

Week 5 Musical Examples

1-3. Muddy Waters-*I Can't Be Satisfied, Rollin' and Tumblin', Hoochie Coochie Man*, A postwar Chicago blues scene without the magnificent contributions of Muddy Waters is absolutely unimaginable. From the late '40s on, he eloquently defined the city's aggressive, swaggering, Delta-rooted sound with his declamatory vocals and piercing slide-guitar attack. When he passed away in 1983, the Windy City would never quite recover.

Like many of his contemporaries on the Chicago circuit, Waters was a product of the fertile Mississippi Delta. Born McKinley Morganfield in Rolling Fork, he grew up in nearby Clarksdale on Stovall's Plantation. His idol was the powerful Son House, a Delta patriarch whose flailing slide work and intimidating intensity Waters would emulate in his own fashion.

From: *Rollin' Stone: The Golden Anniversary Collection (Disc 1)* UMG / MCA

4-5. Howlin' Wolf-*Smokestack Lightning, Evil*, In the history of the blues, there has never been anyone quite like the Howlin' Wolf. Six foot three and close to 300 pounds in his salad days, the Wolf was the primal force of the music spun out to its ultimate conclusion. A Robert Johnson may have possessed more lyrical insight, a Muddy Waters more dignity, and a B.B. King certainly more technical expertise, but no one could match him for the singular ability to rock the house down to the foundation while simultaneously scaring its patrons out of its wits.

He was born in West Point, MS, and named after the 21st President of the United States (Chester Arthur). His father was a farmer and Wolf took to it as well until his 18th birthday, when a chance meeting with Delta blues legend Charley Patton changed his life forever. Though he never came close to learning the subtleties of Patton's complex guitar technique, two of the major components of Wolf's style (Patton's inimitable growl of a voice and his propensity for entertaining) were learned first hand from the Delta blues master. The main source of Wolf's hard-driving, rhythmic style on harmonica came when Aleck "Rice" Miller (Sonny Boy Williamson) married his half-sister Mary and taught him the rudiments of the instrument. He first started playing in the early '30s as a strict Patton imitator, while others recall him at decade's end rocking the juke joints with a neck-rack harmonica and one of the first electric guitars anyone had ever seen. After a four-year stretch in the Army, he settled down as a farmer and weekend player in West Memphis, AR, and it was here that Wolf's career in music began in earnest.

Wolf finally started recording in 1951, when he caught the ear of Sam Phillips, who first heard him on his morning radio show. The music Wolf made in the Memphis Recording Service studio was full of passion and zest and Phillips simultaneously leased the results to the Bihari Brothers in Los Angeles and Leonard Chess in Chicago.

From: *The Chess Box (Disc 1)* UMG / MCA

6. Otis Rush-*I Can't Quit You Baby*-Breaking into the R&B Top Ten his very first time out in 1956 with the startlingly intense slow blues "I Can't Quit You Baby," southpaw guitarist Otis Rush subsequently established himself as one of the premier bluesmen on the Chicago circuit. He remains so today.

Rush is often credited with being one of the architects of the West side guitar style, along with Magic Sam and Buddy Guy. It's a nebulous honor, since Otis Rush played clubs on Chicago's South side just as frequently during the sound's late-'50s incubation period. Nevertheless, his esteemed status as a prime Chicago innovator is eternally assured by the ringing, vibrato-enhanced guitar work that remains his stock-in-trade and a tortured, super-intense vocal delivery that can force the hairs on the back of your

neck upwards in silent salute.

From: *Otis Rush 1956-1958: Cobra Recordings* Cobra

7-8. Magic Sam-*All Your Love, Easy Baby*- No blues guitarist better represented the adventurous modern sound of Chicago's West side more proudly than Sam Maghett. He died tragically young (at age 32 of a heart attack), right when he was on the brink of climbing the ladder to legitimate stardom — but Magic Sam left behind a thick legacy of bone-cutting blues that remains eminently influential around his old stomping grounds to this day.

