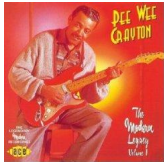


Pee Wee Crayton - The Modern Legacy Vol.1 (1996)

Written by bluesever

Monday, 24 September 2012 16:36 - Last Updated Wednesday, 12 June 2013 14:57

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1. Texas Hop [1948] 2. Central Avenue Blues [1948] 3. Bounce Pee Wee [1948] 4. T For Texas (mistreated Blues) [1949] 5. Rosa Lee [1951] 6. Blues After Hours [1948] 7. I'm Still In Love With You [1948] 8. Pee Wee's Boogie [1951] 9. Louella Brown [1950] 10. From Blues To Boogie [1950] 11. Please Come Back [1950] 12. Rock Island Blues [1948] 13. Rockin' The Blues [1950] 14. Change Your Way Of Lovin' [1950] 15. Pee Wee's Wild [1950] 16. Black Gal [1949] 17. Boogie Woogie Upstairs [1949] 18. When Darkness Falls [1948] 19. Bop Hop [1949] 20. My Everything [1951] 21. Blues For My Baby [1951] 22. Tired Of Travelin' [1951] 23. Austin Boogie [1949]

As an overview of Crayton's work for Modern from 1948-51, this might not be ideal, as only about half of it appeared on singles during that time; the rest was mostly unissued until the 1980s and 1990s, some making their first appearance on this CD. It also means that some of his Modern singles, including his biggest hit for the label (the ballad "I Love You So"), aren't here, as they were saved for another Ace volume of Crayton's Modern sides. Those considerations aside, this is superior Los Angeles jump blues, with the rare vault sides holding up about as well as what came out on singles. Were this the only anthology to appear of Crayton's Modern material -- heck, were it the only Crayton material, period -- it would still offer convincing proof of his stature as a significant bluesman, one who (like several Modern labelmates) was instrumental in the transition from the earliest electric blues to a harder R&B style. Although his singing and songwriting are good, what really makes this stand out is his incendiary guitar playing. In addition to taking good single-note solos, he made use of insistent, sometimes machine-gun-like jazzy chords that unpredictably shifted keys and pushed the limits of the day's amplification technology. That really comes to the fore on some of the uptempo instrumentals, like the nearly out-of-control "Pee Wee's Wild." Unlike many blues guitar heroes, though, he doesn't have to wait for the fast tunes to strut his stuff, as the crazily descending solo of the bump-and-grind "Please Come Back" demonstrates. On top of being a quality early electric blues anthology on its own merits, the CD makes a good case for Crayton being one of the more overlooked pioneers of the electric guitar as a whole. --- Richie Unterberger, Rovi

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