

PIANO BLUES RBF 12



Compiled and Edited by Samuel B. Charters

WALTER ROLAND - Big Mama
 WALTER ROLAND - Dice's Blues
 SYLVESTER PALMER - Broke Man Blues
 MISSISSIPPI JOOK BAND - Skippy Whippy
 WESLEY WALLACE - Fanny Lee Blues
 WESLEY WALLACE - Number 29
 JABBO WILLIAMS - Pratt City Blues
 WALTER DAVIS - M & O Blues #3
 ROMEO NELSON - Dyer's Rider Blues
 LOUISE JOHNSON - On The Wall
 ROOSEVELT SYKES - Lost All I Had Blues
 LITTLE BROTHER MONTGOMERY - The First Time I Met You
 JABBO WILLIAMS - Jab Blues
 PETTIE WHEATSTRAW - Good Woman Blues

PROPERTY OF
 FOLK LIFE PROGRAM
 SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

COVER PHOTOGRAPH BY ANN CHARTERS / DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE

© Copyright 1966 RBF Records

PIANO BLUES DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

PIANO BLUES

Side A

- | | |
|--------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Walter Roland | -Big Mama |
| 2. Walter Roland | -Dice's Blues |
| 3. Sylvester Palmer | -Broke Man Blues |
| 4. Mississippi Jook Band | -Skippy Whippy |
| 5. Wesley Wallace | -Fanny Lee Blues |
| 6. Wesley Wallace | -Number 29 |
| 7. Jabbo Williams | Pratt City Blues |

Side B

1. Walter Davis -M & O Blues #3
2. Romeo Nelson -Dyin' Rider Blues
3. Louise Johnson -On The Wall
4. Roosevelt Sykes -Lost All I Had Blues
5. Little Brother Montgomery-The First Time I Met You
6. Jabbo Williams - Jab Blues
7. Peetie Wheatstraw - Good Woman Blues

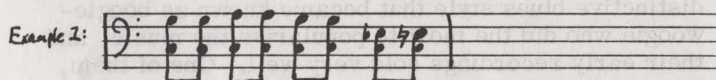
Notes by Samuel Charters

Back in a dark corner in a shambling Mississippi juke joint, or pushed into an opening over the bar in a club in Alabama, up on a rickety balcony in a New Orleans dance hall, next to the door in a saloon in Galveston, there used to be as many pianos as there are now juke boxes. Most of them were heavy, ornate uprights, the maker's trademark painted over the keyboard with flowing gold letters, the wooden cases carved with flowers and wreaths and pedestals and columns. Also most of them were out of tune, the felts worn off the dampers so they had a tinny, jangling sound, the ivories on the keys were broken and stained, and the pedals were usually gone. But they still played, and the piano has had almost as long and important a place in the development of the blues as the guitar. Because of its place in the dance orchestra the piano was as important to the development of early jazz as it was to the blues, and there were already ragtime and barrelhouse styles before the blues took on a definite shape. Older jazz pianists could tell where a man was from by listening to the way he played the bass, but, as Jelly Roll Morton put it, "Everybody had their own style." The pianists were mostly itinerant entertainers, playing popular songs and dances, as well as blues and ragtime. In their own way they were like the old songsters, and like the guitar players and blues singers they learned from each other sitting in the saloons or the brothels taking turns at the piano in all night "cutting" contests.

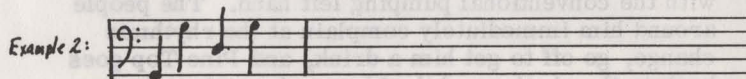
The piano was suited to the blues in some ways, and in others it had difficulties of its own. It was loud and strong and not too hard to learn, and there were pianos in most of the little clubs, but at the country balls and cabin parties there weren't pianos around. Most blues men, even today, play both piano and guitar, even though

they're usually better on one than they are on the other. Also the piano is tuned to the European diatonic scale, while the blues vocal scale is almost always a gapped pentatonic, or five note scale. The most serious problem is in the major-minor relationship of the third of the scale. In their singing they usually used a so-called "neutral tone" that was between the two, and on the guitar they could push a string, or slide on it with a bottleneck to get a tone that had the ambivalence of the vocal line. The ragtime pianists had already been troubled by the same problem, and they had finally found a number of ways to get around it. In one of James Scott's best rags, "Grace And Beauty," the opening melodic phrase is a pentatonic scale outline, without diatonic alteration. Also in the chord texture of the rags there was frequent use of both the major and minor intervals of the chord within a measure or phrase, and the resulting composite sound had considerable ambiguity.