Mississippi Delta-born Sam Maghett (one of his childhood pals was towering guitarist Morris Holt, who received his Magic Slim handle from Sam). In 1950, Sam arrived in Chicago, picking up a few blues guitar pointers from his new neighbor, Syl Johnson (whose brother Mack Thompson served as Sam's loyal bassist for much of his professional career). Harpist Shakey Jake Harris, sometimes referred to as the guitarist's uncle, encouraged Sam's blues progress and gigged with him later on, when both were West side institutions.

Sam's tremolo-rich staccato finger-picking was an entirely fresh phenomenon when he premiered it on Eli Toscano's Cobra label in 1957. Prior to his Cobra date, the guitarist had been gigging as Good Rocking Sam, but Toscano wanted to change his nickname to something old-timey like Sad Sam or Singing Sam. No dice, said the newly christened Magic Sam (apparently Mack Thompson's brainstorm).

His Cobra debut single, "All Your Love," was an immediate local sensation; its unusual structure would be recycled time and again by Sam throughout his tragically truncated career. Sam's Cobra encores "Everything Gonna Be Alright" and "Easy Baby" borrowed much the same melody but were no less powerful; the emerging West side sound was now officially committed to vinyl.

From: *With A Feeling* Cobra

9. Buddy Guy-*Try to Quit You Baby*- He's Chicago's blues king today, ruling his domain just as his idol and mentor Muddy Waters did before him. Yet there was a time, and not all that long ago either, when Buddy Guy couldn't even negotiate a decent record deal. Times sure have changed for the better — Guy's first three albums for Silvertone in the '90s all earned Grammys. Eric Clapton unabashedly calls Buddy Guy his favorite blues axeman, and so do a great many adoring fans worldwide.

High-energy guitar histrionics and boundless onstage energy have always been Guy trademarks, along with a tortured vocal style that's nearly as distinctive as his incendiary rapid-fire fretwork. He's come a long way from his beginnings on the 1950s Baton Rouge blues scene — at his first gigs with bandleader "Big Poppa" John Tilley, the young guitarist had to chug a stomach-jolting concoction of Dr. Tichenor's antiseptic and wine to ward off an advanced case of stage fright. But by the time he joined harpist Raful Neal's band, Guy had conquered his nervousness.

Guy journeyed to Chicago in 1957, ready to take the town by storm. But times were tough initially, until he turned up the juice as a showman (much as another of his early idols, Guitar Slim, had back home). It didn't take long after that for the new kid in town to establish himself. He hung with the city's blues elite: Freddy King, Muddy Waters, Otis Rush, and Magic Sam, who introduced Buddy Guy to Cobra Records boss Eli Toscano. Two searing 1958 singles for Cobra's Artistic subsidiary were the result: "This Is the End" and "Try to Quit You Baby" exhibited more than a trace of B.B. King influence, while "You Sure Can't Do" was an unabashed homage to Guitar Slim. Willie Dixon produced the sides.

From: *I Was Walking Through The Woods* UMG/MCA

10. Jimmy Reed-*Baby What You Want Me To Do*- There's simply no sound in the blues as easily digestible, accessible, instantly recognizable, and as easy to play and sing as the music of Jimmy Reed. His best-known songs — "Baby, What You Want Me to Do," "Bright Lights, Big City," "Honest I Do," "You Don't Have to Go," "Going to New York," "Ain't That Lovin' You Baby," and "Big Boss Man" — have become such an integral part of the standard blues repertoire, it's almost as if they have existed forever.

Reed was born on September 6, 1925, on a plantation in or around the small burg of Dunleith, MS. He stayed around the area until he was 15, learning the basic rudiments of harmonica and guitar from his buddy Eddie Taylor, who was then making a name for himself as a semi-pro musician, working country suppers and juke joints. Reed moved up to Chicago in 1943, but was quickly drafted into the Navy where he served for two years. After a quick trip back to Mississippi and marriage to his beloved wife Mary (known to blues fans as "Mama Reed"), he relocated to Gary, IN, and found work at an Armour Foods meat packing plant while simultaneously breaking into the burgeoning blues scene around Gary and neighboring Chicago. The early '50s found him working as a sideman with John Brim's Gary Kings (that's Reed blowing harp on Brim's classic "Tough Times" and its instrumental flipside, "Gary Stomp") and playing on the street for tips with Willie Joe Duncan, a shadowy figure who played an amplified, homemade one-string instrument called a Unitar. After failing an audition with Chess Records (his later chart success would be a constant thorn in the side of the firm), Brim's drummer at the time — improbably enough, future blues guitar legend Albert King — brought him over to the newly formed Vee-Jay Records, where his first recordings were made.

