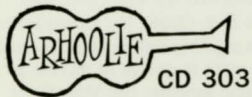


1. **It Ain't Right** (Walter Jacobs)
2. **Finger Lickin' Good** (Musselwhite)
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(Musselwhite)
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& Leake)



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 "Wild Wild Woman" by Johnny Young is
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#1-7: Charlie Musselwhite—vocals & harmonica; William "Skip" Rose—piano; Robbin Ford—guitar; Patrick Ford—drums; Gerald Pedersen—bass. Recorded Berkeley, Ca. 1971.

#8-14: Charlie Musselwhite—vocals, harmonica (chromatic on #13), and guitar on #8 & 11; Lafayette Leake—piano; Tim Kaihatsu—guitar; Larry Martin—drums; Karl Sevareid—bass; Recorded San Francisco, Ca. August 24, 1974.

Produced by Chris Strachwitz

Cover by Lynda Barry

All selections previously released on
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Charlie Musselwhite

Although the Blues, along with jazz and gospel music, were one of the main musical traditions to evolve as the result of the African American experience in the United States, the genre has long since then lost its ethnic exclusivity. Just as jazz from its earliest days to the present, has had major figures of other than African American background, so has the blues.

Charlie Musselwhite was born in Kosciusko (Attala County), Mississippi on January 31, 1944. His father was a man of diverse interests: carpenter, cab driver, guitar, mandolin, and harmonica player. His grandfather, "Mr. Charlie," as he was known when sheriff in Pawhuska, Oklahoma, captured the notorious three Spencer Brothers. A great-uncle, Archie Stevens, was a one man band called "The Sunshine Band" and travelled all over the South and central U.S. following the harvests all the while playing for field hands until he returned to preaching in recent years.

In 1947 the family moved in a dump truck to Memphis, Tennessee looking for a better life. Charlie's parents soon divorced and his mother had little time for her child since she always worked full time to make a living. As a teenager in the late 50s Charlie worked at various jobs while still going to school. One summer he was with a construction company in West Memphis.

He was the only white kid on the crew and was paid \$1 per hour. During his free time he listened to WDIA and was especially fond of Rufus Thomas who used Sonny Terry's "Hootin' the Blues" as his theme song. Music was not only on the air but it was part of life. Charlie often jammed with a white guitar playing friend, Jerry Smith, who served some time at he Shelby County Penal Farm. Later Charlie worked for the Southern Central Paper Company as a "dolly boy" whose job it was to cart paper stacks from cutting tables to the packers. Most of the workers were women and they would sing:

Dolly boy, dolly boy
Bring your dolly 'round
If you don't like your job
Put your dolly down.

In 1961 Charlie saw Sam Charters' book "The Country Blues" and became aware of the fact that right there in Memphis were many of the blues singers who had become the object of researchers from all over the world. He went to see Will Shade (also known as Son Brimmer) who taught Charlie a little on the harp and a good deal on the guitar. Soon Charlie also met Furry Lewis and Gus Cannon. In 1962, just as his parents had moved from the country to Memphis in search of better wages, Charlie left

for Chicago after hearing people tell that up North you could get jobs paying \$3 per hour, and he thus followed, unconsciously, the pattern of most Mississippi blues singers. But the promised land didn't turn out to be so generous and hospitable. After searching for a whole week Charlie finally landed a job with an exterminator company. He never did get to exterminate many rats and roaches, although these creatures existed in rather generous quantities. Instead, Charlie answered the phone, cleaned latrines, and did all sorts of odd jobs for \$60 per week.

Charlie was not aware that many of the great blues artists were also in Chicago until one day while walking around town for the exterminator, he saw a sign advertising Elmore James and soon he became well acquainted with many of the legendary bluesmen. On weekends Charlie joined Johnny Young in "Jewtown," that open air market on Maxwell Street. At night they moved to a Mexican joint called "Pasa Tiempo." Carey was on bass, Houston Phillips on drums and John Lee Granderson often joined. Later they worked at Rose and Kelley's Blue Lounge where Charlie was adopted as a son by the owners and got the nickname "Charlie Kelley." Many bluesmen like Big Walter, J.B. Hutto, Charlie West, Robert Nighthawk and Johnny Shines came by to sit-in or just hang out. Between sets they would drink wine out in the alley. During the days Charlie would work with Johnny Young, painting, cleaning, or just doing any kind of work

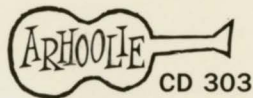
they could find.

One day while walking through Chicago, Charlie came by the Jazz Record Mart at 7 West Grand Avenue and seeing all those old labels of blues records in the window he went in and soon became friends with the owners Bob Koester and Pete Welding who worked for Down Beat at the time. Through them he met Sam Charters who was then working for Vanguard Records and so the first recording session came about. Charlie recalls that after the session he waited a few days to hear from the union to get his money which he was already planning to spend on a new amplifier and some records. When they finally called him, he rushed down only to find out that the check for the session came to exactly 38 cents! He was disillusioned and explanations about how renting an amp and assorted other expenses had to be deducted did not help much. Disappointed or not, the record was the beginning of a new career for Charlie Musselwhite III who has since then made many recordings and played all kinds of places all over the world from small clubs to Carnegie Hall. Charlie has toured Europe and Australia regularly and alumni of his bands have gone to work in groups as diverse as Robert Cray, David Sanborn, and Miles Davis. I hope you will catch Charlie the next time he comes through your town, he has a fantastic new band and sounds better than ever!

(Chris Strachwitz—1989)

Charlie Musselwhite

MEMPHIS CHARLIE



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