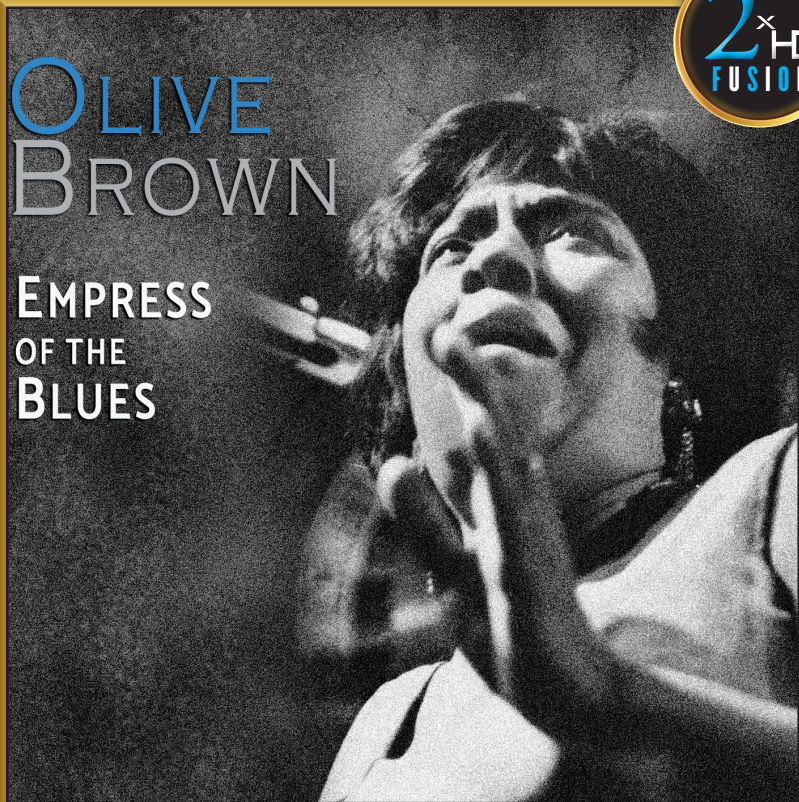


FROM ORIGINAL ANALOG MASTER



OLIVE BROWN

EMPRESS
OF THE
BLUES



Olive Brown (1922-82) had a long musical career in a number of places, yet seems in many ways a complete mystery. My first impression of Brown came from friends who'd gone to St. Louis for the annual ragtime festival on the Goldenrod Showboat- everyone was talking about this young African-American blues singer who sang on the boat. She was highly visible as the only younger African-American woman in a venue generally associated with traditional jazz, at the time largely attended by older white guys.

Brown wasn't that young (50) but no one had seen her before, so it was assumed she was just starting out. In fact, she was rebranding herself as a performer of classic blues, sort of an early Black revivalist, abandoning a career in basically modern to mainstream jazz to jump into the classic blues. In her earlier career she worked with big bands- Earl Bostic, Ted

Buckner, Todd Rhodes, Tiny Bradshaw- and did a lot of nightclub work in St. Louis, Detroit and Chicago. The 1960s were mostly spent in Toronto, where she began her transition into the classic blues. She had an early brush with fame when the CBC broadcast a club appearance backed by a group led by Buck Clayton.

Beginning in 1972 Brown (who may have changed her name- she was reportedly born Olive Jefferson) started working the traditional jazz circuit. In those days there weren't as many festivals as in later years and the Goldenrod was the big one. There were also festivals in Memphis (Cotton Festival), Kerrville TX (Ragtime Festival), and Chicago (Big Horn Festival). Brown played them all.

During her festival gigs she picked up a sponsor- Jim Taylor- and a title- The New Empress of the Blues. Taylor

was a roofing contractor from Detroit, and devoted much of his spare time to promoting traditional jazz. He started the JTP label (Jim Taylor Presents) and recorded a number of mostly Detroit based groups - Johnny Guarnieri, Wolverine Jazz Band and Gene Mayl Dixieland Rhythm Kings. He advertised his product extensively in the Mississippi Rag Magazine, which was then just hitting its stride as a traditional jazz publication. Taylor promoted some Detroit gigs for Olive Brown and issued an LP "Olive Brown And Her Blues Chasers" (JTP 103) in 1973.