From: *Big Boss Man* Jewel-Paula Records

11. Elmore James-*Dust My Broom*- No two ways about it, the most influential slide guitarist of the postwar period was Elmore James, hands down. Although his early demise from heart failure kept him from enjoying the fruits of the '60s blues revival as his contemporaries Muddy Waters and Howlin' Wolf did, James left a wide influential trail behind him. And that influence continues to the present time — in approach, attitude and tone — in just about every guitar player who puts a slide on his finger and wails the blues. As a guitarist, he wrote the book, his slide style influencing the likes of Hound Dog Taylor, Joe Carter, his cousin Homesick James and J.B. Hutto, while his seldom-heard single-string work had an equally profound effect on B.B. King and Chuck Berry. His signature lick — an electric updating of Robert Johnson's "I Believe I'll Dust My Broom" and one that Elmore recorded in infinite variations from day one to his last session — is so much a part of the essential blues fabric of guitar licks that no one attempting to play slide guitar can do it without being compared to Elmore James. Others may have had more technique — Robert Nighthawk and Earl Hooker immediately come to mind — but Elmore had the sound and all the feeling.

A radio repairman by trade, Elmore reworked his guitar amplifiers in his spare time, getting them to produce raw, distorted sounds that wouldn't resurface until the advent of heavy rock amplification in the late '60s. This amp on 11 approach was hot-wired to one of the strongest emotional approaches to the blues ever recorded. There is never a time when you're listening to one of his records that you feel — no matter how familiar the structure — that he's phoning it in just to grab a quick session check. Elmore James always gave it everything he had, everything he could emotionally invest in a number. This commitment of spirit is something that shows up time and again when listening to multiple takes from his session masters. The sheer repetitiveness of the recording process would dim almost anyone's creative fires, but Elmore always seemed to give it 100% every time the red light went on.

From: *Dust My Broom* Jewel-Paula Records

12. Freddie King-*Hideaway*- Guitarist Freddie King rode to fame in the early '60s with a spate of catchy instrumentals which became instant bandstand fodder for fellow bluesmen and white rock bands alike. Employing a more down-home (thumb and finger picks) approach to the B.B. King single-string style of

playing, King enjoyed success on a variety of different record labels. Furthermore, he was one of the first bluesmen to employ a racially integrated group on-stage behind him. Influenced by Eddie Taylor, Jimmy Rogers, and Robert Jr. Lockwood, King went on to influence the likes of Eric Clapton, Mick Taylor, Stevie Ray Vaughan, and Lonnie Mack, among many others.

Freddie King (who was originally billed as "Freddy" early in his career) was born and raised in Gilmer, TX, where he learned how to play guitar as a child; his mother and uncle taught him the instrument. Initially, King played rural acoustic blues, in the vein of Lightin' Hopkins. By the time he was a teenager, he had grown to love the rough, electrified sounds of Chicago blues. In 1950, when he was 16 years old, his family moved to Chicago, where he began frequenting local blues clubs, listening to musicians like Muddy Waters, Jimmy Rogers, Robert Jr. Lockwood, Little Walter, and Eddie Taylor. Soon, the young guitarist formed his own band, the Every Hour Blues Boys, and was performing himself.

In the mid-'50s, King began playing on sessions for Parrott and Chess Records, as well as playing with Earlee Payton's Blues Cats and the Little Sonny Cooper Band. Freddie King didn't cut his own record until 1957, when he recorded "Country Boy" for the small independent label El-Bee. The single failed to gain much attention.

Three years later, King signed with Federal Records, a subsidiary of King Records, and recorded his first single for the label, "You've Got to Love Her With a Feeling," in August of 1960. The single appeared the following month and became a minor hit, scraping the bottom of the pop charts in early 1961. "You've Got to Love Her With a Feeling" was followed by "Hide Away," the song that would become Freddie King's signature tune and most influential recording. "Hide Away" was adapted by King and Magic Sam from a Hound Dog Taylor instrumental and named after one of the most popular bars in Chicago.

