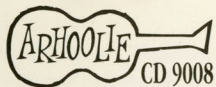


BEE HOUSTON & HIS HIGHSTEPPERS

"The Hustler"



1. YOU THINK I'M YOUR GOOD THING * (C)
2. BUSY BEE (C)
3. BE PROUD TO BE A BLACK MAN * (C)
4. THE HUSTLER * (B)
5. BREAK AWAY (C)
6. THINGS GONNA GET BETTER * (A)
7. NEVER ** (A)
8. LOVESICK MAN ** (A)
9. FREDDY'S BAG (A)
10. ANY TIME * (A)
11. WOKE UP THIS MORNING
vocal by Big Mama Thornton
12. WHEN I GO OUT * (B)
13. ANY TIME * (B)
14. LOVESICK MAN ** (B)
15. CHARLIE'S BAG (B)
16. THINGS GONNA GET BETTER * (B)
17. DON'T TAKE YOUR LOVE FROM ME ** (B)
18. BLUES FOR RUPEZ (*D flat Blues*) (A)
19. DO IT EASY (B)

* = Bee Houston – vocals; ** = Willie Molette – vocals

#1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 12, 13, 15, 16, 18, & 19 are composed by Bee Houston. #7 is by Wilbert Hemsley; #8, 14 & 17 are by Willie Molette; #11 is by Willie Mae Thornton. All © by Tradition Music Co. (BMI) and administered by Bug Music Co.

Session (A):

Bee Houston – guitar and vocals; Richard Brown – baritone sax; Wilbert "Jiggs" Hemsley – tenor sax; Fred Cooper – drums; Charles Givens – bass; William Anthony – trumpet; Willie Molette – vocals. Produced by Chris Strachwitz and Pete Welding. Recorded at Western Recorders (Hollywood, Ca) August 27, 1968.

Session (B):

Same except Eddie Jones – drums (for Cooper); Alex Nelson – tenor sax. Produced by Barret Hansen. Recorded at Harmony Recorders (Hollywood, Ca.) October 23, 1968.

Session (C):

Bee Houston – guitar and vocals; Terry DeRouen – second guitar; Sonny Campbell – tenor sax; Jay Hodge – tenor and alto sax; Chuck Davenport – drums; Frank "Honeyboy" Patt – bass. Produced by Bruce Bromberg. Recorded at Vault Recording Studios, Los Angeles, Ca., March 5, 1970.

11 vocal by Big Mama Thornton, with:

Bee Houston – guitar; Curtis Tillman – bass; Nathaniel Dove – piano; Gus Wright – drums; Everett Minor – tenor sax. Produced by Chris Strachwitz. Recorded at United Studios, Hollywood, Ca., January 25, 1968.

Executive producer: Chris Strachwitz.

Cover photo by Pete Welding

Cover design by Wayne Pope

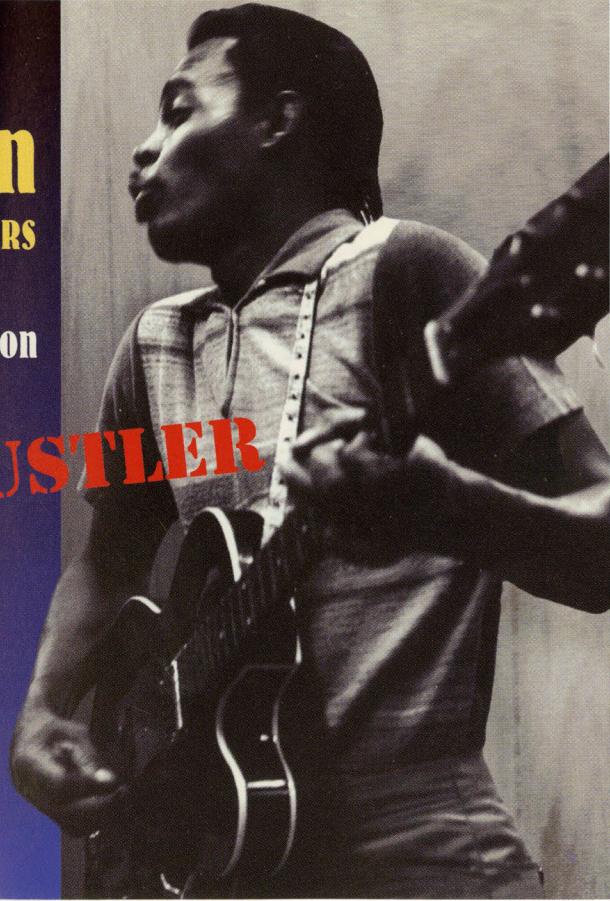
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Bee Houston

