

Tail Dragger: Stop Lyin' - The Lost Session (2013)

Written by bluesever

Monday, 26 February 2018 16:39 -

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01. So Ezee (3:47) 02. Where Did You Go (4:25) 03. Ain't Gonna Cry No Mo (4:57) 04. Don't You Want A Good Man (3:34) 05. My Head Is Bald (4:16) 06. Alabama Bound (4:08) 07. Don't Trust Yo Woman (4:01) 08. Please Mr. Jailer (5:05) 09. Stop Lyin' (3:14) 10. Tail's Tale (16:41)
Tail Dragger Vocals Eddie Burks Harmonica Willie Kent Bass Lafayette Leake Piano Johnny B. Moore Guitar Little Mack Simmons Harmonica Larry Taylor Drums Jesse Lee Williams Guitar

Veteran singer James Yancey Jones, aka Tail Dragger, has been making his presence felt on the Chicago blues scene since the '60s. But like so many other bluesmen who specialize in electric Chicago blues and made their mark in the Windy City, Tail Dragger actually grew up in the Deep South. Tail Dragger was born on September 30, 1940 in Altheimer, AK, where he was raised by his grandparents and began listening to the blues as a kid. Although he appreciated a variety of blues when he was growing up (including acoustic Southern country blues), electric Chicago blues became his greatest interest. Tail Dragger's most obvious influence has been Howlin' Wolf, although his rugged, gritty approach was also affected by Muddy Waters, Sonny Boy Williamson, and Willie Dixon. Tail Dragger left Arkansas for good in 1966, when he moved to the city that did the most to shape him stylistically: Chicago. Moving to the city's West Side, Tail Dragger didn't start earning his living from music right after his arrival; at first, he had a "day gig" as an auto mechanic. But Tail Dragger got a lucky break when he met his idol, Howlin' Wolf, who let him sit in during live performances. Howlin' Wolf, in fact, started calling him Tail Dragger because Jones often showed up late for gigs (before he became known as Tail Dragger, Jones was known as Crawlin' James in Chicago blues circles because he would sometimes crawl around on the floor when he performed).

Tail Dragger's association with Howlin' Wolf (who died in 1976) did a lot to increase his profile in the blues world, but in the early '70s, he became a full-time solo artist -- and Willie Kent, Hubert Sumlin, Carey Bell, Mack Simmons, Big Leon Brooks, and Eddie Shaw were among the Chicago-based bluesmen who performed in his various bands. Tail Dragger received some

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negative publicity in 1993, when he shot and killed fellow blues artist Bennie Joe Houston, aka Boston Blackie (b. 1943, Panola, AL). The two had just performed together at a gig, and allegedly, they got into a heated argument over payment. Tail Dragger said he acted in self-defense; nonetheless, he was convicted of manslaughter and spent 17 months in an Illinois prison. But after his release, he wasted no time resuming his musical career. Although Tail Dragger was a fixture in Chicago blues clubs throughout the '70s and '80s, and recorded some singles along the way, it wasn't until the mid-'90s that he finally had an album available. Crawlin' Kingsnake, Tail Dragger's first album, was released on the St. George label in 1996 (the year he turned 56). That disc was followed by a second album, American People, which was recorded in 1998 and released by Delmark the following year. Delmark put out his DVD, My Head Is Bald: Live at Vern's Friendly Lounge, in 2005 and released his Live at Rooster's Lounge as both a DVD an audio CD in 2009. --- Alex Henderson, allmusic.com

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