

Johnny Guitar Watson – Hot Just Like TNT (1996)

Written by bluesever

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01 - Hot Little Mama (Watson, Davis, Taub) 02 - I Love to Love You (Watson, Davis, Taub)
03 - Hot Little Mama (Watson, Davis, Taub) 04 - Don't Touch Me (I'm Gonna Hit the Highway)
(Watson, Davis, Josea) 05 - Too Tired (Watson, Davis, Ling) 06 - Lonely Girl (De Milo) 07 -
Ain't Gonna Hush (De Milo) 08 - Those Lonely, Lonely Nights (King, Vincent) 09 - Oh Baby
(Watson, Davis, Taub, Josea) 10 - Someone Cares for Me (Watson, Davis, Taub) 11 - Ruben
[Piano Version] (Watson) 12 - Give a Little (Watson, Davis, Bihari) 13 - Love Me Baby (Booker,
Josea) 14 - She Moves Me (Watson, Ling) 15 - Ruben [Guitar Version] (Watson) 16 - Three
Hours Past Midnight (Watson, Ling) 17 - Love Bandit (Gangster of Love) (Watson) 18 -
Telephone Boogie (Otis) 19 - Dee's Boogie 20 - I Got a Girl (That Lives over Yonder) (Otis) 21
- Gangster of Love (Watson) 22 - One Room Country Shack (Watson) 23 - Deana Baby
(Adler, Alpert) 24 - Honey (Watson) 25 - Come on Baby [Saxophone Version] (Watson) 26 -
My Baby and Me (Watson) 27 - You've Been Gone Too Long (Watson) 28 - Come on Baby
[Guitar Version] (Watson) Johnny "Guitar" Watson (vocals, guitar)

This generous serving of 28 tracks focuses on Watson's mid-1950s recordings (both released and unissued) for RPM, throwing in some songs by singers Devonia Williams, Jeannie Barnes, and Crodella de Milo (on whose songs he was accompanist); a couple of 1957-58 singles for Keen; and some previously unavailable tracks he recorded for Johnny Otis, probably dating from the late 1950s and early 1960s. This is worthwhile for fans of Watson in particular as well as fans of the R&B-blues crossover sound of the '50s in general. It's a patchy set, however, in which Watson and his associates try on several different styles for size, but not always with memorable success. Watson's stinging guitar is satisfying on cuts like "Hot Little Mama," and one can tell that it was probably played at a volume that challenged the limitations of 1950s engineering technology; but his playing is sometimes less to the fore in the arrangement than is desirable. For the most part, the material is adequate but not exciting. Sometimes it follows the lead of Watson's avowed hero Ray Charles, while other times it is shaded with doo wop and New Orleans R&B. On the Keen tracks he ventures into Larry Williams-styled rock; on "Gangster of Love" (one of the standouts on the disc), he accomplishes swinging and boasting first-person-narrative blues. The tunes certainly aren't as impressive as the instrumental skills of Watson and the RPM/Modern house bands overseen by Maxwell Davis. Among the tracks, one

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will find the 1956 single "Three Hours Past Midnight" -- a slow blues that, according to the liner notes, the teenaged Frank Zappa considered "his number one record which had a big influence on his own guitar playing." --- Richie Unterberger, allmusic.com

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