

ABC Of The Blues CD42 (2010)

Written by bluesever

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CD 42 – Sunnyland Slim & Johnny Shines 42-01 Sunnyland Slim – Mud Kicking Woman
42-02 Sunnyland Slim – Brown Skin Woman 42-03 Sunnyland Slim – I'm Just a Lonesome
Man 42-04 Sunnyland Slim – Back to Korea Now 42-05 Sunnyland Slim – You've Got to Stop
This Mess 42-06 Sunnyland Slim – Sunnyland Special

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42-07 Sunnyland Slim – Leaving Your Town 42-08 Sunnyland Slim – I Done You Wrong
42-09 Sunnyland Slim – Orphan Boy Blues 42-10 Sunnyland Slim – When I Was Young
(Shake It Baby) 42-11 Sunnyland Slim – Hit the Road Again 42-12 Johnny Shines – Ramblin'

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42-13 Johnny Shines – Fishtail 42-14 Johnny Shines – Cool Drive 42-15 Johnny Shines –
Ain't Doin' No Good 42-16 Johnny Shines – Evening Shuffle 42-17 Johnny Shines – Evening
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42-20 Johnny Shines – Gonna Call the Angel

Exhibiting truly amazing longevity that was commensurate with his powerful, imposing physical build, **Sunnyland Slim's** status as a beloved Chicago piano patriarch endured long after most of his peers had perished. For more than 50 years, the towering Slim had rumbled the ivories around the Windy City, playing with virtually every local luminary imaginable and backing the great majority in the studio at one time or another.

He was born Albert Luandrew in Mississippi and received his early training on a pump organ. After entertaining at juke joints and movie houses in the Delta, Luandrew made Memphis his home base during the late '20s, playing along Beale Street and hanging out with the likes of Little Brother Montgomery and Ma Rainey. He adopted his colorful stage name from the title of one of his best-known songs, the mournful "Sunnyland Train." (The downbeat piece immortalized the speed and deadly power of a St. Louis-to-Memphis locomotive that mowed

down numerous people unfortunate enough to cross its tracks at the wrong instant.)

Slim moved to Chicago in 1939 and set up shop as an in-demand piano man, playing for a spell with John Lee "Sonny Boy" Williamson before waxing eight sides for RCA Victor in 1947 under the somewhat misleading handle of "Doctor Clayton's Buddy." If it hadn't been for the helpful Slim, Muddy Waters may not have found his way onto Chess; it was at the pianist's 1947 session for Aristocrat that the Chess brothers made Waters' acquaintance.

Aristocrat (which issued his harrowing "Johnson Machine Gun") was but one of a myriad of labels that Slim recorded for between 1948 and 1956: Hytone, Opera, Chance, Tempo-Tone, Mercury, Apollo, JOB, Regal, Vee-Jay (unissued), Blue Lake, Club 51, and Cobra all cut dates on Slim, whose vocals thundered with the same resonant authority as his 88s. In addition, his distinctive playing enlivened hundreds of sessions by other artists during the same time frame. In 1960, Slim traveled to Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, to cut his debut LP for Prestige's Bluesville subsidiary with King Curtis supplying diamond-hard tenor sax breaks on many cuts. The album, Slim's Shout, ranks as one of his finest, with definitive renditions of the pianist's "The Devil Is a Busy Man," "Shake It," "Brownskin Woman," and "It's You Baby."

Like a deep-rooted tree, Sunnyland Slim persevered despite the passing decades. For a time, he helmed his own label, Airway Records. As late as 1985, he made a fine set for the Red Beans logo, Chicago Jump, backed by the same crack combo that shared the stage with him every Sunday evening at a popular North side club called B.L.U.E.S. for some 12 years.

There were times when the pianist fell seriously ill, but he always defied the odds and returned to action, warbling his trademark Woody Woodpecker chortle and kicking off one more exultant slow blues as he had done for the previous half century. Finally, after a calamitous fall on the ice coming home from a gig led to numerous complications, Sunnyland Slim died of kidney failure in 1995. He's sorely missed. ---Bill Dahl, allmusic.com

Johnny Shines (April 26, 1915 – April 20, 1992) was an American blues singer and guitarist.

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He was born John Ned Shines in Frayser, Tennessee. He spent most of his childhood in Memphis playing slide guitar at an early age in local "juke" and for tips on the streets. His first musical influences were Blind Lemon Jefferson and Howlin' Wolf, but he was taught to play the guitar by his mother. Shines moved to Hughes, Arkansas in 1932 and worked on farms for three years putting his musical career on hold. But it was a chance meeting with Robert Johnson, his greatest influence, that gave him the inspiration to return to music. In 1935, Johnny Shines began traveling with Robert Johnson, touring the south and heading as far north as Ontario. There, they both appeared on a local radio program. The two went their separate ways in 1937, one year before Johnson's death. Johnny Shines played throughout the U.S. South until 1941 when he decided to head back to Canada and then to Africa. He never made it past Chicago. In Chicago, Shines found work in the construction trade and continued to play in local bars.

He made his first recording in 1946 for Columbia Records, but the takes were never released. He later recorded for Chess and was once again denied. He kept playing with local blues musicians in the Chicago area for several more years. ---last.fm

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