



Jimmy Witherspoon

August 8, 1920 - September 18, 1997

Los Angeles, California

Jimmy Witherspoon - James Witherspoon - American jump-blues and jazz singer whose smoky baritone bridged big-band blues and modern club stages, died in Los Angeles, California, on September 18, 1997. He was seventy-seven. Born August 8, 1920, in Gurdon, Arkansas, he came up through wartime and postwar bandstands, scored a massive late-1940s hit with "Ain't Nobody's Business," and then outlasted fashion cycles that tried to retire blues singers when rock and roll arrived.

He worked with Jay McShann early, later shared bills and records with jazz players who valued his timing and grain, and kept a career alive on European and American festival circuits when domestic radio moved on. The voice was conversational menace and warmth at once - urban blues without apology. Younger audiences in the 1970s and 1980s rediscovered him as a living link to the jump era.

Throat cancer ended the singing. Los Angeles, long his base, was the last address. Discographies still list dozens of albums; the best sides need no liner-note rescue to sound current.

He died in Los Angeles on September 18, 1997. "Ain't Nobody's Business" still turns up whenever someone needs a blues standard that refuses to beg.

Witherspoon's gift was lived-in authority - a voice that sounded like it had already survived the story it told. Notice Nearby keeps the death date so September 18 remembers the Arkansas-born bluesman who made jump blues a lifelong craft.

Services

Died in Los Angeles, California, September 18, 1997. Jump-blues and jazz singer; known for "Ain't Nobody's Business"; performed from the big-band era through late-century festivals.

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