

Week 4 Musical Examples

1. Tampa Red- *If You Want Me To Love You* - Out of the dozens of fine slide guitarists who recorded blues, only a handful — Elmore James, Muddy Waters, and Robert Johnson, for example — left a clear imprint on tradition by creating a recognizable and widely imitated instrumental style. Tampa Red was another influential musical model. During his heyday in the '20s and '30s, he was billed as "The Guitar Wizard," and his stunning slide work on steel National or electric guitar shows why he earned the title. His 30-year recording career produced hundreds of sides: hokum, pop, and jive, but mostly blues (including classic compositions "Anna Lou Blues," "Black Angel Blues," "Crying Won't Help You," "It Hurts Me Too," and "Love Her with a Feeling").

From: *Bottleneck Guitar 1928-1937* Yazoo Records

2. Tampa Red-Georgia Tom Dorsey-*I Had To Give Up Gym*-The acknowledged father of gospel music, Thomas A. Dorsey remains arguably the most influential figure ever to impact the genre. A versatile composer whose material shifted easily from energetic hard gospel to gossamer hymns, he penned many of the best-known songs in the gospel canon, among them "Take My Hand, Precious Lord" and "Peace in the Valley"; the founder of the National Convention of Gospel Choirs and Choruses, he was also a pioneering force in the renowned Chicago gospel community, where he helped launch the careers of legends including Mahalia Jackson and Sallie Martin. Dorsey was born in Villa Rica, Georgia on July 1, 1899 and raised in the Atlanta area; there, in addition to the traditional Dr. Watts hymns, he also absorbed early blues and jazz. A child prodigy, he taught himself a wide range of instruments, and was playing blues and ragtime while still in his teens; under the stage name Georgia Tom, he was a prolific composer, authoring witty, slightly racy blues songs like the underground hit "It's Tight Like That."

From: *Please Warm My Weiner: Old Time Hokum Blues* Yazoo Records

3. Bukka White-*Shake Em On Down*-In 1930 Bukka White met furniture salesman Ralph Limbo, who was also a talent scout for Victor. White traveled to Memphis where he made his first recordings, singing a mixture of blues and gospel material under the name of Washington White. Victor only saw fit to release four of the 14 songs Bukka White recorded that day. As the Depression set in, opportunity to record didn't knock again for Bukka White until 1937, when Big Bill Broonzy asked him to come to Chicago and record for Lester Melrose. By this time, Bukka White had gotten into some trouble — he later claimed he and a friend had been "ambushed" by a man along a highway, and White shot the man in the thigh in self defense. While awaiting trial, White jumped bail and headed for Chicago, making two sides before being apprehended and sent back to Mississippi to do a three-year stretch at Parchman Farm. While he was serving time, White's record "Shake 'Em on Down" became a hit.

From: *Complete Bukka White* Sony

4. Big Bill Broonzy-*Good Liquor Carry Me Down*-In terms of his musical skill, the sheer size of his repertoire, the length and variety of his career and his influence on contemporaries and musicians who would follow, Big Bill Broonzy is among a select few of the most important figures in recorded blues history. Among his hundreds of titles are standards like "All by Myself" and "Key to the Highway." In this country he was instrumental in the growth of the Chicago Blues sound, and his travels abroad rank him as one of the leading blues ambassadors.

Literally born on the banks of the Mississippi, he was one of a family of 17 who learned to fiddle on a homemade instrument. Taught by his uncle, he was performing by age ten at social functions and in church. After brief stints on the pulpit and in the Army, he moved to Chicago where he switched his attention from violin to guitar, playing with elders like Papa Charlie Jackson. Broonzy began his recording career with Paramount in 1927. In the early '30s he waxed some brilliant blues and hokum and worked Chicago and the road with great players like pianist Black Bob, guitarist Will Weldon and Memphis Minnie. In 1938, Broonzy was at Carnegie Hall (ostensibly filling in for the fallen Robert

Johnson) for John Hammond's revolutionary Spirituals to Swing Series.

