

Alexis Korner's Blues Incorporated - R & B From The Marquee (1962)

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01. *Gotta Move (Korner) - 2:27*
 02. *Rain Is Such A Lonesome Sound (J.& R. Witherspoon) - 2:48*
 03. *I Got My Brand On You (Muddy Waters) - 3:46*
 04. *Spooky But Nice (Davies) - 2:56*
 05. *Keep Your Hands Off (Davies) - 2:28*
 06. *I Wanna Put A Tiger In Your Tank (Muddy Waters) - 2:51*
 07. *I Got My Mojo Working (Foster) - 3:09*
 08. *Finkle's Cafe (Korner) - 2:44*
 09. *Hoochie Coochie (Muddy Waters) - 3:02*
 10. *Down Town (Korner) - 2:58*
 11. *How Long, How Long, Blues (Carr) - 3:00*
 12. *I Thought I Heard That Train Whistle Blow (Baldry) - 2:18*
- Bonus:*
13. *I'm Built For Comfort (Dixon) - 2:19*

Personnel:

- Alexis Korner - acoustic guitar
 - Cyril Davies - vocal (3,5,6,7,9), harmonica (except for 6)
 - Long John Baldry - vocal (2,11,12,13)
 - Dick Heckstall-Smith - tenor saxophone
 - Keith Scott - piano
 - Spike Heatley - string bass (except for 7)
 - Graham Burbridge - drums
- +
- Teddy Wadmore - bass guitar (7)
 - Big Jim Sullivan - vocal chorus (7)

Its title notwithstanding, R&B from the Marquee was not a live album, nor was it cut at the

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Marquee: it was actually done at Decca Records' London studio, albeit in one long day's work and effectively live-in-the-studio. It was also the place where British blues began, at least as a recording proposition. Blues played by Britons had been part of the underground music scene since the mid-'50s, and Blues Incorporated had been a going concern in one form or another, initially guitarist Alexis Korner and harpist/singer Cyril Davies (actually, maybe the first two Britons to play blues); but by this time, the group also included Dick Heckstall-Smith (tenor sax, backing vocals), Keith Scott (piano), Spike Heatley (upright bass), and Graham Burbridge (drums), with Long John Baldry handling some lead vocals. For this record, Big Jim Sullivan also sang backup, and Teddy Wadmore provides a key cameo appearance for the electric bass guitar (then a new and alien instrument in this music). The sound here is mostly out of late-'40s and early-'50s Chicago blues; in later years -- Blues Incorporated would embrace more diverse branches of the music in their performances -- and the outfit swings with a surprising degree of authenticity; they're somewhat stiffer than any actual Chicago outfit would be, but in England in 1962, this was as down-and-dirty as any homegrown outfit ever sounded. Korner's guitar leads things off with his own "Gotta Move," an instrumental that showcases the whole outfit, including a bracing duet between Davies' harmonica and Heckstall-Smith's sax: they give each other plenty of space to work around the other, here and also on Davies' own "Spooky But Nice," and it's easy to see why the two got along so well despite Davies' well-known antipathy to reed instruments and horns. Blues Incorporated was at its peak during the time this album was done, with its best and most powerful lineup, and never stronger in the vocal department -- Baldry has more flexibility, and is more a potential star (which he became) for his singing, while Davies is a pure, raw bluesman, with no concessions to pop music, and he sounds uncannily like Muddy Waters on "I Got My Brand on You." And this band swings, but it also rocks. "I Wanna Put a Tiger in Your Tank" is a forceful blues workout for its time, and when Wadmore's electric bass shows up on "Got My Mojo Working," you can hear the first recorded manifestation of what would become blues-rock in the hands of Blues Incorporated member/acolytes the Rolling Stones and the Pretty Things. Spike Heatley gets the spotlight briefly on the instrumental "Down Town," and lest anyone think that Alexis Korner is only a supporting player in his own band, nothing could be farther from the truth: his guitar, acoustic and mostly unamplified, helps drive everything here, and "Finkle's Café" and "Hoochie Coochie Man," among other tracks, give him the spotlight. ---Bruce Eder, All Music Guide

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