ann arbor blues festival

50¢
PROGRAM

FRIDAY NIGHT
Roosevelt Sykes
Bukka White
Mighty Joe Young
Jimmy Dawkins
John Lee Hooker
Howlin' Wolf

SATURDAY AFTERNOON
Houndog Taylor
Lazy Bill Lucas
Fred McDowell
Juke Boy Bonner
Luther Allison
Albert King

SATURDAY NIGHT
Robert Pete Williams
Johnny Shines
with Sunnyland Slim
Johnny Young
Dave Alexander
Joe Turner
with Eddie Vinson
Bobby Bland

SUNDAY AFTERNOON
John Jackson
Papa Lightfoot
Little Brother Montgomery
Carey Bell
Buddy Guy
Otis Rush

SUNDAY NIGHT
Mance Lipscomb
Little Joe Blue
Lowell Fulson
Big Mama Thornton
Junior Parker
Son House

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Cover photo: Otis Spann
The blues never die

The Blues will never die. We of the Blues Festival Committee whole heartedly believe this, but we also accept that time changes everything, even the blues. The Ann Arbor Blues Festival is set up as a tribute to an American musical genre that has been part of black culture in this nation since slave days. It is from and of the black experience. Those who bemoan the passing of the so-called rural blues fail to realize that the same intensity and feeling is apparent in the blues that pour from the black urban community today. The blues are the same - only the problems are different.

Really, the blues never die, only bluesmen. In the short space of twelve months since last year's festival the blues world has been saddened by the untimely death of many noted bluesmen. Sadly, each of the artists who died represented a high point in the craft that they followed. It is due to these men that the blues continue to be heard and loved. Their deaths have left a vacancy in our hearts that will never be filled. As a gesture of appreciation to their greatness, we would like to pay tribute to them:

T. V. Slim - On October 21, 1969, at the age of 53, Oscar "T.V. Slim" Wills died. Slim died in an auto accident near Kingman, Arizona, when his car hit an oil slick. Slim was a little known Texas bluesman whose big hit was "Flat Foot Sam" which was distributed nationally by Checker. Slim leaves a wife and eleven children.

Kokomo Arnold - On November 8, guitarist-singer Kokomo Arnold died of a heart attack. He was born in Lovejoy, Georgia on February 15, 1901, and began playing professionally in 1924. He moved to Chicago in 1929 and played there until 1941. During this time he recorded for Decca. Then he drifted into obscurity never to play again.

J. T. Brown - On November 24, saxophonist J. T. Brown passed away. His death went virtually unnoticed. J. T. was best known for his great sax work with J. B. Lenoir and Elmore James. He was highly respected among Chicago's musicians and was known as "Nature Boy", "Sax Man", "Bep", and "Big Boy". He played a great, rocking sax and occasionally sang. He can be heard on recordings with many of Chicago's greatest artists. He also leaves a few obscure singles as his legacy.

Skip James - In late November Skip James, the legendary Delta blues singer, passed away at the age of
Otis Spann - The death of Otis Spann on April 25 stunned and saddened the blues world. Otis died at 40 of cancer of the liver in Cook County Hospital in Chicago. Among blues pianists Otis Spann was without peer. For over two decades, ever since he arrived in Chicago from his home in Belzoni, Miss.

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Magic Sam - On December 1, Samuel (Magic Sam) Maghett collapsed and died of a heart attack, probably brought on by overwork more than anything else. Like many brilliant blues musicians, fortune and fame eluded Sam. He spent most of his musical career scuffling around Chicago for jobs in the bars and lounges which were usually characterized by their long hours and low pay. Still, Sam's fluid guitar work and powerful, piercing vocals helped to make his name legend among the ghetto blacks on the South and West sides of Chicago. He formed his first band while still in high school and cut some 78's for the now defunct Cobra label at the age of twenty. Sam was the undisputed highlight of last year's festival. Virtually unknown when he came to Ann Arbor, Sam completely destroyed the crowd in a brilliant 45 minute set. Long after he had left the stage, cheerleader type chants arose from the audience calling him back. He had released two great albums on Delmark, a tour of Europe, and was just beginning to achieve some long overdue recognition when he died. Magic Sam was 32.

Slim Harpo - On January 31, 1970 Slim Harpo died of a heart attack in Baton Rouge. Slim was born James Moore and was only 45 when he died. A great guitar and harp player, Slim had been playing and recording for many years. He recorded several outstanding albums for Excello and produced such hits as "I'm a King Bee", "Baby Scratch My Back", and "Tip on In".

Earl Hooker - On April 20, Earl Hooker succumbed to tuberculosis. B. B. King had called him "the greatest living blues guitarist - except he's too damn lazy". Earl first recorded in 1948 for King records. Over the years he backed up many musicians, including Junior Wells, Muddy Waters, and his cousin John Lee Hooker. Earl, who picked up his slide guitar style from Robert Nighthawk, was a great performer in his own right. In the last few years he cut some great albums for Arhoolie, Blue Thumb, and Bluesway. However, fame eluded him. He suffered from TB for many years and this disease finally claimed him at the age of 40.

Lonnie Johnson - On June 17, veteran bluesman Lonnie Johnson died as the result of a stroke. Born in New Orleans in 1889, Lonnie first became famous playing the guitar in Storyville bordellos. Probably no man influenced modern blues and rock guitar styles more than Lonnie Johnson. From Jimi Hendrix and Eric Clapton to B. B. King, every guitarist owes a debt to Lonnie. He developed the modern blues sound.

We of the festival hope to achieve, as last year, a true rapport between the audience and the performing artist. This shouldn't be too difficult as this year's show contains some of the greatest blues acts around. This is a lineup that may never be repeated again. Watch, listen, and dig it, which shouldn't be too hard as the next three days of music will be fantastic. After the three days are over, see if you don't agree with us that the Blues shouldn't die. As the late Otis Spann sang:

We just can't let the blues die
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5 ann arbor blues festival program 1970
It is a popular artifice of writers and rock musicians who haven’t been on the Chicago blues scene in five or ten years, if at all, to depict the Chicago blues as a dying idiom. But those who have spent any appreciable time in the more than 30 blues bars on the South and West Sides that still present the music every weekend night know better. They discover Junior Wells and Detroit Junior at Peppers; Otis Rush at the Alex Club; Luther Allison at the L & A Lounge; Buddy Guy, Andrew Odem, and the Myers Brothers at Theresa’s; J. B. Hutto at Rose and Kelly’s; Carey Bell and Jimmy Dawkins at Duke’s Place; Johnny Littlejohn at the Riveria; Hound Dog Taylor at Florence’s; Sunnyland Slim at the J & P Lounge; Mighty Joe Young at the Brass Rail; or 23-year old Young Blood (Alvin Nichols) at the Sportsman’s.

No, the blues are not dying in Chicago. The vital influence of Gospel music and the better soul singers, the cultural interchanges with jazz, the oppressive partnership of the political machine, the crime syndicate, and the racist system must all disappear before the Chicago blues will be spoken of in the past tense.

How did Chicago become a major center for blues activity? Of course there are no phonograph records to give us any insight into the musical environment of Chicago in the earliest years of black migration to the city. (Since Chicago was founded by a black man, we should speak of white migration.) But very early in the history of so-called race recording, Chicago became important. The venerable Paramount label hired a sportswriter named J. Mayo Williams in 1923 to produce its series of blues, jazz, and vaudeville sessions beamed to the black community. He crossed the street from his office and hired Ma Rainey, Lovie Austin and Ida Cox at the Monogram Theatre, later went afield to give us the first sides by Blind Lemon Jefferson. Since recording apparatus was quite bulky, the artists were brought to the Chicago area. When the records sold well, many of them stayed.

Chicago was firmly established as THE “race” recording center by 1926 when Okeh and Vocalion centralized their blues activity here. Gradually a body of resident bluesmen developed from this recording activity and from the increasing movement to the city by blacks trying to escape the more naked oppression of the South.
During these early years, the bluesmen literally "put it in the alley" - played on the streets and in the alleys for tips - or worked at the house rent parties and whiskey flats (prohibition, remember, wasn't repealed until 1932). A walk through residential neighborhoods on a weekend night provided ample evidence of house parties in progress. Sometimes it was a fulltime business: the selling of alcohol and water, gambling and vice to the accompaniment of the rolling bass that found its way to the city from the rural South.

Most of the itinerant musicians were blues singers who learned their songs down home but found a more generous audience in South-Side flats. Some had originally played the guitar but, with a piano in every building on the South-Side capable of a louder volume of sound, the stringed instrument was discarded. A few Chicago pianists who didn't sing developed the instrumental possibilities of the idiom. Meade Lux Lewis, Albert Ammons and Jimmy Blythe were really jazz musicians -- and could perhaps be termed the first "soul" jazzmen because of their close association with blues at its most magnificently primitive level.

The development of a recognizable Chicago blues idiom can be seen in the evolution of Big Bill Broonzy's recordings beginning with his country blues on Paramount and Champion thru the gradually more urbanized approach on his later Bluebird and Vocalion (later Okeh and Columbia) sessions. Some of the credit belongs to Lester Melrose, a white music publisher who eventually supervised two-thirds of Chicago blues sides during the late 30's and 40's. He combined bluesmen often literally off the farm with jazz musicians from New Orleans who were influencing Chicago's music scene in a way that was unheard of in the early 20's.

Thus, trumpeters Lee Collins and Punch Miller, clarinetist Arnett Nelson, bassist Ransom Knowling, drummer Jump Jackson and many others are featured on numerous Melrose dates of the period and are also known in the world of traditional jazz. Pianists "Black Bob" Robinson and Thomas A. Dorsey had careers in black vaudeville and jazz which brought some sophistication to their blues accompaniments with Big Bill and Tampa Red. Eventually the piano became an integral part of Chicago-made blues recordings and a few pianists such as Joshua Altheimer, Blind John Davis, Roosevelt Sykes and even Mississippi onetime guitarist Peetie Wheatstraw made literally hundreds of sides with various bluesmen.

Now, it must be remembered that Chicago had feeder-cities primarily Indianapolis (Champion Jack Dupree and before him, LeRoy Carr) and St. Louis (Sykes, Wheatstraw, Walter Davis, Speckled Red, Rober Lee "Nighthawk" McCoy) and more recently Memphis (Wells, Cotton, Big Walter and the BB King school). Also, new talent was constantly coming in from the rural South -- all this still keeps the pot melting and the music close to its roots.

By 1938, when blues recording was organized by the black musicians Union local, electric guitars began appearing on records. In the 40's the pianists began to overtake the guitarists in popularity with Roosevelt Sykes, Jack Dupree, Memphis Slim and, later, Sunnyland Slim broadening the appeal of the blues to middle-class blacks who chose to forget the unpleasantness of their Southern birthplaces and the music connected with it.

Wartime prosperity brought with it increased wages for workers who brought a love for the blues with them from the Southern rootland. Blues bands started appearing in the taverns of the West and South-Sides. Big Bill Broonzy played at Sylvio's, Sonny Boy Williamson sometimes in the band with him. Sykes, more debonair, worked steadily between North Side syndicate joints and 47th Street's shonkly spots. And Memphis Minnie, Curtis Jones, Tampa Red and other really popular blues artists no longer had to depend on cop-dodging on the South-Side and Maxwell Street Sunday afternoons for income from their music.

But Melrose, who now had a virtual monopoly (since Mayo Williams Decca operations were moved to New York after 1938's recording ban in Chicago and never returned) on Chicago recording, did not record the bands that appeared in the taverns. His sessions were polished but lacked the robustness of the blues joints.

Before getting into the modern Chicago scene, several extremely important artists of the early 40's should be mentioned. First, guitarists Baby Doo and Willie James Lacey -- who must have influenced greatly the way even T-Bone Walker (who worked Chicago regularly at that time) played the blues. And you must hear the records of Doctor Clayton to appreciate how much this African-born and New York-bred vocalist influenced every aspect of the blues in the postwar years.

Recording of bands as they sounded in the clubs had to wait for the appearance of the independent labels in the late 40's. Of course, the surviving label of this group is Chess, with its Checker and Argo subsids, and marvelous reissue series. But let's pay heed to the others. Miracle, Premium and "United/States" were to give us modern-style sides by Memphis Slim, Roosevelt Sykes, Robert Nighthawk, Junior Wells and Big Walter Horton. Disc jockey Al Benson's Swingmaster, "Parrot/Blue Lake" gave us J. B. Lenore, Snooky Pryor, Dusty Brown, and some classic early T-Bone Walker material in the 50's. "Cobra" produced magnificent debut sessions by Magic Sam, Otis Rush, Shakey Jake and Buddy Guy in the late 1950's. J.O.8- entered dozens of great sides by Sunnyland Slim, J. B. Lenore, Johnny Shines, Willie Mabon, Floyd Jones, John Brim, Eddie Boyd, and others. Vee-Jay began with Eddie Taylor, Jimmy
Reed and later John Lee Hooker, merged with Chance (J. B. Hutto, Homesick James) before going pop with the Beatles, Four Seasons, etc. (Only poor management prevented Vee-Jay, United and Parrot from becoming major independent operations.)

Elmore James' and Junior Wells' Chief and Profile releases are much sought after by 50's blues collectors. "USA Age", in the 60's, brought back Buddy john, J. L. Smith, Big Mac. Rev. Harrington's Atomic label continues its very long history with a recent release by Eddie Clearwater.

In the tradition of tavern-owners who have operated labels, Cadillac Baby still recorded Earl Hooker, Little Mack and Eddie Boyd 45's in the early 60's. The day bartender at Theresa's operates CJ/Colt/ Firma with items by Hooker, Little Mack, Detroit Junior and a recent release by Lee Jackson. These 45's are often pressed in quantities as small as 500 or 1000 copies, usually do not get the vital press that LP's ever made in Chicago by Delmark, Arhoolie, Testament or Vanguard.

It is true that you cannot come to Chicago and expect to find the old country players like Big Joe Williams or Arthur Crudup working the West Side. Times change and with it the music changes. You must either accept change in art or encrust yourself in a sad nostalgia. You will not even hear the Muddy-Little Walter sound very often anymore. J. B. Hutto, Lee Jackson, Sunnyland Slim, Louis Myers, Big Walter and even Junior Wells and Buddy Guy in a mellow mood will give you a glimpse of the past occasionally - but they are with the newer sounds, too, and that's why they remain a part of the genious of B. B. King's style.

In the "New York Times" (June 21, 1970), Albert Goldman depicted bluesmen as "middle-aged or elderly" but has probably never been inside a blues club. The commentators, promoters and producers of certain white bluesmen who drew most of their inspiration from occasional sitting-in at Peppers or Theresa's ten years ago tell the same fiction from the same lack of knowledge. It's good for the imitative musicians' ego and Myth (and business) to portray themselves as the saviors of a dying tradition — twenty years ago the dixielanders were turning the same trick — but the creative ferment of the ghetto is all-encompassing. It can almost be sniffed amid the stale beer and cigarette smoke of the thriving tradition of blues bar sessions.

That's why the young Chicago blues fans who recently kicked off America's first blues magazine dubbed it LIVING BLUES. If you come to Chicago, and are 21, you can usually find some of the clubs listed in the Sun-Times Thursday and Sunday entertainment calendars — a few dozen of the others are listed on the wall chart at the Jazz Record Mart at Grand and State just North of the Loop.

And if Chicago's still cooking, so is St. Louis, Memphis, etc., etc., etc. Anyone who thinks the blues are dying doesn't know much about the sick state of American society, about racism, about artistic evolution, or the fecund musical environment of the black church.
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Definitions of blues styles and characteristics are seldom precise - probably no one knows exactly what is meant by “Country blues” or “Mississippi Blues” or “Classic blues”. Such terms are rarely used by blues singers anyway; when they are, they have generally been picked up from blues critics and enthusiasts.

