



**JIMMY
BABY FACE
LEWIS**

**THE COMPLETE
RECORDINGS
1947-1955**

featuring:

**JOE MORRIS
TAFT JORDAN
TAB SMITH
HAL SINGER
BUDDY TATE
BUDD JOHNSON
ERNIE FREEMAN
RENE HALL**

**blue
moon**
Blue Series

JIMMY "BABY FACE" LEWIS

THE COMPLETE RECORDINGS 1947-1955

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|----|-------|---|--------------|------|
| 1. | 133-1 | JOSEPHINE [Jimmy "Baby Face" Lewis] | Aladdin 3004 | 2:48 |
| 2. | 134-3 | RIDING WITH JIMMY [Jimmy "Baby Face" Lewis] | Aladdin 3003 | 2:40 |
| 3. | 135-1 | LONESOME ROAD [Jimmy "Baby Face" Lewis] | Aladdin 3003 | 3:05 |
| 4. | 136-2 | GETTIN' OLD [Jimmy "Baby Face" Lewis] | Aladdin 3004 | 2:54 |

JIMMY "BABY FACE" LEWIS with FLOYD CAMPBELL AND HIS ORCHESTRA: Vcl/gtr with Louis Aceheart, Henderson Smith, Calvin Ladner, tp; Al Wynn, Joe McLewis, tb; Fred Brown, Sugarman Pennigar, ts; Ruth Crowder, p; Jesse "Po" Simpkins, sbs; Floyd Campbell, dms; Stanley Williams, Herman Baker, Clifford Clark, unk. instruments. *Chicago, 19 March 1947*

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| 5. | S-9650-2 | DUSTY ROAD [J. Lewis] | Savoy 5547 | 2:50 |
| 6. | S-9653 | GRANDMA AND GRANDPA [J. Lewis] | Savoy 5547 | 2:30 |

BABY FACE LEWIS: Vcl/gtr with unk. p, sbs, dms. *New York City, 1947*

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| 7. | F-1739 | I'M WISE TO YOU BABY -1 [Lewis] | Manor 1164 | 2:25 |
| 8. | F-1740 | EVERY SUNDAY BEFORE MONDAY [Lewis] | Manor 1197 | 3:17 |
| 9. | F-1742 | BULGING EYES [Lewis] | Manor 1197 | 2:44 |

JIMMY (BABY-FACE) LEWIS with TAB SMITH ORCHESTRA: Jimmy "Baby Face" Lewis, vcl/gtr with Frank Galbreath, Russell Green, tp; Tab Smith, as; Hal Singer, ts; unk. bar; Red Richards, p; Johnny Williams, sbs; Walter Johnson, dms; ensemble vcl -J *New York City, December 1948.* Note: Lewis does not sing on the fourth title of this session, "The Red Rider" (Manor 1164).

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| 10. | A-273 | ALL NIGHT LOVER BLUES [Lewis] | Atlantic 884 | 3:06 |
| 11. | A-274 | HOW LONG BABY (Standin' And Lookin' Blues) [Lewis] | Atlantic 884 | 2:45 |
| 12. | A-275 | I'M SO GOOD TO YOU (Pretty Baby) [Toombs] | Atlantic 901 | 2:35 |
| 13. | A-276 | MAILMAN BLUES [Lewis] | Atlantic 901 | 2:43 |

JIMMY "BABY-FACE" LEWIS AND HIS BAND: Vcl/gtr with unk. ts; Ernie Freeman, p; unk. sbs, dms. *New York City, 31 August 1949*

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| 14. | A-435 | ALL THE FUN'S ON ME -1 [Lewis] | Atlantic 913 | 2:59 |
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15. A-436 I'M STILL IN LOVE -1 [Lewis] Atlantic 913 3:06
 16. A-437 I'VE GOT A RIGHT TO LOVE -1 [Lewis] Atlantic 927 2:52
 17. A-438 SLIPPIN' AND SLIDIN' [Lewis] Atlantic 927 2:43

JIMMY LEWIS And His Trio: Vcl/gtr with Rene Hall, lead gtr -1; Ernie Freeman, p; unk. sbs, dms. *New York City, 15 May 1950*

18. A-553 LOVE FEVER BLUES [Lewis-Carr] Atlantic 940 3:11

JOE MORRIS' BLUES CALVACADE: Jimmy Lewis, vcl/gtr with Joe Morris, tp; Alfonso King, tb; Johnny Griffin & Wally Williams, ts; Bill McLemore, bar; Elmore Sylvester, p; Bobby Burton, sbs; Sinclair Abbot, dms. *New York City, 15 January 1951*

Note: Lewis does not sing on other titles of this session.

19. NA-609 LET'S GET TOGETHER AND MAKE SOME LOVE [Biggs-Lewis] Atlantic 943 2:42
 20. NA-612 I'LL BE FAITHFUL TO YOU [Lewis] Atlantic 943 2:45

JIMMY LEWIS AND HIS BAND: Vcl/gtr with unk. tp, ts, bar; poss. Howard Biggs, p; unk. sbs, dms. *New York City, 14 June 1951*

21. E2-VB-6628-1S CHERRY WINE [Jimmy Lewis] Victor 20-4899 2:28
 22. E2-VB-6630-1S DARK AND LONELY ROOM [Jimmy Lewis] Victor 20-4899 2:47

JIMMY LEWIS: Vcl/gtr with Taft Jordan, tp; Claude Jones, tb; Eddie Barefield, as; Buddy Tate & Budd Johnson, ts; Howard Biggs, p; Abie Baker, sbs; Charlie Smith, dms. *New York City, 26 June 1952*

