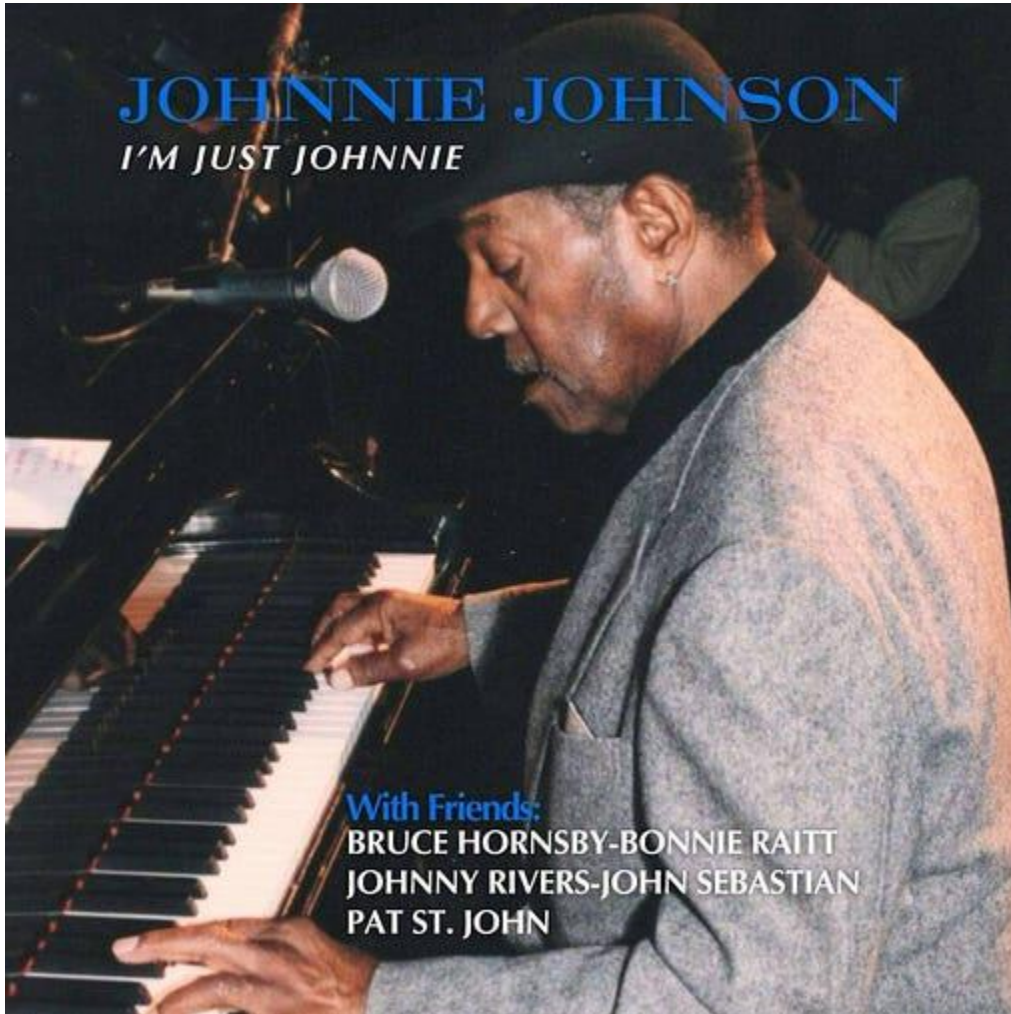


Still Rollin': Johnnie Johnson's Posthumous Album Keeps the Keys Turning



By Dee Gee, Punmaster MusicWire

It's not often a new album comes along that feels both like a long-lost treasure and a soulful farewell hug. But *I'm Just Johnnie*, the posthumous release from piano legend and Rock & Roll Hall of Famer **Johnnie Johnson**, is precisely that. Scheduled for release on **August 29th** via **Missouri Morning Records**, this lovingly crafted collection arrives two decades after Johnson's passing — and somehow feels right on time.

Known to most as the secret weapon behind **Chuck Berry**'s early rock 'n' roll classics, Johnson was the unsung architect of the genre's piano foundation. His fingerprints are all over "Roll Over Beethoven," "Maybellene," "School Days," and of course "Wee Wee Hours" — a slow blues in the key of G that Clapton once called "piano heaven." While Berry took center stage, it was Johnson who kept the wheels turning with his impeccable left hand and joyous rhythmic instincts.

I'm Just Johnnie is more than a tribute — it's the realization of Johnson's own creative dreams. Produced and shepherded into existence by long-time friend and collaborator **Gene Ackmann**, the album was started in the early 2000s and completed shortly before Johnson's death in 2005. Remarkably, it features **brand-new songs** recorded with a dream team of contributors who understood and adored him: **Bruce Hornsby**, **Bonnie Raitt**, **Johnny Rivers**, and **John Sebastian**, among others.

This isn't just a studio Frankenstein stitched together from scraps. These are full-bodied, fully lived-in tracks that capture Johnson's warmth, humor, and undying groove. One of the delights is hearing **Charles Glenn** (famed as the Blues' anthem singer) belt out "Heebie Jeebies" with all the gusto of a man raised in a church that served fried chicken. Then there's former NFL tackle **Henry Lawrence**, a surprise powerhouse on "Lo Down" and "Stagger Lee" — proving that soul and swagger know no position on the field.

Backing musicians include veterans of Johnson's own band like **Kenny Rice** and **Gus Thornton**, both of whom also played with **Albert King**, creating a direct line through the Mississippi-to-Memphis blues lineage. There's also a family feel throughout the record, with players from beloved St. Louis band **Mama's Pride** adding the kind of authenticity you can't fake.

The bonus disc is a rare jewel in its own right — featuring interviews between Johnnie and legendary DJ **Pat St. John**, plus reflections from **Bonnie Raitt**, whose admiration for Johnson runs deep and genuine. These spoken-word segments paint a vivid picture of a man who stayed humble even as his hands shaped rock history.

Ackmann's memories of fishing trips, donuts, and music sessions by the lake add a bittersweet poignancy to the project. Johnson didn't drive, but he sure could steer a groove. And now, 20 years later, he's still driving the beat — posthumously, but unmistakably alive in spirit.

The album's title says it all: *I'm Just Johnnie*. Modest. Unpretentious. Timeless. But don't let the humility fool you. He wasn't just Johnnie — he was *the* Johnnie. The one Chuck wrote about in "Johnny B. Goode." The one who made a piano jump, cry, and testify. And now, thanks to this labor of love, he gets to do it one more time.

Release Date: August 29, 2025

Label: Missouri Morning Records

Recommended Tracks: "Lo Down," "I Get Weary," "Let the Good Times Roll," "Stagger Lee," "Heebie Jeebies"

Bonus Disc: Interviews with Johnnie Johnson, Pat St. John, and Bonnie Raitt

Special Guests: Bruce Hornsby, Bonnie Raitt, Johnny Rivers, John Sebastian

Stay tuned — and make sure your speakers are tuned for G.