denominator clichés. He's obviously got chops and good ideas, but Duarte still hasn't quite forged his own sound for an entire album. *Romp* though, proves that he's getting closer. ---Hal Horowitz, allmusic.com

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This is a spectacular offering from a real guitar virtuoso, whose tonal palette is as rich as that of any player I have ever heard. If you think of Chris Duarte as 'just' a Texas techno flash guitar slinger, then think again. Certainly, musical references to Hendrix and Stevie Ray are not hard to find but they are conveyed in a context that Duarte makes his own: this is mastery, not mimicry. This album is an absolute treat and after playing it about 30 times I still hear something new every time I hit 'play'. I have only heard the excellent 'Strat Magic' album previously but this is a whole new ball game, and better. Air guitarists will not be able to resist Romp, 101 or Like Eric, whilst dyed in the wool blues fans will slake their thirst on numbers like B flat Blues and Take It To The Lord. However the album's tour de force is Last Night. This is just under 10 minutes of brooding malevolence and possessed (yet controlled) guitar playing. Frankly it is worth buying the album for by itself. Mention should also be made of Duarte's strong, but never overbearing, vocals and the production is wonderfully open and detailed: I could have sworn this was analog recording (it wasn't!). --- Richard Pratt, amazon.com

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