

## Smokie - Midnight Café (1976)

Written by bluelover

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01. *Something's Been Making Me Blue* (N.Chinn/M.Chapman) - 2:59
02. *Wild Wild Angels* (N.Chinn/M.Chapman) - 3:55
03. *Poor Lady (Midnight Baby)* (C.Norman/P.Spencer) - 4:40
04. *When My Back Was Against The Wall* (C.Norman/P.Spencer) - 3:34
05. *Make Ya Boogie* (A.Silson/C.Norman/P.Spencer/T.Uttley) - 5:11
06. *Stranger* (N.Chinn/M.Chapman) - 4:38
07. *What Can I Do* (A.Silson) - 3:35
08. *Little Lucy* (C.Norman/P.Spencer) - 3:44
09. *Going Home* (C.Norman/P.Spencer) - 7:30
10. *I'll Meet You At Midnight* (N.Chinn/M.Chapman) - 3:13

### Personnel:

- Chris Norman - lead vocals, rhythm guitar
- Alan Silson - lead guitar, vocals
- Terry Uttley - bass, vocals
- Pete Spencer – drums

This 1976 follow-up to the successful *Changing All the Time* finds Smokie pursuing the same kind of country-flavored pop that made that album a hit. With Nicky Chinn and Mike Chapman once again in the producer's chairs, the band produced some notable hits in Europe: "Something's Been Making Me Blue" layers Smokie's trademark harmonies atop a rousing country-rock tune driven by tasty guitar work, and "Wild Wild Angels" is a dramatic power ballad that highlights a strong lead from whiskey-throated vocalist Chris Norman. Smokie also scored a hit with "I'll Meet You at Midnight," a surprising departure from their usual formula where the band plays a backup role to a dramatic, French-styled string arrangement that sets the melody. Despite these strong hits, the remainder of *Midnight Café* hits a few rough spots: "Make Ya Boogie" is a dull and overlong boogie rock tune that could have been performed by any rock band, and the attractive melody of "Poor Lady (Midnight Baby)" is marred by mean-spirited and

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misogynistic lyrics that mercilessly skewer the down-on-her-luck groupie of the title. Despite these occasional lapses in quality, Midnight Café does offer some decent tunes between the hit singles: "When My Back Was Against the Wall" is a dreamy ballad driven by an ethereal string arrangement, and the epic "Going Home" allows the bandmembers to stretch out and show off their formidable instrumental chops. In the end, the album serves up enough solid tunes to satisfy the group's fans, but casual listeners may want to track down the album's hits on a Smokie compilation. ---Donald A. Guarisco, AllMusic Review

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