

and piano. Shines and Horton are at the height of their musical powers, and their contributions are absolutely stunning. Some highlights from the original album include: West Wind, a Horton vocal and harp showcase with Nicholas on acoustic guitar; Blues Came Fallin' Down, a dazzling Delta slide masterpiece from Shines with drummer Martin Gross and Nicholas on second guitar and mandolin; Mandolin Boogie featuring Nicholas and his Asleep at the Wheel compadres; and Hellhound On My Trail, a slow, funky workout with Nicholas on vocals with interweaving guitar and harp lines from Shines and Horton. With the exception of a Fred McDowell-style take on That's Alright Mama, a duet between Nicholas on slide guitar and drummer Short, the unreleased material focuses on Nicholas working with the veteran musicians. Three trio tracks, Pump Jockey Blues, Hootie Blues and Soon Forgotten, feature Nicholas on guitar, Horton on Harmonica and Red on piano. Other notable performances include: Move on Down the Line with Shines' lead guitar and Horton and Nicholas trading lead vocals; the rocking instrumental Apple Grove Rhumba with dueling guitars from Shines and Nicholas and Horton's wailing harp.

Too Many Bad Habits is jam-packed with historically important, vibrant traditional blues that sound as alive and rocking today as they did 40 years ago.

—Robert H. Cataliotti

BIG JOE TURNER

San Francisco 1977

Rock Beat Records – ROC-3388

Pairing legendary bluesmen with the younger musicians they've inspired sometimes yields mixed results. Yet, the music flows beautifully on **San Francisco 1977**, a live recording that finds Kansas City blues shouter Big Joe Turner backed by Paul Butterfield Blues Band alumni Mike Bloomfield and Mark Naftalin. Listeners who remember Bloomfield as the guitar hero featured on albums like **East-West** and **Super Session** may be surprised to hear how well he adapts to the role of an accompanist. His deft rhythm playing anchors each tune, while Naftalin's piano fleshes out the sound and adds juke joint atmosphere. Together, the two

blues rock pioneers create the perfect musical foundation for Turner's larger than life vocals.

Spanning two CDs, Turner's set contains the usual mix of slow blues and high-energy jump tunes. Standards like Flip Flop and Fly, Shake, Rattle and Roll and Honey Hush all get spirited readings featuring top-notch musicianship. Age hadn't diminished Turner's vocal prowess in the least—he infuses his voice with all the dynamics and nuance one would hear in a jazz horn solo. Given Bloomfield's presence, some of the most exciting tracks on this collection are the slow blues workouts. Give Me an Hour in Your Garden is a gloriously lowdown, salacious track which gives Bloomfield plenty of room to stretch out—his trademark stinging tone and vibrato are back in all their glory. On My Way to Denver Blues offers another fine pairing of Turner's weathered voice with Bloomfield's trademark deep bends and flurries of 16th notes.

The key to any successful live recording is whether the musicians enjoy themselves onstage. Listening to **San Francisco 1977**, it's clear that everyone involved had a blast. That joy and musical chemistry make this collection a worthwhile listen.

—Jon Kleinman *LB*

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