“Urban blues” is, similarly, an uncertain term. Few blues collectors would call Blind Lemon Jefferson or Barbecue Bob, Furry Lewis or Blind Boy Fuller “urban blues singers”, but if the term means “living in, or pertaining to, a town or city” then all of them could come within this definition. Jefferson lived in Dallas, Texas, Barbecue Bob in Atlanta, Georgia, Furry Lewis still lives in Memphis, Tennessee, and Blind Boy Fuller came from Durham, North Carolina. These are all cities, and they are large ones, widely separated. What links them is that they are Southern cities.

Most of the singers who are associated with “Urban blues” in the general use of the term, became celebrated in the cities of the North, or of the border states: Bib Bill Broonzy, Sonny Boy Williamson (No. 1.), Tampa Red, Howling Wolf. Perhaps then, a distinction between Southern blues and Northern blues would be more useful than one between Country blues and City blues, or Rural blues and Urban blues. Except for one small thing - nearly all the singers commonly associated with Urban blues were born and raised in the South.

Many blues singers have led careers which cut right across all simple definitions in the blues. Take Big Joe Williams for instance, a singer whose early career was spent in Mississippi and Alabama, but who has been long associated with St. Louis and Chicago. He recorded with Sonny Boy Williamson on titles which seem indisputably “urban” and yet his wanderings have kept him continually on the move from Texas to California, from Chicago to Mississippi. Today he is featured as a “country blues” singer on Festivals and concerts. But really he defies such classification - Big Joe is himself and as far as pigeon-holing blues singers is concerned we might do better to consider them on their merits as individual artists.

Yet, at the same time, it is reasonable to relate elements in the work of artists which do appear to be associated, in fact it is a necessary process in understanding. So if “urban blues” seems uncertainly applied to many individual blues singers, and is inaccurate as a means of identifying them, why do we cling to this classification, and what do we mean by it?

In a sense we cannot answer this question without considering the other side of the coin: what do we mean by “country” or “rural” blues; when, as we have seen, many blues singers do not comfortably fit in this kind of compartment either. We are, I think, talking about qualities - elements of style,
delivery, musical interpretation, lyric content, and attitudes to the creative process which together have an urban character, an urban character which is Northern also, contrasted with those qualities which we associate with the rural South, and probably with Southern cities likewise.

As far as recordings are concerned a definable urban character appears in the very first sessions to produce what can be considered as blues. Mamie Smith's "Crazy Blues", made in 1920, had a bland, rather piping delivery and a jazz band accompaniment which typified the vaudeville-styled blues of New York. Her successors, Edith Wilson, Lucille Hegamin, Mary Stafford, Alberta Hunter, Sara Martin and many more, all sang blues of a kind but also performed popular songs which were directed at a black audience more at home in a Brooklyn or Harlem cabaret than in a southern juke.

Many of the so-called "Classic blues" singers were theatre and vaudeville stage performers first, and blues singers second. Their appearances in Atlantic City, Cleveland, Detroit, Baltimore, Washington, New York or Chicago attracted huge audiences. They were singing mainly for black people, but for city dwellers, many of whom had spent their entire lives in the urban north, and their performances had a sophistication which would have seemed odd in rural Mississippi or Alabama.

Many of these women singers travelled in road shows and in stock companies nevertheless, to appear in theatres in Memphis, Houston, New Orleans, Dallas or Atlanta and countless tops in between. There's plenty of evidence to show that country singers knew the records and witnessed the performances of these girls from the cities, even including their songs in their own repertoires.

Sometimes "City blues" and "classic blues" are considered as one, but neither term is satisfactory and they are not simply interchangeable. For it would be incorrect to think of Gertrude "Ma" Rainey as an urban blues singer. She seldom played much in the north and most of her career was spent travelling in road shows and tent shows, working the theatres of the South, appearing under canvas, in minstrel shows and stock companies. Ida Cox too, spent half a century touring with such companies as Silas Green from New Orleans, the Florida Cotton Blossoms or the Rabbit Foot Minstrels. Such singers, in any usual applications of the terms, were certainly "classic" but not "urban". The incomparable Bessie Smith on the other hand, sang in joints in Tennessee and Alabama, before eventually becoming the outstanding singer in the classic vein who dominated jazz and blues in New York.

These singers had strong, sonorous voices, nasal in the case of Ida Cox, warm and deep in the instance of Ma Rainey; Bessie Smith's singing was broad and sweeping and she had a command of inflection which indicated her indebtedness to rural traditions. Her transition to urban blues was the inspiration of many other women singers whose voices and emotional depth were far closer to the blues of the fields than were the first classic blues on record. Bertha "Chippie" Hill who came from Alabama to Chicago, Sippie Wallace and Victoria Spivey who left Texas for Detroit were among the rich-toned "moaners" who followed Bessie Smith's example, to add a new dimension to the urban blues of the women singers.

Blues entertainers worked in the clubs and speakeasies which grew in number spectacularly as Prohibition engendered a bootleg liquor industry in Chicago and other northern cities. They sang to black audiences and occasional white listeners, who for the most part had come up from the South themselves. The First World War created job opportunities in the defense factories which attracted black migrants in scores of thousands from out of the South.

During the boom years of the 'twenties the influx of southern Negroes seeking work in the north continued, and the South Side of Chicago threatened to burst at the seams. Among them came blues singers, guitarists and pianists, whose local characteristics of the regions of the South were mixed into a melting-pot of musical styles. Guitarists and pianists jelled together: Blind Blake with Charlie Spand, Tampa Red with Georgia Tom Dorsey, Big Bill Broonzy with just about everyone. They were among the blues singers and musicians who shaped an essentially urban music out of the blues of many traditions. Two artists who did not work together but were highly influential must be mentioned. They were Lonnie Johnson, a guitarist from New Orleans by way of Texas and St. Louis, and Clarence "Pine Top" Smith, a pianist from Alabama.

Lonnie Johnson had a deft technique on the guitar and a suave, insinuating voice which owed little to the country. His blues were clever, his lyrics well constructed and his playing impeccable. Johnson's urban manner appealed to the new northern residents who didn't want to be reminded too much of their rural origins. In contrast, the exhilaration and excitement of the city was caught in the fast, rolling piano of "Pine Top's Boogie Woogie". Eight beats to the bar in the left hand rhythms, which set up a train-like impetus to the blues, typified the playing of scores of South Side pianists. Down in Mississippi, Louisiana and Arkansas pianists like Roosevelt Sykes and Little Brother Montgomery called the technique "walking the basses" or "Dud Low Joes". It was Pine Top Smith who called his dance number "boogie woogie" and the term was applied to a whole genre of piano blues.

In 1928, the year when Pine Top made his record a few brief months before he was killed by a stray bullet, also saw the appearance of "Tight Like That." It was made by Tampa Red and Georgia Tom, with the former's easy slide guitar, the latter's stomping
Roy Carr in a sad, sweet voice sang "How Long, How Long Blues" to his own blues piano and slide or flat-picked guitar with lyrics of rare poetry and sensitivity. It was a brilliant combination and in the second half of 1928, the watershed year for urban blues, more than a dozen titles by Carr and Blackwell were issued: there were twice as many the following year.

They were the last to be laid off when the Depression hit the record industry, and the first to be reinstated, their amalgam of city urbanity and rural emotion, of boogie and blues piano and slide or flat-picked guitar, was the dominant center to which southern bluesmen like the guitarists Henry Townsend, Big Joe Williams, Charley Jordan and Robert McCoy all gravitated. It had its own school of pianists who were joined by Roosevelt Sykes and who accompanied such singers as Mary Johnson and Edith Johnson in the clubs of Deep Morgan Street. Best known of the bluesmen who worked this urban period were thestringers of country blues maybe these will open up blues harmonica for a decade.

This triumvirate made a strong opposition to Bumble Bee Slim and Little Bill Gaither who modelled themselves on Leroy Carr, and though these artists continued to record in the late thirties it was the Broonzy-Williamson school which grabbed the new audiences. Their music was driving, with a strong rhythm, powerful boogie-woogie piano, interweaving guitar and hard-blowing harp. The pianists included Bob Call and Blind John Davis but the most dynamic was Big Maceo Merriweather whose thunderous left hand bass figures were offset by the plangent guitar of Georgia Tom's old partner, Tampa Red.

Shellac rationing, the Petrillo recording ban and the stringencies of wartime economy left the years of the Second World War largely undocumented as far as urban blues was concerned, but in the late 'forties the music of Chicago was still flourishing, even if its exponents were now middle-aged. But there were indications of a change in taste: on the West Coast a number of sophisticated singers, among them Charles Brown, Floyd Dixon and the somewhat more vigorous pianist Cecil Gant, appeared to challenge the supremacy of the Chicago blues singers. Virtuosi of the electric guitar with T-Bone Walker in the forefront were also stealing attention, while a host of small record companies were undermining the monopoly of Bluebird, Victor and Columbia. Rhythm and Blues was on its way in, and the older forms of urban blues on their way out.

Just twenty years after "Tight Like That" and "Pine Top's Boogie Woogie" heralded the urban blues of the 'thirties and 'forties, the murder of Sonny Boy Williamson in June 1948 signalled its end. Simultaneously a singer in his early 'thirties was beginning to record for Aristocrat. He called himself Muddy Waters and his "down home" blues did not seem at this time to be a threat to the music of the older urban bluesmen. But the first recordings of Howling Wolf in Memphis and John Lee Hooker in Detroit were now being made and this last generation of urban blues singers was soon to force Washboard Sam and Jazz Gillum into retirement, and Big Bill Broonzy into the folk clubs and the concert circuit.

This is a story in itself, and one which has most influenced modern trends in blues appreciation. But the earlier forms of urban blues first introduced black music to America on record, and subsequently demonstrated the maturity of the new city-dwellers through humour and hokum. In the 'thirties and 'forties the developing confidence and sense of identity of black America was declared forcefully in the assertive music of Chicago and the peripheral cities. In its different phases it was bland, cool, exhilarating, sardonic, aggressive - and in the grooves of its hundreds of recorded examples there's still much to discover and enjoy. As recordings led to an appreciation of country blues maybe these will open up urban blues to us. Its surviving exponents have a lot to give us yet.
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Roosevelt Sykes

"All I've done, all my life, is picking a little cotton and picking a little piano."

Roosevelt Sykes was born in Helena, Arkansas, on January 13, 1906. At the age of three, Roosevelt and his family moved to St. Louis, a town famous for its piano players. He frequently returned to visit relatives in West Helena, and was greatly impressed by the pianists there. Lee Green, Baby Sneed, Joe Crump and Jesse Bell being among them. His grandfather, a preacher, helped Roosevelt get started by letting him play the church organ. After a short period, he switched to the piano and developed what has proven to be one of the most influential styles in blues history.

St. Louis had a wealth of great pianists, but Sykes stood out as best. While in St. Louis, Roosevelt played with almost every singer in town. Clifford Gibson, Peetie Wheatstraw, Lonnie Johnson, Henry Townsend, Teddy Darby and Walter Davis were just a few who called on Roosevelt to fill out their sound. St. Louis Jimmy Oden even relied on Sykes to back him on his classic recording "Going Down Slow."

Roosevelt's first recording session was for Okeh in 1929, where he produced "44 Blues." In 1930 he signed with four companies under four different names. He was Willy Kelly for Victor, Dobby Bragg for Paramount, Easy Papa Johnson for Melotone, and Roosevelt Sykes on Okeh.

Many of Roosevelt's recordings have become classics. "44 Blues" also became a hit for Howlin' Wolf and more recently for Johnny Winter. "Night Time Is The Right Time" was a hit for Sykes, and has been recorded by Aretha Franklin and Ray Charles. "Driving Wheel" has been done by J. Parker and B. B. King, among others.

Roosevelt is one of the most famed and admired of all blues singers. As a talent scout, he himself, was responsible for the recording of many artists.

Sykes now resides in New Orleans, and plays at Preservation Hall, when not on the road. He has never known a dry period in his career, having recorded regularly since his first session. He is a singer and pianist, who performs with immense gusto. His continuing popularity lies with his ability to mould himself along changing trends in the blues. Roosevelt remains as one of the dominant figures in the world of the blues piano.
Bukka White

Booker Washington (Bukka) White was born in Houston, Mississippi in 1909. At the age of 10 he moved to the Mississippi Delta, where he took up residence with his uncle who taught him to play piano. Being musically inclined it took Bukka only a short time to learn guitar by listening to some of the master's living in the area. When Bukka turned 20 he made his first recordings for RCA's Bluebird label. In 1934 he moved to West Point, Mississippi and became a popular performer in the local juke joints along with his cousin, Bullet Williams.

In 1937 Bukka was sent to the infamous prison, Parchman Farm, for shooting another man. He was pardoned after two years, but not until he had recorded two of the most moving sides ever recorded for the Library of Congress. Shortly after his release Bukka recorded several sides for Okeh and this was the extent of his recordings until his rediscovery in 1963.

Although Bukka White is a fine guitarist, and undoubtedly had a big influence on his cousin B. B. King, he is most well known for his voice. That voice is probably the most powerful possessed by any blues singer active today. Listening to Bukka sing “Columbus Mississippi Blues” is enough to make even the most experienced fan shake his head in utter disbelief. When they announce Bukka's performance make sure you hold on to your hat; Otherwise you'll lose it.

BUKKA WHITE
Mississippi Blues Takoma B1001
Bukka White - Skysongs Vol. 1 Arhoolie F1019
Bukka White - Skysongs Vol. 2 Arhoolie F1020
Memphis Hot Shots Blue Horizon 7-63229
Living Legends Verve/Folkways 3010 (four cuts)
Blues Rediscoveries RBF RF11 (two cuts)
I Have To Paint My Face Arhoolie F1005 (one cut)
Red, Luck And Trouble Arhoolie F1018 (one cut)
Roots of America's Music Arhoolie R2001/2002 (one cut)
Blues Roots Poppy (one cut)
The 1968 Memphis Country Blues Festival Sire SES97003 (three cuts)
On the Road Again Adelphi AD10075 (several cuts)

--Prewar Recordings--
The Country Blues Vol. 1 RBF RF1 (one cut)
The Country Blues Vol. 2 RBF RF9 (one cut)
The Rural Blues RBF RF202 (one cut)
Country Blues Classics Vol. 2 Blues Classics HCS (two cuts)
Mississippi Moaners 1927-1942 Yazoo L1009 (one cut)
The Mississippi Blues No. 1 Origin Jazz Library OJ/L5 (two cuts)
The Mississippi Blues No. 2 Origin Jazz Library OJ/L12 (one cut)
In The Spirit No. 1 Origin Jazz Library OJ/L13 (one cut)
Mighty Joe Young

Mighty Joe Young is a fine guitar player who is very well known to Chicago's blues audience. Born in Shreveport, Louisiana on September 23, 1927, Joe came to Chicago in 1956. He started playing guitar at an early age but did not take it seriously until he was nineteen. He credits T-Bone Walker, Lowell Fulsom, and B. B. King as his biggest inspirations. Joe first recorded in 1961 and cut sessions for small labels like Fury, Fire and Webcor.

Highly respected among blues musicians, Joe has been called upon to back up many of them. He has recorded with Otis Rush, Magic Sam, and Billy Boy Arnold and backed Tyrone Davis on his hit “Can I change My Mind.” Joe has just released a fine single called “Guitar Star.” It describes Joe perfectly.

MIGHTY JOE YOUNG
No L.P.'s

Jimmy “Fast Fingers” Dawkins

Jimmy “Fast Fingers” Dawkins is almost an institution in the blues clubs that dot the West side of Chicago. A sounder example of the blues tradition which harkens back to the Delta and the South in general could not be found. “Fast Fingers” is a bluesman and a great artist in the truest sense. Jimmy is unlike many performers who feel it’s necessary to gyrate and throw oneself and one’s “axe” all over the stage. “Fast Fingers” merely stands his ground, looking through his shades at the audience, but really not seeing them. As he plays and sings he becomes im-
mersed in his music and is the living epitome of what one can really call a bluesman.