23. C-1193 LOVE BROKE MY HEART AGAIN [Lewis] Cat 103 2:45
 24. C-1194 LAST NIGHT (I Was In Heaven) [Lewis] Cat 103 2:30

JIMMY LEWIS: Vcl/gtr with unk. ts, bar, p, sbs, dms. *New York City, 14 January 1954*

25. 1489 HEY PRETTY GIRL -1 [Jimmy Lewis] Atlantic 1064 2:53
 26. 1490 HOW CAN I WIN YOUR LOVE [Jimmy Lewis] Atlantic 1064 2:44

THE TONE TWINS with JIMMY LEWIS: Vcl/gtr/poss. double-tracked vcl with unk. ts; bar; vib -1; p; sbs; dms. *New York City, 8 April 1955*

Jimmy "Baby Face" Lewis is possibly the most sorely overlooked R & B singer / guitarist of any sizable significance about whose personal details we know very little. This reissue CD gathers, for the first time, Lewis's broad body of work cut for three major indies plus Manor and RCA Victor over a period of eight years.

Lewis could do it all — shout the blues, pick a savage guitar and croon a ballad as smoothly as Larry Darnell. Peter Carr tells us in his liner notes to Saxophonograph LP 509 in 1986 ('Joy! At The Savoy' — Tab Smith) that the March 6, 1948 issue of *The Baltimore Afro American* reported that Lewis, fresh out of Canada, stole the spotlight at 'Gamby's' (a Baltimore night club at 1502 Penn. Ave.) by strumming (The Flennoy Trios) "I Ain't Mad At You" enough to be dubbed "The Madman of the Guitar." Mixing a medley of semi-classical blues and popular, tunes, Lewis stopped the show nightly at each performance.

Due to Lewis' sizable reputation, it is quite possible that he surfaced as a session man on recordings prior to the first studio date with Floyd Campbell and his Orchestra in March 1947. The Campbell Aladdin session reflected an evolving, distinctly rocking blues and rhythm sound with its solid bass lines, extravagant vocal parts and T-Bone Walker-type distorted guitar fills, a departure

from the Hampton-Jordan jump sound of the day.

Lewis's Savoy sides give us a glimpse of the blues and jazz stylist. Busy piano ornaments and guitar statements are reminiscent of some of Bill Jennings' early work prevail. On "Grandma & Grandpa" Lewis scats to some fine, fancy fretwork.

1948 finds Lewis sharing vocal chores with altoist Tab (Talmadge) Smith and his nine-piece orchestra. Lewis, with a flair for writing his own material, especially on the nasty or ugly woman theme, cut the jumping "I'm Wise To You Baby," the bluesy "Every Sunday Before Monday" and the novel "Bulging Eyes" before signing as a solo entity with Atlantic in late August 1949.

Lewis's early work on Atlantic Records is extremely fine, and with the great Cleveland-born Ernie Freeman at the piano, he waxed some of his most evocative blues ballads such as the tender "All Night Lover Blues" and "How Long Baby (Standin' & Lookin' Blues)" at New York's Apex Studios. More blues was waxed during his second date with Freeman at the Beltone Studios. Standouts include the sultry "All The Fun's On Me" with its Roy Brown-type vocal shadings, the torchy "I'm Still In Love" with its intelligent lyrics and well-mannered guitar work, the moody, emotional "I've Got A Right To Love" and the infectious, mid-tempo "Slippin' And Slidin'."

During this time, Lewis was enjoying a successful comeback at 'Gamby's', heading a talent parade that included Baltimore's own Cecilia Cox. Rumor has it that he sessioned for Tab Smith at Premium at this time. In early 1951, Lewis joined the Joe Morris Blues Cavalcade. Morris, an extremely talented trumpeter from Montgomery, Alabama, had formed a revue modelled on the Johnny Otis Show. Along with Laurie Tate and others, Lewis became a featured soloist. He fronted one song on wax with Morris, the excellent back-alley-sounding "Love Fever Blues."

During the summer of 1951, pianist / orchestral arranger Howard Biggs organized a Lewis session for Atlantic at the Beltone Studios. From this emerged the rocking "Let's Get Together And Make Some Love" and the throaty ballad, "I'll Be Faithful To You." Biggs repeated this tactic a year later by having Lewis record the booting "Cherry Wine" and the tear-stained "Dark And Lonely Room" for RCA.

Lewis then returned to occasional sessions work and did not pop up again until January 1954, when he headed up a session on Atlantic's Cat subsidiary accompanied, in all likelihood, by Texas-born pianist Floyd Dixon and his combo. The net

result was the unreleased "Danger", "Love Broke My Heart Again," – a popish lament – and the rug-cutting "Last Night (I Was In Heaven)". Lewis also waxed behind Dixon on his November 10, 1954 Cat session which produced Dixon's much heralded "Hey Bartender." The last we hear of Lewis on record is as the double-tracked Tone Twins on Atlantic in April 1955. Sounding like Marvin & Johnny, Lewis waxed the stompin' "Hey Pretty Girl" backed with the catchy "How Can I Win Your Love."

After this Lewis faded from view until March 1963 when the British tabloid, 'The Daily Express', reported that he had been arrested by police (five "7-Ups"), two of whom were disguised as harmonica-blowing hula dancers at his Manhattan apartment for peddling drugs. Hunting dogs found \$200,000 worth of "narcotics," the report added. This may explain the sad fact that Lewis slipped out of the music business in the late 1950s. It was yet another disheartening end to another enormous talent.

— *Opal Louis Nations, July 2001*

with assistance from Peter Carr, Guido Van Rijn and Bob Eagle.