

George Smith & Bacon Fat - The Complete Blue Horizon Sessions (2006)

Written by bluelover (Bogdan Marszałkowski)

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CD 1 1. *Up the Line* (Jacobs) 4:17 2. *Boom, Boom [Out Goes the Lights]* (Lewis) 3:50 3. *Small's on 53'rd* (Piazza) 3:49 4. *She's a Wrong Woman* (Piazza) 5:24 5. *I Need Your Love* (Nicholson) 3:47 6. *Juicy Harmonica* (Smith) 3:57 7. *Nobody But You* (Spriggs) 2:17 8. *Telephone Blues* (Ling, Smith) 6:00 9. *You're So Fine* (Jacobs) 3:11 10. *Too Late* (Dixon) 6:00 11. *Evil* (Dixon) 2:47 12. *Blues Feeling [Remixed Version]* (Piazza) 4:02 13. *Off the Wall [Previously Unreleased]* (Jacobs) 2:57 14. *Ah'w Baby [Previously Unreleased]* (Jacobs) 3:39 15. *Mellow Down Easy [Previously Unreleased]* (Dixon) 3:25 16. *Blues with a Feeling [Previously Unreleased]* (Tarrant) 3:09 17. *Tight Dress [Previously Unreleased]* (McCoy, Smith) 2:59 18. *I've Had My Fun [Previously Unreleased]* (Oden) 6:53 19. *Help Me [Previously Unreleased]* (Bass, Dixon, Williamson) 3:56 20. *My Babe, Pt. 1 [Previously Unreleased]* (Dixon) 2:38

CD 2: 1. *Someday You're Gonna Learn [To Treat Me Right]* (McCoy) 4:17 2. *Blue Switch* (Smith) 2:57 3. *Mississippi River Blues* (Smith) 9:17 4. *Before You Do Your Thing [You'd Better Think]* (McCoy) 4:21 5. *I Don't Want to Go, Baby* (McCoy) 7:06 6. *Good Things* (McCoy) 3:48 7. *Soul Feet* (Smith) 3:46 8. *No Time for Jive* (Smith) 7:25 9. *My Babe, Pt. 2 [Previously Unreleased]* (Dixon) 1:55 10. *I'm Ready [Previously Unreleased]* (Dixon) 2:51 11. *Telephone Blues [Previously Unreleased]* (Ling, Smith) 5:23 12. *Forty Four [Previously Unreleased]* (Burnett C.) 4:40 13. *Blues with a Feeling [Previously Unreleased]* (Tarrant) 3:33 14. *Summertime [Previously Unreleased]* (Gershwin, Heyward) 3:43 15. *Got My Mojo Working [Previously Unreleased]* (Foster) 4:09 16. *Hamp's Boogie Woogie [Previously Unreleased]* (Buckner, Hampton) 5:16

Pee Wee Crayton - (Guitar) Marshall Hooks - (Guitar) Dick Innes - (Drums) J.D. Nicholson - (Organ, Piano) Rod Piazza - (Harmonica, Vocals) Buddy Reed - (Guitar) Gregg Schaefer - (Guitar) George Smith - (Harmonica, Vocals) Jerry Lee Smith - (Guitar Bass)

For dedicated followers of Post-war blues harp, the mention of George "Harmonica" Smith's name certainly stirs enthusiasm, and rightly so given his influence over a host of modern interpreters, among them Rod Piazza. This solid 2-disc stands up well more than three-and-a-half decades after it was recorded and combines two long-absent titles; *Grease One For Me* which was listed under the Bacon Fat banner, plus George's own *No Time For Jive*. Bacon Fat consisted of Buddy Reed and Greg Schaefer on guitars, Jerry Smith's bass, the

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drumming of a young Richard Innes, and J.D. Nicholson on piano, who wasn't in the lineup for George's effort. There are a handful of shortcomings here including the less-than-pristine sound we've grown accustomed to in the age of remastering. The original multi-track tapes are long-gone so the studio recordings aren't quite up to snuff in the clarity department. Another miss was producer Mike Vernon's admitted blunder in not combining the talents of Smith and Piazza together as the potent twin-harmonica tandem they were with Bacon Fat behind them. However flawed that opportunity was, it doesn't lessen the importance of this incredibly interesting two-and-a-half hours of blues. Many listeners might not be aware of Piazza's lengthy history but he was undoubtedly strong more than thirty-five years ago and the proof resides here; hefty versions of Little Walter's Up The Line, Off The Wall, Ah'w Baby, Mellow Down Easy, and more prove his mettle while he was still in his early twenties. Smith was in his middle-forties when these 1970 recordings were tracked and sported a recording history dating back to 1955 so it should come as no surprise that he was in top-shelf form on Someday You're Gonna Learn, Blue Switch, No Time For Jive, Mississippi River Blues, and others. Vernon also admits in retrospect that not using the abilities of guitarist Pee Wee Crayton to better effect on Smith's Good Things was another blunder, but don't pass on this because of the errors - it was still a well-played game. The extra-innings win comes in the form of fifteen previously-unreleased 'live' recordings from a handful of British venues in late 1970 evenly balanced between those featuring Piazza and Smith. While it does have its small share of warts, don't let a few youth-related managerial mistakes deny the pleasure derived from delving deep into this fine document of a legendary harmonica master and one of his key students. The Complete Blue Horizon Sessions featuring George "Harmonica" Smith & Bacon Fat lands in the 'win' column and that's what counts. ---Craig Ruskey, bigroadblues.com

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