

SPY TUNES

THE BLUES



LEGACY

Sandy Buglass & Dan Lundholm

Blues Legacy - Credits

This eBook was written by Sandy Buglass and Dan Lundholm.

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Blues Legacy - Intro



Introduction

The Blues Legacy is a 'in the style of' product designed to demonstrate how the electric guitar as we know it today has evolved and why we play it the way we do.

In doing so, it will enable you to have a better grasp and understanding of not only the Blues but the roots of all contemporary music.

As the great bassist/composer Willie Dixon said:

"The Blues is the roots, the rest are the fruits"

A Brief Background

Though electric blues was pioneered in the late 1930s and 40s, particularly in areas such as Texas and Chicago, the roots of the blues date back much further.

Originating from African-American work, gospel and spiritual songs in the Mississippi Delta in the late 19th century, the music evolved from basic field hollers and work songs used by slaves during the days of plantations, to a standardized 8, 12 or 16 bar framework.

As we learn from the players that have made the style famous since then, we discover how the evolution of popular music and the guitar has gone hand in hand.

In The Style Of

To get you playing "In The Style Of" these great players we have put together live "In The Style Of" backing tracks.

Use these to play the original riff and solo, come up with your own variation or learn exactly what I'm playing using the "In The Style Of" video and the transcription.

When you feel ready; upload your version as a video response via YouTube to get feedback from other users at Spytunes.

I wish you the best of luck in your journey

-Sandy Buglass

Aaron Thibeaux “T-Bone” Walker



Where better to start than with electric blues Godfather, Mr T-bone Walker, our first Texan in Spytunes Blues Legacy.

T-Bone was born in Liden, Texas, 1910. Ever the performer and showman, T-Bone began his professional life performing as a dancer and banjo player as part of local carnival shows.

Like so many Texans before him, T-Bone moved to California (Texas musicians went to California to record, Mississippi Delta players tended to go to Chicago, Illinois) to record and it was here that Walker got his hands on one of the first electric guitars. The rest, as they say, is history.

Walker made his mark in musical legend by cutting his first blues recordings with an electric guitar around 1939.

Walker did to Blues what Charlie Christian did for jazz guitar (In fact, the two spent a lot of time with each other and regularly played together)

Walker was one of the first (if not THE first) electric blues men who took the guitar from an instrument that simply accompanied other instruments, to one which performed single note lead solos like a trumpet or sax player would.

He was also a pioneer of stage craft and invented classic moves such as the infamous ‘playing with the teeth’ (A trick later adopted and made famous by Chuck Berry and Jimi Hendrix).

He was a consummate showman, even playing his guitar at a right angle to his body!

"When T-Bone Walker came, I was into that. That was the sound I was looking for."
- Albert King

T-Bone Walker - Gear



T-Bone lived and performed long before the use of guitar pedals and Marshall stacks, so his set-up was pretty basic.

Over his long career the electric guitar evolved but T-Bone remained a faithful Gibson man, his model choices can be divided into different eras.

T-Bone Walker Guitars

1930 - 50s - Gibson ES-250

The follow up of Gibson's first electric jazz guitar (the ES-150) the ES-250 had a blade style pickup, which later became known as the Charlie Christian Pickup. Both T-Bone and Charlie Christian used this guitar.

"Once I'd heard him for the first time, I knew I'd have to have an electric guitar to myself. Had to have one, short of stealing!" -B.B. King

1950 - 70s - Gibson ES-5

The ES-5 was Gibson's 3 pickup Deluxe model. T-bone used this guitar for the majority of his career.

70s - Gibson ES-335

This was possibly Gibson's most famous semi-hollow model and was used by Clapton and Freddie King as well as the late T-bone Walker.

Gibson Barney Kessel model

As well as the 335, T-bone also dabbled with the Gibson Barney Kessel Model.

This guitar was launched alongside the Johnny Smith guitar, making Gibson a pioneer in signature guitars.

The model was available between '61 and '73 as a regular and custom model.

T-Bone Walker Amps

Gibson EH-150

Gibson's ES-150 guitar came with an amp called EH-150, named so since together they cost \$150.

Fender Bassman

Fender's classic 4 by 10 design was aimed at bass players, but many guitar players came to favour it as well. This amp is what Marshall based their first designs on, so its legacy is huge.

Modern players still use the amp; for example, Brian Setzer of Stray Cats is a huge Fender Bassman fan.

Did you know?

Blind Lemon Jefferson (Phenomenal acoustic bluesman) was a family friend of T-Bone, so as a youngster, T-Bone used to lead Jefferson around to different bars to play the Blues.

T-Bone Walker Legacy



T-Bone is perhaps the most influential of all our blues legacy players, mainly because he almost single-handedly invented electric blues lead playing on the guitar.

Unfortunately, he is often overlooked in favour of more recent guitarists, such as B.B King and Jimi Hendrix.

Walker's popularisation of the minor pentatonic blues box (which ironically is now considered by some to be somewhat basic) was revolutionary during his day.

Though many of Walker's licks have now become fairly cliché, it must be remembered that he was the first to play them the way he did and was the first to execute them properly on the electric guitar.

T-Bone also added flavour to his playing by borrowing from jazz players and used notes from outside the minor pentatonic and blues scales such as the '2nd', '6th' and the major '3rd'.

As the Blues Legacy discusses, this can also be seen as mixing minor and major pentatonic scales.

An often over looked aspect of Walker's influence was his use of chords, particularly the 9th chord.

Before T-Bone, most guitarists would simply use 7th chords over blues progressions, so his use of 9th was simply unheard of.

T-Bone Stylistic Traits

- Sliding 9th chords
- 'Single note' solos
- Large use of pentatonic 'boxes'
- No vibrato (Very important, vibrato didn't become part of the guitar's arsenal until around the 1950/60's)
- Slight bending (DO NOT over-bend, under-bend!)

In The Style Of Papa Ain't Salty



The solo is primarily based around the first position of the G minor pentatonic with hints of G Mixolydian (particularly the 6th and 9th)

With the picking hand, make sure you're picking fairly close to the bridge with the neck pick up selected (This allows for a much more vintage and

authentic sound)

As the song progresses, double stops start to appear as well as more single note lines.

To enhance these double stops, I down pick all of them for a more authentic feel and sound (The difference between using down strokes and alternate picking everything, is massive)

During bars 13 - 24, I begin to play through the chords a bit more rather than implying only the G minor pentatonic/G Mixolydian over everything.

Over the IV chord (in this case C9) I imply C Mixolydian and over the V (D9) I imply D Minor Pentatonic.

I still use G minor pentatonic/ G Mixolydian over the I (G9)

Think about the ideas/concepts listed below as you record your video response:

- Listen/watch very carefully to the bending style (It's very different to the modern bending technique)
- No vibrato (If you add vibrato, you'll lose the authenticity and sound much more modern)
- In terms of tone, select the neck pick up and aim for that half way point between clean and the amp 'breaking up' (Add a nice dollop of reverb too)

- Pick nearer the bridge for a more vintage sound
- Practice switching between playing the licks using alternate picking as well as just using down strokes.

The difference in feel/tone is huge and I personally prefer to down pick a lot of T-Bone licks as to my ears, it adds to that vintage feel.

Upload your version of 'Papa Ain't Salty' to YouTube, then video response your version to get feedback!