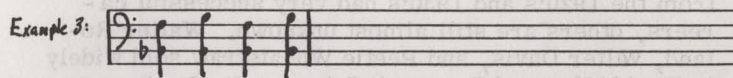
The blues pianists had some of this problem in both the melodies and the harmonic structure. Often in the left hand the third of the scale was eliminated, and the bass pattern was built on the open fifth or open octave. One of the more complex basses in the style of piano that became known as boogie-woogie used both the open fifth and the ambivalent third, the little finger and thumb playing the outer notes and the third and second finger playing the flatted third to major third that ended the pattern.



A fast bass pattern that was used in Texas and Louisiana developed around the open octave and fifth, avoiding the third.



In many of the piano blues styles the left hand patterns were clearly related to the local guitar blues accompaniments. The alternating octave-fifth was similar to the alternating thumb picking of Mississippi, which moved from either the octave or the fifth. The wide spread piano bass of alternating intervals of the fifth and the sixth



was closely related to the guitar pattern that used the little finger to move up and down on a string, from fret to fret, to give some variety to the sound of the open harmonics.

The melodic material of the blues pianists was usually a series of sequential figures that retained their outline, even though they moved through a series of harmonic changes. The concept was close to the jazz melodic practise that Winthrop Sargeant has called

er
d

Example 4:

The musical notation for Example 4 is a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The melody consists of a quarter note G2, a quarter note A2, a quarter note B2, a quarter note C3, a quarter note D3, a quarter note E3, a quarter note F3, and a quarter note G3.



d

ies

cat

SO:

Samuel Charters

Si

1.

You know she makes me mad when she calls
my name, (three times)
But you know I never told her
She could not shake that thing.

2. Walter Roland -- "Dice's Blues"

I say, dices oh dices, please don't shoot three
on me, (twice)
You know I'm just as broke and hungry
As any gambler ought to be.

You know my woman gave me money, just to
play good jack, (twice)
I didn't win no money, but
You know I played my hand.

I went down in Louisiana, down on that
floor, (twice)
I wonder if I'll win any money,
Sure gonna bring it home.

I gambled yesterday, and I gambled again
today, (twice)
But you know if I don't win tomorrow
I'm gonna throw my cards away.

Says, you know I'm a gambler, 'cause I've
been gambling all the time (twice)
But you know, I've got to win some money
So I can give it to that gal of mine.

3. Sylvester Palmer -- "Broke Man Blues"

I know just how bad, baby, (repeat)
How a broke man feels,
There is no one, baby,
Who will do him a real good deal.

I been broke all day, baby, (repeat)
Did not have a lousy dime,
But I'll be all right, baby
I swear some other time.

I don't feel welcome,
Mama, in St. Louis anymore, (repeat)
'Cause I have no friends
And there's no place to go.

I'm gonna leave this town, baby
And I swear I ain't comin' back no mo', (repeat)
I been treated so bad
I can't be happy no mo'.

I've lost all my money, baby,) (repeat)
And everything I had too,
That's why you hear me cryin'
Mama, these broke man blues.

Ummhumm, I ain't got to sing it no more, (repeat) (spoken)
'Cause I been broke, baby,
And I got these broke man blues.

Band 6. Wesley Wallace -- "Number 29"

A little train called 29,
... comin' from St. Louis.
... she blows that whistle,
She blows the whistle this way.
I caught that train one night,

(spoken)

I was intendin' to get off in Illinois.
I mean that train was runnin'
She wasn't doin' nothin' but runnin' hard,
Something like this.
Just before she got to the border
She thought she'd blow that whistle again.
She blow that whistle something like this.
She's loafin' now.
I wanted to get off that train
But she's goin' too fast.
I hauled away and stretched one foot on the
ground, . . . nearly knocked my
brains out. . .
And fell off. I was rollin' when I hit the
ground.
I'm rollin' now. I got up and waved my hand,
told her goodbye.

Side B

Band 1. Walter Davis -- "M & O Blues #3"

My baby got a ruling,
And she called the chief of police.
My baby got a ruling,
Called the police up to my door,
And I believe to my soul
Goin' to have to ride that M & O.

I'm a railroad man, and I love that M & O.
(repeat)

And when I leave this time
I ain't comin' back no mo'.

Now don't the moon look pretty, shinin' down
through the trees, (repeat)

I can see my baby,
But I swear that she can't see me.

I'm a mean old traveler, and I believe I've
got to go, (repeat)

I'm goin' to leave here, people,
Goin' to catch that M & O.

Band 2. Romeo Nelson -- "Dyin' Rider Blues"

I got a letter from my rider, (repeat)
What do you reckon it read?
Hurry home, papa, rider's almost dead.

