BIG MAMA THORNTON IN EUROPE

Willie Nae "Big Nama" Thoraton is in my opinion the greatest female blues singer of this and say other decade. She combines the sensitive and personal qualities of the great country blues singers like Memphis Minnie and Lottie Kimbrough and the showmanship and powerful delivery of the great legends of the 1920s such as Ma Rainay and Bessie Smith. Big Mama can get as rough as any great blues artist when she blows the harmonica and beats out the rhythm behind a set of drums, she can be as magnificent as Mahalia Jackson when she singe alongs like "Qammartime", and she can be the real personal and sensitive country blues artist as evidenced on this silbum by the two selections with Fred McDowdil, But at all times Big Mama is herself - she doesn't try to be anybody olse. Sometimes she makes up her own songs as as he goes along but susually Big Mama there any song she likes and makes it late her own personal expression. I have heard Big Mama at many different places, from "down-home" beer joints to the stages of Europpe's finest concert halls and everywhere Big Mama has been herself. Big Mama sings the muste ash known all her life - music she feels - songs which have meaning for her - blues which deal with everyby life as she has experienced it - not always an easy life - mostly a rough and hard life with many disappolements in love and other relationships - but that is the essence of the blues - and they are universal. A person who has never experienced the blues is a rare bird indeed. Different people have many ways to express their blues and Big Mama is sure about her way. She sings and plays in the long and rich tradition of her predecasaers - the men and women who have made Negro music the meat important influence in popular music throughout the world. Willie Mae was leacheft home to tour with the shot Harrison was born and resisted a Alabama, ther father was a minister and her mother also sang in the church. When Willie Mae was leacheft home to tour with the shot Harrison was born and resisted in Alabama, in fa

while keeping the drum beat going with the other. Early in 1844 Jimmy Lyons called me to ask whom I would recommend for their filmes Alternoon to be part of the 1844 Monitorey Jazs Featival and the first name which came to my mind was Big Mama Thoraton. All of us who were there know what happened. It was just the way Raiph Gleason said it in the San Francisco Chronicle: "A six foot, 300 pound blues singer broke up pesterday siternoon's record crowd at the Monitorey Jazs Featival. The singer, Big Mama Thoraton, received a standing ovalion from the crowd of 6000 for her preditioned "Hound Dog!" and a blues of her own composition "I'm Losti".

In the fall of 1864 I had told Horst Lippmann, producer of the now annual American Folk Blues Festival which tours all of Europe, about Big Mama Thoraton and her tramendous success at Moniterey andhe was very enhanced about the possibility of finalty getting a real low-down female blues singer to tour with the Festival. At first Big Mama was a bit reluctant about the trip because she has similar dislikes for sirplanes as does Lightning Hopkins, but she finalty agreed to make the trip. As it turned out Big Mama certainly was the topper of the 1985 American Folk Blues Festival. Her rousing "Hound Dog" as well as the finale which she called "Down-home Shakedown" wrereceived with enthusiable applause everywhere in Europe, and her manager Jim Moore was quoted as asying: "And the reception! Wow! You couldn't believe it! Big Mama reid, really cried."

This album was recorded in London with members of the 1985 American Folk Blues Festival. Side one of this LP features the powerful, rocking, big-beat blues backed by the Chicagor rhythm section. Side one of this LP features the powerful, rocking, big-beat blues backed by the Chicagor rhythm section. Side one of this LP features the powerful, rocking, big-beat blues backed by the Chicagor rhythm section. Side one of this LP features the powerful, rocking, big-beat blues backed by the Chicagor rhythm section. Side one of this LP feature