Jimmy Dawkins was born in Tchula, Mississippi on October 24, 1936. As a young boy he always dug the blues and got his first guitar from a northern mail order house while in his early teens. He knew from the start that he wanted to play and sing the blues as a professional. He got his chance to do it in 1955 when he came North to Chicago. After a brief stint in a paper box factory he decided that he wanted music as a full-time career and began to gig around Chicago. He immediately fell in with a group of young bluesmen, who at the time were all struggling to make it. They included Magic Sam, Otis Rush, and Freddy King.

As did these great guitarists, so did “Fast Fingers” develop a musical style all his own. It is easily recognizable on the many recordings he appears on as a sideman and leader.

He has played as a sideman behind Earl Hooker, Carey Bell, Wild Child Butler, Johnny Young, and several others. He has played with just about all the bluesmen in Chicago at some time and although they never recorded together he played with Jimmy Rodgers for many years.

For some time now Jimmy has fronted his own group on Chicago’s West side. The work is hard to get, the pay low, and the hours long, but that just may be what the blues is all about. Lately, Jimmy has concentrated more heavily on his vocals and he has developed a plaintive, understated style which compliments his guitar well. Still, don’t look at Jimmy’s singing as throwaway vocals. His blues are emotional and powerful in a muted way.

In the past year Jimmy’s first album as a leader, “Fast Fingers”, has been released on the Delmark label. It is selling extremely well and a second one should soon be in the works. In the meanwhile, since his performance at the Ann Arbor Blues Festival last year, he has been actively appearing throughout the country as well as gigging in Chicago as he always has. Early in 1970, Jimmy and Carey Bell, the harmonica player, went to Europe for a two month tour of France and Spain. They were quite well received. He himself realizes that with only three pieces you can’t really hide behind a sax or another piece. It’s up to you to do it.

JIMMY DAWKINS
Jimmy “Fast Fingers” Dawkins
Delmark DS621

ann arbor blues festival program 1970
John Lee Hooker

“I was born with the blues, I eat with the blues, I sleep with the blues - man, I know it’s just simply the truth.” One cannot help but be moved by the power of John’s music. There can be no doubt, when John sings, that he is telling the truth.

John Lee Hooker was born in Clarksdale, Mississippi on August 22, 1917. He is part of an unbroken line of great singers to come out of the Mississippi Delta (Robert Johnson, Charlie Patton, Son House, Bukka White, Muddy Waters, etc.) John’s stepfather played guitar and was his initial inspiration. At the age of eleven John sang in the Big Six gospel group, later joining the Delta Big Four. John ran away to Memphis, moved to Cincinnati, and by 1948 he was in Detroit working for Mr. Ford.

The late 40’s and early 50’s were marked by great migrations of blacks from the rural South to the urban North. Included in these migrations were numerous blues singers who came to work in the auto plants by day and play in the clubs at night. The Detroit blues scene of the early 50’s was a vibrant and exciting one. People like Washboard Willie, Baby Boy Warren, Little Sonny Willis, Dr. Isaiah Ross, Bobo Jenkins, and Little Eddie Kirkland laid down the best blues in town, while remaining obscure outside of Detroit. John Lee Hooker dominated the Detroit scene at this time and was the one singer to break out of its ghetto and achieve international recognition.

John began a long successful recording career in 1949, with some of his best material appearing on Sensation and Modern. “Boogie Chillen,” “Boom, Boom, Boom,” “Turpelo,” and “The Motor City Is Burning” are just a few of his many classic recordings.

John is a very versatile guitar player. He can play rhythm and blues, city blues, or country. While playing electric guitar, John is still very close to the roots. The emotions reflected in his music typify the bluesmen of the Mississippi Delta. His guitar technique makes heavy use of hammering on the strings and his heavily accented foot beat is an integral part of his playing. John has a slight speech impediment and this, coupled with his deep rich voice give his music its power.

John simply sings the blues, and he sings it the way he feels. “You go into church ... You’re sorry, and you think to yourself, “Lord, I got my whole heart and soul in you! You really feel it. Sometimes you want to cry. That’s the blues. You get deep into it. That’s soul. Blues is the real soul music ... Comes from way, way back, from the spirituals. Blues is the root of all our music.”

JOHN LEE HOOKER
Drifin’ Thru The Blues United US7710
The Blues United US7725
 Folk Blues United US7729
The Great Blues Sound of John Lee Hooker United US7731
John Lee Hooker Sings The Blues King 727
Highway of Blues Audio Lab. 1520
Don’t Turn Me From Your Door Atco 33-151
That’s My Story Riverside RL12-321
Country Blues Riverside RL12-836
Burnin’ VJ 1041
The Big Soul VJ 1058
On Campus VJ 1066
Concert At Newport VJ 1078
Is He The World’s Greatest Blues Singer VJ 8902
House Of The Blues Chess LP1438
John Lee Hooker Plays And Sings The Blues Chess LP1451
The Real Folk Blues Chess LP1506
Serve You Right To Suffer Impulse LP9103
John Lee Hooker Archive Of Folk And Jazz S222
And Seven Nights Verve Folkways 3003
Live At The Cafe Au Go Go Bluesway HLS6002
Urban Blues Bluesway HLS6012
That’s Where It’s At Stax NTS2013
Live At Sugar Hill Galaxy LP205
Original Folk Blues Kent KLP3023
Real Blues Tradition 2089
Simply The Truth Bluesway HLS50049
Big Band Blues Buddah BHS7506
The Very Best Of John Lee Hooker Buddah BHS4092
Mammon’s Blues King 1085
If You Miss ‘Em ... I Got ‘Em Bluesway HLS6008

(Note: Due to space limitations, no anthology or foreign LP’s upon which John Lee Hooker appears have been included)
Howlin' Wolf

"Man, you know I've enjoyed things that Kings and Queens will NEVER have; in fact, things that they will never get and they don't even know about ... and good times ... umm-mm."

Chester Arthur Burnett (better known as the Howlin' Wolf) was born June 10, 1910 in Aberdeen, Mississippi.

The Wolf ran with Charley Patton as a youngster, picking up a lot of his incredible singing style from Charley. Still, no one but the Wolf ever produced the eerie howls that punctuate his vocals. Another great blues man familiar to the Wolf was Rice Miller - Sonny Boy Williamson II. Sonny Boy's influence can be heard on the down home harp sound that the Wolf usually accompanies himself with.

In 1948 he recorded a couple of sides for Ike Turner on the Sun label, and shortly thereafter Leonard Chess put him under contract and brought him to Chicago, where he's been ever since. While he's been with Chess, the Wolf has had several smash hits including "Smokestack Lightning," "Spoonful," "Going Down Slow," and "Moaning at Midnight."

Often his songs have been recorded by better known white groups. The Doors reworked "Back Door Man," but it is still the Wolf's song. Jeff Beck recorded "I Ain't Superstitious," but the Wolf's version is still my favorite.

Seeing the Wolf in Chicago is an unforgettable experience. Usually he works at the Key Largo Club, or more recently, at Big Duke's on Roosevelt Road. The band, led by Hubert Sumlin, the killer lead guitarist, wails up on the stand. The Wolf sits at the first table with his harps and his drinks spread out in front of him. Once he gets into a song he will jump up, stride around the club with the microphone, eyes flashing. When he sings "How many more years are you going to dog me around?" it doesn't sound like he's whining.

Lately the singles the Wolf has cut ("Pop it to Me" and "Do the Do") are more rock 'n' roll than blues, but it's the down home sound he likes and does best.

**Howlin' Wolf**

- Big City Blues United US7717
- Moanin' In The Moonlight Chess LP11
- reissued as Evil Chess LP1540
- Howlin' Wolf Chess LP1469
- Real Folk Blues Chess LP1501
- More Real Folk Blues Chess's LP1512
- Howlin' Wolf Cadet Concept CD9
- Folk Festival Of The Blues Argo LP40:
  - Stone cut
- The Blues Vol. 1 Argo LP4026
  - (two cuts)
- The Blues Vol. 2 Argo LP4027
  - (one cut)
- The Blues Vol. 3 Argo LP4034
  - (four cuts)
- The Blues Vol. 5 Argo LP4051
  - (four cuts)
- Super Super Blues Chess LP3008
  - (four cuts)
- Heavy Heads Chess LP1522
  - (two cuts)
- Heavy Heads Voyage 2 Chess LP1528
  - (two cuts)
- Memphis Blues Kent 9002
  - (four cuts)
- Underground Blues Kent KST5: 15
  - (three cuts)
Lazy Bill Lucas

Few, if anyone, would ever think of blues being live and well in Minneapolis, Minnesota. But, this year's Ann Arbor Blues Festival features the blues as it is heard today in Minneapolis, through one Lazy Bill Lucas, an exceptional piano player and blues singer. Bill, though not originally from Minnesota, moved there a number of years ago and has been plying his trade there ever since.

Bill Lucas was born in Wynne, Arkansas in 1918. A nervous disorder has affected his eyesight since birth and music has been an outlet to this affliction as well as a livelihood. Although he began as a young boy playing guitar, it was on the piano that he made his reputation. Bill's early music training was mostly self taught and his repertoire wide and varied. Not only did he play blues but also hillbilly music and jazz. Back in the 1940's Bill played guitar as a street musician and it was at this time that he met and played on the streets with the legendary Big Joe Williams.

By 1941 he made his way to Chicago and began to play the Maxwell Street Market. It was there that he teamed up for a time with Sonny Boy (Rice Miller) Williamson. He began to become acquainted with other young bluesmen in the city such as Maxwell St. Jimmy and Little Walter. Little by little he became part of the established scene in Chicago. His particular idol was Big Bill Broonzy and Lazy Bill spent a good deal of time following him around and observing his style. Bill met up with all the name blues artists in Chicago and became friends with Roosevelt Sykes, Curtis Jones, and Memphis Slim. At this time, Bill formed a band with Earl Dranes and Willie Mabon. Later, after this group broke up Lazy Bill began playing once in a while with Homesick James Williamson.

It was at this time that Bill took up piano. By 1950 he had recorded one side "Johnny Mae" for Excello. He recorded a few more sides in the fifties and was a featured accompanist on some sides by Homesick James, Little Willie Foster, and Snooky Pryor. After Chance records went out on the road, with Mojo Buford, Muddy's old harp player. Coming to Minneapolis, he stayed and continues to live and perform there.

With Lazy Bill is Jeff Titon, his guitarist, who has worked consistently since Bill arrived in Minnesota.

LAZY BILL LUCAS
Lazy Bill Wild 12mol
Houndog Taylor

Theodore Roosevelt Taylor, magnanimously nicknamed Houndog by his fellow bluesmen of Chicago, was born 55 years ago in Mississippi. While still a young man the Houndog came North to ply his trade as bluesman. Houndog plays in that time worn pattern of the Delta, the slide guitar. He stands stylistically closer to Elmore James, Homesick James Williamson, J. B. Hutto, and Johnny Littlejohn than to their country precursor. Simply though, what Houndog and his band, consisting of Brewer Phillips and Ted Harvey, play is goodtime music. The type of dance and foot stomping music that came from the juke joints of the 20's, 30's, and 40's and found its way into the taverns of Chicago.

Houndog is known and loved by the entire Chicago blues scene, of which he is an integral part. What he lacks in technical skill is more than made up by his animation and unquestionable love of his music and making people happy. This then is the blues, unpolished, performed as it should be with all its innuendos.

HOUNDOG TAYLOR
American Folk Blues Festival 1967
Fontana 885433TY (one cut)
Fred McDowell

Fred McDowell is undoubtedly the finest bottleneck guitarist alive, and many people believe he is the best who ever lived. (Bottle-neck style guitar playing is done by placing either a broken off bottle-neck or a highly polished piece of pipe on the small or ring finger of the chording hand. This technique enables the guitarist to make the guitar sing with a tone incredibly similar to an anguished human voice.)

Fred McDowell was born shortly after the turn of the century and was raised on a farm where he first started playing guitar. He learned bottleneck from his uncle, who used a ground bone on his finger, and Fred McDowell perfected the style that made him the legendary guitarist he is today.

If one listens carefully to Fred it soon becomes apparent the guitar sings every word he sings. This is Mr. McDowell's style, and in the performance of it he has no equal.

Fred McDowell

Mississippi Delta Blues Arhoolie F1021
Fred McDowell Vol. 2 Arhoolie F1027
My Home Is In The Delta Testament T2208
Amazing Grace Testament T2219
Long Way From Home Milestone MSP93001
I Do Not Play No Rock And Roll Capitol ST409
In London Vol. 1 Transatlantic TRA194
In London Vol. 2 Transatlantic TRA
When I Lay My Burden Down
Biograph LP12017 (seven cuts)
Roots Of The Blues Atlantic LP1348 (three cuts)
The Blues Roll On Atlantic LP1352 (two cuts)
Blues At Newport 1964 Pt. 1 Vanguard VRS9180 (three cuts)
Traditional Music At Newport 1964 Pt. 1 Vanguard VRS9182 (two cuts)
Newport Folk Festival 1964: Evening Concerts Vol. 3 Vanguard VRS9186 (one cut)
Bad Luck And Trouble Arhoolie F1018 (one cut)
Mississippi Delta Blues Vol. 1 Arhoolie F1041 (one cut)

The Sound Of The Delta Testament T2209 (two cuts)
American Folk Blues Festival 1965 Fantano 081-52971 (one cut)
Stars Of The Memphis Country Blues Festival Sire SES85015 (four cuts)
Memphis Swamp Jam Blue Thumb RTH6000 (three cuts)
Roots Of America's Music Arhoolie R2001-002 (one cut)
Blues Roots Poppin' (one cut)
Juke Boy Bonner

Juke Boy Bonner is heir to one of the richest of blues traditions, that of Texas, his home state. But what is most noteworthy about his blues is that he is not merely one of the leading exponents of the Texas tradition, but rather that he uses this tradition as a vehicle for expressing contemporary themes. Many of his songs deal with the problems of the contemporary black man in coping with life in a southern ghetto. His lyrics are often pure poetry, expressed with a dynamic sense of rhythm and meter uniquely his own. Consequently, he extends the blues form to accommodate his lyrics rather than vice-versa, as is the case with so many other modern bluesmen.

Born just outside of Belleville, Texas on March 22, 1932, Wheldon “Juke Boy” Bonner was the last of nine children. His father was a sharecropper, and died when Juke Boy was only one, leaving the family practically destitute. As a survival tactic, the family dispersed, and Juke Boy was sent to live with an elderly couple who were better off. In 1940 when Juke Boy was eight, his mother died and he was left to fend for himself. Working odd jobs, he saved up enough money to buy his first guitar, which he bought from a friend for $3.50. Within a year, however, this was stolen, and to replace it, he had to pay $12.50.

As he became more proficient, he began playing country suppers around the Belleville area, picking up a few dollars here and there. At the age of fifteen, he headed for Houston, where after winning a blues contest, he was granted a fifteen-minute radio program. He stayed and played around Houston most of the time until 1956, when he headed for Oakland, California. There he met Bob Geddins, and in 1957, he recorded a couple of sides for Bob’s Irma label, accompanied by the young Lafayette Thomas on guitar. Today these records are very rare. Following this he returned to Texas, and he recorded again. This time he recorded for Eddie Shuler in Lake Charles, Louisiana. Some of these appear on the Goldband and Jan and Dill labels, and the Storyville label in Europe, but none of his recorded efforts sold very well.

