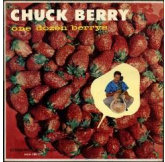


Chuck Berry - One Dozen Berrys (1958)

Written by bluesever

Saturday, 25 March 2017 12:05 - Last Updated Saturday, 30 December 2017 15:06

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A1 Sweet Little Sixteen A2 Blue Feeling A3 La Jaunda (Espanola) A4 Rockin' At The Philharmonic A5 Oh Baby Doll A6 Guitar Boogie B1 Reelin' And Rockin' B2 Ingo B3 Rock And Roll Music B4 How You've Changed B5 Low Feeling B6 It Don't Take But A Few Minutes Chuck Berry - Composer, Primary Artist

Chuck Berry's second album is ever so slightly more sophisticated than its predecessor. Although *One Dozen Berrys* is hooked around a pair of hit singles, "Sweet Little Sixteen" and "Rock & Roll Music," most of what's here doesn't really sound too much like either of those songs -- rather, the other ten tracks each constitute a close-up look at some individual component of the types of music that goes into brewing up the Chuck Berry sound. Thus, the slow instrumental "Blue Feeling" is a look at the blues sound that Berry initially proposed to bring to Chess Records; "How You've Changed" presents him in a slow ballad, singing in a manner closer to Nat "King" Cole than to any rock & roller of the era; and "Lajaunda" shows off his love of Latin music. "Rocking at the Philharmonic" is a rippling guitar/piano workout, a compendium of the sounds that lay beneath those hit singles, and a killer showcase not only for Berry, but also for Lafayette Leake at the ivories, and also a decent showcase for Willie Dixon's bass playing. "Oh Baby Doll" is a return to the beat of "Maybellene," this time carrying a lyric that's more sensual (in a bluesy sense) than rollicking fun, though it comes out that way amid the pounding beat and Berry's crunchy, angular guitar solo. "Guitar Boogie" is yet another guitar instrumental, one of four on this album, leading one to wonder if he was running short of first-rate lyrics in mid-1957, amid his frantic pace of recording and touring -- no matter, for the piece is a killer track, a pumping, soaring working out for Berry's guitar that had some of the most impressive pyrotechnics that one was likely to hear in 1957; what's more, the track was good enough to form the template for Jeff Beck's more ornate adaptation, "Jeff's Boogie," from the 1966 album *Roger the Engineer* (aka *The Yardbirds* aka *Over Under Sideways Down*). The best of the album's tracks is easily "Reelin' & Rockin'," which is also just about the dirtiest song that Berry released in all of the 1950s (and for many years after that), essentially a blues-boogie recasting, on a more overt level, of the extended feats of sexual intercourse alluded to in Bill Haley's "Rock Around the Clock." The one totally weird track here is "Low Feeling," which is nothing but "Blue Feeling" doctored in the studio by Leonard and Phil Chess, slowed down to

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half speed and edited to create a 12th track -- doing that to the original was bad enough, but sticking it on the same LP with the original was downright bizarre. And the album's closer, "It Don't Take But a Few Minutes," is a reminder of just how much Berry owed to country music for his sound, and explains, to anyone coming in late, how he could have been mistaken for a white hillbilly in those early days, based on the sound of this song and "Maybelline." --- Bruce Eder, AllMusic Review

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