

Eddie Kirkland – Pick Up The Pieces (1980/2011)

Written by bluesever

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1 *Pick Up The Pieces* 2 *Why Can't I Be Your Backdoor Man Instead* 3 *Turning Point* 4 *Walking At Midnight* 5 *Don't Monkey Around With Me* 6 *Write My Baby A Letter* 7 *Working Man* 8 *I've Got To Leave Your Town* 9 *I'm A Stranger* 10 *Pick Up The Pieces*
Bass – Billy Trioni Drums – George Horales Guitar – John Spectre Guitar, Vocals, Harmonica, Producer – Eddie Kirkland

By 1980, when he made this CD, Eddie Kirkland was already a blues legend - most notably as John Lee Hooker's backing guitar and traveling companion. That was little help to him - legend or not, the blues was in one of its perennial quiet periods. When JSP boss John Stedman came across him in a New York club, it turned out that Eddie was not only looking for a record deal, but he had a set of songs ready for release. Here's the result - the sides from an LP that has never before been transferred to CD and, for the first time, some tracks that didn't (for space reasons) make it onto the original album. This is hard blues by a master who's seen it all. If the business is in a trough, so what - the man still gives of his best. The previously unreleased material is from a different session - a little funkier and with a fascinating alternative version of the title song. ---Editorial Reviews, amazon.com

How many Jamaican-born bluesmen recorded with John Lee Hooker and toured with Otis Redding? It's a safe bet there was only one: Eddie Kirkland, who engaged in some astonishing on-stage acrobatics over the decades (like standing on his head while playing guitar on TV's Don Kirshner's Rock Concert). But you would never find any ersatz reggae grooves cluttering Kirkland's work. He was brought up around Dothan, Alabama before heading north to Detroit in 1943. There he hooked up with Hooker five years later, recording with him for several labels as well as under his own name for RPM in 1952, King in 1953, and Fortune in 1959. Tru-Sound

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Records, a Prestige subsidiary, invited Kirkland to Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey in 1961-1962 to wax his first album, *It's the Blues Man!* The polished R&B band of saxophonist King Curtis intersected with Kirkland's intense vocals, raucous guitar, and harmonica throughout the exciting set. Exiting the Motor City for Macon, Georgia in 1962, Kirkland signed on with Otis Redding as a sideman and show opener not long thereafter. Redding introduced Kirkland to Stax/Volt co-owner Jim Stewart, who flipped over Eddie's primal dance workout "The Hawg." It was issued on Volt in 1963, billed to Eddie Kirk. By the dawn of the '70s, Kirkland was recording for Pete Lowry's Trix label; he also waxed several CDs for Deluge in the '90s. Kirkland remained active into the 21st century, and was in Florida to perform at a show in the Gulf Coast community of Dunedin when he died from injuries sustained when the automobile he was driving collided with a Greyhound bus in Crystal River on February 27, 2011. Eddie Kirkland was 87 years old. ---Bill Dahl, allmusic.com

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