From: *The Young Bill Broonzy* Yazoo Records

5-6. Louis Jordan-*I'm Gonna Move To The Outskirts of Town, Caldonia Boogie*-Effervescent saxophonist Louis Jordan was one of the chief architects and prime progenitors of the R&B idiom. His pioneering use of jumping shuffle rhythms in a small combo context was copied far and wide during the 1940s.

Jordan's sensational hit-laden run with Decca Records contained a raft of seminal performances, featuring inevitably infectious backing by his band, the Tympany Five, and Jordan's own searing alto sax and street corner jive-loaded sense of humor. Jordan was one of the first Black entertainers to sell appreciably in the pop sector; his Decca duet mates included Bing Crosby, Louis Armstrong, and Ella Fitzgerald.

From 1942 to 1951, Jordan scored an astonishing 57 R&B chart hits (all on Decca), beginning with the humorous blues "I'm Gonna Leave You on the Outskirts of Town" and finishing with "Weak Minded Blues." In between, he drew up what amounted to an easily followed blueprint for the development of R&B (and for that matter, rock & roll — the accessibly swinging shuffles of Bill Haley & the Comets were directly descended from Jordan; Haley often pointed to his Decca labelmate as profoundly influencing his approach).

From: *Louis Jordan And His Tympany Five, 1938-1940, Volume 1, Volume 3* JSP Records

7-8. Big Joe Turner- *Everyday I Have The Blues, Wee Wee Baby Blues*-The premier blues shouter of the postwar era, Big Joe Turner's roar could rattle the very foundation of any gin joint he sang within — and that's without a microphone. Turner was a resilient figure in the history of blues — he effortlessly spanned boogie-woogie, jump blues, even the first wave of rock & roll, enjoying great success in each genre.

Turner, whose powerful physique certainly matched his vocal might, was a product of the swinging, wide-open Kansas City scene. Even in his teens, the big-boned Turner looked entirely mature enough to gain entry to various K.C. niteries. He ended up simultaneously tending bar and singing the blues before hooking up with boogie piano master Pete Johnson during the early '30s. Theirs was a partnership that would endure for 13 years.

The pair initially traveled to New York at John Hammond's behest in 1936. On December 23, 1938, they appeared on the fabled Spirituals to Swing concert at Carnegie Hall on a bill with Big Bill Broonzy, Sonny Terry, the Golden Gate Quartet, and Count Basie. Turner and Johnson performed "Low Down Dog" and "It's All Right, Baby" on the historic show, kicking off a boogie-woogie craze that landed them a long-running slot at the Cafe Society (along with piano giants Meade Lux Lewis and Albert Ammons).

From: *Flip, Flop, Fly* Fantasy/Pablo Records

9-10 T Bone-Walker-*Stormy Monday Blues, T-Bone Shuffle*-Modern electric blues guitar can be traced directly back to this Texas-born pioneer, who began amplifying his sumptuous lead lines for public consumption circa 1940 and thus initiated a revolution so total that its tremors are still being felt today. T-Bone grew up in Dallas and moved to L.A. in the mid 30's.

Few major postwar blues guitarists come to mind that don't owe T-Bone Walker an unpayable debt of gratitude. B.B. King has long cited him as a primary influence, marveling at Walker's penchant for holding the body of his guitar outward while he played it. Gatemouth Brown, Pee Wee Crayton, Goree

Carter, Pete Mayes, and a wealth of other prominent Texas-bred axemen came stylistically right out of Walker during the late '40s and early '50s. Walker's nephew, guitarist R.S. Rankin, went so far as to bill himself as T-Bone Walker, Jr. for a 1962 single on Dot, "Midnight Bells Are Ringing" (with his uncle's complete blessing, of course; the two had worked up a father-and-son-type act long before that).

11-12. John Lee Hooker-*Boogie Chillin*, *Sally Mae*-He was beloved worldwide as the king of the endless boogie, a genuine blues superstar whose droning, hypnotic one-chord grooves were at once both ultra-primitive and timeless. But John Lee Hooker recorded in a great many more styles than that over a career that stretched across more than half a century.