In 1963, Juke Boy was put in the hospital with a chronic stomach ulcer, and when they operated on him, the surgeons found it necessary to remove 45% of his stomach. This sapped him of most of his physical strength, and unable to play the guitar, he turned to writing poetry. He became quite adept at writing, and many of his poems were published in a local newspaper. As he regained his strength, he went back to music, and played around Houston’s third ward.

In 1967, Mike Leadbetter of Blues Unlimited magazine was traveling through Louisiana and Texas collecting discographical information, and he met Juke Boy in Houston. He was impressed both personally and professionally with Juke Boy, and decided to help him get a single out, backed by donations from Blues Unlimited readers. Shortly after this, Juke Boy was recorded by Chris Strachwitz of Arhoolie records, resulting in the album entitled “Going Back to the Country”. This album received such acclaim that it was followed by another, recorded and released recently on Arhoolie entitled “The Struggle.” In October of 1969, Juke Boy toured Europe with the American Folk Blues Festival, and was so well received that he was asked to stay on and tour England.

JUKE BOY BONNER

American Roots Poppy (one cut)
American Folk Blues Festival 1969
Luther Allison

With blues suddenly becoming a very marketable commodity the rise of a plethora of mediocre blues bands is a fear that is just beginning to be realized. Of the hordes of groups that appear on the scene to perform and record only a select few rise to the top, the cream above the dross. Such an analogy may be extended to Luther Allison, who since his initial appearance at last years festival has been a bright star ascendant in the blues world.

Luther has been touring extensively since last year's show and has developed quite a devoted following from the University of Buffalo to the University of California at Berkeley. At the latter, he was one of the undisputed stars of the Berkeley Blues Festival. With the release of a new album on the Delmark label, "Love Me Mama", Luther has reached an even wider cross section of the people. With his unbelievably immediate style of singing and his emotional guitar wailing he has become a favorite.

Luther, for those of you as yet unfamiliar with him, was born thirty-one years ago in Mayflower, Arkansas. By 1952 he had moved north to Chicago, where he decided to become a musician after watching his older brothers who were singers and bluesmen. He began on bass but decided that he would rather play guitar. He went to "Fast Fingers" Dawkins who taught him some things on the guitar, and Luther was off. He started to hang around on the West side of Chicago and soon found himself taking over Freddy King's band, which he had sat in with many times. With this band, consisting of Big Mojo on bass and T. J. on drums, he worked for many years in the West side clubs such as the Alex and the L. and A.

A year ago this past April, Luther came to the University of Michigan for a promotional concert for the first Ann Arbor Blues Festival. He completely devastated the crowd in a four hour show and became an immediate favorite. Again, at the Blues Festival, although he had guitar problems, he was able to put on a fine show, especially at the jam session which followed the Friday night concert. Since then he has toured fairly consistently becoming a large favorite all over. Today, Luther Allison is standing on the threshold of a great career, well deserved since he is a great showman. Luther is going to be working hard up here this year and, doubtlessly, if you don't know who Luther is now, you will by the time he finishes.

LUTHER ALLISON

Love Me Mama Delmark DS625
Sweet Home Chicago Delmark DS618 (two cuts)
Albert King

Born on April 25, 1924 in Indianola, Mississippi, Albert King is one of the most popular contemporary blues musicians. He was raised in Forest City and Osceola, Arkansas. As a boy he picked up the guitar and taught himself. He is one of the few bluesmen who play the guitar upside down. Albert King began his career in the late 1940’s, when he joined a gospel quartet, the Harmony Kings. After several years he joined a blues jump band which eventually brought him to Chicago. Prior to cutting his records for Parrott in 1953, Albert King played drums for Jimmy Reed and was active as a session player.

After cutting his first recordings, however, success failed to materialize and King moved back to Arkansas. By 1957, now settled in St. Louis, his career finally began to progress. Recordings for Bobbin, King, Chess and most recently Stax, have brought him an increasing audience and international recognition for his playing.

In the last few years Albert King has become a tremendously popular artist among white youth. Playing the Filmores, The Eastown, and other ballrooms around the country King has become known as “Mr. Blues Power.” With his deep passionate voice and the life like crying guitar, he has brought some legitimate blues to areas where it has not been before.

“If you don’t dig the blues you got a hole in your soul”, says Albert. Listen to Albert and his guitar, Lucy, and see if you don’t dig the blues too.

ALBERT KING

Born Under A Bad Sign Stax S723
Live Wire Blues Power Stax STS2003
King Of The Blues Guitar Atlantic SD8213
Years Gone By Stax STS2010
King Does The King’s Things Stax STS2018
Jammed Together (with Pops Staples & Steve Cropper) Stax STS2010
Travelin’ To California King KSD1060
Door To Door Chess LP1538 (eight cuts)
Memphis Gold Volume 2 Stax S726 (one cut)
Soul Explosion Stax STS2007 (two cuts)
Robert Pete Williams

Listening to Robert Pete Williams is one of the most moving experiences in the blues. The intense, raw blues of Robert Pete are so completely his that comparisons are impossible. His stream of conscious lyrics and his rapid-fire Louisiana guitar style are so startlingly original and complex that his music requires total concentration. Robert Pete improvises freely on both his vocal and guitar work. He often displays a total disregard for rhyme, and his guitar style can only be described as erratic. However, the combined effect of the scattered phrasing and playing is a remarkably cohesive emotional whole.

Robert Pete Williams was born in Zachary, Louisiana on March 14, 1914. Robert lived in extreme poverty and was forced to work as soon as he was able. He was unable to get any schooling. Robert spent much of his life working in levee camps, on farms, and in road gangs, in addition to being a part time musician.

Robert Pete’s family was highly musical and Robert progressed from harmonica and juice harp to guitar. Robert took to knife (bottleneck) guitar in imitation of an uncle, Simon Carney, but soon found that he preferred playing with his naked fingers in natural standard tuning. He spent hours listening to Blind Lemon Jefferson records, trying to pick out the sounds on his guitar strings. But, Robert was no copy artist, and he created his own patterns and is constantly experimenting with new techniques.

His favorite artist is Texas Bluesman Lightning Hopkins. He also admires the music of many of his friends who have recorded for Excello: Lightnin’ Slim, Silas Hogan, Lazy Lester, and Slim Harpo. Robert Pete might have recorded for Excello, but on April 6, 1956, he was convicted for murder and imprisoned at Angola State Penitentiary in Louisiana. “I’m the peacefullest man in the world. I told that man to back off, but he just kept on pushing me, and when he pulled a knife, there wasn’t nothing I could do. I didn’t want to, but I had to protect myself.”

While imprisoned in Angola, he was recorded by Harry Oster, of the Louisiana Folklore Society and three songs were issued on Folk Lyric records. Letters started pouring into Angola. In 1959, Robert was paroled for a five year term to a local farmer, for whom he labored in virtual slavery. There were more recordings, but little freedom until his full release was granted in 1964. He was released in time to make an appearance at that year’s Newport Folk Festival. It was the first major set he had played outside his native state, but the audience roared to their feet in applause after he finished his set.

Since that time Robert Pete has appeared at many major festivals. However, he still must work at a lumber company to make ends meet. He lives today in Rosedale, Louisiana, with his wife and children. He is a quiet, peace loving man who sometimes wonders if he should give it all up for religion.

ROBERT PETE WILLIAMS
Those Prison Blues Folk Lyric FL109
Free Again Prestige/Bluesville 1026
Louisiana Blues Takoma R-101
Son House And Robert Pete Williams Live
Roots SL-501 (five cuts)
Blues at Newport 1964 Pt. 1 Vanguard
VR-6310 (three cuts)
Traditional Music At Newport 1964 Pt. 2
Vanguard VR-83183 (one cut)
American Folk Blues Festival 1966
Fontana 885.4317Y (one cut)
Johnny Shines

In these days when one hears rumbles of “the dying tradition of the Delta blues”, a figure such as Johnny Shines serves to dispell these rumors. He stands in the interim, an individual linked stylistically and emotionally to the work of the fabled Robert Johnson and at the same time deeply rooted in the Chicago blues tradition of the early 1950's. His whining slide guitar and deeply moving vocals serve up to an audience all the emotion and power that is the blues.

Johnny Shines was born in Memphis, Tennessee on April 25, 1915. Music permeated his early life and at seventeen he seriously took up playing the guitar. Johnny gained inspiration and stylistic ideas from such luminaries of the blues as Blind Lemon Jefferson, Scrapper Blackwell, Charley Patton, Ishman Bracey, and Lonnie Johnson. Within the years of his later teens, Johnny became an accomplished guitarist and performer. He worked regularly within the Memphis area in those days of the early 1930's.

It was in 1934 that Johnny, already a professional musician, met up with Robert Johnson. Robert Johnson's great creative ability and his ragged emotion in song had a profound effect on the young Johnny Shines. He envied and respected the slightly older Robert Johnson and traveled with the veteran bluesman on and off for two years until 1936.

Each man's music went through a metamorphosis as it was affected by the others. Still, in Johnny's music one can hear the qualities that have helped to canonize the late Robert Johnson to blues enthusiasts the world over.

By 1941, Johnny had joined the hordes of Southern blacks in migrating to Chicago. Work as a musician never being plentiful, he performed in the local taverns on week-ends and worked a factory day job to make ends meet. It was only upon reaching Chicago that Shines' first recordings were made. These sides for the Columbia label utilized some of the finest talent available in Chicago at the time and included such sidemen as Roosevelt Sykes. Sadly, none of these, at least four sides, have ever been issued.

Later, in the early 1950′s, he again recorded, this time for the Chess brothers Chicago based label. These two sides “Joliet Blues” and “So Glad I Found You” are among the most beautiful and moving blues that mark that transition period of movement from the South to the North. These extremely rare sides have recently been reissued as part of the new Chess Vintage series and still have the same emotional effect on the listener. In 1953, for the small JOB label, Johnny Shines cut four sides - “Brutal Hearted Woman,” “Eve

Johnny accompanied others such as Snooky Pryor, Homesick James, and Arbee Stidham but by the late 1950′s jobs were so scarce that Johnny quit professional music and went to work as foreman of construction crew. He also moonlighted by taking photographs over at Sylvio's of Howling Wolf's band. It was here in 1965, that Johnny was working when he was again recorded. This time he did six numbers for the Vanguard series - Chicago, The Blues Today, and in the next few years recorded an entire album for Testament records. In the last year or so, Johnny was a member of the Blues All Stars but as of this writing has split from the group and returned to the roots of the blues by moving back to Alabama.

Johnny Shines

Masters Of Modern Blues Vol. 1 Testament T2212
Johnny Shines Testament T2217
Last Night's Dream Blue Horizon 7-63212
Chicago/The Blues/Today Vol. 3 Vanguard VRS9218 (seven cuts)
Drop Down Mama Chess 411 (two cuts)
Country Blues Classics Vol. 2 Chess Classics 958 (nine cuts)
Chicago - Post War Blues PWR-1 (two cuts)
Really Chicago's Blues Adelphi AD10055 (several cuts)

27 ann arbor blues festival program 1970
Sunnyland Slim

Johnny Shines will be accompanied here in Ann Arbor this year by one of the most accomplished and prolific blues artists of the last 35 years, Albert Luandrew, better known as Sunnyland Slim. Sunnyland was born in Vance, Mississippi on September 5, 1907. As a youngster he taught himself blues piano and was profoundly affected by the early practitioners of this art, including Little Brother Montgomery and Roosevelt Sykes. In his youth Sunnyland worked fish fries, house parties, as well as at the local movie house playing his blues and boogie woogie piano. While still in his teens, Sunnyland, lured by the glamour of being a bluesman - as opposed to working in the cotton fields - took off for Memphis, which was at that time (late twenties, early thirties) something of a nexus for blues artists. Here he immediately fell in with numerous guitarists, piano players, and other blues men. He knew and worked with Memphis Minnie, Robert Johnson, Sonny Boy Williamson, Buddy Doyle, and Shakey Walter Horton. He even worked for a time with the great Ma Rainey.

Then, in 1942, he decided once again to pull up roots and moved to Chicago during the great black migrations north. Once in Chicago, he established himself as a regular part of the blues scene that clustered around Tampa Red’s house, himself a stellar blues guitarist and singer. He ran with Tampa, Big Bill Broonzy, Sonny Boy (John Lee) Williamson, etc. Then, in 1947, he was heard by a scout from Victor records while playing at Tampa Red’s. Sunnyland had developed a style much like one Doctor Clayton, a popular recording artist who had just passed away. Victor signed Slim and he became “Dr. Clayton’s Buddy” for his first recording efforts in 1947. One year later, he recorded again, this time with the late Lonnie Johnson for the Hyton label.

By the later 1940’s Sunnyland was established as a moving force on the Chicago blues scene. Besides his own efforts, he worked as a sideman behind such well known Chicago bluesmen as J. B. Lenior and Robert Nighthawk. It was Sunnyland who helped the young McKinley Morganfield, newly arrived from the South in the late 1940’s, establish himself as Muddy Waters. Throughout the 1950’s Slim continued to record on small labels and gig in the many bars that dot Chicago.

Then in the 1960’s he was “rediscovered” by the folkies and a record on Prestige resulted from this, as did more gigs and a tour of Europe on the American Folk Blues Festival. In the last few years Sunnyland has played in Chicago’s bars as well as on some college tours. For a while he was part of the group known as the Blues All Starts. Now though, he is back on his own. With a recent recording on World Pacific and his performance at this years Blues Festival, it is hoped that Sunnyland will at last receive the recognition he deserves.

**SUNNYLAND SLIM**

- Slim’s Shout Prestige/Bluesville 1916
- Slim’s Got His Thing Going World Pacific 21890
- Chicago Blues Session ’77 L.A12/21
- Memphis And The Delta The 1950’s Blues Classics HC15 (one cut)
- Chicago Blues Spivey LP1003
- After Hour Blues Biograph HL10100
- American Folk Blues Festival 1964 Fontana T15225 (one cut)
- Really Chicago’s Blues Adelphi AD10056

**28 ann arbor blues festival program 1970**
THE PEOPLES' RECORD STORE...

j.p. garrett  robert johnson  t-bone walker
roosevelt sykes  big mamma  luther allison

magic sam  the wolf  charlie christian  b.b. king  albert king  freddy king  elmore james
jimmy rogers  little sonny  earl hooker  john lee hooker  j.b. leonard  otis rush  son house
sunnyland  slim  otis spann  robert nighthawk  lightnin' hopkins
little brother  montgomery  james cotton  cary bell

STUDENTS INTERNATIONAL

STORE...

john jackson  bobby blue bland
butler  white  cotton  chenier

LOWEST PRICES
IN ANN ARBOR

CLEANHEAD  VINSON  MANCE  LIPSOMB  BUDDY GUY
MUDDY WATERS  J.C. WELLS
FRED McDOWELL

JUKE BOY  BONNER  JOE YOUNG  LEADBELLY
SLIM HARP  SONNY BOY

LITTLE & BIG  JOE TURNER

STUDENTS INTERNATIONAL STORE
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The Blues Was And Is!

by MIKE LEADBITTER

In 1960, very little was known about blues artists, especially those who had started recording after the Second World War, but by 1970 enough material had been collected on these people to publish two comprehensive discographies and rediscoveries were being made almost daily. How on earth did all this come about? How did it all happen? Even today, I'm not too sure. The so called “Blues Boom” or “Revival” means many different things to so many different people and I often have difficulty in adjusting myself to new tastes and changing attitudes. This is how I see it. I'll try to answer my own questions in my own way.

The really great days for the blues were during the 1945-1955 decade. Nothing that happens in the seventies will ever recreate that piece of blues history. Perhaps I should explain that when I refer to blues I am talking about the ethnic music of Black America and of nothing else. This is what it was all about just after the War. The growth of the jukebox industry, the arrival of disc-jockeys that would actually play “race” music, plus an ever expanding record distribution set-up, meant that bluesmen could suddenly gain a national reputation among their own people almost overnight instead of the very local one that most had to put up with previously. Independent labels blossomed by the hundred and when 1954 came round just about anyone who could sing or play an instrument had been recorded, and then usually in a convenient house, garage or hotel room. The few independent studios that flourished then were booked solid by the major labels and it was easier and cheaper to record on location, far from troublesome union officials.

