The Piano Blues Vol. 21 - Unissued Boogie 1938-1945 (1984)



1. Meade Lux Lewis - Honky Tonk Train Blues 2. Albert Ammons - Pine Top's Boogie Woogie 3. Meade Lux Lewis - Yancey Special 4. Joe Turner & Pete Johnson - Low Down Dog 5. Albert Ammons - Boogie Woogie Stomp 6.Albert Ammons & Meade Lux Lewis - Jumpin' Blues 7.Meade Lux Lewis - Honky Tonk Train Blues 8. Albert Ammons & Meade Lux Lewis Double Up Blues 9. Joe Turner & Meade Lux Lewis - Roll 'em 1o. Meade Lux Lewis - Boogie Woogie 11. Joe Turner & Meade Lux Lewis - Low Down Dog 12. Albert Ammons - Suitcase Blues Meade Lux Lewis – piano (1,3,6,7,8,9,10,11) Albert Ammons – piano (2,5,6,8,12) Pete Johnson – piano (4) Joe Turner – vocals – (4,9,11) Lonnie Johnson – guitar (12) John Lindsay – bass (12) Tom Taylor – drums (12)

Boogie-Woogie," generally associated with the piano, wasn't the sole form of blues or jazz inspired by ragtime, but it was arguably the most direct descendant of the compositions and style of Scott Joplin. While usually categorized as a form of the blues, however, boogie-woogie is considerably more upbeat in mood. What sets it apart is the division of hands that goes into its performance, with the right hand engaging in improvisatory movements while the left hand maintains a constant beat. As it evolved during the early half of the 20th Century, it became more associated with "swing."

Albert Ammons (1907-1949) was considered one of the fathers of boogie-woogie, and became one of its best-known practitioners, many of whose recordings remain available, including on YouTube. Performing primarily in his native Chicago, with a period in New York where he collaborated with Pete Johnson, Ammons was a gifted pianist whose up-tempo style detracted from the nature of the blues but succeeded in establishing its own genre of music. In fact, so up-tempo was his piano playing that his style was given another moniker not traditionally associated with the blues: stomp. So popular and respected did Ammons become, that he was given the privilege of performing the first recording for the newly established jazz record label Blue Note. He died at the age of 42. --- enotes.com

One of the three great boogie-woogie pianists (along with Albert Ammons and Pete Johnson) whose appearance at John Hammond's 1938 Spirituals to Swing concert helped start the boogie-woogie craze, Meade "Lux" Lewis was a powerful if somewhat limited player. He played regularly in Chicago in the late '20s and his one solo record of the time, "Honky Tonk Train Blues" (1927), was considered a classic. However, other than a few sides backing little-known blues singers, Lewis gained little extra work and slipped into obscurity. John Hammond heard Lewis' record in 1935 and, after a search, found Lewis washing cars for a living in Chicago. Soon, Lewis was back on records and after the 1938, concert he was able to work steadily, sometimes in duets or trios with Ammons and Johnson. He became the first jazz pianist to double on celeste (starting in 1936) and was featured on that instrument on a Blue Note quartet date with Edmond Hall and Charlie Christian; he also played harpsichord on a few records in 1941. After the boogie-woogie craze ended, Lewis continued working in Chicago and California, recording as late as 1962, although by then he was pretty much forgotten. Lewis led sessions through the years that have come out on MCA, Victor, Blue Note, Solo Art, Euphonic, Stinson, Atlantic, Storyville, Verve, Tops, ABC-Paramount, Riverside, and Philips. ---Scott Yanow, Rovi

Pete Johnson was one of the three great boogie-woogie pianists (along with Albert Ammons and Meade Lux Lewis) whose sudden prominence in the late '30s helped make the style very popular. Originally a drummer, Johnson switched to piano in 1922. He was part of the Kansas City scene in the 1920s and '30s, often accompanying singer Big Joe Turner. Producer John Hammond discovered him in 1936 and got him to play at the Famous Door in New York. After taking part in Hammond's 1938 Spirituals to Swing Carnegie Hall concert in 1938, Johnson started recording regularly and appeared on an occasional basis with Ammons and Lewis as the Boogie Woogie Trio. He also backed Turner on some classic records. Johnson recorded often in the 1940s and spent much of 1947-1949 based in Los Angeles. He moved to Buffalo in 1950 and, other than an appearance at the 1958 Newport Jazz Festival, he was in obscurity for much of the decade. A stroke later in 1958 left him partly paralyzed. Johnson made one final appearance at John Hammond's January 1967 Spirituals to Swing concert, playing the right hand on a version of "Roll 'Em Pete" two months before his death. ---Scott Yanow, Rovi

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