& His HIGH STEPPERS

With Guest Artist
Big Mama Thornton

THE HUSTLER



BEE HOUSTON

"The Hustler"

Bee Houston, like all good blues artists, developed a unique guitar style even to the point where he keeps some strings slightly—bent even when tuning! His earthy voice makes a fine complement to his strong guitar work and although the end result is strictly Bee Houston, his Texas roots are noticeably evident. One hears shades of Gatmouth Brown, T-Bone Walker, Blues Wallace (a one-man band guitarist), as well as Pancho Gonzales, and Jewel Simmons who Bee admits as his early influences when he started playing around San Antonio in 1956. Since then Bee has added only one more influence to his style: the master B.B. King.

Born Edward Wilson Houston on April 19, 1938, in San Antonio, Bee lived a long time in the shadow of his taller and handsome twin brother "Bo" (Wilson Edward Houston). Bee played bugle and Bo the drums in their school's drum and bugle corps. One day Bee somehow managed to get \$50 together and started out to buy a trumpet but discovered, or was persuaded by the music shop owner, that for a meager \$50 he could not buy a trumpet but might have to settle for a guitar! For a time brother "Honey" (Wilson Vincent Houston)

played drums and Bee and Bo did an act where Bee would play the treble strings and Bo the bass strings of the guitar.

Music became Bee's life and soon his group was the backup band for "name" artists like Brook Benton, Little Willie John, Junior Parker, and Bobby Bland (with whom he recorded "Teach Me How To Love You" on Duke Records) when these singers were booked by Henderson Glass to tour the southwest.

In 1961 Bee and his wife decided to try their luck on the West Coast and persuaded Bo to drive them out. Bo however soon returned to San Antonio where he became a respected guitarist in his own right. Brother Honey also came to Los Angeles and apparently ran the Smoke House BarBQ # 2 on south Western Avenue (# 1 is supposedly back in Texas!). From then on Bee played in the Los Angeles area with many R&B artists including the Simms Twins, McKinley Mitchell, Little Johnny Taylor (with whom he recorded "Gonna Need Another Favor" for Galaxy Records) and Big Mama Thornton. It was with Big Mama that Bee came to my attention and his guitar work on the classic "Ball

and Chain" (on Arhoolie CD 305) convinced me that here indeed was an interesting and unique guitarist. In 1968 and 1970 I made several attempts to record Bee but I was never quite happy with the results. Finally in 1970 Bruce Bromberg supervised the third session from which most of the original album was drawn. I personally recall having a lot of problems getting Bee's guitar in tune with the band and Pete Welding was quite helpful. Barret Hansen, who is today better known as "Dr. Demento", sent me a note after his session with Bee and complained that they had spent almost half the session trying to get Bee in tune! He also mentioned to me that Bee had a strange way of tuning his guitar - figuring that since he "bends" many of his notes, he should hold the strings in a slightly bent position when tuning! However we should not forget, and folklorists like Alan Lomax

will agree, that many African Americans especially, have a different perception of tuning and that the now standard European scale, has not been "standardized" all that long. A typical example of this scenario occurred when I was recording Texas guitarist and songster, Mance Lipscomb and my friend Pete Welding was visiting. As a "trained" guitarist, Pete at one point attempted to tune Mance's guitar to perfect pitch, only to be rewarded by Mance's "thanks" and immediate return to his own tuning during the first song!

In 1970 Bee toured again with Junior Parker but he preferred to stay in Los Angeles close to his family and continued to play the local R & B circuit. Bruce Bromberg tried to stay in touch with Bee but with little success. Bee apparently died in 1991.

(Chris Strachwitz — 1970 & 1997)

This CD contains Bee Houston's only album, originally issued as Arhoolie LP 1050 (cuts 1 - 10) plus the original album which was never issued (cuts 12 - 19), as edited and segued by Barret Hansen. Big Mama Thornton is the guest vocalist on cut # 11 with Bee playing some really fine blues back-up.

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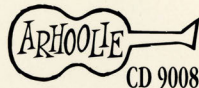
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11 vocal by **Big Mama Thornton**, with: **Bee Houston** - guitar; **Curtis Tillman** - bass; **Nathaniel Dove** - piano; **Gus Wright** - drums; **Everett Minor** - tenor sax. *Produced by Chris Strachwitz. Recorded at United Studios, Hollywood, Ca., January 25, 1968. Executive producer: Chris Strachwitz.*

Executive producer: Chris Strachwitz

Cover photo by Pete Welding

Cover design by Wayne Pope

File Under: **BLUES**



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