

Chuck Berry - Rockin' at the Hops (1960)

Written by bluesever

Wednesday, 01 February 2012 20:01 - Last Updated Saturday, 30 December 2017 15:10

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01. *Bye Bye Johnny* (Chuck Berry) - 2:02 [play](#) 02. *Worried Life Blues* (Maceo Merriweather) - 2:07 03. *Down The Road A Piece* (Don Raye) - 2:10 04. *Confessin' The Blues* (Walter Brown/Jay McShann) - 2:06 05. *Too Pooped To Pop* (B.Davis) - 2:31 06. *Mad Lad* (B.Davis) - 2:06 07. *I Got To Find My Baby* (Chuck Berry) - 2:12 08. *Betty Jean* (Chuck Berry) - 2:25 09. *Childhood Sweetheart* (Chuck Berry) - 2:40 10. *Broken Arrow* (Chuck Berry) - 2:19 11. *Driftin' Blues* (Charles Brown/Johnny Moore's Three Blazers/Eddie Williams) - 2:16 12. *Let It Rock* (Chuck Berry) - 1:42 [play](#)

Personnel: - Chuck Berry - guitar, Vocals - Matt "Guitar" Murphy - guitar - Leroy C.Davis - tenor saxophone - Willie Dixon - bass - Johnnie Johnson - piano - Fred Below, Eddie Hardy, Jasper Thomas - drums - The Moonglows - backing vocals

The two classic cuts that bookend this album should be enough to attract the uninitiated -- Berry at his best wrote danceable little "vest-pocket" screenplays dealing with teen life, of which "Bye Bye Johnny" and "Let It Rock" were two of his best; but because they've been so heavily anthologized, those two cuts don't have the pulling power here that they would have had 40-some years back. So get this record for everything else that's on it -- *Rockin' at the Hops* not only has no filler, but it's chock full of records that show off a bluesy side of Berry's output that was never fully appreciated at the time. His version of Big Maceo's "Worried Life Blues" shows how good a bluesman Berry might've been had he been more the Muddy Waters-type player and singer that Chess had been looking for; "Down the Road a Piece," a song written by Don Raye (of "Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy" fame), is a lost Berry single that could've rated right up there with "Roll Over Beethoven," except that its roadhouse ambience and story line were more mature than a lot of kids might've embraced in 1959; and Walter Brown's "Confessin' the Blues" and "Driftin' Blues" fit into the same category, Berry the adult bluesman rather than the teen-oriented teaser. "Childhood Sweetheart" is a sequel to "Wee Wee Hours," Berry's very first blues side, lifting a fragment or two from Elmore James' "Dust My Broom" for its guitar break. "Too Pooped to Pop" and "Betty Jean," by contrast, are a pair of enjoyably upbeat rock & roll numbers, each featuring uncharacteristic elements, a sax solo on the former, and a male chorus on the latter; in between them is "Mad Lad," an instrumental that presents Berry drifting into what would later be defined as a surf guitar mode -- a quicker tempo would have done it (and

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does anyone want to bet that a young Carl Wilson didn't wear out a copy or two listening to this track?). --- Bruce Eder, allmusic.com

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