

## John Hammond - The First Album & Bonus Tracks (2012)

Written by bluesever

Monday, 13 June 2016 14:45 - Last Updated Monday, 08 March 2021 15:46

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1. *Two Trains Running* (3:23) 2. *Give Me A 32-20* (3:40) 3. *Maybelline* (2:37) 4. *Louise* (4:07) 5. *This Train* (2:28) 6. *East St. Louis Blues* (3:06) 7. *Going Back To Florida* (2:54) 8. *Mean Old Frisco* (3:13) 9. *I Got A Letter This Morning* (4:09) 10. *Alabama Woman Blues* (3:34) 11. *The Hoochie Coochie Man* (3:02) 12. *Crossroads Blues* (3:59) 13. *See That My Grave Is Kept Clean* (5:12) 14. *Drop Down Menu* (2:50) 15. *Me And The Devil* (2:32) 16. *Ask Me Nice* (4:42) 17. *Hellhound Blues* (3:35) 18. *Midnight Hour Blues* (4:00)

John Hammond, a New York native (son of John Hammond the producer who had discovered Bob Dylan), became a staple of the Greenwich Movement with his passionate recreation of the blues. Hammond debuted in 1962 with a collection of acoustic blues classics, *John Hammond* (Vanguard, 1962), and that remained his style for a while. *Big City Blues* (Vanguard, 1964) had more rock and roll (most selections are by Chuck Berry and Willie Dixon) and *Country Blues* (Vanguard, 1964) had more Delta blues, but the style was fiercely acoustic.

His work was recognized as important by rock musicians because it helped uncover forgotten heroes of the blues. Unlike John Mayall in Britain, though, Hammond was a faithful recreator of the original sound, and that was also his limit. He was a living documentary of the blues. He finally embraced the electric instrumentation on two albums with backing from Robbie Robertson, Garth Hudson and Levon Helm (before they renamed themselves The Band), *So Many Roads* (Vanguard, 1965), mainly devoted to Bo Diddley and Willie Dixon, and *Mirrors* (Vanguard, 1967), with several Robert Johnson compositions; then *I Can Tell* (Atlantic, 1967), again in the tradition of Willie Dixon and John Lee Hooker, featured Bill Wyman of the Rolling Stones, Robbie Robertson and Rick Danko. *Sooner Or Later* (Atlantic, 1968), with two Sonny Boy Williamson songs, and *Southern Fried* (Atlantic, 1969), with a mixture of blues and rock and roll, ended the Sixties on a sour note. *Source Point* (Columbia, 1970), long delayed, was finally released, but for a few years Hammond was engaged only to compose the soundtrack for *Little Big Man* (1971) and to play in the *Triumvirate* (Columbia, 1973), with Dr. John and Michael Bloomfield.

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I'm Satisfied (Columbia, 1972), mostly a tribute to Delaney Bramlett, was the only solo album of these years (several encyclopedias confuse his albums of this period with the albums by Albert Hammond).

Can't Beat The Kid (Capricorn, 1975) and John Hammond Solo (Vanguard, 1976) were still in the old style, regardless of waning interest in his revivalist operation. Footwork (Vanguard, 1978), a dazzling return to Robert Johnson material and therefore to his roots, Hot Tracks (Vanguard, 1979), Mileage (Rounder, 1980) and Frogs For Snakes (Rounder, 1982) re-established his name.

But then he was largely forgotten again, recording only Nobody But You (Flying Fish, 1988).

Hammond's career was revitalized one more time with Trouble No More (Virgin, 1993), that led to a string of successful (and impeccable) albums: Found True Love (Virgin, 1996), Long As I Have You (Virgin, 1998). Wicked Grin (Virgin, 2001) is a Tom Waits tribute. --- scaruffi.com

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