From: *Ultimate Collection* -Rhino

13-14. Chuck Berry- *Johnny Be Good* , *Wee Wee Hours*- Of all the early breakthrough rock & roll artists, none is more important to the development of the music than Chuck Berry. He is its greatest songwriter, the main shaper of its instrumental voice, one of its greatest guitarists, and one of its greatest performers. Quite simply, without him, there would be no Beatles, Rolling Stones, Beach Boys, Bob Dylan, nor a myriad others. There would be no standard "Chuck Berry guitar intro," the instrument's clarion call to get the joint rockin' in any setting. The clippety-clop rhythms of rockabilly would not have been mainstreamed into the now standard 4/4 rock & roll beat. There would be no obsessive wordplay by modern-day tunesmiths; in fact, the whole history (and artistic level) of rock & roll songwriting would have been much poorer without him. Like Brian Wilson said, he wrote "all of the great songs and came up with all the rock'n'roll beats." Those who do not claim him as a seminal influence or profess a liking for his music and showmanship show their ignorance of rock's development as well as his place as the music's first great creator. Elvis may have fueled rock & roll's imagery, but Chuck Berry was its heartbeat and original mindset.

He was born Charles Edward Anderson Berry to a large family in St. Louis. A bright pupil, Berry developed a love for poetry and hard blues early on, winning a high school talent contest with a guitar-and-vocal rendition of Jay McShann's big band number, "Confessin' the Blues." With some local tutelage from the neighborhood barber, Berry progressed from a four-string tenor guitar up to an official six-string model and was soon working the local East St. Louis club scene, sitting in everywhere he could. He quickly found out that black audiences liked a wide variety of music and set himself to the task of being able to reproduce as much of it as possible. What he found they *really* liked — besides the blues and Nat King Cole tunes — was the sight and sound of a black man playing white hillbilly music,

and Berry's showmanlike flair, coupled with his seemingly inexhaustible supply of fresh verses to old favorites, quickly made him a name on the circuit. In 1954, he ended up taking over pianist Johnny Johnson's small combo and a residency at the Cosmopolitan Club soon made the Chuck Berry Trio the top attraction in the black community, with Ike Turner's Kings of Rhythm their only real competition.
From: *The Chess Box (Disc 1)* UMG/Chess

15-16. Bo Diddley-*Hey Bo Diddley, I'm a Man*-He only had a few hits in the 1950s and early '60s, but as Bo Diddley sang, "You Can't Judge a Book by Its Cover." You can't judge an artist by his chart success, either, and Diddley produced greater and more influential music than all but a handful of the best early rockers. The Bo Diddley beat — bomp, ba-bomp-bomp, bomp-bomp — is one of rock & roll's bedrock rhythms, showing up in the work of Buddy Holly, the Rolling Stones, and even pop-garage knock-offs like the Strangeloves' 1965 hit "I Want Candy." Diddley's hypnotic rhythmic attack and declamatory, boasting vocals stretched back as far as Africa for their roots, and looked as far into the future as rap. His trademark otherworldly vibrating, fuzzy guitar style did much to expand the instrument's power and range. But even more important, Bo's bounce was fun and irresistibly rocking, with a wisecracking, jiving tone that epitomized rock & roll at its most humorously outlandish and freewheeling.

Before taking up blues and R&B, Diddley had actually studied classical violin, but shifted gears after hearing John Lee Hooker. In the early '50s, he began playing with his longtime partner, maraca player Jerome Green, to get what Bo's called "that freight train sound." Billy Boy Arnold, a fine blues harmonica player and singer in his own right, was also playing with Diddley when the guitarist got a deal with Chess in the mid-'50s (after being turned down by rival Chicago label Vee-Jay). His very first single, "Bo Diddley"/"I'm a Man" (1955), was a double-sided monster. The A-side was soaked with futuristic waves of tremolo guitar, set to an ageless nursery rhyme; the flip was a bump-and-grind, harmonica-driven shuffle, based around a devastating blues riff. But the result was not exactly blues, or even straight R&B, but a new kind of guitar-based rock & roll, soaked in the blues and R&B, but owing allegiance to neither.

From: *The Chess Box (Disc 1)* UMG/Chess