

Trust My Baby by Sonny Boy Williamson II

Written by bluesever

Friday, 09 February 2018 14:38 -

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Sonny Boy Williamson was, in many ways, the ultimate blues legend. By the time of his death in 1965, he had been around long enough to have played with Robert Johnson at the start of his career and Eric Clapton, Jimmy Page and Robbie Robertson at the end of it. In between, he drank a lot of whiskey, hoboed around the country, had a successful radio show for 15 years, toured Europe to great acclaim and simply wrote, played and sang some of the greatest blues ever etched into black phonograph records. His delivery was sly, evil and world-weary, while his harp-playing was full of short, rhythmic bursts one minute and powerful, impassioned blowing the next. His songs were chock-full of mordant wit, with largely autobiographical lyrics that hold up to the scrutiny of the printed page. Though he took his namesake from another well-known harmonica player, no one really sounded like him.

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'The Real Folk Blues' is a series of blues albums released between 1965 and 1967 by Chess Records, later reissued MCA Records. Each album in the series highlighted the music of one major Chess artist. The series, overseen by Marshall Chess, was a reaction to the increasing audience for the blues following the British Invasion. Companion discs, titled More Real Folk Blues, were released for many of the artists.



Sonny Boy Williamson II, 1963

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Sonny Boy Williamson's "The Real Folk Blues" was not really folk, and not really regular album. Rather, it was somewhat arbitrarily chosen compilations, titled to appeal to the crowd that had gotten turned onto the blues during the 1960s folk revival. In Williamson's case, all tracks were done between 1960 and 1964. At any rate, this does have several of his best and most familiar songs: "One Way Out," "Bye Bye Bird," "Help Me," "Nine Below Zero," "Down Child" and "Trust My Baby". "Trust My Baby" was first released by Checker Records in 1960 - with "Too Close Together" on B-side.



Sonny Boy Williamson - "The Real Folk Blues"

This album is classic, with incredible songs and playing. He played acoustically without a bullet mic and amplifier. Throughout his playing, notice little quick groups of two holes played at once, called double stops. Rick Estrin calls these the glue that holds the carpet together. Notice repetitive tongue slaps. His preferred harmonica keys were F, C, B flat and D, but he also played in E, G and A. He generally played in second position, with the occasional exception e.g., on "Trust My Baby" he played in first position on a G harp.



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Sonny Boy Williamson - Trust My Baby, 1960

Sonny Boy was, legitimately, “The King of the Delta Blues Harmonica” whose career spanned most of the Golden Era of delta blues began as a preacher “Reverend Blue” at age six and by the 1930s he was playing with blues legend Robert Johnson and his stepson Robert Lockwood Jr., with whom he was playing amplified blues as early as 1938 (six years before Muddy Waters owned an electric guitar) to recording with Eric Clapton and the Yardbirds, Eric Burdon and the Animals and Jimmy Page in 1963-65.



Sonny Boy Williamson & Robert Lockwood Jr.

Marc Ryan wrote: *"The tone of Sonny's harmonica was unusually full, the result of a combination of virtuosic breath control and an especially large resonating chamber created by cupping his hands around his ... harp ... Sonny thus brought unique timbres to his blues, which were ... laden with a joyful sensuality."*



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Sonny Boy Williamson & The Yardbirds, 1963

Sonny Boy's harp style included: *"intricately woven phrasing, bold sonic textures, trills and vibrato ... He was also an effective showman -- he could, for instance, put the entire harp in his mouth and still draw notes. More important, his playing made the harp the centre attraction, no matter how many other great blues musicians shared the stage with him."*



Sonny Boy Williamson - Copenhagen 1964

Sonny Boy Williamson - Trust My Baby, lyrics

*I have a right to trust my baby She always looks out for me I have a right to trust my baby
She always looks out for me But that sweet woman, oooh, is so good to me Every time my
baby talk Chills run, run all over the place Every time my baby talk Chills run, run all over the
place But that sweet woman, oooh, is so good to me When I woke up this morning Tears
was in my eyes When I woke up this morning Tears was in my eyes But that sweet woman,
oooh, is so, so good to me Saint Jane, Saint Jane Do it again Saint Jane, wait for me boy I
have a right to trust my baby She always looks out for me I have a right to trust my baby She
always looks out for me But that sweet woman, oooh, is so good to me*

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King Biscuit Time, 1941