Band 4. Roosevelt Sykes -- "Lost All I Had Blues"

I woke up this mornin', found many things on
my mind (repeat)
As I thought about my troubles,
Could not keep from cryin'.

I turned around, looked toward the sun,
(repeat)
Said if these blues don't kill me
I wasn't born to die.

I lost all I had, everything I had to lose,
(repeat)

I lost the one I love,
I just can't lose these blues.

It's tough to lose everything you got, lose
the one you love,
You know I got the blues.

As I see it, I be blue all the time, (repeat)
If I don't go crazy,
Then I will lose my mind.

I believe I'll just go home and kill my wife
alive. Yes sir,
'cause she come and bring me that old jive.
And I better go
home than sit in some old dive.

Band 5. Little Brother Montgomery --
"The First Time I Met You"

The first time I met the blues, mama,
They came walkin' through the wood.

(repeat)
They stopped at my house first, mama,
And done me all the harm they could.

Now my blues got at me, and run me from
tree to tree, (repeat)

You should have heard me beggin',
Mister Blues, don't bother me.

Good mornin', blues, what are you doin'
here so soon? (repeat)

You be with me every mornin',
Lordy, every night and noon.

The blues came down the valley, and stopped
right at my door, (repeat)

They give me more hard luck and trouble
Than I ever had before.

Band 7. Peetie Wheatstraw -- "Good Woman Blues"

What makes me love my baby, (repeat)
She loved me when I was down,
Well, she was nice and kind,
She did not dog me around.

You know, most of the women
Will listen to what people say, (repeat)
But you know my babe,
Well, well, she's just the other way.

She gave me money, and kept me nice and
clean, (repeat)

You know when I was down,
My babe didn't treat me mean.

Now I'm good to my baby, since I'm up on
my feet, (repeat)

Now I don't care
If I see another woman on the street.

OTHER RECORDS IN THE RBF CATALOGUE

RF 1 THE COUNTRY BLUES, Volume 1.

RF 3 (FJ 2823) HISTORY OF JAZZ: THE NEW
YORK SCENE.

RF 5 AN INTRODUCTION TO GOSPEL SONG.

RF 6 THE JUG BANDS.

RF 7 THE PIANO ROLL

RF 8 SLEEPY JOHN ESTES

RF 9 THE COUNTRY BLUES: Volume II.

RF 10 BLIND WILLIE JOHNSON 1927-1930.

RF 11 BLUES REDISCOVERIES.

RF 12 PIANO BLUES

RF 51 UNCLE DAVE MACON

RF 202 THE RURAL BLUES.

RF 203-1 NEW ORLEANS JAZZ: THE '20's,
Volume I.

RF 203-2 NEW ORLEANS JAZZ: THE '20's,
Volume 2.

RF 203 NEW ORLEANS JAZZ: THE '20's, Volumes
1 and 2.

RECORD, BOOK, AND FILM SALES, INC.

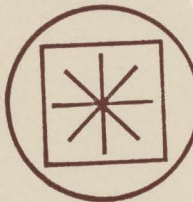
© 1966 by Record, Book, and Film Sales, Inc.,
701 Seventh Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10036

PIANO BLUES

Compiled and Edited by Samuel Charters

SIDE 1 RF-12A
33 $\frac{1}{3}$ RPM

RBF



©

1. WALTER ROLAND - Big Mama
2. WALTER ROLAND - Dice's Blues
3. SYLVESTER PALMER - Broke Man Blues
4. MISSISSIPPI JOCK BAND - Skippy Whippy
5. WESLEY WALLACE - Fanny Lee Blues
6. WESLEY WALLACE - Number 29
7. JABBO WILLIAMS - Pratt City Blues

RECORD, BOOK, AND FILM SALES, INC.

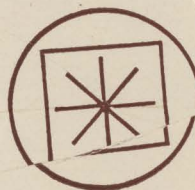
© 1966 by Record, Book, and Film Sales, Inc.,
701 Seventh Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10036

PIANO BLUES

Compiled and Edited by Samuel Charters

SIDE 2 RF-12B
33 1/3 RPM

RBF



1. WALTER DAVIS - M & O Blues #3
2. ROMEO NELSON - Dyin' Rider Blues
3. LOUISE JOHNSON - On The Wall
4. ROOSEVELT SYKES - Lost All I Had Blues
5. LITTLE BROTHER MONTGOMERY - The First Time I Met You
6. JABBO WILLIAMS - Jab Blues
7. PEETIE WHEATSTRAW - Good Woman Blues