

Canned Heat - Vintage (1970)

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A1 Rollin' and Tumblin', Pt. 1 2:17 A2 Big Road Blues 2:08 A3 Spoonful 2:30 A4 Got My Mojo Working 2:44 A5 Pretty Thing 2:01 B1 Louise 3:07 B2 Dimples 2:21 B3 Can't Hold On Much Longer 2:32 B4 Straight Ahead 2:35 B5 Rollin' and Tumblin', Pt. 2 2:07 Bob Hite – vocals Alan Wilson – slide guitar, vocals, harmonica Henry Vestine – lead guitar Stuart Brotman – bass Frank Cook – drums

These are the earliest-known recordings of Canned Heat with the primordial lineup of Alan "Blind Owl" Wilson (guitar/harmonica/vocals), Stuart Brotman (bass), Henry "Sunflower" Vestine (guitar), Bob "The Bear" Hite (vocals), and either Keith Sawyer (drums), or perhaps his replacement, Frank Cook (drums), who joined circa 1966. Another notable name among the personnel listed on the original LP jacket is rhythm & blues legend, Johnny Otis as producer. This is certainly fitting, as the Heat wind their way through compact, high-energy versions of a variety of selections, directly contrasting the longer psychedelic showcases that would evolve over the next few years. Their almost cerebral respect for their predecessors would have suggested that the band hailed from anywhere other than their Topanga Canyon digs. However, Wilson, Vestine, and Hite were consummate students of authentic R&B, as evidenced by their practically note-for-note transcriptions of tunes from Chicago icons such as Muddy Waters ("Got My Mojo Working"), Willie Dixon ("Spoonful" and "Pretty Thing"), John Lee Hooker ("Louise" and "Dimples"), and Elmore James ("Rollin' and Tumblin'.") The latter cut is actually presented in two distinct renderings -- with and without Wilson's hard-hitting harmonica leads, closely resembling the sound of their self-titled debut, Canned Heat (1967) from the following year. A second holdover is "Big Road Blues," which is also given a similar driving beat and an otherwise solid reading. These sessions have surfaced on an endless array of reissues including Don't Forget to Boogie: Vintage Heat (2002), Vintage Canned Heat [Sundazed] (1996), or paired with a 1969 concert platter on the Akarma Records double-play Live at the Topanga Corral/Vintage (2002). ---Lindsay Planer, Rovi

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