

John Lennon - Rock 'N' Roll (1981)

Written by bluesever

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01 - *Be-Bop-A-Lula* 02 - *Stand By Me* 03 - *Medley* - *Rip It Up* - *Ready Teddy*
04 - *You Can't Catch Me* 05 - *Ain't That A Shame* 06 - *Do You Want To Dance* 07 - *Sweet Little Sixteen* Side Two. 01 - *Slippin' And Slidin'* 02 - *Peggy Sue* 03 - *Medley* - *Bring It On Home (Cooke)* - *Send Me Some Lovin'* 04 - *Bony Moronie* 05 - *Ya Ya* 06 - *Just Because*
John Lennon: Guitars, vocals Jesse Ed Davis: Guitar Jim Calvert: Guitar
Eddie Mottau: Acoustic guitar José Feliciano: Acoustic guitar Michael Hazelwood: Acoustic Guitar
Steve Cropper: Guitar Klaus Voormann: Bass guitar, answer vocal on "Bring It On Home to Me"
Leon Russell: Keyboards Ken Ascher: Keyboards Michael Lang: Keyboards Jim Keltner: Drums
Hal Blaine: Drums Gary Mallaber: Drums Arthur Jenkins: Percussion Nino Tempo: Saxophone
Jeff Barry: Horn Barry Mann: Horn Bobby Keys: Horn Peter Jameson: Horn Joseph Temperley: Horn
Dennis Morouse: Horn Frank Vicari: Horn

Although the chaotic sessions that spawned this album have passed into rock & roll legend and the recording's very genesis (as an out-of-court settlement between John Lennon and an aggrieved publisher) has often caused it to be slighted by many of the singer's biographers, *Rock 'n' Roll*, in fact, stands as a peak in his post-Imagine catalog: an album that catches him with nothing to prove and no need to try. Lennon could, after all, sing old rock & roll numbers with his mouth closed; he spent his entire career relaxing with off-the-cuff blasts through the music with which he grew up, and *Rock 'n' Roll* emerges the sound of him doing precisely that. Four songs survive from the fractious sessions with producer Phil Spector in late 1973 that ignited the album, and listeners to any of the posthumous compilations that also draw from those archives will know that the best tracks were left on the shelf -- "Be My Baby" and "Angel Baby" among them. But a gorgeous run through Lloyd Price's "Just Because" wraps up the album in fine style, while a trip through "You Can't Catch Me" contrarily captures a playful side that Lennon rarely revealed on vinyl. The remainder of the album was cut a year later with Lennon alone at the helm, and the mood remains buoyant. It might not, on first glance, seem essential to hear him running through nuggets like "Be Bop A Lula," "Peggy Sue," and "Bring It on Home to Me," but, again, Lennon has seldom sounded so gleeful as he does on these numbers, while the absence of the Spector trademark Wall-of-Sound production is scarcely

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noticeable -- as the object of one of Lennon's own productions, David Peel once pointed out, "John had the Wall of Sound down perfectly himself." Released in an age when both David Bowie and Bryan Ferry had already tracked back to musical times-gone-by (Pin-Ups and These Foolish Things, respectively), Rock 'n' Roll received short shrift from contemporary critics. As time passed, however, it has grown in stature, whereas those other albums have merely held their own. Today, Rock 'n' Roll sounds fresher than the rock & roll that inspired it in the first place. Imagine that. ---Dave Thompson, AllMusic Review

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