"The Hook" was a Mississippi native who became the top gent on the Detroit blues circuit in the years following World War II. The seeds for his eerily mournful guitar sound were planted by his stepfather, Will Moore, while Hooker was in his teens. Hooker had been singing spirituals before that, but the blues took hold and simply wouldn't let go. Overnight visitors left their mark on the youth, too: legends like Blind Lemon Jefferson, Charley Patton, and Blind Blake, who all knew Moore.

Hooker heard Memphis calling while he was still in his teens, but he couldn't gain much of a foothold there. So he relocated to Cincinnati for a seven-year stretch before making the big move to the Motor City in 1943. Jobs were plentiful, but Hooker drifted away from day gigs in favor of playing his unique free-form brand of blues. A burgeoning club scene along Hastings Street didn't hurt his chances any.

In 1948, the aspiring bluesman hooked up with entrepreneur Bernie Besman, who helped him hammer out his solo debut sides, "Sally Mae" and its seminal flip, "Boogie Chillen." This was blues as primitive as anything then on the market; Hooker's dark, ruminative vocals were backed only by his own ringing, heavily amplified guitar and insistently pounding foot. Their efforts were quickly rewarded. Los Angeles-based Modern Records issued the sides and "Boogie Chillen" — a colorful, unique travelogue of Detroit's blues scene — made an improbable jaunt to the very peak of the R&B charts.

From: *The Classic Early Years 1948-1951 (Disc 1)* JSP Records

13. Boogie Woogie Red-*The Viper Song*-Though a Louisiana native, Vernon Harrison has been associated with the Detroit blues sound as long as anyone. A Motor City resident since 1927, he began performing in the local clubs as a teenager. As a sideman he worked locally with Sonny Boy Williamson, Baby Boy Warren, and John Lee Hooker. Despite Red's renown for the blues and boogie-woogie style that earned him his nickname, he has recorded only a few times as a featured artist, and aside from a bit of European touring in the '70s, he has remained a local Detroit treasure, rarely appearing outside the area.

From: *Motor City Blues* Total Energy Records / Mordam

14. Baby Boy Warren-The denizens of Detroit's postwar blues scene never really received their due (except for John Lee Hooker, of course). Robert "Baby Boy" Warren compiled a sterling discography from 1949 to 1954 for a variety of Motor City firms without ever managing to transcend his local status along Hastings Street.

After honing his blues guitar approach in Memphis (where he was raised), Warren came to Detroit in 1942 to work for General Motors and gig on the side. The fruits of his first recording session in 1949 with pianist Charley Mills supporting him came out on several different logos: Prize, Staff, Gotham, even King's Federal subsidiary. A second date in 1950 that found him backed by pianist Boogie Woogie Red was split between Staff and Sampson; Swing Time snagged "I Got Lucky"/"Let's Renew Our Love" and pressed it for West Coast consumption.

From: *Motor City Blues* Total Energy Records / Mordam

15. Eddie "Guitar" *I Call it Love*-Detroit boasted a vibrant blues scene during the postwar era, headed by John Lee Hooker and prominently featuring Eddie Burns, who hit the Motor City in 1948 and musically flourished there. While still in Mississippi, Burns picked up his early blues training from the 78s of Sonny Boy Williamson, Tommy McClennan, and Big Bill Broonzy. When he hit Detroit, Burns was exclusively a harp player. He cut "Notoriety Woman," his first single for Holiday in 1948, with partner John T. Smith on guitar. Burns added guitar to his personal arsenal the next year, cutting sessions with Hooker. Burns' own discography was slim but select — he cut singles for DeLuxe in 1952 ("Hello Miss Jessie Lee"), Checker in 1954 ("Biscuit Baking Mama"), JVB, and Chess in 1957 ("Treat Me Like I Treat You"). In 1961, Burns waxed the slashing "Orange Driver" and several more R&B-slanted sides for Harvey Fuqua's Harvey Records.

From: *Motor City Blues* Total Energy Records / Mordam

16. Joe L. Carter-*Please Mr. Foreman*-

From: *Motor City Blues* Total Energy Records / Mordam