

### B.B. King - Easy Listening Blues (1962)



01. *Easy Listening Blues aka Easy Listening*
02. *Blues For Me aka Groovin' Twist*
03. *Night Long*
04. *Confessin'*
05. *Don't Touch*
06. *Slow Walk aka Slow Burn*
07. *Walkin'*
08. *Hully Gully aka Hully Gully Twist*
09. *Shoutin' The Blues*
10. *Rambler*

"Easy Listening Blues" is a bit of an oxymoron, especially in the hands of B.B. King, who might be smooth and urbane in some respects, but who's rarely recorded music that could be categorized as easy listening. That's the title that Crown used, however, for this all-instrumental 1962 collection. Just prior to leaving Modern for ABC, King did a lot of recording that Modern milked for sides to put out after he'd left the company, and the liner notes to the Ace CD reissue of the album speculate that these tracks were laid down in late 1961 as part of this process. Since a big part of the pleasure of listening to B.B. King is hearing his voice, and hearing the songs he wrote and interpreted, an all-instrumental album -- no matter how competently done -- is almost bound to sound like something's missing. And although this is a competent record, it's got to rank as one of his less essential efforts, the ten numbers often sounding like warm-up tunes or background generic blues club filler, hastily ground out to meet a quota. That doesn't mean that it's worthless -- the tunes are pleasant if unimaginative, and King plays with his usual authority, making occasional nods toward the rock & roll twist craze in cuts like "Night Long" and "Hully Gully Twist" (aka "Hully Gully"). The 2004 Ace CD reissue adds historical liner notes and, more importantly, eight instrumental bonus tracks, taken from instrumental odds 'n' ends like the 1955 single "Talkin' the Blues"/"Boogie Rock" (aka "House Rocker"); the 1962 single "3 O'Clock Stomp" (aka "Poontwangie"); a couple Modern outtakes that didn't surface until a 1987 Ace

compilation; and three previously unissued recordings, those being "Really the Blues" (aka "Slidin' and Glidin'"), "King's Rock Jazz," and a "previously unissued extended take" of "Mashing the Popeye." Some of these extras are among the best the expanded CD has to offer, particularly the swinging "King's Rock Jazz" (where the horns are as prominent as King's guitar) and "Boogie Rock," which benefits from a Maxwell Davis sax solo. --- Richie Unterberger, allmusic.com

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