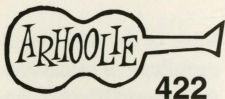


BIG JOE DUSKIN

"Cincinnati Stomp"



1. MEAN OLD FRISCO
2. ROLL 'EM PETE
3. STORMIN' IN TEXAS
4. CINCINNATI STOMP (*Duskin*)
5. LITTLE RED ROOSTER
6. THE TRIBUTE (*Duskin*)
7. DOWN THE ROAD APIECE
8. WELL, WELL BABY (*Duskin*)
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15. SLIDELL BLUES
16. DOLLAR BILL BOOGIE (*Duskin*)
17. I MET A GIRL NAMED MARTHA (*Duskin*)
18. BOOGIE WOOGIE PRAYER

Total time: 64:05

Big Joe Duskin - vocals and piano with: Jimmy Johnson - guitar (#1), Bob Margolin - guitar (#1, 11, 12, 13); Truck Parham - bass (#1, 4, 11, 12, 13); S.P. Leary - drums (#4, 11, 12, 13); Ben Sandmel - drums (#1); Steve Tracy-harmonica (#18).

#1-12 previously issued on ARH LP/C 1080

#13-18 previously unissued

#1-17 produced by Ben Sandmel

#18 produced by Steve Tracy

Executive producer: Chris Strachwitz

Photos by Daniel J. Ransohoff

Cover by Dix Bruce

Recorded in 1977 and 1978.

Compositions by Joe Duskin © by Tradition Music Co. / BUG Music.



Big Joe Duskin

Cincinnati Stomp



BIG JOE DUSKIN

"Cincinnati Stomp"

Boogie-woogie evolved in the '20s and '30s, and the next decade saw it become a national craze, performed by everyone from lone pianists to the biggest of big bands. Apart from a few post-war numbers such as Big Joe Turner's "Boogie Woogie Country Girl," this trendy period was followed by a pronounced lull as the genre's stars began to pass on. But boogie-woogie got a fresh infusion in the late '70s when a vibrant and expert pianist emerged unexpectedly from Cincinnati. It was a pleasant surprise indeed that a musician with Big Joe Duskin's ability had stayed hidden for so long.

Joe was born in Birmingham, Alabama, in 1921, the son of a hard-core Baptist preacher. Reverend Duskin encouraged Joe's first efforts on the family piano and was delighted to hear him learn religious material, but "the Devil's music" — blues and boogie-woogie — was strictly forbidden. In a familiar blues scenario, when young Joe became tempted by this wicked style he had to post look-outs

in order to practice. If one of the neighborhood kids announced that Reverend Duskin was coming, Joe would quickly switch over to "Nearer My God to Thee."

The Duskins moved to Cincinnati when Joe was a teenager. Close to Appalachia, and a cultural hybrid of North and South, with a strong dose of Midwestern conservatism, the city had a rich mixture of folkloric and musical traditions. Jazz, jugband music, blues and boogie-woogie all flourished in the bars of the West End where Joe grew up. Learning from local artists including "Blackjack," and from records by such greats as Roosevelt Sykes, Joe Duskin soon became skilled enough to play the West End bars himself. Much to Reverend Duskin's distaste, Joe became a regular performer at the Armory Cafe, the Bucket of Blood, and other Central Avenue nightspots.

At that time, the town of Newport, Kentucky, across the Ohio River, was a wide-open vice mecca, and Joe began working

some of the wild gambling and strip joints over there. A career was in the making, but then World War II came along and Joe was drafted.

Fortunately the military didn't stifle Joe's playing, but resulted instead in valuable professional experience. On various U.S.O. gigs he met his idols Pete Johnson, Albert Ammons, and Meade Lux Lewis, three of boogie-woogie's all-time leading lights. The U.S.O. also gave Duskin the chance to play in varied band settings and broaden his scope. He came back from Europe full of ambition, but his father, then in his eighties, asked Joe to refrain from playing "the Devil's music" while Reverend Duskin was still alive. Anxious to give the old man some peace in his twilight years, Joe made a solemn vow to stay away from blues and boogie-woogie. Imagine his mixed emotions as this twilight period dragged on for some twenty-odd years!

