

Buster Benton - Is The Feeling (1981)

Written by bluesever

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A1 The Feeling 6:39 A2 Holding On 4:46 A3 Cold Man Ain't No Good 4:47 A4 Lean On Me 4:42 B1 Dancing Music 4:12 B2 Get Away 5:08 B3 Breaking Up 4:29 B4 Judge Give Me Time 5:27 B5 Thinking About My Past 5:00 Drums – Marle Perkins Guitar – Jimmy Johnson Harmonica – Carey Bell Harrington Keyboards – Lafayette Leake Lead Guitar, Songwriter, Producer, Lead Vocals – Buster Benton Tenor Saxophone – Ronnie Scott

Despite the amputation of parts of both his legs during the course of his career, Chicago guitarist Buster Benton never gave up playing his music -- an infectious hybrid of blues and soul that he dubbed at one point "disco blues" (an unfortunate appellation in retrospect, but useful in describing its danceability). In the late '70s, when blues was at low ebb, Benton's waxings for Ronn Records were a breath of fresh air.

Inspired by the music of Sam Cooke and B.B. King, the gospel-bred Benton began playing the blues during the mid-'50s while living in Toledo, Ohio. By 1959, he was leading his own band in Chicago. During the '60s, he cut a series of soul-slanted singles for local concerns (Melloway, Alteen, Sonic, Twinight) before hooking up with the great Willie Dixon in 1971.

Benton was a member of Dixon's Blues All-Stars for a while, and Dixon is credited as songwriter of Benton's best-known song, the agonized slow blues "Spider in My Stew." Its release on Stan Lewis' Shreveport-based Jewel Records gave Benton a taste of fame; its follow-up, "Money Is the Name of the Game," solidified his reputation. A 1979 LP for Jewel's Ronn subsidiary (logically titled *Spider in My Stew*) stands as one of the most engaging Chicago blues LPs of its era, its contemporary grooves abetting Benton's tasty guitar work and soulful vocals.

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Benton cut three albums later on for Ichiban, but compared to his Ronn output, they were disappointing. On the Chicago circuit, Benton's extreme courage in the face of physical adversity will long be cited. He was on kidney dialysis for the last few years of his life as a result of diabetes, and a portion of his right leg was amputated in 1993 due to poor circulation (he had already lost part of the other a decade earlier). Still, he continued to play his brand of uplifting blues until the end. ---Bill Dahl, allmusic.com

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