Michael Bloomfield - It's Not Killing Me (1969)

1 If You See My Baby 3:05 2 For Anyone You Meet 4:03 3 Good Old Guy 3:20 4 Far Too Many Nights 5:09 5 It's Not Killing Me 3:01 6 Next Time You See Me 2:55 7 Michael's Lament 4:21 8 Why Must My Baby 2:37 9 The Ones I Loved Are Gone 3:05 10 Don't Think About It Baby 3:19 11 Goofers 1:48 Accordion – Richard Santi Acoustic Guitar, Electric Guitar, Vocals, Piano – Michael Bloomfield Baritone Saxophone – Mark Teel Bass – John Kahn Drums, Vocals – Bob Jones Electric Guitar [Rhythm], Acoustic Guitar – Fred Olsen Guitar, Mandolin, Vocals – Michael Melford Organ – Roy Ruby Organ, Piano – Mark Naftalin Organ, Piano, Banjo – Ira Kamin Soprano Saxophone – Noel Jewkis Steel Guitar – Orville (Red) Rhodes Tenor Saxophone – Gerald Oshita, Ron Stallings Trumpet – John Wilmeth, Marcus Doubleday Vocals – The Ace Of Cups, Diane Tribuno, Nick Gravenites

It's a shame that Michael Bloomfield's recorded legacy is so spotty. Generally speaking, the blues guitarist's finest moments are found on the universally praised first two discs with Paul Butterfield, the Electric Flag's A Long Time Comin' album, and the sporadic glimpses of greatness on his solo records. Unfortunately, there aren't many of those on It's Not Killing Me, Bloomfield's first solo LP released under his name in 1969. The main problem with this album is its lack of a powerful vocalist who could equally tackle blues, soul, and country. Singing was not one of the legendary guitarist's strengths, and he definitely wasn't capable of carrying that load over an entire record. Instead of focusing on Bloomfield's guitar prowess and letting him arrange the American music he obviously loved so deeply, you get the impression someone at Columbia, or maybe even Bloomfield himself, wanted to turn him into a hip frontman à la Eric Clapton. It's especially odd considering the presence of blues belter Nick Gravenites singing backup on this session, not to mention additional vocals by the Ace of Cups and Diane Tribuno. It makes about as much sense as Led Zeppelin having Jimmy Page sing lead while Robert Plant played tambourine! It's Not Killing Me is recommended for completists only. ---Al Campbell, AllMusic Review

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