

Smokie - The Best of Smokie (1997)

Written by bluelover

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1. *Living Next Door to Alice*
2. *Needles and Pins*
3. *Oh Carol*
4. *Lay Back in the Arms of Someone*
5. *Something's Been Making Me Blue*
6. *Couldn't*
7. *Talking Her 'Round*
8. *Train Song*
9. *The Loser*
10. *Miss You*
11. *Run to You*
12. *Here Lies a Man*
13. *Now You Think You Know*
14. *No One Could Ever Love You More*
15. *Goin' Tomorrow*
16. *Will You Love Me*
17. *You Took Me by Surprise*
18. *A Stranger With You*

Disky's 1998 release *The Best of Smokie* is a generous, 18-track collection featuring all of the '70s British phenomenon's hits. At least that what it appears to be upon a glance. Closer inspection reveals that these are "Digital re-recordings" featuring "lead singer Alan Barton." Which means it isn't quite the bargain it seems. These slick re-recordings are professionally done but they feel wrong really should be avoided by listeners with any degree of interest in Smokie. --- Stephen Thomas Erlewine, AllMusic Review

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Originally formed in Yorkshire, England, in 1966, Smokie hit the British pop charts several times during the late '70s with updated psychedelic pop, influenced by the band's stay on Mickie Most's Rak Records as well as the writers of most of the band's hit material, Rak's Nicky Chinn and Mike Chapman. Vocalist Chris Norman, bassist Terry Utley, guitarist Alan Silson, and drummer Ron Kelly had played in the Elizabethans, but formed the band Kindness in 1970. The quartet recorded many singles during the late '60s and early '70s, but failed to show any chart activity. By 1973, Kelly had left the band and was replaced by Pete Spencer. In 1975, the band, signed to Rak Records, and billed as Smokey, hit number three in the U.K. with "If You Think You Know How to Love Me." After another Top Ten hit, "Don't Play Your Rock 'n' Roll to Me," Smokey became Smokie; during 1976, the group scored with three Top 20 hits, including the number five "Living Next Door to Alice." Smokie hit number five both in 1977 ("It's Your Life") and 1978 ("Oh Carol"), but the band's chart run ended by early 1980, and following 1982's *Midnight Delight*, they disbanded. Both Spencer and Norman continued to work at Rak during the '80s, writing hits for several groups; they re-formed Smokie in 1986, resurfacing with the LP *My Heart Is True*. Two more albums, *All Fired Up* and *Greatest Hits Live*, followed, with the group remaining active throughout the '90s, issuing new material as well as a number of hits collections. ---John Bush, allmusic.com

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