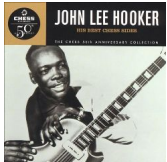


John Lee Hooker - His Best Chess Sides (1998)

Written by bluesever

Monday, 28 October 2013 16:54 - Last Updated Tuesday, 09 March 2021 21:38

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CD 1 01. *Mad Man Blues* 02. *Hey Boogie* 03. *Louise* 04. *High Priced Woman* 05. *Union Station Blues* 06. *Ground Hog Blues* 07. *Leave My Wife Alone* 08. *Ramblin' By Myself* 09. *Dreamin' Blues* 10. *Just Me and My Telephone* 11. *Walkin' the Boogie (Alternate)* 12. *Sugar Mama* 13. *Please Don't Go* 14. *I Don't Want Your Money* 15. *Hey Baby* 16. *Bluebird*

CD 2

01. *Walkin' the Boogie* 02. *Love Blues* 03. *Lonely Boy Boogie (a/k/a New Boogie)* 04. *Apologize* 05. *The Journey* 06. *Worried Life Blues* 07. *Down at The Landing* 08. *You Have Two Hearts* 09. *It's My Own Fault* 10. *Blues for Big Town* 11. *Women and Money* 12. *Big Fine Woman* 13. *Tell Me Baby* 14. *Blues for Christmas* 15. *Cry Baby Cry*

John Lee Hooker – guitar, vocals Eddie "Guitar" Burns – guitar Eddie Kirkland - guitar Lafayette Leake – piano Fred Below - drums

John Lee Hooker, as anyone with a decent-sized blues collection knows, recorded for a virtual parade of labels early in his career, including Chess, although his stays with the company were fairly brief. Hooker's best early recordings, most would agree, were issued on Modern and Vee-Jay, not Chess. Still, if the only Hooker extant consisted of his Chess sides, his greatness would be readily apparent. Approached not as a best-of but simply as one of many Hooker compilations, this 15-song disc is fine, leaning heavily on early-'50s material (the source for 11 of the songs). This is typical of his early work in its stress on his great guitar work, walking rhythms, and drumless arrangements (most of it is played solo). It's good stuff, even if much of it is derivative of things he recorded elsewhere, and the mike plainly catches him coughing on "Bluebird." The solo on "Leave My Wife Alone" is almost avant-garde in conception, a series of plucked runs up and down the scale with little relation to convention, even by blues standards. Closing the set are four much more modern-sounding cuts from the mid-'60s, the "I'm in the Mood"/"Let's Go Out Tonight" single and a couple of cuts from the Real Folk Blues LP (including his standard "One Bourbon, One Scotch, One Beer"). --- Richie Unterberger, allmusic.com

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