

Roomful of Blues - Hook, Line & Sinker (2011)

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1. *That's A Pretty Good Love* [02:55] 2. *She Walks Right In* [03:32] 3. *Hook, Line and Sinker* [02:50] 4. *Kill Me* [03:55] 5. *Gate Walks To Board* [04:01] 6. *Juice, Juice, Juice* [02:41] 7. *Ain't Nothin' Happenin'* [03:10] 8. *Win With Me, Baby* [03:50] 9. *It* [04:01] 10. *Come On Home* [02:35] 11. *Time Brings About A Change* [05:32] 12. *Roomful of Blues / Just A Little Love* [02:23] Personnel: Phil Pemberton (vocals); Chris Vachon (guitar); Rich Lataille (alto saxophone, tenor saxophone); Mark Earley (tenor saxophone, baritone saxophone); Doug Woolverton (trumpet); Travis Colby (piano, Hammond b-3 organ); John Turner (upright bass); Ephraim Lowell (drums).

Roomful of Blues have been playing their blistering take on the jump blues for over 35 years and through numerous personnel changes. Only saxman Rich Lataille is left from the band's best-known lineup, and even he joined after Roomful of Blues had been playing beer joints for three years, but their sound still remains as rough and tough as ever and that's a good thing indeed. On *Hook, Line & Sinker* they're doing what they've always done, and as the provocative album cover suggests, they remain capable of delivering a platter full of sly, sexy stompers. There aren't any originals this time around; instead they trot out a bunch of juke joint classics and infuse them with their own special brand of soulful grit. Chris Vachon's slinky guitar pulls you into the opener, "That's a Pretty Good Love," a tune made popular by Big Maybelle. Vachon's long, serpentine solo complements the song's smoldering message. Vocalist Phil Pemberton shines on "Kill Me," with a soulful, growling vocal worthy of the Don & Dewey original, while he shows off his tender side on Floyd Dixon's "Time Brings About a Change," which features an intricate late-night piano solo by Travis Colby. But like all good Roomful albums, it's the uptempo numbers that really make you want to hit the replay button. Vachon lets loose on the smokin' instrumental "Gate Walks to Board," then steps aside to let Lataille, Mark Earley, and trumpeter Doug Woolverton trade wailing solos. They play the bouncy title track, a tune by Dave Bartholomew/Pearl King that Smiley Lewis had a hit on, with the pedal to the metal. Gatemoth Brown's "She Walks Right In" gets the full jump blues treatment, with John Turner's acoustic bass pushing the band into overdrive and the horn section wailing like a chorus of desperate drunks at closing time on Saturday night. --- j. Poet, Rovi

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