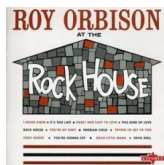


Roy Orbison - At the Rock House (2009)

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Roy Orbison - At the Rock House (2009)



1. *This Kind Of Love* 2. *Devil Doll* 3. *You're My Baby* 4. *Trying To Get To You* 5. *It's Too Late* 6. *Rock House* 7. *You're Gonna Cry* 8. *I Never Knew* 9. *Sweet And Easy To Love* 10. *Mean Little Mama* 11. *Ooby Dooby* 12. *Problem Child* 13. *Ooby Dooby (Master)* 14. *Go! Go! Go!* 15. *You're My Baby* 16. *Rock House* 17. *Sweet And Easy To Love* 18. *Chicken Hearted* 19. *I Like Love* 20. *A True Love Goodbye* 21. *Fools Hall Of Fame* 22. *You Tell Me* 23. *I Give Up* 24. *One More Time* 25. *Lovestruck* 26. *The Cause Of It All* 27. *The Clown* 28. *(A Cat Called) Domino* 29. *Claudette* 30. *Love Dumb Baby (fragment)* 31. *This Kind Of Love* 32. *Trying To Get To You* 33. *It's Too Late* 34. *You're Gonna Cry* 35. *I Never Knew* 36. *Mean Little Mama* 37. *Problem Child*

Although it was technically Roy Orbison's first album, *At the Rock House* wasn't really an LP effort on his part so much as a cash-in effort by Sun Records in the wake of Orbison's later success on Monument Records with "Uptown," "Only the Lonely," etc. And understandably, the sound is very retro for 1960-1961, comprised as the record is primarily of the rock & roll and hardcore rockabilly numbers that he cut for Sun in 1956 (with his original group the Teen Kings) and 1957, including the Johnny Cash-authored "You're My Baby," the Orbison/Harold Jenkins collaboration "Rock House," and Sam Phillips' "Mean Little Mama" and "Problem Child." Not everything is quite as briskly paced as those two numbers, but even the ballads, such as "Sweet and Easy to Love" and "Devil Doll," and the melodic "This Kind of Love" and "It's Too Late," have an edge to them -- they stand midway between the rock & roll that was happening in 1956 and the more lush and dramatic sound that Orbison would perfect at Monument Records from 1959 onward. All of the material is fascinating as a sort of alternate-universe version of where Orbison might've headed musically, and most of it is downright bracing and exciting, though it's easy to see why it never succeeded at the time -- numbers like "You're Gonna Cry" and "Problem Child" were a little too intense and ambitious as rock & roll, with too many changes and involved lyrics, to hold that audience en masse. It was some of the best and most intense rock & roll you could buy in 1961 this side of Elvis Presley, however, and heard today the album is a fascinating curio from what's usually thought of as a fallow period in rock & roll history. ---Bruce Eder, allmusic.com

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