It was this decade that produced R&B records that sold a million copies; records that found their way into the new “R&B Charts” that the trade magazines began to feature. These charts prominently featured new releases by artists like Cecil Gant, Muddy Waters, Big Boy Crudup, Howlin’ Wolf, Mercy Dee, Guitar Slim, B. B. King, Lightnin’ Hopkins and a host of their contemporaries. If you were a blues-singer in that time, you were looked up to by your people, wore good clothes and drove a Cadillac. You toured endlessly on the “chittlin’ circuit” and made money, even though you had to work twice as hard for it as any popular white artist. Labels like Imperial, Specialty, Atlantic, Kent and Chess were built on a
foundation of Southern Blues, or one of its variations. Everyone was riding high in the saddle, keeping well behind the segregation line, and never anticipating a white take-over.

During 1953 and 1954, record companies were getting reports that white kids, mainly in the South, were buying “Race” records as they liked the music for dancing. They especially enjoyed the “watered-down” material that Ruth Brown, Fats Domino, the Clovers and the like were doing well with, for it generally relied on a strong back-beat. The songs these artists sang were usually simple in construction with a very basic message that was endlessly repeated. It was the “Big Beat” that sold them. In a deliberate attempt to cash in on a new and surprising market, the companies developed new artists to cater for new audiences and the segregation line was forgotten under the soothing influence of money. As far as music went, it vanished altogether in 1954 when Elvis Presley started singing and selling country blues to white people. The initial Presley hysteria led to Rock ‘N Roll, a term coined for the moment to replace R&B, which made people think of Negro music, and the rise to power of Bill Haley, Pat Boone, Carl Perkins and others best forgotten was rapid with everyone happily rockin’ around the clock, not appreciating for a moment that their new cult was named after Black slang terms for sexual intercourse. Rock ‘N Roll brought blues to its knees.

Up to 1960 blues was still being recorded for a Black market. The South still wanted records by Muddy Waters & Co. and got them, if not quite as regularly as before, for the blues labels were putting everything they could into new artists who could sing Rock ‘N Roll. Chuck Berry, Johnny Ace, Bo Diddley, Little Richard, and Larry Williams were some of the hot new properties, while oldtimers like Fats Domino, Johnny Otis, Joe Turner and Ray Charles found they too could cope with the trends and benefited considerably. Ignored by the rock public, B. B. King stayed a big selling blues artist. The new generation who liked blues turned to the King sound to further themselves. Junior Parker, Otis Rush, Freddy King, Buddy Guy and Bobby Bland became some of the new champions and survived long enough to establish themselves at a later day. In spite of these people the Black audience was turning away from blues. They wanted their own scene again and found it in jazz and soul. Blues had too many associations with times best forgotten for the young Negro of the ‘sixties; he left it to the old folks, only listening to blues-singers like Lowell Fulson who had managed to move with the times. By 1965, blues as a commercial proposition was a thing of the past.

However, Rock ‘N Roll did some good. In Europe the fifties generation caught on to it some time after its success in the States, and, as Europeans will, took it very seriously. People like Bill Haley were quickly discarded in favour of Ray Charles and Fats Domino because they played better music. Then new collectors started digging into the past, collecting backwards through Wolf and Muddy, back to Washboard Sam and Jazz Gillum, and on to Leroy Carr and Robert Johnson. They forgot the rock scene, and not only found they enjoyed the newly discovered blues, but wanted to know all about the artists, their origins and styles. Articles were written, discography began and new, often short-lived, R&B magazines appeared. Eyes turned to old catalogs and trade papers and records began to make their way across the Atlantic. It was a popular theory that if an artist had a weird professional name his music must be good. This theory usually worked. Europe listened to Lonesome Sundown, Lazy Slim Jim, Lazy Lester, John Lee Hooker, Little Walter, Juke Boy Bonner and so many more. By the late fifties, Europeans were actually going to the States to interview all these people and listen to them in the clubs. The blues began to get documented. It seemed exclusively European. Apart from a few pioneers in the States like Anthony Rotante, Chris Strachwitz and Mack McCormick, no other whites appeared to be paying any attention to the good sounds on their doorsteps; they were all doing the Twist.

“ROCK ‘N ROLL BROUGHT BLUES TO ITS KNEES”

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All this European activity found its way (back) across the Atlantic during the sixties in a simple way. First came the blues magazines and then came the groups. The magazines supplied details on records and these records in turn inspired collectors to start playing blues to entertain others. All Europe lacked was “live” blues. It accepted the second-hand sound for want of anything better. White blues, as we know it today, found its way out of the pubs onto record and finally into the Charts, which got it released in America. Blues, led by white bluesmen, became a part of the youth movement in America and America in turn began to play it, producing yet more white bluesmen. British groups went to the States and to our joy real bluesmen could be imported on the exchange deal which our Union lives by. At last, Muddy, Wolf, Buddy Guy, Sonny Boy, all our heroes could be actually heard live in Europe. Their fantastic success away from home turned into further success when they got back. The white youth of their country, caring little for social barriers, accepted them as their own. Authentic blues became a part of the White American world for the first time, but if you were a Black bluesman you had to make it in Europe first. This ludicrous state of affairs has come to an end at last. American collectors and enthusiasts are now helping with what was once left to Europe; the arduous task of research and rediscovery. No longer do they just read Blues Unlimited to find out what is going on in their own country, they now supply most of the material in it and are starting projects of their own. The Cause is at last being furthered. The Black bluesman must benefit.

With the arrival of 1970, Black blues, rejected by its own people, has become an international white property. The record companies are chasing yet another new, surprising market and are producing a flood of all coloured blues records in the hope that some of it will sell. Though many enthusiasts still prefer the imitators - John Mayall, Johnny Winter, Janis Joplin - the real bluesmen are slowly making headway thanks to the efforts of the imitators themselves (especially Mayall) who often turn people in the right direction. Real blues is getting its last chance at survival and we must do all we can to help. Let’s make it an era of Black folk music again - unhampered by white interference, but preserved by white love. The sound of the good old fifties cannot be recaptured, but the feeling should and must be. We all made the blues what it is in 1970 and we all share the responsibility of helping it back to true life.
LUTHER ALLISON
ARTHUR CRUDUP
SLEEPY JOHN ESTES
BUDDY GUY
SON HOUSE
J.B. HUTTO
MANCE LIPSCOMB
FRED McDOWELL
JOHNNY SHINES
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 Appearing at the Ann Arbor Blues Festival, Ann Arbor, Michigan

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Johnny Young

Singer - Guitarist - Mandolinist Johnny Young stands out as one of the most exciting bluesman around. He is a fine powerful singer, and agile guitarist, and most of all a fluent, inventive mandolinist. Johnny is one of a handful of masters of this instrument. Strong, earthy, and honest best describe the music that Johnny and his Chicago blues band lay down. Anyone who has seen him and his tight band perform cannot help but be moved by the power of their music.

Johnny was born in Vicksburg, Mississippi, on January 1, 1917, the third of seven children. His education was limited, reaching only to the fourth grade. "I can read a little and write, but it hasn't held me back too much - not having more schooling. I've been able to go through life on mother wit, and I always did have the gift of music."

When Johnny was twelve, his family moved to Rolling Fork in the Delta. It was here that Johnny first turned his attention to music. He started out playing harmonica, but after being inspired by an Uncle turned to guitar. Shortly thereafter he switched to the mandolin and devoted all his energies to this instrument, becoming proficient quickly. While in his teens, Johnny absorbed quite a bit from the playing of the famous Mississippi Sheiks, who lived in nearby Grace, Mississippi. By the time he was fifteen he was playing for house parties and earning up to five dollars a night.

In 1939, Johnny left the South for Chicago. He and Muddy Waters, who had also come North from the Delta, began playing with the famous singer-harp player John Lee (Sonny Boy) Williamson. After a few months Johnny decided to quit music and get a job. However, music had become a part of him, and in 1947, he was playing with harpist Snooky Pryor, guitarist Moody Jones, and singer Floyd Jones in Chicago's Maxwell Street Open Air Market. At this time Johnny made his first recording, the classic "Money Taking Women" for the short lived Ora Nelle label. Johnny also cut a few records for the Swing Masters label, and backed Snooky Pryor on cuts for Vee-Jay.

Johnny is typical of a vast number of great bluesman whom fortune has treated shabbily. He has been a fixture in the bars and lounges on the South and West sides of Chicago for over twenty years, but it has only been in recent years that he has recorded again, and achieved a measure of recognition. His selections appear on Testament, Vanguard, and Arhoolie records. He has appeared on College Campuses, and at concerts where the blues revivals have been centered, and has also made a trip to Europe.

JOHNNY YOUNG

Johnny Young And His Chicago Blues Band
Arhoolie F1029
Johnny Young And Big Walter Horton "Chicago Blues" Arhoolie F1037
Modern Chicago Blues Testament T2203 (several cuts)
Chicago/Blues/Today Vol. 3 Vanguard VR59215 (six cuts)
Can't Keep From Crying Testament S-01 (one cut)
Chicago Blues The 1950's Blues Classics BCR (one cut)
Blues Scene: Chicago Storyville SLP180 (one cut)
Classic Train And Travel Blues Milestone LP3002 (one cut)
Blues/Chicago The Southside Decca LK-4748 (two cuts)
Roots of America's Music Arhoolie R2001/2002 (one cut)
Blues Roots Poppy (one Cut)
The current white enthusiasm for the blues has not yet accorded the jazz-influenced, fully urban bluesmen typified by Big Joe Turner and Eddie "Cleanhead" Vinson, their proper recognition. The nastier, less commercially successful styles of the country singers and backrail, Mississippi-rooted Chicago blues have so far held far more appeal. Yet, merely the fame of Turner, Vinson, and their cohorts of the 30's from the "Southwest"—blues and jazz musicians who worked in Kansas City, Texas, and Oklahoma—merits them greater attention. These Southwestern musicians, among whom are also T-Bone Walker and Lowell Fulson, had common roots in pre-war jazz and blues and then became well-known R&B performers of the late 30's. They toured, especially in the Southwest and on the West Coast, the circuit of black clubs, ballrooms, and theaters. Their records hit the charts and were aired on the newly established big city black radio stations.

The influence of these musicians from the Southwest is even more significant than their fame. From the musical developments of the 30's in the Southwest, they have left a strong impact on today's funky jazz and, more importantly, have shaped the form and the vocal, instrumental, and band styles of post-war R&B. Turner and Vinson helped popularize a sound, heard today in the bands of B.B. King and James Brown, that stemmed from the Kansas City jazz groups of the 30's—a harddriving, rhythm emphasizing, blues-riffing, brassy sound. The R&B derived from the Southwest emphasized the beat, increased the volume, and often had the polish of big band jazz voicing. As a highly commercial dance music it may have lost some of the personal conviction of the lone blues singer telling his story, but the musicians from the Southwest did lighten personal expression within R&B through the development of their instrumental solo styles and vocal attacks. The pioneer electric guitar work of T-Bone Walker (to whom B.B. King attributes much of his playing) and the wailing, "coarse-toned, ruggedly, swinging blues" saxophone, as played by Eddie "Cleanhead" Vinson and others, typify the instrumental contributions of the Southwest. Big Joe Turner, a delineator of a style known as Kansas City blues shouting, typifies the vocal contribution.

Big Joe Turner was born May 18, 1918 in Kansas City and commenced his musical career there during the 30's, the peak years of Kansas City jazz. In the 30's, this city was an open town, where gambling, prostitution, and bootlegging flourished. As such, it became a regional entertainment center that attracted and supported many musicians. Many great bands, notably Count Basie's, came out of there at this time, and they reflected a complex intermixing of jazz and regional blues instrumental styles. Big Joe Turner's work with the band of pianist Pete Johnson and his after-hours jamming with the other great Kansas City groups helped shape his vocal style. To blend with the harddriving, loud, blues-riffing sound of Kansas City bands, Turner and rival Jimmy Rushing developed Kansas City blues shouting. Deep, strong male voices belting out sonorous, though often incoherent twelve bar blues lyrics characterized their work. They eliminated the whining and falseto associated with country blues.

While bartending in the early 30's at Kansas City's Sunset Club, Turner would sing between sets and be accompanied on piano by
the club’s bandleader, Pete Johnson. This was the start of the legendary team that wrote and recorded many hits and blues classics of the late ’30’s and early ’40’s. John Hammond, the famous talent scout, discovered them in the early ’30’s, and, after one unsuccessful attempt at the New York bigtime in ’36, Hammond invited them back again to make their national debut in a December, 1938, Carnegie Hall concert. Johnson’s piano accompaniment at this concert set off a boogie-woogie craze. The two also cut in New York at this time the highly successful record with “Roll ’Em Pete” and “Goin’ Away Blues”, this record foreshadowed the sound of post-war r&b. After the Carnegie Hall concert, Turner and Johnson remained in New York and worked together regularly until 1944. They often performed simultaneously with two other boogie pianists, with a group called “The Boogie Woogie Boys” at both the Cafe Society Downtown and Uptown. During the early ’40’s, Turner also toured theaters across the country and made recordings. Some notable recordings of this period include “Wee Baby Blues,” on which he is accompanied by the great jazz pianist, Art Tatum, and the original version of “Cherry Red,” later a hit for Eddie “Cleanhead” Vinson.

In 1947, after a period of separation, Turner rejoined Johnson on the West Coast. He remained there for the next three years, and, as both a bandleader and singer, he became an important figure in the developing r&b scene of California. Many musicians were part of the massive wartime migration of blacks from the Southwest to California, and they brought their musical traditions with them. By the late ’40’s, California, along with Texas, was becoming a center for a distinct strain of r&b that drew on the prewar jazz and blues of the Southwest. Turner, as a bandleader, was one who popularized the Kansas City sound within California r&b. As a vocalist, the style he developed in Kansas City, loud, often harsh, and emotional, fit well with the r&b bands and their coarse-toned, blues saxophones.

With the advent of r&r in the fifties, Turner and other black r&b singers adapted the mood and style of their music to appeal to the larger white audience. His records frequently made the r&r charts during the mid-fifties. His hit recordings include “Shake, Rattle & Roll,” later recorded by Bill Haley and His Comets, “All Night Long,” “Flip, Flop & Fly,” and “Blow, Joe, Blow.” Besides his hit recordings and his original compositions, his vocal style has had a profound influence on r&r. In recent years, with the renewed interest in blues, Turner has stepped up his recording activity and his personal appearances here and abroad.

Alto saxophonist and blues singer Eddie “Cleanhead” Vinson is one of the important jazz-influenced, blues musicians from the Southwest. Although current blues fans have not been too familiar with his work, he did achieve great popularity in the 40’s as a bandleader and blues singer. Furthermore, he distinguished himself as a singer with a very personal, feeling approach to the blues within a big band context. Vinson, along with
T-Bone Walker and Big Joe Turner, helped to create an r&b sound in the late ‘40’s that drew from the prewar jazz and blues of the Southwest.

Born December 18, 1917, in Houston and city-bred, Vinson is once removed from the rural roots of the blues. Consequently, his singing and alto playing reflect an intermixing of influences from jazz, an urban form, and from blues. His father played jazz piano and his earliest professional experiences were as a jazz alto player. Yet even with these early jazz influences, Vinson’s alto playing retained a strong blues flavor. He still plays in the style, which originated in the Southwest, that is characteristic of funky jazz and r&b - “coarse-toned” and “ruggedly swinging.” Not until well along a career as a jazz alto player, did he meet Big Bill Broonzy and make a conscious attempt to develop his blues singing. Broonzy taught him a lot of material, notably “Just a Dream” and “Somebody’s Got to Go”. Vinson also listened to and gained much from Joe Turner, whose song “Cherry Red” was his first hit. Vinson attributes his good voice and alto, and, with the growing blues scene, makes occasional performances at festivals in the United States and Europe.

