

John Coltrane - Coltrane Plays The Blues (1966)

Written by bluesever

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1. *Blues To Elvin* 7:52 2. *Blues To Bechet* 5:44 3. *Blues To You* 6:25 4. *Mr. Day* 7:56 5. *Mr. Syms* 5:19 6. *Mr. Knight* 7:30 John Coltrane – soprano & tenor saxophone McCoy Tyner – piano Steve Davis – bass Elvin Jones – drums

Coltrane's sessions for Atlantic in late October 1960 were prolific, yielding the material for *My Favorite Things*, *Coltrane Plays the Blues*, and *Coltrane's Sound*. *My Favorite Things* was destined to be the most remembered and influential of these, and while *Coltrane Plays the Blues* is not as renowned or daring in material, it is still a powerful session. As for the phrase "plays the blues" in the title, that's not an indicator that the tunes are conventional blues (they aren't). It's more indicative of a bluesy sensibility, whether he is playing muscular saxophone or, on "Blues to Bechet" and "Mr. Syms," the more unusual sounding (at the time) soprano sax. Elvin Jones, who hadn't been in Coltrane's band long, really busts out on the quicker numbers, such as "Blues to You" and "Mr. Day." --- Richie Unterberger, Rovi

These recordings come from the same sessions that produced 1961's *My Favorite Things*. This is one of the least well know Coltrane albums, partly because it is an all blues format and partly because it was released at the end of his association with Atlantic records.

Plays The Blues features the talents of McCoy Tyner, Elvin Jones and Steve Davis. It is the beginning of his work with Tyner and Jones in quartet form. For that alone this recording would be important. Although this album is called *Plays The Blues*, this is by no means the only blues which Coltrane plays. There are blues elements, moods and feelings in all of his best-known

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recordings. Listen to "Slowtrane," "Blue Train," "Bessie's Blues" among others and one can't help but hear the blues vibe.

The original six tracks are fantastic and have that same blues vibe. They hit the listener right in the heart and soul and don't let go. All six are superb, but "Blues To Bechet," "Mr. Day," "Mr. Knight" and "Blues To Elvin" are absolute classics.

Rhino has done another fine job in remastering the music and creating a beautiful CD jacket, which incorporates the original album artwork and liner notes. As usual the booklet has additional liner notes by Neil Tesser, author of The Playboy Guide To Jazz as well as the original liner notes as written by Joe Golding.

Long-time Coltrane fans will fall in love with the clean, crisp sound. New fans will be afforded a great opportunity to be introduced to the master's work on this timeless album. Another four-star re-issue from the best re-issue label — Rhino. ---Mike Perciccante, allaboutjazz.com

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