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 APICE
8. WELL, WELL BABY (Duskin)
9. HONKY TONK TRAIN
10. BEAT ME DADDY, EIGHT TO THE BAR
11. TENDER HEARTED WOMAN
12. STOOP DOWN BABY
13. BETTY AND DUPREE
14. YANCEY SPECIAL
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


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

Boogie-woogie evolved in the '20s and '30s, and the next decade saw it become a national craze. Reverend Duskin, a musical innovator and his son, Joe Duskin, a pianist, were both part of this trend. Joe was born in Birmingham, Alabama, in 1921, the son of a hard-core Baptist preacher, Reverend Duskin. Joe was a teenager when he moved to Cincinnati with his family. 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 met his idols by 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 harmonist 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 WAIFF-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 anthologies.

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 Ransohoff 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

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