The significance of the music of Big Joe Turner and of Eddie “Cleanhead” Vinson lies within the context of the enormous role of the Southwest on post-war music. When Turner and Vinson, T-Bone Walker, and others from the Southwest are taken together, the scope of the impact of the Southwest becomes clearer. Then too, when the careers of musicians like Turner and Vinson are compared, some revealing parallels appear.

Vinson’s professional career began as an alto player with Milt Larkins’ band in Houston during the early ‘30’s (T-Bone Walker also worked with this band for a while). Later, he played with the Ray Floyd orchestra. At the end of 1941, Vinson joined, as the lead alto player, the band led by great jazz trumpeter, Cootie Williams. During the three years he was with Williams’ band, he established himself primarily as a great blues singer and recorded the hits “Cherry Red” and “Somebody’s Got to Go.” In 1945, Vinson formed his own group and made a hit with “Kidney Stew Blues.” His band played at the Zanzibar on Broadway in 1947, and throughout 1948 and 1949, it toured the country, playing one-nighters almost everywhere. As the popularity of big bands declined, Vinson reduced his group to a sextet, then went to working as a single, and, for four months in 1954, rejoined Williams’ band. After playing with Williams’, he worked around Chicago, in small groups of his own and of others. Eventually, he returned home to Houston and, with tenorist Arnett Cobb, successfully formed both a big band and a sextet. In recent years, he continues to perform in Houston, teaches voice and alto, and, with the growing blues scene, makes occasional performances at festivals in the United States and Europe.

J. Silvers

---Pre-ear Recordings---

Jumpin’ The Blues Arhoolie R2004
Blues And Trouble Vol. 2 Arhoolie F1012 (one cut)
The Roots Of America’s Music Arhoolie R2001/2002 (one cut)
Blues Roots Poppy (one cut)

EDDIE VINSON

Back Door Riverside
Battle Of The Blues Vol. 3 with Jimmy Witherspoon King 654
Battle Of The Blues Vol. 4 with Roy Brown & Wynonie Harris King 668
Cherry Red Bluesway RLS9007
Original Bluestime Bts9007
Original Gold Soul Mercury S2-600 (one cut)

---Press Release---

Joe Turner Atlantic 8005
Rockin’ The Blues Atlantic 8023
Big Joe Is Here Atlantic 8033
Best Of Joe Turner Atlantic 8081
Joe Turner’s Blues Savoy 14012
Careless Love Savoy 14016
Blues And All That Jazz Decca 79230
Boss Of The Blues Atlantic S-1234
Big Joe Rides Again Atlantic S-1332
Singing The Blues Bluesway RLS9006
Turns On The Blues Kent KST542
Real Boss Of The Blues Bluesetime HTS9002
Super Black Blues Bluesetime HTS9003
Oldies But Goodies Vol. 2 Atlantic S-1234
(two cuts)
History Of Rhythm And Blues Vol. 1 Atlantic R161 (one cut)
History Of Rhythm And Blues Vol. 2 Atlantic R162 (one cut)
History Of Rhythm And Blues Vol. 3 Atlantic R163 (one cut)
Urban Blues Vol. 1 Imperial LMP4902 (two cuts)
Urban Blues Vol. 2 Imperial LMP4904 (one cut)

---Press Release---
The Southwest musical scene is one of rich tradition, producing some of the finest musicians that the world of blues and jazz has ever seen. It is the blues of Blind Lemon Jefferson, Lightning Hopkins, and the jazz of Count Basie, Charlie Parker, and Ornette Coleman. The style is deft, swinging, and without frills. It seems to fuse jazz and blues at every step, giving the blues a melodic sound not present elsewhere. To this rich and unique tradition one must add the name of Bobby Bland.

Born Robert Calvin Bland in Rosemark, Tennessee, Bobby has been relatively unknown, except to the black community where he is a household word. At a very early age he moved to Memphis, Tennessee and grew to be one of the "Beale Streeters", who included B. B. King, Roscoe Gordon, Junior Parker, and Johnny Ace (who lost a game of Russian Roulette at a Houston Concert in 1954). In 1951 Bobby went into the army for 3½ years. While still in uniform he made an appearance at a Houston talent show, where he gained the attention of Don Robey, president of Duke Records. Robey signed him to a contract and Bobby cut a couple of discs.

It wasn't until he was out of the army in 1954, however, that his recording career for Duke began to blossom. April of 1955 saw the release of his first hit, "It's My Life, Baby." Many others followed, including, "I Smell Trouble," "Little Boy Blue", "Cry, Cry, Cry," "Don't Cry No More." "Call On Me," and more recently "Too Far Gone," "If You Could Read My Mind," and "Poverty."

Once established, Bobby Bland took to the road, touring the well worn circuit of one night stands, concerts, dances, and theaters such as Harlem's Apollo and Chicago's Regal. On stage Bobby is dynamite. With the help of trumpeter-arranger, Joe Scott, the band is tight and explosive. With the blues gaining in popularity among white people the name of Bobby Bland will certainly be in the forefront.

Bobby Bland

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Bobby Bland

The Southwest musical scene is one of rich tradition, producing some of the finest musicians that the world of blues and jazz has ever seen. It is the blues of Blind Lemon Jefferson, Lightning Hopkins, and the jazz of Count Basie, Charlie Parker, and Ornette Coleman. The style is deft, swinging, and without frills. It seems to fuse jazz and blues at every step, giving the blues a melodic sound not present elsewhere. To this rich and unique tradition one must add the name of Bobby Bland.

Born Robert Calvin Bland in Rosemark, Tennessee, Bobby has been relatively unknown, except to the black community where he is a household word. At a very early age he moved to Memphis, Tennessee and grew to be one of the "Beale Streeters", who included B. B. King, Roscoe Gordon, Junior Parker, and Johnny Ace (who lost a game of Russian Roulette at a Houston Concert in 1954). In 1951 Bobby went into the army for 3½ years. While still in uniform he made an appearance at a Houston talent show, where he gained the attention of Don Robey, president of Duke Records. Robey signed him to a contract and Bobby cut a couple of discs.

It wasn't until he was out of the army in 1954, however, that his recording career for Duke began to blossom. April of 1955 saw the release of his first hit, "It's My Life, Baby." Many others followed, including, "I Smell Trouble," "Little Boy Blue", "Cry, Cry, Cry," "Don't Cry No More." "Call On Me," and more recently "Too Far Gone," "If You Could Read My Mind," and "Poverty."

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BOBBY BLAND

The Barefoot Rock And You Got Me  Duke  DLP72 (six cuts)
Like A Red Hot Duke  DLP73 (several cuts)
Two Steps From The Blues Duke  DLP74
Here's The Man Duke  DLP75
Call On Me Duke  DLP77
Ain't Nothing You Can Do Duke  DLP78
Soul Of The Man Duke  DLP79
Best Of Bobby Blue Bland Duke  DLP84
Best Of Bobby Blue Bland Vol. 2 Duke  DLP86
Touch Of The Blues Duke  DLP88
Spotlighting The Man Duke  DLP89
Memphis Blues Kent 9002 (two cuts)
When folklorist Chuck Perdue stumbled upon John Jackson in a filling station in Fairfax, Virginia one day in 1964, the music world was blessed with the discovery of an exciting new performer, and with the resultant revitalization of the great songster tradition of Virginia. John Jackson is the essence of what might be called a true folk musician. His music knows no color boundaries. He plays songs derived from “white” sources, and songs derived from “black” sources, but somehow it all comes out as just plain fine music performed in a style uniquely his own.

John Jackson was born in Rappahannock County, Virginia in 1924, the son of a tenant farmer on a plantation that predated the Civil War. John, along with his thirteen brothers and sisters, helped his father with the farming and household chores, in a system that brought them few economic benefits. His family was a musical one, and by the age of four, John had started playing guitar. John’s father played guitar and banjo and sang blues, while his mother played accordion and some harmonica, singing hymns and spirituals. Nobody ever taught John how to play, most of it he just picked up by watching other musicians such as his father.

In addition, phonograph records were no small influence, and John learned much about the blues by listening to the records of Blind Lemon Jefferson, Blind Boy Fuller,
Blind Blake, and Mississippi John Hurt that were sold door to door when John was young. Blues wasn't all that John listened to, however, he was also exposed to recordings by white country performers such as Jimmy Rogers, the Carter Family, the Delmore Brothers, Ernest Tubb, and Roy Acuff, among others. Perhaps the biggest influence on John's guitar style, however, was a waterboy named "Happy" who worked on a chain gang cutting highway 29-211 through the mountains near his home back in 1933-34. In addition to learning a number of songs and picking techniques from him, John also learned "Spanish Tuning" from him.

John stayed in Rappahannock County, working with his father until he was twenty-five and had a wife and family of his own, at which time he moved to Fairfax, Virginia, and went to work as a caretaker and houseman on an estate. While still in Rappahannock County, John had gained valuable playing experience performing at house parties in the area. At one such party, just before he moved to Fairfax, a brawl broke out, and as a consequence, John was so upset that he quit playing. It was more than ten years before John even owned a guitar again. John kept his caretaking job in Fairfax for more than fourteen years, often supplementing his income by gravedigging, cutting grass, chopping and hauling firewood, and other odd jobs. In 1964, John's employer died, and John had to resort almost exclusively to these odd jobs, primarily gravedigging, for his livelihood.

One day in 1964, John was noticed standing and holding a guitar in a service station near his home by folklorist Chuck Perdue. Chuck asked him if he knew how to play, and John responded that he only knew a few chords; but a sample of his playing proved that he was only being modest. He was rusty, but after a few months practice, John was in top form, and started playing at the now defunct Ontario Place in Washington D. C. Another performer who occasionally played the Ontario Place was the recently rediscovered bluesman Mississippi John Hurt, a man whose records John had heard as a child and from whom he had learned his "Candy Man." When they were introduced, John was stunned with disbelief mixed with awe at meeting such a celebrated bluesman of many years past.

Following this, John appeared in a number of concerts offered by the Folklore Society of Greater Washington, and recorded an excellent first album for Arhoolie Records. He has appeared in folk festivals all over the country, including the University of Chicago Folk Festival, the Smithsonian Folklife Festivals of 1967, 68, and 69, and recently the Berkeley Folk Blues Festival. Last fall John toured Europe with the American Folk Blues Festival, traveling in the company of some of the finest bluesmen this country has produced, and according to most reports, he "stole the show." On April 12 of this year, John appeared in the promotional concert for this year's Ann Arbor Blues Festival. John now has a second Arhoolie album on the market, that is equally fine as the first, and a third is reported to be on the way.
Papa Lightfoot

Born in Pisces, March 2, 1924 in Natchez, Mississippi, Alexander Lightfoot taught himself to play harmonica when he was a youngster and taught the white kids in school. Nick-named "George" by his mother in early days, it was many years before anyone knew his real name was Alexander, and to this day, the whole town of Natchez knows him as Papa George. He pulled an ice cream wagon around Natchez for many years, "I had a wash basin on the back with soap and everything."

He turned pro in the late 1940's, playing gigs around Natchez at places like the Blue Cat. For the next ten years his giging days were at their peak, and his home moved back and forth between New Orleans and Natchez. During this time he played many shows and tours with Fats Domino, Dinah Washington, Sonny Boy Williamson II, Tommy Ridgley, Shirley and Lee, and Lionel Hampton among many others; recorded for Imperial, Aladdin, and Savoy in New Orleans, for Peacock in Houston, and for Twin City Music Co. in Monroe, Louisiana-many songs, never released, recorded with local musicians. On all his released recordings, he remembers the guitar player and drummer to have been Edwin "Guitar Red" Marion, and Sam Cooks. He didn't remember anyone else.

Peacock recorded Papa Lightfoot and Tommy Ridgley at the same time as they went to Houston together at the request of Don Robey. They were working together in New Orleans.

He twice won a Horace Heidt talent contest—one in Natchez, the other in New Orleans, both over Al Hirt, and was awarded a gig with the Heidt band and toured with him for four years from 1954-58 at $175.00 a week plus expenses.

He toured as Little Papa Walter and as such played all of Little Walter's tunes and generally copied his whole scene. On such tour included a trip from Nashville to Cincinnati with Smiley Lewis in a 1955 station wagon. He toured also as John Lee Hooker, wore shades and played guitar, and was discovered as a fake Walter and Hooker more than once, never to any harm, however—all who couldn't take a joke like that? He toured with Champion Jack Dupree in the mid 1950's, and made a short entitled "Spooky Loot" sporting "gangsters on the run" "red hot music," "spooks on the loose," and "red hot gals," and starring Robert "Lucky" Hoggatt and Henry "Dollar Bill Dotson, with Ralph Moore, Papa George, Willie Mae Calvin, John Moore, Archie Jones, and Earl Cosy, "and a cast of hundreds." It was directed and produced by Jack Davis, later to become "Wolfman Jack" of late night, South western USA radio fame.

He was born with a crossed eye and has a very distinctive countenance: a jovial person and all around beautiful cat. He inherited 450 acres of land near Lorman in Mississippi, from his father which he leases to a farmer and works two days a week now as a driver for Jackson Packing Co., delivering meat in and around Natchez. His mother still lives in Natchez in a house he owns, but he prefers to stay with his common-law wife, Hattie Mae, in one of the more dilapidated sections of Natchez.

He had a radio show in Natchez sponsored by the C and G Grocery on which he played—harp, washboard, sticks; did the commercials and advertisements as well.

After many financial disappointments in the music business, he retired to his Natchez home in the late 1950's.

PAPA LIGHTFOOT

Rural Blues Vol. 2 Imperial LMP1001
Rural Blues Vol. 3 Imperial LMP1006
Natchez Trace Vault LP130
Little Brother was born Eurreal Montgomery on April 18, 1906 in Kentwood, Louisiana. His was a musical family, with all of his nine brothers and sisters playing either guitar or piano. In addition to this, his father played cornet and his mother played accordion and organ. His father ran a little barrelhouse-juke joint for the local sawmill workers, and it was here that Little Brother first heard piano played real barrelhouse style. When Little Brother was five, his father bought a piano, and Little Brother set out to master it.

He left home at the age of eleven, hoping to find a music career. First he went down to Saratoga Street in New Orleans, then up the Mississippi River playing in all the river towns on the Louisiana/Arkansas side such as Holden, Plaquemine, Ferriday, Arkansas City, Eudora, and Lake City. He played mostly in barrelhouse-juke joints for the sawmill and levee camp workers, providing music for such dances as the Eagle Rock, Grizzly Bear, and the Shimmy. Heading back down into Louisiana, he ended up in Tallulah and crossed the river to Vicksburg, Mississippi. It is here that Little Brother is said to have met Skip James, resulting in a song exchange with Little Brother learning his “Vicksburg Blues” from Skip, and Skip learning Little Brother’s “No Special Rider Blues.”

While in Vicksburg, and throughout the course of his travels in the South, Little Brother came in contact with an incredible number of obscure and unrecorded barrelhouse piano players, many of whom were very influential in Little Brother’s maturing as a pianist. In the middle 1920’s, Little Brother played in the bands of Clarence Desdune from Jackson, Mississippi, and Leonard Parker from Vidalia, Louisiana.

