

Ted Hawkins □ – Watch Your Step (1982)

Written by bluesever

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1 *Watch Your Step (Acoustic Version)* 2:27 2 *Bring It Home Daddy* 3:08 3 *If You Love Me* 2:24 4 *Don't Lose Your Cool* 2:49 5 *The Lost Ones* 3:13 6 *Who Got My Natural Comb?* 2:42 7 *Peace & Happiness* 2:33 8 *Sweet Baby* 3:28 9 *Stop Your Crying* 2:30 10 *Put In A Cross* 1:38 11 *Sorry You're Sick* 2:10 12 *Watch Your Step (Band Version)* 2:46 13 *TWA* 0:47 14 *I Gave Up All I Had* 2:57 15 *Stay Close To Me* 3:18 Bass – Ollie "Count" Gaines Bass – Dennis Walker Drums – John Tucker Guitar [Lead] – Phillip Walker Guitar, Vocals – Ted Hawkins Piano – Arthur Woods Saxophone – David Li Trumpet – Mel Moore Vocals – Elizabeth Hawkins Vocals [Backup] – Ina Bea Walker, Jimmy Grisby, Phillip Walker

Guitarist/vocalist Ted Hawkins was an instant sensation when this session was originally released in 1982. At a time when slick, heavily produced urban contemporary material was establishing its domination on the R&B scene, Hawkins' hard-edged, rough, cutting voice, plus his crisp acoustic guitar accompaniment and country-blues roots, seemed both dated and extremely fresh. This 15-track CD includes four numbers with Hawkins backed by Phillip Walker and his band, and others ranging from the humorous "Who Got My Natural Comb?" to the poignant "If You Love Me" and two versions of the title track. He also teamed with his wife Elizabeth on "Don't Lose Your Cool" and "I Gave It All I Had" for moving duets. ---Ron Wynn, AllMusic Review

Hawkins claimed to have been the virtually abandoned child of an uncaring prostitute. He related eating out of garbage cans and being nicknamed "Dirty Junior" by school kids in his hometown of Lakeshore, Miss. By the time he was 8 he was acquainted with jail cells, and for stealing food at age 15 he was sent to the notoriously harsh Parchman Farm prison.

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At age 12, while Hawkins was in reform school, New Orleans piano legend Professor Longhair visited the school and taught him his first song. He fell in love with music, and for years his life alternated between singing on streets and run-ins with the law for a series of nonviolent offenses.

At the time when his first album, "Watch Your Step," came out on Rounder Records in 1982, Hawkins was incarcerated at the California State Medical Facility at Vacaville. Rolling Stone gave the album a five-star review, but few people noticed, and when Hawkins was released in 1984, after which he had no further brushes with the law, he returned to street singing in L.A. ---latimes.com

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