

Leonardo - A Country Blues Narrative with Songs

This will be a journey from the beginning of blues music told with a timeline narrative and songs. There will be examples of some of the first recorded Blues songs all the way through the late 1930's. Also covered is how these songs influenced post-war music.

Leonardo has been performing and giving workshops in the Detroit area for 20 years. He is endorsed by the National Reso-Phonic Guitar Company. He plays his guitars in open tunings. His primary musical focus is solo, acoustic country blues.

The Songs:

"No More" - "Early In The Morning" - 1947 - Prison Songs - Vol 1
"Murderous Home". Recorded by Alan Lomax at Parchman Farm Prison.

"Pony Blues" - Charley Patton - 1929 - One of Charley's first recorded songs. I play the Son House version. Charley re-recorded this song in 1934 calling it "Stone Pony Blues". Linda Ronstadt named her band The Stone Ponies as a nod to Charley.

"Dark Was The Night, Cold Was The Ground" - "Blind" Willie Johnson - 1927. A melodic moaning depicting laying Jesus' body down. This song was selected to be on the Golden Record that is on the Voyager Spacecraft.

"Trouble Soon Be Over" - "Blind" Willie Johnson - 1930. A traditional Gospel Blues song. Chris Thomas King does a great pantomime of this in-character on YouTube.

"Boogie Woogie Dance" - Tampa Red - 1927 - A Blues instrumental. Red was one of the first players to use a National Tricone resonator guitar.

"Aberdeen, Mississippi Blues" - Booker "Bukka" White - early '30's. A first cousin of B. B. King's mother. A letter by John Fahey addressed to "Bukka White, Blues Musician, Aberdeen, MS" is how he was rediscovered in the 60's and can be found performing on YouTube.

"Big Road Blues" - Tommy Johnson - 1928 - This song influenced the Canned Heat song "Going Up The Country". They took their name from his

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song "Canned Heat Blues". The whole "devil at the crossroads" myth was about Tommy Johnson, not Robert Johnson.

"I'm So Glad" - "Cypress Grove" - "Illinois Blues" - Skip James - 1931 - Recorded 18 songs on guitar and piano and disappeared until being rediscovered in 1964. My favorite Country Blues player!

"Police Dog Blues" - Arthur "Blind" Blake - 1929. A blues/ragtime style song that is a good example of the Piedmont Blues style.

"That's No Way To Get Along" - Rev. Robert Wilkins - 1929. The secular version of one of Jesus' parables. A Gospel version, "Prodigal Son", was recorded by The Rolling Stones in 1968.

"High Sheriff Blues" - Charley Patton - 1934 - A song about getting drunk and thrown in jail in Belzoni, MS. Mr. Purvis was the High Sheriff and Mr. Wells was the turnkey.

"Country/Walking Blues" - Son House/Robert Johnson/Muddy Waters - 1930's. One of the most performed and covered country blues songs.

"Crossroad Blues" - 1937 - Robert Johnson. A good example of how the Blues has developed by the time of Robert Johnson. Cream's cover of this song introduced many people to the Blues.

"Love In Vain" - Robert Johnson - 1937. A copy of Leroy Carr's "In The Evening" on piano. Back then, you could copy someone else's song, change the lyrics, and no one would know. This was the first Robert Johnson song recorded by The Rolling Stones.

"Cigarette Blues" - Armenter Chatmon a.k.a. Bo Carter - 1936. A hokum-type song that has nothing to do with cigarettes. He was also a member of The Mississippi Sheiks.

"Wild Ox Moan" - Vera Ward Hall - 1948. Alan Lomax said that she had the sweetest voice that he had ever heard. Many examples of her singing can be found on YouTube. She sang a cappella.