

Elmore James – Blues After Hours (1960)

Written by bluesever

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1. *Dust My Blues* 2. *Sunnyland* 3. *Mean and Evil* 4. *Dark and Dreary* 5. *Standing at the Crossroads* [play](#) 6. *Happy Home* 7. *No Love in My Heart* 8. *Blues Before Sunrise* [play](#) 9. *I Was a Fool* 10. *Goodbye Baby* 11. *Late Hours at Midnight* 12. *Quarter Past Nine* 13. *Strange Kinda Feeling* 14. *Make My Dreams Come True* 15. *So Mean to Me* 16. *Long Tall Woman* 17. *Wild About You A.K.A. Wild About You Baby* 18. *Elmo's Shuffle*
Line-Up: Elmore James (vocals, guitar); Johnny Jones (piano).

Blues After Hours, originally released on LP by Crown in 1960, was Elmore James' first long-playing record. Made up of singles released on the Modern imprints Meteor and Flair, for many it was their first introduction to the fiery slide guitarist, and the crunchy garage sound of James' arrangements (backed variously by the Broomdusters in Chicago, the Maxwell Davis Orchestra in Los Angeles, and the J&M Studio house band in New Orleans), coupled with his passionate edgy vocals, quickly made him one of the most influential blues artists of his time. Mastered from the original LP tapes and augmented with eight bonus tracks (which include three additional singles relevant to the LP and five tracks from the Chicago sessions), this expanded version of Blues After Hours has great sound, and the rough explosive nature of James' music is front and center and never lets up from the second he steps into the famous slide riff on "Dust My Blues," which opens the set. That roaring riff is repeated many times on this disc, since labels constantly demanded it, and James delivered it under a range of different titles, and amazingly, no one ever seems to get tired of it. But James was more than a one-trick pony, and he didn't just play slide. He was also an impassioned singer, and gifted enough to trade lines (both vocally and on guitar) with horn sections, giving songs like "Dark and Dreary" the illusion of being both raw and smooth at the same time. Truthfully, James never recorded a lame track (even if dozens of them were variations on "Dust My Broom"), always pouring all his energy into the performance, so it really doesn't matter which collection of his you pick up, but this one has the advantage of being a fleshed-out facsimile of his very first album (right down to the cover art), giving it a kind of historical and archival appeal. --- Steve Leggett, allmusic.com

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Following our success with the mid-price Crown reissues by B.B. King and Howling Wolf, Ace Records presents the classic Elmore James Crown LP with bonus tracks. The original 1960 release, with the foxiest of covers, introduced Elmore James's intense vocals and slide guitar to legions of young blues fans everywhere. He is now venerated as one of the greatest bluesmen of all time. The eight bonus tracks feature three singles relevant to the LP, with the other five cuts coming from the top-class Chicago sessions. Of particular note is the stand-out piano work of the wonderful Little Johnny Jones. 2005. ---Dave Sax

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