

Tampa Red & Big Maceo - Echoes From The South (2009)

Wpisany przez bluesever

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1. *You'd Better Be Ready to Go* 3:01 2. *So Long Baby* 2:38 3. *Any Time for You* 2:48 4. *I Oughta Bite You* 3:01 5. *Please Be Careful* 3:03 6. *Won't Be a Fool No More* 2:50
7. *Corrina Blues* 2:43 8. *Give Me Mine Now* 2:51 9. *Can't You Read* 3:06 10. *Kid Man Blues* 2:32
11. *Don't Deal With the Devil* 2:53 12. *Let Me Play Your Poodle* 2:37 13. *I'm So Worried* 2:32
14. *Maybe Someday* 2:43 15. *She Wants to Sell My Monkey* 3:17 16. *Georgia Blues* 2:51
17. *I'll Be Up Again Some Day* 3:01 18. *My First Love Blues* 2:59 19. *So Far So Good* 2:42
20. *Winter Time Blues* 2:51 21. *Let's Try It Again* 2:59 22. *Big Road Blues* 2:54
Big Maceo - vocals, piano Tampa Red - vocals, guitar, kazoo + Charles Saunders - drums

Big Maceo Merriweather was one of the most prominent blues recording artists of the 1940s, famed not only for his powerful piano work but for his expressive singing on hits such as *Worried Life Blues*. Although he had only a short career, his music had a strong influence on the Chicago pianists who followed, especially Otis Spann and Little Johnnie Jones. Born Major Merriweather on March 21, 1905, near Newnan, Georgia, Maceo and his family lived on a farm until they moved to nearby Atlanta in 1920. There the left-handed Maceo took up the piano, developing a pounding style with, naturally, a prominent left hand that would later distinguish his recordings. In 1924 he moved to Detroit, where he began playing the house party circuit which was the bread and butter of piano players in prewar blues. He also worked the night clubs of Detroit and, during the 1940s and '50s, Chicago after he moved to the Windy City. In Chicago Maceo often teamed with guitarist Tampa Red, both on record and in clubs such as the H&T. Maceo recorded for Bluebird and RCA Victor under the supervision of Lester Melrose from 1941 to 1947, establishing himself as a major name among blues record buyers. The first song he recorded, the poignant *Worried Life Blues*, is considered such an essential blues work that it was elected to the Blues Hall of Fame in the first year of the Classics of Blues Recording balloting, years before Maceo himself was inducted as a performer. Other highlights of his recorded repertoire include *Things Have Changed*, a hit on Billboard's "Race Records" jukebox chart in 1945, *County Jail Blues* and its flip side *Can't You Read* from 1941, and his 1945 instrumental masterpiece *Chicago Breakdown*. A stroke in 1946 cost him the use of his right hand, although he continued to sing and play one-handed, sometimes employing a protégé such as Johnnie Jones or Eddie Boyd to play the keys, or at least the treble notes. He never

regained the strength or stature he had once enjoyed, though, and, like a number of top blues recording artists of the era, was never able, even at his peak, to translate his fame into a successful touring career. Blues promoters, agents, and clubs were only beginning to coalesce into what we know as the chittlin circuit, and the big theater circuit was the domain of jazz and swing bands and uptown blues shouters and crooners. Big Maceo made his final records for Specialty in 1949 and Fortune in 1950, in addition to an unissued session for Mercury in 1952 . He died of a heart attack on February 26, 1953, in Chicago. -- Jim O'Neal
www.stackhouse-bluesoterica.blogspot.com

Few figures in blues history have been as important as Tampa Red, 'The Guitar Wizard.' From his recording debut in 1928 until his retirement in the 1950s, record companies released more 78rpm records by Tampa than by any other blues artist. Most of those records featured Tampa's own compositions (under his legal name, Hudson Whittaker), including songs that would gain renewed popularity time and again when re-recorded by artists such as B.B. King, Elmore James, Little Walter, Fats Domino, Albert King, Junior Wells, Freddy King, Clarence Carter, and the slide guitarist most influenced by Tampa's style, Robert Nighthawk. Tampa waxed the first versions of such classics as 'It Hurts Me Too,' 'Crying Won't Help You,' "Don't Lie to Me," "Love Her With a Feeling," "You're Gonna Miss Me When I'm Gone," "Let Me Play With Your Poodle," and "She Want to Sell My Monkey." His influential 1934 version of "Black Angel Blues," originally recorded by Lucille Bogan, predated Robert Nighthawk's version by 15 years and B.B. King's rendition, "Sweet Little Angel," by 22. Tampa's "Anna Lou Blues" became "Annie Lee" when recorded by Nighthawk and "Anna Lee" when Elmore James tackled it. Slide guitarists again came into prominence, but none could ever match the mellow beauty of Tampa's bottleneck sound. (On Tampa's early records he said he used the actual neck of a whiskey bottle he had fashioned to fit his finger. Later, when he played an amplified Gibson, he owned a metal slide as well as a solid steel bar.) Tampa Red was born as Hudson Woodbridge in Smithville, Georgia. The year has been cited as 1900, 1903, 1904, or 1908; the headstone on his grave lists Jan. 8, 1904, the date used in his state medical records. His parents died when he was young and he assumed the surname Whittaker after he went to live with his grandmother's family in Tampa, Florida. In the 1920s Tampa took a train to Chicago to make his name in music. In Chicago, Tampa began playing the streets and parties. He teamed with pianist Georgia Tom in 1928 to cut "It's Tight Like That," one of the biggest "race" hits of the era, for J. Mayo Williams with Vocalion Records. Dorsey went on to become the dean of black gospel music. Tampa, meanwhile, continued to record all types of blues - hokum songs, party blues filled with double entendres, uptempo dance numbers, slow expressive blues, and guitar solos. He added a band, the Chicago Five, for many pop-styled Bluebird sessions. Influenced by the great Lonnie Johnson in his smooth, measured, and precise approach, Tampa was as capable of bringing playful joy, jive, and clever humor to his blues as he was deep pain and sorrow. Much of Chicago's before- and after-hours blues activity in the '30s and '40s centered around Tampa's house, where musicians gathered to room, rehearse and party. Tampa's

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popularity waned in the '50s as his health declined while the harsher electric blues from Memphis and the Mississippi Delta overtook the Chicago scene. He lived his last 20 years quietly with a friend at a South Side apartment, and, at the end, in a nursing home. He died on March 19, 1981. -- Jim O'Neal www.stackhouse-bluesoterica.blogspot.com

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