

Buddy Guy – Damn Right, I've Got The Blues (1991)

Written by bluesever

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Personnel
Buddy Guy - Lead Vocals, Lead Guitar
Greg Rzab - Bass
Richie Hayward - Drums
Mick Weaver - Organ/Piano/Electric Piano
Pete Wingfield - Piano
Neil Hubbard - Guitar
John Porter - Guitar
Tessa Niles - Backing Vocals
Katie Kissoon - Backing Vocals
Carol Kenyon - Backing Vocals + Jeff Beck - Electric Guitar on Tracks 4 & 6
Eric Clapton - Electric Guitar on Track 6
Mark Knopfler - Electric Guitar on Track 2
The Memphis Horns - Trumpet/Saxophone/Trombone, except Track 5

Throughout the 1960s, Buddy Guy was at the forefront of Chicago's blues scene, and in essence, it's his legendary output during this decade that links Muddy Waters, Howlin' Wolf, and B.B. King with Jeff Beck, Eric Clapton, and Jimi Hendrix. As the '70s mutated into the '80s, however, the master showman increasingly found himself drifting into such obscurity that he was unable to secure a recording contract. In 1991, when he issued *Damn Right, I've Got the Blues*, his first studio effort in 10 years, everything changed for the better. Flanked by the likes of Clapton, Beck, and Mark Knopfler and backed by a band that featured the Memphis Horns, drummer Richie Hayward from Little Feat, and bass player Greg Rzab (who later spent time with The Black Crowes), Guy staged a mammoth comeback that has kept him aloft ever since. Granted, some of his song selections — most notably, Sir Mac Rice's *Mustang Sally*, Eddie Boyd's *Five Long Years*, and Louis Jordan's *Early in the Morning* — were turned into blues-rock clichés a long time ago, and it also is true that at times, the album's production approached the edge of being a tad too slick for its own good. Yet, in the end, it was Guy who raised the material above its deficiencies and transformed it into a set that remains staggeringly

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captivating.

The title track, with its searing lead guitar, soulful vocals, and sturdy rhythmic chug, provides more than enough reason as to why *Damn Right, I've Got the Blues* not only notched for Guy a much-deserved Grammy win for Contemporary Blues Album of the Year, but also helped fellow Chicagoan Otis Rush to relaunch his own career. Even so, the tune merely set the stage for the explosive force that followed. *Five Long Years*, for example, may have been underscored by Mick Weaver's playful piano accompaniment, but it was Guy's anguished, gospel-infused wails and his tear-stained guitar overtures that stuffed the song to the brim with emotion. Elsewhere, he slathered *Too Broke to Spend the Night* with tumultuously angered peals of guitar and took his time fully developing the textured mourning of *Jessie Robinson's Black Night* — all before he concluded the effort with *Rememberin' Stevie*, a rousing tribute to Stevie Ray Vaughan. Although the expanded edition of *Damn Right, I've Got the Blues* was remastered, the sonic differences are subtle rather than dramatic, but tacked onto the new edition are two selections (*Doin' What I Like Best* and *Trouble Don't Last*), which previously had been available only in the U.K. as B-sides. Both are worthy additions to a modern day gem that shouldn't be missed at any cost. ---John Metzger, musicbox-online.com

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