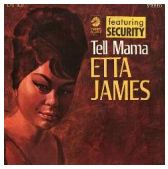
Etta James – Tell Mama (1968)



A1 Tell Mama 2:20 A2 I'd Rather Go Blind 2:33 A3 Watch Dog 2:06 A4 The Love Of My Man 2:37 A5 I'm Gonna Take What He's Got 2:32 A6 The Same Rope 2:39 B1 Security 2:44 B2 Steal Away 2:19 B3 My Mother-In-Law 2:20 B4 Don't Lose Your Good Thing 2:26 B5 It Hurts Me So Much 2:34 B6 Just A Little Bit 2:11 Bass – David Hood Drums – Roger Hawkins Guitar – Albert Lowe, Jr., Jimmy Ray Johnson Organ – Barry Beckett, Carl Banks Piano – George Davis, Marvell Thomas Piano, Organ – Dewey L. Oldham Saxophone – Aaron Varnell, Charles Chalmers, Floyd Newman, James Mitchell Trumpet – Gene Miller Vocals – Etta James

In 1967, a pregnant Etta James traveled to rural Alabama to work with the world-class musicians of Muscle Shoals Studios. Country fiddler Rick Hall, who ran the studio, had the perfect song for James, ‘Tell Mama.’ James made four trips to Muscle Shoals in 1967 and 1968 to work with Hall’s creative touches. Hall’s subtle nuances gave Leonard Chess a magnificent record from start to finish. The album features a high-octane version of the title cut, which may be James’ most recognizable song after ‘At Last.’ Also on the album are the gorgeous Soul ballad ‘I’d Rather Go Blind,’ Rosco Gordon’s ‘Just A Little Bit,’ Otis Redding’s ‘Security, and two Don Covay songs, ‘Watch Dog’ and ‘I’m Gonna Take What He’s Got.’ The combination of James’ vocal convictions and Hall’s Muscle Shoals musicians makes this record, released on Chess’s subsidiary label, Cadet, one for the ages. ---blues.org

Leonard Chess dispatched Etta James to Muscle Shoals in 1967, and the move paid off with one of her best and most soul-searing Cadet albums. Produced by Rick Hall, the resultant album boasted a relentlessly driving title cut, the moving soul ballad "I'd Rather Go Blind," and sizzling covers of Otis Redding's "Security" and Jimmy Hughes' "Don't Lose Your Good Thing,"

and a pair of fine Don Covay copyrights. The skin-tight session aces at Fame Studios really did themselves proud behind Miss Peaches. ---Bill Dahl, allmusic.com

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