

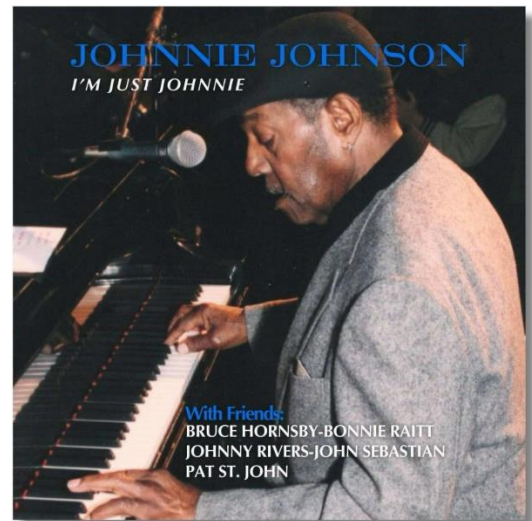


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Johnnie Johnson
I'm Just Johnnie
Missouri Morning Records

Although Chuck Berry purportedly had Johnnie Johnson in mind when he wrote "Johnny B. Goode," it was apocryphal according to Johnson. A key component to Berry's band for many years, Johnson, a Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inductee, has played with Albert King, multiple other musicians and even toured with Bob Wier's Rat Dog. To say that Johnson's piano skills are expressive, timely and enjoyable is an understatement.

This is all-star release from the vaults just before his death has 12 tracks that include guest artists Bruce Hornsby on keys and vocals with Johnson on "Every Day I Have the Blues" while Bonnie Raitt adds her signature slide guitar and backing vocals. Raitt continues with her slide talents also on "Let The Good Times Roll." Johnny Rivers wields his guitar adeptly on two of his own songs: "Lo Down" and "Johnnie Johnson Blues" while John Sebastian adds his harmonica on "Broke the Bank." His trio of Tom Maloney, Gus Thornton and Kenny Rice on guitar, bass and drums accordingly have been with him for over three decades and they play with Johnson like a well-oiled machine.



The second CD contains a free ranging interview with Johnson by Pat St. John and his unique SXM radio voice that is quite interesting as you get to learn about Johnson in his own words. He says his playing is "A gift from God." St. John describes the size of his hands as Johnson demonstrates his extended reach on the keys can reach a *full octave*! The interview is punctuated with some of Johnson's skillful playing between questions as well. After listening to the interview, you will feel that you know Johnson intimately. St. John gushes, "You don't realize how great you are!" Johnson replies, "I just play." ... "I was self-taught." (Johnson doesn't read or write music.) "I would hear something, keep it in my mind until I could sit down at a piano and work it out." Raitt is featured on a second interview with St. John and heartfully states, "He is just the sweetest *giant* of rhythm and blues."

The musical world sustained a loss in 2005 with the passing of Johnson; however, Missouri Morning Records has their 2 CD release, *I'm Just Johnnie*, to both introduce his keyboard skills and voice to new listeners and reward those who currently have enjoyed his talents.

Please consider inviting Johnnie Johnson into your living room by listening to the interview CD first and then sit back and enjoy the dozen songs with his guest musicians of note and you'll be tapping your foot as a smile takes over your face.

--Pete Sardon

