

Big Jack Johnson - The Oil Man (1987)

Written by bluesever
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Big Jack Johnson - The Oil Man (1987)



1 Oil Man 2 Killing Floor 3 Tom Dooley 4 Catfish Blues 5 How Many More Years
6 Too Many Drivers 7 Driving Wheel 8 I'm Gonna Give up Disco and Go Back to the Blues
9 Part Time Love 10 Steel Guitar Rag (Going Bass Fishing) 11 You Can Have My
Woman Big Jack Johnson (vocals, guitar) Frank Frost (piano) Walter Roy (bass) Ernest
Roy (drums)

With his barbed-wire guitar work and hearty vocal on a marathon rendition of "Catfish Blues," Johnson hauls the time-honored Delta tradition into contemporary blues. The entire album is an eminently solid, doggedly down-home affair, though nothing else quite measures up to the powerhouse attack of that one vicious workout. ---Bill Dahl, Rovi

March 14, 2011 - Sad news came in from Dave Riley and Amy Brat that legendary Mississippi guitarist/mandolinist/vocalist Big Jack Johnson has passed away this morning at 6am in his hometown of Clarksdale, Mississippi after a long battle with health issues. He was 70 years old. Note that there were some disturbing premature false announcements of Big Jack's passing 3 days before his actual passing. Big Jack's inventive, energetic, Delta-rooted guitar, rich confident vocals, down home songwriting, and larger than life stage presence made him one of the most celebrated bluesmen of Mississippi. His long music career included much national and international touring, many amazing record releases, and a huge amount of praise and respect. Big Jack was born in Lambert, Mississippi in the summer of 1940, and learned guitar from his father at age 13.

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He rose to prominence in the early 1960s working as a key member of the legendary Jelly Roll Kings, a champion blues band which also included Frank Frost and Sam Carr. Big Jack first appeared on record in the 1960s as the guitarist on two famous Frank Frost albums; Hey Boss Man on the Phillips International label (an offshoot of Sun Records) from 1962, and My Back Scratcher on Jewel from 1966.

In the late 1970s, Michael Frank debuted his Earwig Music label with The Jelly Roll Kings / Rockin' The Juke Joint Down which also was a recording debut for Big Jack's great vocals. Soon afterward, Big Jack Johnson would start a solo career for himself, independent of the Jelly Roll Kings.

His solo debut album, Oil Man (Big Jack used to hold down a day gig delivering oil barrels in Mississippi) on the Earwig label was released in 1987. This led to additional CDs for Earwig, a nice run with M.C. Records, and additional recordings for Rooster Blues, P-Vine Records, Right Coast Recording, and Big Jack Music. There was also a nice Jelly Roll Kings reunion album called Off Yonder Wall that came out in 1997 on the Fat Possum Records. Additionally, Big Jack appeared in the influential 1992 documentary movie Deep Blues.

He was a popular festival and club entertainer, a warm and hospitable person, and an amazing musician. Big Jack Johnson was the last original member of the Jelly Roll Kings. His passing leaves a gap in the blues that will never again be filled. Thanks for all the great music Big Jack. You are loved! --- Bob Corritore, deltabluesmuseum.org

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