• • • • •

Olive Brown continued working through the late '70's, though she was no longer a fixture on the festival circuit. During her last years she moved back to St. Louis and remarried. Her last appearance was at a benefit concert in 1980. Olive Brown Graham died of kidney failure in 1982 — at the time of her death she was president of Black Rose Inc., a manufacturer of costume jewelry.

Ms. Brown selected a wonderful menu for this set, drawing largely on numbers made famous by Bessie Smith, though she touches on the works of Billie Holiday, Ethel Waters, Louis Armstrong and Alberta Hunter. As Eric Townley indicated in his review of the album in Storyville Magazine, "she does not produce carbon copies, and her versions are quite individual.

For anyone to sing *Back Water Blues* or *Empty Bed Blues* after the classic versions by the greatest of all blues and jazz singers is frequently an invitation to disastrous comparison with Bessie, but not so here."

The rest of the band were veterans of the traditional jazz world. Mike Montgomery (1934-2011) was the pianist in the Boll Weevils and an authority on piano rolls. Drummer J. C. Heard (1917-88) was raised in Detroit and finished his career as a mentor to many young Detroit jazzmen. In between he played all over the world, including three years with Cab Calloway and years of touring with Jazz at the Philharmonic. He recorded with a huge array of jazz stars - Teddy Wilson, Billie Holiday, Coleman Hawkins, Dizzy Gillespie, Lester Young, Oscar Peterson etc.... Alto saxophonist Ted Buckner (1913-76) started out in McKinney's Cotton Pickers and was featured for

many years with Jimmie Lunceford. He returned to Detroit and at the time of these recordings was working with the New McKinney's Cotton Pickers, another Jim Taylor project.



OLIVE BROWN

EMPRESS OF THE BLUES

- 1 **BACK WATER BLUES** 3:46
- 2 **SWEET MAN** 3:11
- 3 **SUGAR** 7:57
- 4 **'DEED I DO** 2:36
- 5 **HOW COME YOU DO ME LIKE YOU DO** 3:29
- 6 **GO BACK TO WHERE YOU STAYED LAST NIGHT** 3:50
- 7 **THAT OLD FEELING** 3:57
- 8 **EMPTY BED BLUES** 3:46
- 9 **GIMME A PIGFOOT AND A BOTTLE OF BEER** 4:32
- 10 **AGGRAVATIN' PAPA** 3:30

Personnel:

Olive Brown (vocals)
Mike Montgomery (piano)
John Trudell (trumpet, trombone)
Ted Buckner (clarinet/saxophone)
Bill Bolle (bass)
J.C. Heard (drums)

Liner notes: Paige VanVorst
2xHD Mastering: René Laflamme
2xHD Executive Producer: André Perry





THE 2xHD MASTERING PROCESS



The 2xHD Fusion Mastering System: In the constant evolution of its proprietary mastering process, 2xHD has progressed to a new phase called 2xHD FUSION, integrating the finest analog, with state-of-the-art digital technology.

The mastering chain consists of a selection of high-end vacuum tube equipment. For the recordings on this album, the original ¼" 15 ips NagraMaster curve, NAB or CCIR master tapes were played on a Nagra-T tape recorder, modified with high-end tube playback electronics, wired with OCC silver cable from the playback head direct to a Nick Doshi tube head preamplifier. The Nagra T, with its four direct drive motors, two pinch rollers and a tape tension head, has one of the best transports ever made. A custom-built carbon fiber head block and a head damping electronic system permit 2xHD FUSION to obtain a better resolution and 3D imaging.

The resulting signal is then transferred into high resolution formats by recording it in DXD using a custom 2xHD Technologies A to D converter. All analog and digital cables that are used are state of the art Siltech. The 2xHD FUSION mastering system is powered by a super capacitor power supply, using a new technology that lowers the digital noise found in the lowest level of the spectrum. A vacuum tube NAGRA HD DAC X is used as a reference digital playback converter in order to A and B with the original analog master tape, permitting the fusion of the warmth of analog with the refinement of digital.

www.2xhd.com
Pure Emotion