In 1928, he arrived in Chicago, which was then a mecca for pianists, and came into association with men like Jimmy Yancey, Pinetop Smith, “Cripple” Clarence Lofton, Charlie Spand, Albert Ammons, and Meade Lux Lewis, among others. Little Brother made his first records in 1929 for the Paramount label in Grafton, Wisconsin. Most of what he cut was with singer Irene Scruggs, but he also made two cuts as a single artist - two of his best-known tunes: “Vicksburg Blues”, and “No Special Rider Blues.”

During this period, work was plentiful in Chicago, and Little Brother kept himself occupied playing the house parties and rent parties. After the stock market crash, however, things got bad, and in 1931, Little Brother headed back to Mississippi, where he formed his own band with nine to fourteen pieces in Jackson. In 1936, he recorded again, making a total of eighteen sides in a session down in New Orleans. He toured with his band until 1939 when he moved to Hattiesburg and then to Chicago at the outbreak of World War II. In Chicago he found a job playing at the Hollywood Show Lounge on West Randolph Street, with a five piece band, a gig he held for 12 years.

Since that time, Little Brother has held residence in Chicago, playing in clubs on the North side and in the suburbs, and recording for a number of labels, including Riverside, Mercury, Folkways, and Prestige/Bluesville. In 1966, he toured Europe with the American Folk Blues Festival, being received most enthusiastically, and just recently he has recorded a few sides for the FM label in Chicago, including a new version of “Vicksburg Blues” with singer Jeanie Carrol taking the vocal.

LITTLE BROTHER MONTGOMERY

Little Brother Montgomery Blues
Folkways FG3127
Tasty Blues Prestige/Bluesville 1012
Farro Street Five Folkways 31014
After Hour Blues Biograph BLP12010
(six cuts - two of them previus)
The Queen And Her Knights - Spacey LP1085 (two cuts)
American Folk Blues Festival 1966
Fontana 885.1417PY (one cut)
No Special Rider Adelphi AD1063B

--Prewar Recordings--
Piano Blues RFP RF12 (one cut)
Carey Bell

The Chicago blues scene has always been famous for its great harmonica players. Harp players like Sonny Boy Williamson, Little Walter Jacobs, and Big Walter Horton stand out as musical geniuses as well as giants in the blues world. Following in this great tradition is Carey Bell, an exciting, versatile harp player living on Chicago’s West side.

Carey was born in Macon, Mississippi on November 14, 1936. “It was my grand-dad who got me started in music by buying me and my brother those 25¢ harmonicas back when I was eight years old.” Carey’s stepfather, Lovey Lee, who still plays piano on Chicago’s South side, was also a big inspiration.

Carey became involved with music at an early age. By the time he was thirteen, Carey was playing blues with Lovey Lee’s band in Meridian, Mississippi, on weekends.

In 1956, Carey, Lovey, and other members of the band moved to Chicago and landed a job at Rickey’s Show Lounge on 39th and Indiana. After a short time, Carey began playing with David “Honeyboy” Edwards, who introduced him to Little Walter. “I started taking lessons from Little Walter and stayed at Honeyboy’s, worked with him and a drummer named Dizzy. Walter gave us a job at the Zanzibar when he went on the road.”

For a while Carey switched over to bass and landed a job with Big Walter Horton’s band. He then met Johnny Young and sided up with him for a long time. “I met Johnny Young at Walter’s house and started blowing with him at 63rd and May, Pete’s Lounge, for about a year and a half. I played harp and bass with him until 1966 there and at the I Spy and Kelly’s.

At this time Carey quit playing for money and worked at a car wash and for a convalescent home. He was soon in need of money, so he went on the road with the late Earl Hooker. This trip proved to be a great boost to Carey’s career. Through Earl, Carey met Chris Strachwitz of Arhoolie records, who recorded him. Recently, Delmark records released a fine album, “Carey Bell’s Blues Harp,” which features some great harp work and singing by Carey, as well as the fine guitar playing of Jimmy Dawkins. Carey has been making appearances on campuses and just returned from a tour of France with Jimmy Dawkins and Eddie Taylor.

CAREY BELL

Carey Bell’s Blues Harp Delmark
DP 8823
Two Bugs And A Roach Arhoolie
F1061 (one cut)
American Folk Blues Festival 1969
Buddy Guy

For many years the South side of Chicago has been a spawning ground for great blues artists. Probably one of the most brilliant guitarists to come out of the area in many years is Buddy Guy. A studio musician for over ten years, Buddy played with Muddy Waters, Howling Wolf, Little Walter, Junior Wells, as well as almost every other established bluesman, before forming his own band and breaking out on his own.

George (Buddy) Guy was born in Lettsworth, Louisiana on July 30, 1936. Inspired by the records of Lightning Hopkins, T-Bone Walker, and John Lee Hooker, Buddy was playing by the time he was seventeen.

Buddy’s career started out slowly and he suffered many setbacks. In 1953, Buddy started playing regularly with the “Big Poppers” band in Baton Rouge. Buddy also played with Lightnin Slim and this added to his development significantly. In 1957, Buddy left for Chicago where he had a difficult time establishing himself. He worked as a mechanic between jobs at Teresa’s and the Squeeze Club.

Buddy's big break came when he won a “battle of the blues” at the Blue Flame Club on the South side over Magic Sam, Otis Rush, and Junior Wells. Magic Sam introduced Buddy to people at the Cobra/Artistic record studios and he cut a few sides. After Buddy formed his own band his reputation grew quickly and his records began selling well. When Artistic records collapsed, Otis Rush brought Buddy to Chess. At this time Buddy’s stinging guitar, shouting vocals, and tight band were laying down some of the toughest blues to be heard in Chicago. Some of Buddy’s best work has appeared on Chess and recently he has recorded for Vanguard.

Buddy’s playing reflects a strong influence from the blues of B. B. King and Guitar Slim, but he has overcome established trends to develop his own powerful style. Buddy has toured Europe and Africa and is well on his way to establishing an international reputation for himself.

Buddy is considered by many to be the finest combination of instrumentalist, vocalist, and visual showman in the entertainment world today. Listen and watch Buddy and you will quickly see why B. B. King has indicated him as his heir apparent.
Thirty six year old Otis Rush is one of the most lyrical guitar players on the Chicago scene. As master chordist, Otis is perhaps the most underrated bluesman working today - not underrated by his peers, but by the white blues public. Anyone who has seen Otis play will testify to the brilliance of this musician.

Otis Rush was born in Philadelphia, Mississippi on April 29, 1934. Otis learned to play guitar at an early age. He listened studiously to the records of Muddy Waters, T-Bone Walker, Lightning Hopkins, and John Lee Hooker. In 1948, the Rush family moved to Chicago and Otis began working in the stockyards. His blues education thrived in the atmosphere of the big city bands. In 1953 he formed his first band and began playing at the Club Alibi.

In 1956, at the age of 22, Otis began recording for Cobra records. The sixteen sides he produced are fascinating examples of modern blues ("I can’t Quit You Baby," "Double Trouble"). When Cobra folded Otis moved to Chess and produced his classic "So Many Roads." After leaving Chess, Otis signed a long contract with Duke records but few recordings resulted from this partnership. In the last few years he has been recorded by Vanguard and Cotillion.

Otis has always been an exciting singer, as evidenced by the trembling vocal on "So Many Roads." He has also matured into an inventive guitar player. Otis plays left-handed holding the guitar backwards and upside down, but not reversing the strings to correspond with his left-handedness. When Otis plays he hits the treble strings rather than the bass first, producing a unique sound. On stage Otis is restrained and in command. He does not need to make a spectacle of himself, he simply leans back and plays the blues.

Otis appeared at last year’s festival and also played an outstanding two hour set at a preview concert held in April in Hill Auditorium. It is indeed a pleasure to have Otis in Ann Arbor again.
What is perhaps one of the least favorable results of the booming interest in the blues witnessed in the last decade is that the general music audience has been presented with a distorted picture of the black music tradition in this country. At the time when black music was first recorded commercially, blues was at a peak of popularity in the black community, and as a result, blues was by far the most heavily recorded branch in the mainstream of black music tradition.

The shame is that blues is just that. only one branch of the mainstream, albeit a might important branch. The other traditions remain sadly underrepresented on phonograph records, and remain fairly dark areas in the field of American folklore scholarship. One happy exception to this, however, has been the discovery of a number of traditional "songsters," men whose repertories provide a healthy cross section of traditional black music. Among the artists dead and living who people this category are Leadbelly, Mississippi John Hurt, John Jackson, and Mance Lipscomb.

Mance Lipscomb is a product of the bottomlands of Brazos County, Texas where he was born the second of eleven children on April 9, 1895, just outside of Navasota. His father was a former slave from Alabama, and one of the best fiddle players in that part of the country. Mance developed an interest in guitar after his uncle George brought one by his home, and as he got better, he began traveling with his father, bassing for him on guitar.

Mance's father stopped coming home when Mance was eleven, and shortly following this, his older brother struck out on his own, leaving Mance to support the family. "I had to take a man's job then," Mance says, recalling his youth when he had to hire himself out so his mother and his brothers and sister could eat. At the age of sixteen, Mance was initiated into the southern sharecropping system, or the half-handers system as they called it in his part of the country. This system was designed so as to keep the sharecropper perpetually in debt, binding him to the land as slaves were to their masters. It is a testimony to Mance's hard work and perseverance that he was able to beat the system by keeping out of debt and even bringing in a little profit, as much as $150.00 to $200.00 on the good years.

Around this time, Mance began playing the Saturday night dances and country suppers, supplementing his meager income by supplying the dancers with breakdowns, reels, shouts, drags, jubilees, and blues.
“Saturday night I'd play all night 'til eleven o'clock Sunday morning and go right back and play for the white dance Sunday night, and then go to the fields Monday.”

In 1913, at the age of eighteen, Mance married his wife Elenora, and they have remained together to this day, a fact Mance takes great pride in. During the war, many of the big plantations foreclosed, being broken up into smaller farms. Along with this change, a new renting system was initiated to replace the dated sharecropping system. In 1943, after forty-two years of sharecropping, Mance joined this new system, hoping for more freedom and greater financial returns, but the system proved to be no improvement over sharecropping. In 1956 he was placed in charge of a two hundred acre farm by an absentee landlord, receiving a cut of the profit for his labor. Later, however, the owner decided Mance should receive reimbursement in the form of wages, and Mance got disgusted and left for Houston, going to work for a lumber company.

In 1957, he was involved in an accident when he was struck by some falling lumber from an overturned truck, injuring both his eyesight and his limbs. As compensation for this, he received $1,600.00. With this, he returned to Navasota, bought a plot of land, and built a house for his family. In July 1960, when he was discovered by Mack McCormick and Chris Strachwitz, Mance was working for a contractor, cutting the grass along the state highways and bosses a three man crew. Mack McCormick and Chris Strachwitz recognized the obvious talent and historical importance Mance bore as a purveyor of Negro folksong tradition, and they recorded Mance for Chris’ Arhoolie label.

Since that time, Mance has recorded five full albums for Arhoolie, plus one for Reprise, and he has played in folk festivals and coffee house's all over the United States, astounding and delighting youthful audiences with the music that's part of his heritage.

Joe began to gain more confidence in himself as a singer, and in 1961, he moved to Los Angeles to try his luck in the music world. In 1964, he signed a contract with Kent records, and recorded the first version of “Dirty Work Going On” which was never released. Following this, Joe moved to North Richmond, California, but recorded again after his contract with Kent expired, this time with the Movin’ label in Los Angeles. He recorded a total of six sides for Movin’, four of which were leased to Checker records in Chicago, to receive national distribution. He went to Chicago in 1967 and recorded two of his finest sides, “Me and My Women,” and “My Heart Beats Like A Drum.” Later that year, he recorded for Kent again in Oakland, California, but the sides he cut were never released.

At present, Joe is recording for Jewel records out of Shreveport, Louisiana, and he has recorded no less than four excellent sides with Lowell Fulson playing guitar. Today Joe does most of his playing in the South, in clubs and on R & B shows, often appearing on the same bill with Jimmy McCracklin, Sugar Pie DeSanto, Al King, Maxine Howard, or Sonny Rhodes. Last year, Joe made a guest appearance with John Mayall in the Fillmore West, and he is hoping to find a larger audience this year.

Little Joe Blue

One of the better up and coming bluesmen yet to receive his due recognition is Little Joe Blue. Joe is primarily a vocalist, with a powerful voice strongly reminiscent of early B. B. King, but he is also a more than adequate guitarist. Joe’s real name is Joe Vallery, and his story begins in Vicksburg, Mississippi, on September 23, 1931. Most of his early life, he lived across the river from Vicksburg in Tallulah, Louisiana, and there he came into contact with the blues when performers like T-Bone Walker, Lowell Fulson, and Jimmy Liggins came through in the late 1940’s. In 1951, Joe moved to Detroit, and took on a construction job, his only musical activities being appearances in talent shows, etc. in the area.
Lowell Fulson

There are few blues musicians whose careers so dramatically illustrate the transition from a country style to a modern urban style as does Lowell Fulson's. Lowell’s earliest sides were performed with an acoustic guitar, either by himself, or with his late brother, Martin Fulson, accompanying him on second guitar, and with an extremely emotive voice suggestive of Texas Alexander who influenced him. Today Lowell performs with a five or six piece urban group (often recording with an even larger group), playing electric guitar in a single string fashion influenced by T-Bone Walker. In either style, Lowell is among the finest and most moving bluesmen ever to record.

Lowell Fulson was born in Tulsa, Oklahoma, in 1921. His family farmed and played music in their leisure time, with his father on guitar, and his grandfather on violin. Like Scraper Blackwell, Lowell was born part Indian, but there the similarity ends. Lowell took an early interest in guitar, and by the time he was seventeen, he was proficient enough to join the Wright Brothers Stringband in Texas, a band composed of three violins, two banjos, and two mandolins. After less than a year with this group, he went back to playing alone, often performing for country suppers around his home.

Shortly after this, Lowell met Texas Alexander, whose guitarist, Funny Paper Smith, had just quit. Tex asked Lowell to join him, so for the next year or so, until 1940, Lowell served as Tex’s accompanist. This experience proved extremely influential in molding his vocal style, and it is from Tex that Lowell learned his “River Blues.” When the War rolled around, he joined the Navy and was stationed on the West Coast. Much of his time was spent touring with the USO service shows, often playing with larger bands backing him. This is where Lowell was first exposed to what was later to be called Rhythm and Blues. Lowell was discharged from the Navy in 1945, but rather than go back to his native Texas and Oklahoma, Lowell stayed of the West Coast where there was a whole new audience for his music. Thousands of black people from the rural south had been drawn to the West Coast by the better paying jobs accompanying the wartime boom to industry, and the music they wanted to hear was the blues of their native Texas, Oklahoma, and Louisiana. Around this time, Lowell attracted the attention of local record producer Bob Geddins in Oakland, and Lowell recorded his first sides on Bob Geddins many smaller labels, accompanied only by his brother Martin on guitar. These sides proved so popular, that Lowell switched to the larger Swing Time label in Los Angeles, and Lowell recorded his first sides on Bob Geddins many smaller labels, accompanied only by his brother Martin on guitar. These sides proved so popular, that Lowell switched to the larger Swing Time label in Los Angeles, and Lowell recorded his first sides on Bob Geddins many smaller labels, accompanied only by his brother Martin on guitar. 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Big Mama Thornton

There have been many good female blues singers from Ma Rainey and Lottie Kimbrough to Victoria Spivey and Billie Holiday, but Willie Mae Thornton is as great as any of them.

Born in Alabama, the daughter of a minister, Big Mama was raised in an atmosphere of gospel music. At the age of fourteen she left home to tour with the Hot Harlem Review, where she soon became a featured performer. After leaving the review Willie Mae moved to Texas where she joined Johnny Otis as his lead singer. It was while she was with Otis that Big Mama recorded “Hound Dog.” Although Elvis sold more copies her version was the original, and the better of the two.

