

Hubert Sumlin – I Know You (1998)

Written by bluesever

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01. *I'm Coming Home* 02. *Howlin' for My Darlin'* 03. *That's Why I'm Gonna Leave You* 04. *How Many More Years* 05. *Don't Judge a Book by the Cover* 06. *I Got It Where I Want It* 07. *I'm Not Your Clown* 08. *Smokestack* 09. *I've Been Hurt* 10. *Mind Is Rambling* 11. *You My Best* 12. *Good Bye* Hubert Sumlin (vocals, guitar); Jimmy D. Lane (guitar); Carey Bell (harmonica); David Krull (piano, organ); Freddie Crawford (bass); Sam Lay (drums).

This is arguably the first musically indispensable album that Hubert Sumlin has done since Howlin' Wolf died some 23 years ago. That isn't to say that he hasn't done some good albums before this, just that *I Know You* has a degree of urgency, coupled with remarkable ease, that makes it a real delight. The result is a record that compares very favorably with Wolf's *London Sessions* record as a mix of old and new. Sumlin will never sound like Wolf as a singer, but he can't help sounding like him in every other way, since it was Wolf's guitar on practically every cut after 1954; but he does his best with a limited voice and a hot guitar to deliver some superb electric blues. Whether he's acknowledging Elmore James, Jimmy Reed, or John Lee Hooker, or paying tribute to Wolf himself ("*How Many More Years*," in a killer interpretation), Sumlin sounds like he's having great fun grinding and crunching away on his instrument. He even turns in a surprisingly strong vocal and guitar performance on a familiar piece of subdued blues, "*That's Why I'm Gonna Leave You*." There is a little dross here -- Sumlin doesn't do all that well stepping into John Lee Hooker territory; but generally, *I Know You* is a record that should please any fan of the Wolf or Sumlin (or, for that matter, James or Reed), with two tracks, "*I'm Not Your Clown*" and "*Smokestack*" (based on guess which song), indispensable to fans of hot blues guitar. Playing with him are Sam Lay (drums) and Carrie Bell (harp), with Jimmy D. Lane on second guitar and David Krull at the piano and organ. --- Bruce Eder, allmusic.com

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