

The Piano Blues Vol. 19 - Play It For Your Mama: Barrelhouse Women 1925-1933 (1984)



1. *Cow Cow Davenport & Ivy Smith - State Street Jive* 2. *Doretha Trowbridge - Slavin' Mama Blues* 3. *Margaret Thornton - Texas Bound Blues* 4. *Elzadie Robinson - St. Louis Cyclone* 5. *Mary Johnson - Mean Black Man Blues* 6. *Lucille Bogan - Coffee Grindin' Blues* 7. *Margaret Whitmire - That Thing* 8. *Ida May Mack - Good-bye Rider* 9. *Lillian Miller - Kitchen Blues* 10. *Elzadie Robinson - The Santa Claus Crave* 11. *Alderson & Beck - State Street Special* 12. *Evelyn Brickey - Down In The Valley Blues* 13. *Mary Johnson - Black Men Blues* 14. *Elizabeth Washington - Riot Call Blues* 15. *Mary Johnson - Morning Sun Blues* 16. *Lil Johnson - Never Miss Your Jelly*

Cow Cow Davenport – piano (1) Pinetop Sparks – piano (2,14) Blind James Beck – piano (3,11) Bob Call – piano (4,10) Henry Brown – piano (5,13) Arnold Wiley – piano (7) K.D. Johnson – piano (8) Hersal Thomas – piano (9) Ruben Walker – piano (12) Judson Brown – piano (15) Charles Avery – piano (16) Unknown pianist (6) Ivy Smith – speech (1) Doretha Trowbridge – vocals (2) Margaret Thornton – vocals (3) Elzadie Robinson – vocals (4,10) Mary Johnson – vocals (5,13,15) Lucille Bogan – vocals (6) Margaret Whitmire – vocals (7) Ida May Mack – vocals (8) Lillian Miller – vocals (9) Mozelle Anderson – speech (11) Evelyn Brickey – vocals (12) Elizabeth Washington – vocals (14) Lil Johnson – vocals (16) Tampa Red – guitar (6)

Blues singer **Mary Johnson** got her start in show business as a teenager in St. Louis. She frequently worked with Blues singer and guitarist Lonnie Johnson and in 1925 they were married. They had six children together and divorced in 1930. For some reason they never recorded together. She continued to perform predominantly in the St. Louis area up until the mid-1940s. After leaving show business she was active in the church and worked in a hospital. Johnson was sometimes billed as "Signifying Mary". ---redhotjazz.com

1920s blues vocalist **Elzadie Robinson** hailed from Shreveport, Louisiana, but remained in Chicago, after going there to record. Her recordings span 1926-29, and during that time she worked with several pianists including Bob Call, and her regular accompanist and fellow Shreveport native, Will Ezell. Elzadie Robinson chiefly recorded for the Paramount label, but also cut several sides for Broadway under the alias Bernice Drake. ---Joselyn Layne, Rovi

In A Left Hand Like God: A Study of Boogie-Woogie Peter Silvester wrote: "**Henry Brown** was a living model for the qualities most apparent in the St. Louis boogie-woogie style. He employed an economic left hand of single notes or sparse chords for slow numbers and a rumbustious walking bass for faster ones." Brown learned to play the piano from the "professors" of the notorious Deep Morgan section of St. Louis.

Brown worked clubs such as the Blue Flame Club, the 9-0-5 Club, Jim's Place and Katy Red's, from the twenties into the 30's. He recorded for Brunswick with Ike Rogers and Mary Johnson in 1929, for Paramount in '29 and '30, behind singer Alice Moore in 1929 and 1934 as well as backing others such singers as Jimmy Oden, Bessie Mae Smith and others.

Judson Brown only made one solo recording in 1930, "You Don't Know My Mind Blues", and had to share the b-side of his one and only 78 with Freddie "Redd" Nicholson performing his "Tee Roller's Rub". Brown did appear on some recordings by Mary Johnson for Brunswick the same year as well as backing singers Mozelle Alderson, Madelyn James, Charlie Nickerson and Jenny Pope. The singers he worked with suggest a Memphis background but according to researcher Bob Eagle he was from Georgia and merely passed through Memphis, ending up in Chicago, where he died in 1933. --- sundayblues.org

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