Personnel for each selection:
"Sweet Little Angel", "The
Place": Big Mann Thornton vocals; Buddy Guy = guitar;
Fred Below - drums; Eddle Doyd - plane; Jimm Lee
Bobleson - browners

inson - bass. "Little Red Rooster"; same as last but Eddie Boyd -

"Little Red Rooster"; same as last but Louis Doyuorgan.
"Unbucky Girl" & "Nound Dog"; same as above but
add Walter "Shaby" Horton - harmonics.
"My Heavy Load" & "School Boy"; Big Mama Thornton vocals; Fred McDowell - guitar.
"Down-home Shakedown"; Big Mama Thoraton harmonics; Shaby Horton - harmonics; Eddle Doyd organ; plus Below, Guy & Robinson.
"Your love is where it ought to be"; Big Mama
Thoraton - vocal, harmonics, and drums; Buddy Guy guitar; Eddle Boyd - piano.
"Session Blues"; Big Mama Thoraton vocal and
drums; Shaky Horton - harmonics; plus Guy and Boyd.

WING IT ON HOME SWEET LITTLE ANGEL THE PLACE

Stereo F 1028

UNLUCKY GIRL

MY HEAVY LOAD

DOWN-HOME SHAKE-DOWN

SESSION BLUES

Cover Photo: Chris Strachwitz Cover Design: Wayne Pope

Recorded by: Chris Strachwitz England, October 20, 1965

ced by: Chris Strachwitz



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ARHOOLIE RECORDS-Box 9195 Berkeley, Ca. 94709

New York-based poet, performer and visual artist Pamela Sneed's genre defying work is rooted in her commitment to activism and intersectional modes of thinking, from the 1990s AIDS crisis to the Black lesbian working class experience. An example of this is her most recent and widely celebrated book, Funeral Diva (2020) —a poetic memoir about coming-ofage in the AIDS era, and its effects on life and art.

Often working from an autobiographical impulse, Sneed's contribution to ACT IX is no different. For the occasion, she brings her recently developed performance project A Tribute to Big Mama Thornton to Amsterdam for the first time. Premiering in New York at the beginning of 2023 and brought to life in the style

of a juke joint—a term within African American vernacular to refer to an establishment featuring music, dancing and drinking—A Tribute to Big Mama Thornton honours singer and songwriter Big Mama Thornton. Until her recent induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2024, Big Mama Thornton was an unsung pioneer of rock and roll known for her genderexpansive style. Through bringing her hits to life on stage, Sneed locates the legacy of Big Mama Thornton within the queer canon through an examination of her presence as a Black and transgender performer.

In a prose poem-cum-newsletter for the Poetry Project in 2020, Sneed writes: 'Like Big Mama Thornton, I too was raised in the church. My grandfather was a baptist preacher. My

grandmother sang spirituals. I credit the Black church for my love and introduction to poetry, the music and art I was surrounded by, and through the lyricism of preachers and women's testimonies I learned poetry. Through this upbringing I identified with Big Mama Thornton and how she came to music.'

Sneed will be joined on stage at Torpedo Theater by Mara Rosenbloom on keys, Michael Vatcher on drums and Jasper Stadhouders on guitar. For the evening, Torpedo Theater will open its doors under the name of Juke Joint, and its stage will be dedicated to the coalescence of voices raring to be heard—ones joyously singing their refusal to adhere to what could be understood as normative femininity.

PROGRAMME

mq8

Introduction to Pamela Sneed

8.10pm—Set The hits of Big Mama Thornton Performed by Pamela Sneed (vocals), Mara Rosenbloom (keys), Michael Vatcher (drums) and Jasper Stadhouders (guitar)

9:30pm—Drinks

IMAGE Backside of the record Big Mama Thornton In Europe (1966), signed by Big Mama Thornton.

COLOPHON Torpedo Theater is a long-running, thirty-seat theatre in the heart of Amsterdam's city centre. Originally founded by Het Parool, a Dutch national newspaper, the theatre has been committed to the spoken, written and performed word from the beginning. playbill is an event-based project invested in the presentation of experimental language and text-based artistic works on the (small) stage. It is curated by Martha Jager and Isabelle Sully, and designed by Maud Vervenne. playbill: ACT IX has been made possible thanks to the Amsterdams Fonds voor de Kunst, Gemeente Amsterdam Stadsdeel Centrum and Mondriaan Fonds. This playbill has been printed by Terry Bleu, Amsterdam.