

Bill Haley - Shake, Rattle And Roll (1955)

Written by bluesever (Bogdan Marszałkowski)
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1 *Shake Rattle And Roll* 2 *A.B.C. Boogie* 3 *Rock Around The Clock* 4 *Two Hound Dogs* 5 *Dim, Dim The Lights* 6 *Razzle-Dazzle* 7 *Birth Of The Boogie* 8 *Mambo Rock*
Bill Haley - composer, guitar, primary artist, vocals Johnny Grande - piano, accordion Billy Williamson - steel guitar Marshall Lytle - string bass Joey D'Ambrosia - tenor sax Dick Richards - drums

It's a shame that, except for Elvis Presley's long-players, rock & roll and R&B albums just didn't sell in the early days -- those kids might have appreciated the music, but they just didn't know what they were missing by failing to absorb it eight or ten songs at a time. Bill Haley's first long-player, *Shake, Rattle & Roll* was a 10" platter that came out almost too early for its own good, in the first half of 1955, when most people had scarcely bought their first rock & roll single. Assembled from the eight sides cut at the first four recording sessions by Bill Haley & His Comets, in the spring and fall of 1954 and early 1955, it just happened to comprise four classics out of early rock & roll, including "Rock Around the Clock," "Thirteen Women," and "Shake, Rattle & Roll" -- the latter was the big hit at the time, having sold close to a million copies, while "Rock Around the Clock" was something of a secondary track, with only the 75,000 copies that it sold on its initial 1954 release to its credit. They were augmented with four solid rockers. "Happy Baby" and "Dim, Dim the Lights (I Want Some Atmosphere)" might not be in exactly the same league with those first two singles, but they're close and they made this one hell of a dance album, back when that was what one did with rock & roll. "Birth of the Boogie" captured Franny Beecher doing his best to imitate the late Danny Cedrone's playing on "Rock Around the Clock" and "Thirteen Women," and if there's any slackening at all in inspiration, it's on the last number, "Mambo Rock" (which, contrary to what the lyrics tell, was not being done by everyone), but Haley still makes it sound exciting. This was also the only complete album to feature two of the original members of the Comets -- with Marshall Lytle on bass and Joey d'Ambrosio on tenor sax -- before they quit with drummer Dick Richards (who had been with the group but barely allowed to contribute to their records, playing tom-toms on two tracks) in the late summer of 1955, to be replaced by the longer-tenured Rudy Pompilli, Al Rex, and Ralph Jones. *Shake, Rattle & Roll*'s contents were later folded into the 12" platter *Rock Around the Clock*, which contained two more songs by this lineup and a pair of tracks by the second

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Comets lineup. The best way to appreciate this disc and these tracks is to imagine a time, and a reality, where these were the most exciting eight songs that you could buy all at once by any white band, anywhere in the entire world (and when there weren't five other LPs by any act, having to do with R&B or anything else resembling rock & roll, anywhere in the world, to choose from). ---Bruce Eder, AllMusic Review

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