

## Byther Smith - Hold That Train (1981)

Written by bluesever

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01. *This Little Voice* (3:20) 02. *300 Pounds Of Joy* (4:05) 03. *So Unhappy* (4:29) 04. *Tell Me How You Like It* (4:16) 05. *What My Mamma Told Me* (4:16) 06. *Hold That Train Conductor* (5:28) 07. *Mississippi Kid* (3:41) 08. *Come On In This House* (5:05) 09. *You Ought To Be Ashamed* (3:42) 10. *Walked All Night Long* (4:09) 11. *So Mean To Me* (4:46) 12. *Thrill Is Gone* (4:19) 13. *Close To You* (4:03) 14. *I Don't Like To Travel* (4:53) 15. *Killing Floor* (3:39)  
Bass – Bruce Felgen Drums – Joe Pusateri Guitar – Mike Baietto Guitar, Vocals – Byther Smith

Recorded in 1981 and issued that same year on LP, the CD release of *Hold That Train* has been a long time comin'. Byther Smith is the great unsung Mississippi-cum-Chicago bluesman. Coming to the Windy City from the Delta, he has toured the world countless times, played with everyone from Dr. John to Malachi Thompson and Son Seals, and performs not only classic material from the blues canon, but writes amazing tunes as well. But outside the blues world he is an unknown, despite having some of the heaviest credentials on the planet and being one of the last Delta bluesmen still playing and recording. Smith is one of those bluesmen whose recordings are a potent, snaky brew of pure sweat, grit, and spirit. *Hold That Train* is a case in point. Here are 15 tracks covering 60 minutes that feature not only his signature slashing guitar style that embodies the entire history of electric blues with its wrist-wrangling attack, but his unbelievable singing voice, which is clear, cool, and full of the moaning power of raw sexuality and fierce independence. His versions here of "Tell Me How You Like It," Willie Dixon's "300 Pounds of Joy," Howlin' Wolf's "Killin' Floor," Amos Blakemore's "Come on in This House," and the old trad nugget "What My Mamma Told Me," become his in the execution. His own tunes, "I Don't Like to Travel," "Mississippi Kid," and "Walked All Night Long," are classics in their own right -- even if nobody's ever heard them outside of one of his gigs. The songs carry within them a reverence for the time-honored, rough-hewn migration of Delta music to northern climes, and an immediacy that takes them outside history and puts them on the stage at the corner bar, or the after hours blind pig. Bottom line is, this set is one of the most welcome issues on compact disc in recent memory, and if there is one Byther Smith disc to own, this is it, whether you are a diehard or recent convert. ---Thom Jurek, AllMusic Review

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