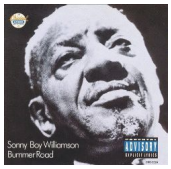
## Sonny Boy Williamson - Bummer Road (1969)




*A1 She Got Next to Me 2:30  A2 Santa Claus 2:41  A3 Little Village 11:50  A4 Your Funeral and My Trail (alt. take)  B1 Lonesome Cabin 3:00  B2 I Can't Do Without You 2:45  B3 Temperature 110 2:14  B4 Unseen Eye 3:00  B5 Keep Your Hand Out of My Pocket 2:45  B6 Open Road 2:52  B7 This Old Life 2:34*  Sonny Boy Williamson II – harmonica, vocals  Eddie King Milton – guitar  Luther Tucker – guitar  Robert Lockwood, Jr. – guitar  Lafayette Leake – piano  Otis Spann – piano  Willie Dixon – bass  Fred Below - drums

This album by the Rice Miller fellow who called himself Sonny Boy Williamson -- in other words, the Mississippi harmonica player rather than the Tennessee harmonica player -- may have been one of the best volumes in the grim-looking series of single-album reissues and collections Chess put out before switching to double-album sets. Those who enjoy both blues and the film noir style will enjoy the graphic design of these albums, which often sported singularly unattractive photography of the artists. The grainy, out-of-focus picture of Williamson that fills this front cover is no exception; in fact, in a way, it established the rule. It isn't that he looks mean, he just looks like he could care less. Such a look of indifference has perhaps never before been captured by the camera. It could easily have been taken during some of the discussion that occurs between the artist and his producers during the recording of a song called "Little Village." It was the reissue producer's decision to put an entire 11 minutes of takes, re-takes, and related arguing on the first side of this collection, complete with a severe warning that the proceedings are not suitable for airplay. Blues fans rushed to this track immediately, and were not disappointed in the slice of recording-studio life that is revealed here. Far better than Frank Zappa's secretly recorded band discussions and arguments, this is one of the best examples of enlarging the scope of a musical track by adding auxiliary material that wasn't originally meant for release. Bless T.T. Swan for compiling this series, and giving us this view of the "Little Village," such a profound moment that an all-star rock band eventually named itself after the track. There's lots of other great stuff here as well; really, every track is a burner. Robert Jr. Lockwood is here on lead guitar, playing from the heart in his style of that era, not as jazzy as what would come later but hardly just a bunch of stock blues licks. "Temperature 110" is fantastic, a totally believable sizzler. "Santa Claus Blues" is many listeners' favorite Sonny Boy Williamson track, after which one can never rummage through a room looking for hidden

booty without hearing harmonica riffs in the background. Other great tracks include "Open Road" and "This Old Life." Quite a bit of this material was released for the first time in this set, certainly one the blues fans will want to sail off to that desert island with. ---Eugene Chadbourne, Rovi

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