

= Electric Mud =

Electric Mud is the fifth studio album by Muddy Waters , with Rotary Connection serving as his backing band . Released in 1968 , it imagines Muddy Waters as a psychedelic musician . Producer Marshall Chess suggested that Muddy Waters record experimental , psychedelic blues tracks with members of Rotary Connection in an attempt to revive the blues singer 's career .

The album peaked at # 127 on the Billboard Pop Albums chart . It was controversial for its fusion of electric blues with psychedelic elements , but was influential on psychedelic rock bands of the era .

= = Production = =

In 1967 , Marshall Chess formed Cadet Concept Records as a subsidiary of Chess Records . The label 's first release was the self @-@ titled debut album of the psychedelic band Rotary Connection , whose members Chess described as " the hottest , most avant garde rock guys in Chicago " . As a result of the album 's success , Chess felt that he could revive the career of bluesmen Muddy Waters and Howlin ' Wolf by recording two albums of experimental , psychedelic blues with members of Rotary Connection as the backing band for the singers , producing the albums Electric Mud and The Howlin ' Wolf Album . Chess hoped the new albums would sell well among fans of psychedelic rock bands influenced by Muddy Waters and Howlin ' Wolf . According to Muddy Waters , " Quite naturally , I like a good @-@ selling record . I was looking at it because I played for so many of these so @-@ called hippies that I thought probably I could reach them . "

In place of Muddy Waters ' regular musicians were Gene Barge , Pete Cosey , Roland Faulkner , Morris Jennings , Louis Satterfield , Charles Stepney and Phil Upchurch . Cosey , Upchurch and Jennings joked about calling the group " The Electric Niggers " . Marshall Chess liked the suggestion , but Leonard Chess refused to allow the name .

The album incorporates use of wah @-@ wah pedal and fuzzbox . Marshall Chess augmented the rhythm of Muddy Waters ' live band with the use of electric organ and saxophone . Blues purists criticized the album 's psychedelic sound . According to Marshall Chess , " It was never an attempt to make Muddy Waters a psychedelic artist ; it was a concept album like David Bowie being Ziggy Stardust . " Muddy Waters said of the album 's sound , " That guitar sounds just like a cat ? meow ? and the drums have a loping , busy beat . "

" I 'm Your Hoochie Coochie Man " incorporates free jazz influences , with Gene Barge performing a concert harp . Muddy Waters performs the vocals of " Let 's Spend the Night Together " , a cover of The Rolling Stones ' 1967 single , in gospel @-@ soul style with heavy influence from Cream 's Sunshine of Your Love .

According to Buddy Guy , " [ Muddy Waters couldn 't ] feel this psychedelic stuff at all ... and if the feeling is gone , that 's it . You can 't get too busy behind a singer . You 've got to let him sing it . " Muddy Waters ' previous albums replicated the sound of his live performances . Working with a studio band rather than his own was problematic for Muddy Waters , who could not perform material from the album live . He stated " What the hell do you have a record for if you can 't play the first time it 's out ? I 'm so sick of that ... If you 've got to have big amplifiers and wah @-@ wahs and equipment to make you guitar say different things , well , hell , you can 't play no blues . "

The title of the album did not refer to the use of electric guitar , as Muddy Waters had played the instrument since he first signed to Chess Records . The use of the term " electric " is used in a psychedelic context .

= = Release = =

The Electric Mud album cover artwork was eclectic and reflected McKinley Morganfield 's fashion preferences during 1968 . The front cover of the original 33 RPM vinyl commercial release during 1968 in the USA featured two graphic versions ; a white background with black text , and a second , less known black background with white text . The back cover and inner gate fold artwork were identical in both versions , as was the small booklet of photos accompanying the release . Viewing

of various Electric Mud album cover graphics can be found by searching Google 's Images metasearch capabilities .

On November 19 , 1996 , the album was reissued on compact disc by Chess Records . On November 22 , 2011 , Electric Mud and After the Rain were combined on a single compact disc by BGO Records .

= = Reception = =

Electric Mud sold 150 @, @ 000 copies within the first six weeks of release . Peaking at # 127 on the Billboard Pop Albums chart , it was Muddy Waters ' first album to hit on the Billboard and Cash Box charts . In a Rolling Stone feature , Pete Welding wrote , " ' Electric Mud ' does great disservice to one of the blues ' most important innovators , and prostitutes the contemporary styles to which his pioneering efforts have led . " Although American critics panned the album , it was better received in England . According to Marshall Chess , " It was the biggest Muddy Waters record we ever had at Chess , and it dropped instantly . The English accepted it ; they are more eccentric . "

= = Legacy = =

Muddy Waters recorded After the Rain the following year , incorporating elements of the sound of Electric Mud . According to Cosey , " I 'll never forget , as soon as I walked into the studio for the follow @-@ up and Muddy saw me , he threw his arms around me , said ' Hey , how you doing , boy , play some of that stuff you played on that last album . ' " Following strong criticism of the album , Muddy Waters claimed that he disliked the album and its sound , and that he did not consider the album to be blues . He stated , " Every time I go into Chess , [ they ] put some un @-@ blues players with me [ ... ] If you change my sound , then you gonna change the whole man . " In the biography The Mojo Man , Muddy Waters stated " That Electric Mud record was dogshit . But when it came out , it started selling like wild , but then they started sending them back . They said , ' This can 't be Muddy Waters with all this shit going on , all this wha @-@ wha and fuzztone . ' "

According to Robert Gordon in Can 't Be Satisfied : The Life and Times of Muddy Waters , the valet of Jimi Hendrix later told Pete Cosey that Hendrix would listen to " Herbert Harper 's Free Press News " for inspiration before performing . Led Zeppelin bassist John Paul Jones cited Electric Mud as the inspiration for the riff of " Black Dog " . Allmusic reviewer Richie Unterberger panned the album as being " crass " .

In Lost in the Grooves : Scram 's Capricious Guide to the Music You Missed , Gene Sculatti wrote that " The rhythm seems to anticipate hip @-@ hop by three decades . " Chuck D stated that he had been introduced to Electric Mud by a member of Public Enemy , which sparked an interest in Muddy Waters ' earlier work , and in roots @-@ oriented blues . The documentary series The Blues , produced by Martin Scorsese , depicts the recording band for Electric Mud performing with Chuck D and members of The Roots . Cypress Hill samples " Tom Cat " , from this album , on the interlude " Ultraviolet Dreams " , from their self @-@ titled debut album , as does Natas on their song " See You In Hell " from the album N of tha World . The rock / funk @-@ oriented arrangement of " Mannish Boy " present on this album is sampled and featured prominently on the Gorillaz B @-@ side " Left Hand Suzuki Method " .

= = Track listing = =

= = Personnel = =

= = = Musicians = = =

Muddy Waters ? vocal

Gene Barge ? tenor saxophone , producer  
Phil Upchurch ? guitars  
Roland Faulkner ? guitars  
Pete Cosey ? guitars  
Charles Stepney ? organ , arranger , producer  
Louis Satterfield ? bass  
Morris Jennings ? drums

= = = Additional personnel = = =

Stu Black ? engineer  
Marshall Chess ? producer  
Meire Murakami ? design  
Bill Sharpe ? cover design  
Abner Spector ? mixing  
Vartan ? art direction

= = Chart positions = =