When Reverend Duskin passed away at the age of one-hundred-and-four, a musical torrent had flowed under the bridge. Joe had spent the past two decades working day jobs, primarily for the Postal Service; he was out of practice and not a little disillusioned. But Cincinnati blues researcher and harmonicist

Steve Tracy encouraged Joe to make a comeback, and in the mid-'70s he began working the hometown bar circuit. Joe also made periodic live performances on WAIF-FM, where he and I met in 1976. This resulted in an LP released by Arhoolie in 1979, comprised of twelve of the tracks heard here. It was culled from two solo sessions cut in Cincinnati in 1977, and a group session cut in Chicago in 1978.

Personnel on the Chicago session included drummer S.P. Leary, who had previously worked with the likes of Howlin' Wolf and Muddy Waters; guitarist Bob Margolin, who was then in the midst of a long stint with Muddy, now leads his own band, and was a big help in producing the session; and bassist Truck Parham, whose resume includes tenures with jazz giants Art Tatum, Jimmy Lunceford, and Roy Eldridge. There was also a special appearance by guitarist Jimmy Johnson, then an obscure player who had just struck out on his own after leaving Jimmy Dawkins' band; today Johnson is one of Chicago's top modern-blues stylists. When these sessions were held Joe had been a professional-caliber player since the late '30s, but this CD represents his very first commer-

cial recordings.

Joe's repertoire mixes classic and contemporary blues standards with sophisticated boogie compositions, pop tunes from the boogie fad of the '40s, and originals such as "Well, Well Baby" and "I Met a Girl Named Martha." His light, swinging touch belies both his power and skilled agility, making the most intricate runs and bass lines sound virtually effortless. Joe is also an expressive and soulful singer who phrases his big voice with the same dexterity that he brings to the keyboard. And while this material was recorded nearly twenty years ago, today Big Joe Duskin is still singing and playing in undiminished fine form. He has built up a devoted following in Europe, recorded six subsequent albums, both domestic and foreign, and also appeared on several antholo-

gies.

Although Joe rarely plays in Cincinnati these days, he's an important figure in the city's distinguished blues history. This history also includes the Cincinnati Jug Band's classic 78s, the '40s-'60s heyday of King Records, the '60s sounds of Albert Washington and Lonnie Mack, the re-emergence of '50s shouter H-Bomb Ferguson, Pigmeat Jarrett's continued vitality in his tenth decade, and the youthful scene represented by such artists as Cincinnati Slim. Cincinnati has long nurtured the blues, as well as such blues related country styles as bluegrass and "hillbilly boogie." Stand with Big Joe Duskin in the shadow of Cincinnati's Suspension Bridge, and listen to his blues and boogie-woogie mastery as the Ohio River rolls on by.

(Ben Sandmel-1995)

Ben Sandmel was raised in Cincinnati and now works in New Orleans as a journalist, drummer and folklore researcher.

Thanks to Steve Tracy, Bob Margolin, Lucy Bukowski, Erwin Helfer and the late Dan Ransoboff for their help back in the '70s.

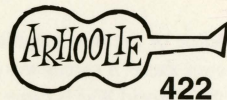
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Total time: 64:05

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BIG JOE DUSKIN

"Cincinnati Stomp"



1. MEAN OLD FRISCO (3:05)
2. ROLL 'EM PETE (3:05)
3. STORMIN' IN TEXAS (4:05)
4. CINCINNATI STOMP (*Duskin*) (2:04)
5. LITTLE RED ROOSTER (4:35)
6. THE TRIBUTE (*Duskin*) (3:20)
7. DOWN THE ROAD APIECE (2:15)
8. WELL, WELL BABY (*Duskin*) (4:30)
9. HONKY TONK TRAIN (3:05)
10. BEAT ME DADDY, EIGHT TO THE BAR (2:50)
11. TENDER HEARTED WOMAN (3:30)
12. STOOP DOWN BABY (2:40)
13. BETTY AND DUPREE (4:57)
14. YANCEY SPECIAL (3:10)
15. SLIDELL BLUES (5:04)
16. DOLLAR BILL BOOGIE (*Duskin*) (2:22)
17. I MET A GIRL NAMED MARTHA (*Duskin*) (3:43)
18. BOOGIE WOOGIE PRAYER (3:37)

Total time: 64:05

Big Joe Duskin - vocals and piano with: Jimmy Johnson - guitar (#1);
Bob Margolin - guitar (#1, 11, 12, 13);
Truck Parham - bass (#1, 4, 11, 12, 13);
S.P. Leary - drums (#4, 11, 12, 13);
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