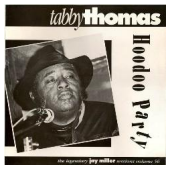
Tabby Thomas – Hoodoo Party (1989)



A1 Boogie Woogie Children A2 C. C. Rider A3 I'd Love To Tell A4 So Hard To Bear A5 Brother Brown A6 Tomorrow A7 Mmm I Don't Care B1 Playgirl B2 Keep On Trying B3 Roll On Mule B4 Too Late Blues B5 Popeye Train B6 My Baby's Got It B7 He's Got The Whole World In His Hands

A solid Louisiana vocalist who plays both guitar and piano, "Rockin'" Tabby Thomas has been cutting stirring recordings since the mid-'50s. He's teamed often with harmonica players Whispering Smith and Lazy Lester, and has done several sessions for Maison De Soul and various labels owned by Jay Miller.

Thomas was born in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, but he began his musical career in San Francisco, which is where he was stationed while he was in the army. After he completed his time in the service, Thomas stayed in San Francisco, playing shows and talent contests. He happened to win a talent contest, which led to a record contract with Hollywood Records. Hollywood issued "Midnight Is Calling," which gained no attention, and the label dropped Thomas.

After the failure of "Midnight Is Calling," Tabby Thomas returned to Baton Rouge. He began playing local clubs with his supporting band the Mellow, Mellow Men. In 1953, the group recorded two songs -- "Thinking Blues" and "Church Members Ball" -- for the Delta label. After those songs didn't gain much attention, Thomas went through a number of record labels -- including Feature, Rocko, and Zynn -- before having a hit on Excello Records in 1962 with "Voodoo Party."

Thomas wasn't able to record a hit follow-up to "Voodoo Party" and by the end of the '60s, he retired from performing music. His retirement was short-lived -- in 1970, he founded his own record label, Blue Beat. In addition to releasing Thomas' own recordings, Blue Beat spotlighted emerging Baton Rouge talent. Within a few years, the label was very successful and Thomas

began his own blues club, Tabby's Blues Box and Heritage Hall. By the mid-'80s, the club was the most popular blues joint in Baton Rouge.

Although he had become a successful businessman in the late '70s, Thomas continued to perform and record. All of his efforts -- from his recordings and concerts, to his label and nightclub -- made Tabby Thomas the leading figure of Baton Rouge's blues scene for nearly three decades. Thomas was still active into the new millennium, although he wasn't performing as frequently as he had in the past. He was seriously injured in an automobile accident in Baton Rouge in October 2002. ---Ron Wynn, Rovi

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