

## Tommy Johnson -- Complete Recorded Works (1928-1929) [1990]

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## Tommy Johnson -- Complete Recorded Works (1928-1929) [1990]



1. *Cool Drink Of Water Blues* 3:27
2. *Big Road Blues* 3:12 [play](#)
3. *Bye-Bye Blues* 3:04 [play](#)
4. *Maggie Campbell Blues* 3:29
5. *Canned Heat Blues* 3:39
6. *Lonesome Home Blues (Take 1)* 3:22
7. *Lonesome Home Blues (Take 2)* 3:17
8. *Big Fat Mama Blues* 3:14
9. *I Wonder To Myself* 3:06
10. *Slidin' Delta* 3:05
11. *Lonesome Home Blues* 3:11
12. *Morning Prayer Blues* 3:21
13. *Boogaloosa Woman* 3:12
14. *Black Mare Blues (Take 1)* 3:32
15. *Black Mare Blues (Take 2)* 3:19
16. *Ridin' Horse* 3:25
17. *Alcohol And Jake Blues* 3:21

Personnel includes:

Tommy Johnson (vocals, guitar);

Charlie McCoy (guitar);

Kid Ernest Michall (clarinet);

Charley Taylor (piano).

An essential Tommy Johnson collection, Document's Complete Recorded Works (1928-1929) features 17 songs from the Delta blues pioneer, including two alternative takes and a pair of previously unissued songs known respectively as "Morning Prayer Blues" and "Boogaloosa Blues." Culled from the great Delta musician's recording sessions in Memphis and Grafton, WI,

from February 1928 to December 1929, this collection shines a light on all of Johnson's known output during his most active recording years. As with most music taken straight from original 78s, the sound quality varies between tracks; all in all, the pops and static aren't too distracting here. The music is well-worth seeking out as the writing, guitar playing, and singing are all exceptional. Johnson's voice, one of the distinctive early Delta blues voices along with Son House and Charley Patton, changes from a deep rumble to a woeful falsetto while his guitar playing is characteristic of the early Delta style. With the exception of a few of the tracks from an August 1928 session, other players accompany Johnson on the tracks. Highlights include the well-known material such as "Cool Drink of Water Blues" and "Canned Heat Blues," as well as scratchy lesser-known gems from his later sessions. The tracks "Ridin' Horse" and "Alcohol and Jake Blues" were taken from what is believed to be the only remaining copy of the 78 they were originally released on. These two songs had not been released on CD prior to this collection. On the two versions of "Black Mare Blues" included, Johnson is joined by the New Orleans Nehi Boys, featuring Kid Ernest Marshall on clarinet and Charley Taylor on piano. The CD includes informative notes by Paul Oliver, personnel lineups for each session, along with issue numbers for the original releases. This is highly recommended for those who have never heard Johnson's music and equally recommended for those who have. ---Jeff Schwachter

Evidence of the strange genius of Mississippi bluesman Tommy Johnson is limited to 17 recordings from two late-1920s sessions. It is the first of these, for the Victor Company, that produced the recordings upon which Johnson's lofty reputation rests. Sung in a husky falsetto, somewhere between an African field holler and an Alpine yodel, "Cool Drink of Water Blues" stands atop a pinnacle in the richly inventive Delta blues tradition with younger cousin Robert Johnson's "Hellhound on My Trail" and Skip James's "Devil Got My Woman." "Canned Heat Blues" is a bittersweet paean to the older Johnson's penchant for imbibing tins of jellied kerosene, and was a modest hit in that era's "race record" market. Also notable from his 1928 session were the influential "Maggie Campbell Blues," "Big Road Blues," and "Big Fat Mama Blues," while the recently discovered Paramount session was remarkable for "Slidin' Delta" and "I Wonder to Myself."--Alan Greenberg

Tommy Johnson (ur. 1896, zm. 1 listopada 1956) – amerykański muzyk bluesowy jeden z najbardziej wpływowych przedstawicieli bluesa Deltty. Na jego muzykę wpływ mieli tacy bluesmeni jak Dick Bankston, Willie Brown, Ben Maree i Charley Patron. Sam z kolei wywarł wpływ na takich muzyków jak James Brewer, K.C. Douglas, Shirley Griffth, Roosevelt Holts, Howlin' Wolf, Floyd Jones, Otis Spann, Houston Stackhouse, Babe Stovall, Johnny Temple i Boogie Bill Webb. Tommy Johnson reprezentował lokalną tradycję bluesową, zwaną "tradycją Drew". Należeli do niej także Charley Patton, Willie Brown, Kid Bailey, Dick Bankston, Howlin' Wolf i kilku innych bluesmanów.

Johnson był typowym bluesmanem, nic nie wiadomo, aby wykonywał utwory niebluesowe. Jako bluesman przewyższył tych, którzy wywarli na niego wpływ. Chociaż dość często wykraczał poza 12-taktowy schemat bluesowy, blues, który wykonywał był zawsze czystym bluesem. Był pierwszym, który wprowadził do bluesa styl śpiewania falsetem. Jego technika gry na gitarze była całkowicie podstawowa. Cała jego siła jako bluesmana leżała w niezwykłym głosie i technice operowania nim.

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