

Atlanta Rhythm Section – Champagne Jam (1978)

Written by bluesever

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A1 Large Time 2:55 A2 I'm Not Gonna Let It Bother Me Tonight 4:06 A3 Normal Love 3:23 A4 Champagne Jam 4:32 B1 Imaginary Lover 5:05 B2 The Ballad Of Lois Malone 4:31 B3 The Great Escape 4:48 B4 Evileen 3:30 Backing Vocals – Paul Davis, Jojo Billingsley Bass – Paul Goddard Drums, Backing Vocals [Background Vocals] – Robert Nix Keyboards – Dean Daughtry Lead Guitar – Barry Bailey Lead Vocals, Backing Vocals [Background Vocals] – Ronnie Hammond Percussion – Artimus Pyle Rhythm Guitar, Lead Guitar [Alternate] – J.R. Cobb Voice ["rebel Yell" Courtesy Of] – Miss Sharon Lawrence

Once part of Roy Orbison's backing band and contributors to Georgia's thriving studio scene, the members of the Atlanta Rhythm Section married their polished chops to the rough-and-tumble blues and Southern-fried rock of the Allman Brothers and Lynyrd Skynyrd. And while the Allmans themselves espoused a jazz-tinged style, the Atlanta Rhythm Section took their boogie swing to almost MOR levels. Their slick style finally turned to gold with the 1976 hit "So Into You." 1978's *Champagne Jam* kept up the pace to an extent with minor successes like the Beatlesque pop side "I'm Not Going to Let It Bother Me Tonight." Chart concerns aside, *Champagne Jam* is one of the group's strongest releases: a seamless marriage of Southern rock muscle and uptown blues dress. Standouts include the almost nouveau Confederate rocker "Large Time" (Molly Hatchet anyone?) and the peak bluesy pop blend of the title track. Things do turn a bit awry on the Steely Dan ripoff "Evileen" and the cloying ballad "Normal Love," but even these tracks have enough in the way of classy arrangements to keep them afloat. Beyond the few best-of discs available, fans will definitely want to make this the first title they consider from the band's regular album catalog. ---Stephen Cook, AllMusic Review

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