It is ironic that it took a rather untalented white imitator’s rendition of “Ball and Chain” to introduce Willie Mae Thornton to a large segment of the population, but in the entertainment field talent doesn’t seem to count nearly as much as skin color. One of the national magazines recently did an article on “the queen of the blues” and used less than a sentence to mention Big Mama’s influence on the “queen.” Well the article was wrong. Big Mama is the true Queen Of The Blues.

BIG MAMA THORNTON

Big Mama Thornton In Europe Arhoolie F1028
Big Mama Thornton And The Chicago Blues Band Arhoolie F1032
Stronger Than Dirt Mercury SR61225
The Way It Is Mercury SR61249
Ball And Chain Arhoolie F1039
(two cuts)
Like ‘Er Red Hot Duke 73 (one cut)
American Folk Blues Festival 1965
Fontana 681.528TL (one cut)
Roots Of America’s Music Arhoolie 82001 2002 (one cut)
Blues Roots Poppy (one cut)
After World War II the Memphis area developed into a blues center second only to Chicago. A group of young men all born within a few years of each other and within the same general area began creating a blues style which gained great popularity among urban blacks. B. B. King, Johnny Ace, Bobby Bland, Roscoe Gordon, and Gatemouth Moore were only a few of the many major talents to rise to fame at this time. One must also include the name of Junior Parker in this list of great artists.

Singer-harp player Herman Parker, Jr. was born in West Memphis, Tennessee in 1927. Junior's biggest influence and inspiration was Rice Miller (Sonny Boy Williamson II) who played over KFFA radio in Helena, Arkansas. In 1948, the Howling Wolf came to West Memphis and Junior joined his band. His stature earned him the nickname of Little Jr. Parker. With Wolf there was little need for a harp player so Junior quit around 1950 to form his own band, calling it "The Blue Flames." Junior's combo quickly made a name for itself. In 1952 he cut his first session for Ike Turner and Modern in West Memphis. In 1953 Junior took his band to Sam Phillips Sun label and recorded the best selling "Feeling Good", and "Mystery Train."

His music owed some debt to the Delta, but reflected the sound of the times to a larger extent. Junior did not play harmonica on "Feeling Good" and it was the wild guitar riff which shot the record to the top of the charts. Following the success of this recording Junior moved to Houston in 1954. For a period Junior toured with Big Mama Thornton and taught her to play harp.

Over the years Junior has toured the country making one night stands in theaters and clubs, and has recorded for several labels with varying degrees of success. Junior has thought about giving up the blues for the church, but "The blues is based on somebody's life, it hits 'em in the heart and the love comes out." Let's hope it continues to come from Junior for many more years.

JUNIOR PARKER
Bare Foot Rock And You Got Me Duke DLP72 (six cuts)
Drivin' Wheel Duke DLP76
The Best Of Duke DLP43
Like It Is Mercury SR61101
Baby Please Mercury 16401
Blues Man Minit 24024
Honey Drippin' Blues Blue Rock 64004
Like 'Er Red Hot Duke DLP73 (several cuts)
Memphis Blues Kent 9002 (one cut)
Son House

The words “living legend” have been used many times, particularly in reference to blues singers, but nothing else can be used to describe this giant among blues artists.

Eddie James (Son) House, Jr. was born in Lyon Mississippi (near Clarksdale, home of the Delta blues) shortly after the turn of the century, where he lived until 1936. In 1930 he went to Wisconsin with Charlie Patton, Willie Brown, and Louise Jordan for perhaps the most notable of all blues recording sessions. Son was not recorded again until the 60's except for the Library of Congress in 1942. In 1964 Son House was found to be living in Rochester, New York. He started making public appearances and still remains an extraordinary blues man.

Son’s music is characterized by a very strong rhythmic pattern and an intensely emotional voice. Sometimes, Son House becomes so emotionally involved in the song it is impossible to understand the words, only the feelings. To listen to Mr. House is an experience one can never forget. We are indeed honored by his presence here.

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**SON HOUSE**

Father Of The Folk Blues Columbia 2917
The Vocal Intensity Of Son House Roots SL504
Son House And Robert Pete Williams Live Roots SL501
Living Legends Venice Folkways FTS3010 (one cut)
Newport Festival Vanguard VSD79225 (two cuts)
American Folk Blues Festival 1967 Fontana 885.443TY (one cut)

---Library Of Congress Material---

Negro Blues And Hollers Library of Congress AFS1.59 (three cuts)
Blues From The Mississippi Delta Folkways FA2467 (seven cuts)
Mississippi Blues Vol. 1 Roots RL302 (one cut)
Mississippi Blues 1927 to 1941 Yazoo L1001 (one cut)
Mississippi Moaners 1927 to 1942 Yazoo L1009 (one cut)

---1930 Paramount Session---

Really! The Country Blues Origin Jazz Library OJL12 (two cuts)
The Mississippi Blues No. 1 Origin Jazz Library OJL13 (two cuts)
The Mississippi Blues No. 2. The Delta Origin Jazz Library OJL11 (two cuts)

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ann arbor blues festival program 1970
The Masters of Ceremonies at this year's festival is Paul Oliver, one of the leading writers and researchers of the blues. Mr. Oliver's love for and association with the blues dates back many years. In 1960, with the aid of a State Department grant, he made an extensive tour of the United States. Traveling North to South with a camera and tape recorder, Mr. Oliver interviewed numerous bluesmen as well as making many field recordings. His untiring efforts at documentation of the blues have led to the writing of several books ("Bessie Smith", "Blues Fell This Morning: The Meaning of the Blues," "Conversation with the Blues," and "The Story of the Blues") all of which have been hailed enthusiastically wherever they have appeared. Mr. Oliver has also lectured throughout the United States, England, and Africa. Currently he is Head of the Department of Arts and History at the Architectural Association School of Architecture in London.
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Johnny Little John
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53 Ann Arbor Blues Festival Program 1970
BOBBY ‘BLUE’ BLAND

at the
ann arbor
blues festival

Fuller Flatlands
University of Michigan - August, 1970

Duke Records, Inc.
Houston, Texas
David Alexander

The Blues Festival is fortunate to have as a last minute addition to their program one of the finest young blues and boogie woogie piano players gigging today. Mr. David Alexander is representative of a thriving blues community which exists today in Oakland, California. Born in Shreveport, Louisiana in 1938 he moved with his family to Marshall, Texas. As a youngster David was inspired by the rolling boogie woogie piano style of Meade Lux Lewis. By age 15 he was teaching himself to play, occasionally copying a free lesson from local musicians or by watching such popular artists as Amos Milburn and Floyd Dixon. At 18 David began to play professionally and during a stint in the navy, stationed in San Diego, he became acquainted with the blues scene in California. In 1958 David Alexander moved to Oakland where he lives today. He lists as his primary influences such diverse personages as Albert Ammons, Charles Brown, Ray Charles and jazz great Horace Silver. This past year Dave did his first recording as a soloist on World Pacific records. He shares the disc with “Good Rockin’ Robinson and “Thing” Thomas, whom he ably backs up on their numbers. But Dave really goes to town on his own vocal numbers and on one instrumental number “Jack Rabbit Boogie”. We feel that although you may never have heard of him before, after the show he will have established himself as one of the great young blues pianists and will kill the rumor the blues is dying.

DAVID ALEXANDER
Oakland Blues World Pacific WPS-21893 (3 cuts)

The Detroit Blues Festival
FREE! August 30

The Detroit Blues Festival will take place in front of the Rackham Building on Woodward next to the Detroit Institute of Arts. It will begin in the early afternoon and go well into the evening and will feature some of the legendary blues artists who have made the Detroit blues scene. Little Sonny, Mr. Bo, Washboard Willie, Bo Bo Jenkins, Eddie Burns and Boogie Woogie Red are only a few of those tentatively scheduled.
Present-day country blues reissues are an outgrowth of the pre-World War II "race" recording era, which presented a wide diversity of musical styles and genres (blues, spirituals, jazz and ragtime) for black consumption. It is only through these recordings (sold purely for entertainment purposes) that the blues historian can learn directly about forgotten trends of black music, and that the listener can
appreciate the genius of a Charley Patton or a Blind Lemon Jefferson.

While the vagaries and inadequacies of commercial recording policies are a constant challenge to the listener and reissue company alike, they nevertheless preserve the only real giants of country blues. A belated recognition of "race" records produced by such familiar blues names as Son House and Bukka White was the impetus to their rediscovery.

The earliest "race" recordings were made by female vocalists like Mamie and Bessie Smith, who sang a suave style of blues to the accompaniment of various studio musicians, generally jazz groups. Their work has been too well documented by the jazz enthusiasts to whom it primarily appeals to be pertinent to a company interested in country blues, such as Yazoo records for whom I work.

On the other hand, the country blues that were apparently first recorded to capitalize on the bandwagon launched by the likes of Mamie Smith (whose debut in 1920 began the "race" era) were comparatively neglected. The great majority of country blues artists are still known only by their recorded work, which often comprised a mere two or four sides.

In their own times, they sometimes lacked commercial appeal to the average "race" record buyer. Nevertheless, these companies were willing to record a great many such artists on a one-time basis, to such an extent that between 1926 and 1929 the country blues nearly dominated the "race" market.

To this experimental trend we probably owe the great success of such country blues artists as Blind Lemon Jefferson or Blind Blake, who became regular Paramount recording artists in 1926. Following the lead of Paramount, the major record companies took up country blues in earnest, although their involvement with the field actually began with the 1923 debut of Sylvester Weaver on Okeh.

The Depression marked a sudden decline in all recording sales, including those of country blues. Unfortunately, a number of great country bluesmen were recorded in the critical years between 1929 and 1934. The present-day scarcity of so many country blues records is directly attributable to their low Depression sales; a few much-sought works by artists like Charley Patton and Skip James have never been found. Here not only the poverty of the people, but that of the record companies themselves, conspired against sales. During the Depression Paramount might press only 300 copies of a Patton or James record, some of which were undoubtedly returned by dealers to the company, which went bankrupt in 1932-1933. Today's chances of finding such works are obviously remote.

Although record companies re-organized in the mid-1930's, the country blues never recovered from the initial Depression blow. It is difficult to pinpoint their gradual decline, as the post-1934 recording policies that swung away from country blues might not have been an accurate reflection of black musical trends. However, the new policies tended to create their own trends. While 1930's country bluesmen like Robert Johnson would occasionally find their way to recording studios, none would attain the success of their earlier counterparts like Blind Lemon Jefferson.

Instead, the trend was towards the small Chicago-based blues bands that were often headed by country blues stars of the 1920's: Memphis Minnie, Bill Broonzy, Tampa Red, etc. Such artists might feature riffs from their earlier records, or record genuine throwbacks to country blues, but the role of the guitar that had been the primary country blues instrument lost prominence in any band setting.

The music of this era was generally bland and stereotyped by comparison with 1920's country blues. Only a few 1930's artists, like Robert Johnson and Bo Carter (see Yazoo 1014: Bo Carter's Greatest Hits 1930-1940), could be deemed to represent a regional or even a particularly rural blues style.

Due to the popularity of the 1930's blues bands, there was little attempt on the part of record companies to reissue earlier country blues. They were quickly forgotten. A scrap drive in 1941-1942 that was partly designed to produce shellac for wartime use resulted in the wholesale destruction of many large record stocks of 1920's country blues. Other companies, like Paramount, had long been bankrupt, leaving practically no record stocks intact.

Thus it is rare for a modern record collector to locate a "mint" (unplayed) country blues record that will carry no surface noise. In order to turn up new blues material, the collector must generally "canvass" from the original consumers of "race" records. While jazz collectors have been canvassing Negro neighborhoods in search of records since the late 1930's, the art of country blues collecting did not come into its own until the 1950's. By that time there had already been a sizeable Negro migration into northern cities, with the concomitant destruction of many records.

For country blacks, too, the blues had become obsolete. The rare finds one now locates in such small, out-of-the-way hamlets as Emmet, Arkansas (a town of 15-20 negro houses in which Yazoo located a previously unfound Charley Patton record) are typically battered condition. The disrespectful attitudes of many blacks towards their old collections has had, however, one fringe benefit for collectors: they are often willing to part with the records they possess but no longer prize.

In this way Yazoo Records has been able to acquire a good portion of the records it retails to modern consumers. An even larger number is obtained from auctions and trades with other collectors. That many of the records Yazoo issues come from the private record library gives us a distinct advantage over other reissue companies, which must scramble among record collectors in hopes of finding suitable material to issue. When the companies' demand exceeds the available supply, the result is an uneven
Getting a good copy of an old 78 is but one of the hurdles that a reissue company must face in order to market country blues LP’s. The most immediate short-range problem is technical: how to make a used side recorded in the pre high fidelity era come up to acceptable listening standards. The early blues reissues companies were unsuccessful at this process of "re-mastering". There is even yet a tendency in the reissue business to cut off high frequencies in an effort to soften surface noises or scratches. The result is that while static is reduced, so is much of the music itself. A blues side re-mastered in this fashion will have low "presence" of the typical product of acoustic (pre-electric) recording days, and will have many of the drawbacks and few of the virtues of the original 78.

At Yazoo, remastering is an intricate process that can delay the release of an LP by several weeks, if necessary. Since the grooves of different records had no standard width, and were often recorded with faulty equalization, each record that Yazoo re-masters is treated as a special case requiring varying treatment. In some cases we have managed to actually improve upon the fidelity of the original recording, without distorting it.

The poor fidelity of so many 78s makes the selection of reissue sides all the more critical. While it is well worth enduring a few scratches to listen to a real blues masterpiece, the same cannot be said for the average 1920’s country blues recording. Whereas early reissues tended to document country blues for their own sake, as a means of exposing the new listener to the idiom, current companies are becoming increasingly selective. To weed out the crap requires a thorough knowledge of the entire blues field, and it is here that our record collecting experience and long involvement with country blues has paid off. Like the average collector, we are well aware that even the legends like Charley Patton were capable of second-rate work.

It is also true that artists who recorded extensively tended to repeat the same motifs, either to string out their sessions, or in the then prevalent delusion that by merely changing lyrics the artist had thereby concocted a new song. From the 100-odd songs recorded by Bo Carter, many of which are musically indistinguishable, Yazoo extracted fourteen sides, each bearing a completely different accompaniment. The listener gets an idea of Carter’s versatility, and hears him at his best. If this represents a distortion of Carter’s real talents, we can only reply that we wish that more companies were willing to so distort the country blues performer. Only in the case of Charley Patton, an artist of almost singular nature, did we strive for complete documentation. It could be argued that only Patton, and a few other country blues greats, are worthy of such documentation.
Most country bluesmen, however, never recorded enough sides to fill an entire LP. This lack makes it necessary for every reissue company to release anthology albums. The policy of Yazoo is to always present such artists in a coherent context. We usually segregate according to regional styles, as they provide the most logical common denominator between artists. The great plurality of country blues styles has enabled us to variously present Mississippi, Alabama, Memphis, Texas-Arkansas, Jackson (Miss.), Georgia, East Coast, St. Louis/musicians. Within these broad groups fall various subdivisions.

Using the musical expertise of Michael Stewart, a blues researcher who ranks as one of today's most accomplished blues guitarists, Yazoo tries to impart some ideal of the skills and dynamics of each performer. We take this approach not only for its own intrinsic worth, but because there is so little tangible information about the personal lives of country bluesmen.

We feel that the time has long passed in which it was feasible to merely tout the musician, his social significance, and his upstanding character. To simply rave about the merits of the bluesman would be to insult an audience that is capable of forming its own independent judgements. As for the artist's lovability and his social significance, we feel that these are largely qualities we can neither know nor appreciate, the vast majority of bluesmen being dead, and the society that formed them so alien to us. While we never exclude relevant biographical or social data, insofar as we have it, it is the musical performer that primarily interests us.

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