

Janis Joplin - I Got Dem Ol' Kozmic Blues Again Mama (1969)

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1. *Try (Just a Little Bit Harder)*
2. *Maybe*
3. *One Good Man*
4. *As Good as You've Been to This World*
5. *To Love Somebody*
6. *Kozmic Blues*
7. *Little Girl Blue*
8. *Work Me, Lord*

Janis Joplin - lead vocals, guitar Sam Andrew - guitar, vocals Michael Monarch - guitar (uncredited) Mike Bloomfield - guitar (One Good Man, Work Me Lord, Maybe) Brad Campbell - bass guitar, brass instrumentation Richard Kermode - electronic organ, keyboards Gabriel Mekler - electronic organ, keyboards Goldy McJohn - electronic organ, keyboards (uncredited) Maury Baker - drums Lonnie Castille - drums Jerry Edmonton - drums (uncredited) Terry Clements - tenor saxophone Cornelius Flowers - baritone saxophone Luis Gasca – trumpet

Janis Joplin's solo debut was a letdown at the time of release, suffering in comparison with Big Brother's Cheap Thrills from the previous year, and shifting her style toward soul-rock in a way that disappointed some fans. Removed from that context, it sounds better today, though it's still flawed. Fronting the short-lived Kozmic Blues Band, the arrangements are horn heavy and the material soulful and bluesy. The band sounds a little stiff, though, and although Joplin's singing is good, she would sound more electrifying on various live versions of some of the songs that have come out over the years. The shortage of quality original compositions -- indeed, there are only eight tracks total on the album -- didn't help either, and the cover selections were erratic, particularly the Bee Gees' "To Love Somebody." On the other hand, "Try" is one of her best soul outings, and the reading of Rodgers & Hart's "Little Girl Blue" is inspired. The 1999 CD reissue adds three bonus tracks: a cover of Bob Dylan's "Dear Landlord" from the Kozmic Blues sessions that was first heard on the Janis box set, and previously unreleased versions of "Summertime" and "Piece of My Heart" from the Woodstock Festival. "Summertime" is okay, but

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this "Piece of My Heart" really pales next to the Big Brother interpretation. --- Richie Unterberger, All Music Guide

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