

### Katie Webster - Has The Blues (1979)



1 *Katie's Blues* 8:34 2 *Little One* 2:57 3 *Let Me Be Your Friend* 2:15 4 *Never Too Old* 2:46 5 *Trouble Blues* 5:29 6 *Broken Hearted Rolling Tears* 3:50 7 *Worry My Life Anymore* 3:57

Katie Webster came by the nickname “Swamp Boogie Queen” honestly. Against her parents wishes, she made her mark as a pianist and singer in southern Louisiana’s boogiewoogie blues tradition. From her start as a studio musician when she was a teenager, and years spent touring with mentor Otis Redding, Webster’s piano-pounding wowed audiences. Known for her lively spirit, and for often being crude or sly on-stage, Webster was a blues powerhouse. Rolling Stone called her “one saucy pianist-vocalist who knows how to dish it out.”

Born Kathryn Jewel Thorne on January 11, 1936, in Houston, Texas, Webster first learned piano as a child. Although she would later become known for her electric New Orleans blues, her parents limited her repertoire to gospel and classical music. Deeply religious, Webster’s parents did everything they could to keep their daughter from playing what they called, according to *Black Women in America*, “the devil’s music.” They even went so far as to keep the piano locked so she could only play while being supervised by her mother. Late at night, Webster listened to the blues, rock and R&B she loved on an old Philco radio. Hidden under the covers of her bed, she listened to the sounds of Fats Domino, Little Richard, Ray Charles, and Sam Cooke. Every chance she got, she played the secular music that moved her. Webster’s parents and nine siblings relocated to Oakland, California, and left the young girl with relatives. The split was a good one for Webster—the more easygoing relatives she lived with allowed her to play whatever music she liked.

Out from under the strict watch of her parents, Webster didn’t waste time starting her professional career. Her ability to read music got her a job with a jazz group. With them she was

playing in clubs and touring east Texas and southern Louisiana at age 13. It was about this time that Webster's piano work first appeared on sound recordings. One of southern Louisiana's most prominent rhythm and blues musicians, Ashton Savoy, heard the girl play and featured her on several of his cuts.

Webster's popularity as a studio musician spread around southern Louisiana and, by the time she was 15, she was one of the most requested studio musicians in the region. She appeared on hundreds of recordings in the 1950s and 1960s produced by Jay Miller of Excello Records and Eddie Shuler of Goldband Records. Webster's piano was heard on singles, also known as "sides," with Guitar Junior (Lonnie Brooks). ---encyclopedia.com

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