

Bumble Bee Slim - Back In Town! (1962)

Written by bluesever

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A1 Direct South 3:29 A2 Wake Up In The Mornin' 2:43 A3 Driftin' Blues 4:26 A4 Puppy Love 4:57 A5 New B & O Blues 2:39 B1 Midnight Special 2:29 B2 In The Evening 4:18 B3 Meet Me In The Bottom 3:18 B4 Wee Baby Blues 5:46 B5 I'm The One 2:22 Bass – Leroy Vinnegar Drums – Ron Jefferson Guitar – Bumble Bee Slim, Joe Pass Organ – Richard Holmes Piano – Les McCann Tenor Saxophone – Curtis Amy Trombone – Lou Blackburn

Vintage vinyl re-issue of this classic 1962 slab of rugged blues that was Bumble Bee Slim's final recorded album before his passing in 1968! - This rare album features several stellar guest artists including one of the greatest jazz guitarists of all-time, Joe Pass! ---Editorial Reviews, amazon.com

I can't believe I finally found this 1962 LP which has been on my wish list for decades. I haven't ever seen it anywhere but I have had 2 tracks on a various artist sampler LP from 1968 called "This Is The Blues", Vol. 2" (the second of 2 volumes) another rare treat. These tracks were all originally produced & released on a Pacific Jazz subsidiary label called World Pacific. I looked for volume 1 of the sampler for decades and only found it...last weekend in Kansas City, in mint condition, at a hippie flea market! No Bumble Bee Slim (real name Amos Easton) tracks are on Vol. 1 of the samplers.

All of the tracks on "Back In Town" and some on the samplers feature the house band of Pacific Jazz like Les McCann, Leroy Vinnegar, Joe Pass, Richard "Groove" Holmes, Curtis Amy (an under-known Texas talent), Harold Land & many others. On Back In Town Amos/Slim plays

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guitar, harmonica, train whistle & sings the vocal on this one, with a varying lean mix of some of the various musicians mentioned above. Just so you know there's also some other later Pacific Jazz samplers before the label got assimilated first into Liberty Records in the 1960s, then eventually EMI/Capitol.

It's an easy-going on the jazz side of blues, here. That's not to say it isn't blues-y. It has elements of Mississippi in it along with cool west-coast jazz. Slim's (Amos Easton) voice works pretty well for the format. He always had a bit of a smoky scratch to his voice, while kind of smooth at the same time. Kind of like someone from the country who went urban, like a T-Bone Walker, Bill Broonzy or Muddy Waters (and countless others). These are Slim's last recordings. He sounds like there was some liquor going on in the studio, but not too bad. Nothing like Screaming Jay Hawkins recording "I Put A Spell On You", or anything like that (the historical note is Screaming Jay didn't even remember recording the song the next day).

So when I saw this was available as a re-issue new for around \$12 I figured this was a no-brainer. Well, it's great it's available but this sounds like it came from a scratchy LP source. Like me you'll hear it scratching then look at the LP itself, and turns out it's NOT the LP you're listening to, it's the SOURCE. The scratchiness is only on a handful of tracks, though. The cover looks just yellow-y in a way which reminds one of an old record found in a garage somewhere, and the clarity isn't the best so it just might be a bootleg. It comes from "Stardust" records which a web search revealed no clues to its origin. So whatever it is, it's good enough. The vinyl is heavy and it at least has full dynamics for what it is. I guess you can think of the scratching sounds as an old worn LP but good enough to play (I have a Denon moving-coil cartridge and an older high-end Denon turntable).

Don't be too scared off to buy this if you've been looking for it, like me. Been looking too long.

Fans of jazzy blues with organ, piano, and sax along with soulful blues-y vocals will enjoy this one anyway and appreciate the rarity of the treat. Not to mention this was the very last LP by one of the more popular blues artists of the 1930s. He died just a few years later.

Just to clarify what I received on vinyl another reviewer said he only got 7 of the 10 tracks from the original LP on the MP3 version. The LP I received had ALL 10 tracks on it. So the MP3 version must have deleted some tracks. ---James Zinn, amazon.com

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