

Memphis Minnie - Blues Collection 76 - Let's Go To Town (1995)

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01 I'm Going Back Home 02 Georgia Skin 03 Bumble Bee Blues 04 Meningitis Blues 05 New Dirty Dozen 06 Frankie Jean (That Trottin' Fool) 07 What's The Matter With The Mill 08 North Memphis Blues 09 Let's Go To Town 10 Moaning The Blues 11 Sylvester And His Mule Blues 12 Joe Louis Strut 13 Doctor Doctor Blues 14 Nothing In Rambling 15 In My Girlish Days 16 Me And My Chauffeur Blues 17 I'm Not A Bad Gal 18 You Got To Get Out Of Here 19 Looking The World Over 20 Black Rat Swing

Tracking down the ultimate woman blues guitar hero is problematic because woman blues singers seldom recorded as guitar players and woman guitar players (such as Rosetta Tharpe and Sister O.M. Terrell) were seldom recorded playing blues. Excluding contemporary artists, the most notable exception to this pattern was Memphis Minnie. The most popular and prolific blueswoman outside the vaudeville tradition, she earned the respect of critics, the support of record-buying fans, and the unqualified praise of the blues artists she worked with throughout her long career. Despite her Southern roots and popularity, she was as much a Chicago blues artist as anyone in her day. Big Bill Broonzy recalls her beating both him and Tampa Red in a guitar contest and claims she was the best woman guitarist he had ever heard. Tough enough to endure in a hard business, she earned the respect of her peers with her solid musicianship and recorded good blues over four decades for Columbia, Vocalion, Bluebird, Okeh, Regal, Checker, and JOB. She also proved to have as good taste in musical husbands as music and sustained working marriages with guitarists Casey Bill Weldon, Joe McCoy, and Ernest Lawlars. Their guitar duets span the spectrum of African-American folk and popular music, including spirituals, comic dialogs, and old-time dance pieces, but Memphis Minnie's best work consisted of deep blues like "Moaning the Blues." More than a good woman blues guitarist and singer, Memphis Minnie holds her own against the best blues artists of her time, and her work has special resonance for today's aspiring guitarists. ---Barry Lee Pearson, Rovi

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