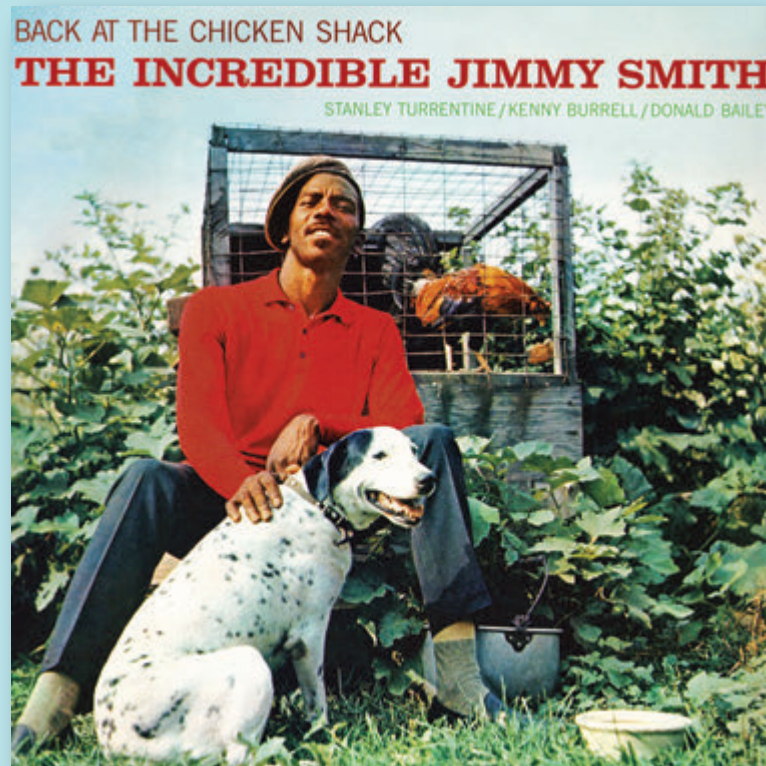


best. Stanley takes the exquisite blues-fired solo lead on the swinging blues take on the Stanley Hammerstein II/Sigmund Romberg tune “When I Grow too Old to Dream,” which is followed half way through by Jimmy’s sweet but beefy stretch that makes you want to shout out.

Stanley’s mysterious and cooking “Minor Chant” gets treated to an uptempo ride with the composer belting out grooved tenor shouts followed by Jimmy’s passionate waves of B3 vibrations and Donald’s spanking solo break. The album ends with the relaxed Smith original “Messie Bessie” which features Kenny coolly playing off the rhythms Jimmy is laying down with his left hand. On the longest track on the album, Jimmy gets his chance to dance with a contagious exuberance of flame.

Not only was Chicken Shack a successful Smith outing, but it was also further testament to the power and glory of his instrument.



Presented as “The Incredible Jimmy Smith,” the organist became a prolific fixture as a leader on the Blue Note roster into the early ’60s. Of all his recordings, one in particular that has become heralded as an essential is his 1960 gem, *Back At The Chicken Shack*, which made the cut for editor Robert Dimery’s book, *1001 Albums You Must Hear Before You Die*.

Recorded during the same studio session that also produced the equally remarkable *Midnight Special* album, the funky, greasy soul-jazz *Chicken Shack* features a young but stellar trio of players: guitarist Kenny Burrell, tenor saxophonist Stanley Turrentine and drummer Donald Bailey who steadfastly keeps the beat throughout.

While a few years later in his career, Jimmy made a couple of memorable albums with guitarist Wes Montgomery, Kenny was his man on the six strings. Jimmy told me, referring to his 1993 Blue Note album *The*

Master, which also featured Kenny, “On the new album it was like the old days. We were feeding each other, steady feeding the whole way through. Most guitarists you gotta tell ‘em how to play—you know, play a suspension here or make a chord larger there. But not Kenny. He knows what to do. He’s a master in his own right...Anytime we play, it’s the same thing. [We’re] just having conversations. I feed him and he feeds me...Look out! We bar nobody. It’s a marriage, and we’re not talking about divorce.”

Decades earlier, Jimmy and Kenny were still in the courting phase, but their improvisational interaction between each other on the original four-track *Chicken Shack* is alchemical. The same holds true for Stanley on tenor, who is actually showcased more than Kenny. The lyrical and catchy title track—composed by the leader with reference to Amos Milburn’s 1948 jump blues “*Chicken Shack Boogie*”—moves into a slow groove with Jimmy’s gurgling and purr-growl B-3 voicings and Kenny’s and Stanley’s simpatico solos. It’s soul musing at its

The Incredible Jimmy Smith Back At The Chicken Shack

- 1 Back At The Chicken Shack 8:01**
- 2 When I Grow Too Old To Dream 9:51**
- 3 Minor Chant 7:32**
- 4 Messy Bessie 12:27**

Recorded by Blue Note on April 25, 1960, at the Van Gelder Studio, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey



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