

RBF 16

BLUES ROOTS/CHICAGO—THE 1930's

Compiled and Annotated by Samuel Charters



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1630.18
B659
1967

MUSIC LP

SIDE ONE:

BIG BILL BROONZY -- "WHEN I HAD MONEY"
 BIG BILL -- "I'VE GOT TO DIG YOU"
 BIG BILL -- "KEEP YOUR HANDS OFF HER"
 MEMPHIS MINNIE -- "HOLD ME BLUES"
 MEMPHIS MINNIE -- "KILLER DILLER"
 JOHNNIE TEMPLE -- "NEW LOUISE LOUISE BLUES"
 JOHNNIE TEMPLE -- "SO LONELY AND BLUE"

SIDE TWO:

JAZZ GILLUM -- "KEY TO THE HIGHWAY"
 JAZZ GILLUM -- "GO BACK TO THE COUNTRY"
 BIG MACEO -- "WINTER TIME BLUES"
 ST. LOUIS JIMMY (JIMMY ODEN) -- "GOING DOWN SLOW"
 WASHBOARD SAM -- "COME ON IN"
 WASHBOARD SAM -- "YES! I GOT YOUR WOMAN"
 WASHBOARD SAM -- "JUST GOT TO HOLD YOU"

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FOLKWAYS RECORDS Album No RBF 16

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BLUES ROOTS/CHICAGO

-the '30's

SAMUEL CHARTERS

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As the 'twenties closed, the market for the country blues that had been so important in the two or three years before dwindled rapidly. Part of it was that the original interest in the difficult, elusive, and strongly individualistic country blues styles had passed, just as most styles in popular recording pass, but the most important part of it was the Depression which hit the South early and grew steadily worse in the 'thirties. Chicago had always had a major place in the blues market, and with the change of style the town's role as a ground source for new singers and styles was to become even more important. A lot of young musicians were already in the southside, and they brought up other young musicians that they heard of from friends and relatives. It was a different kind of blues - with some of the studied sophistication of small band jazz or vocal quartet singing of the period - but it was still the blues. Leroy Carr and Scrapper Blackwell, with their "How Long How Long Blues," and Tampa Red and Georgia Tom with their "Tight Like That" had already established the piano-guitar duet as a blues accompaniment, and the piano stayed on through the 'thirties. The groups tended to get larger anyway, and by the beginning of the 'forties most of the singers were using four and five piece bands for their recordings. With larger groups, and the demand for an increasing number of songs, the music became less personal in one way, but it also became more widely acceptable in another - since the melodies and the style of song became so familiar. As a result the Chicago blues men of the late 1930's were probably more popu-

lar than any of the country blues men of the 'twenties had been.

Many of the Chicago singers of the 'thirties were still singing when the revival of interest in the blues began in the 1950's so they had an opportunity to regain some of their popularity with the new audience and Big Bill Broonzy, in particular, had a very successful second career as a singer and song writer. But all of them had an easy charm and a long familiarity with the blues that was reflected in the recording that they did in the 'thirties. Broonzy dominated the period and his records sold very well, but he was an influence not only for his singing style and songs but for his steady work as an accompanist for other singers as well. The sessions, because of the number of men who worked together for such a long period, had a consistency of style and mood that the blues has seldom seen. And with all the easy habits that they picked up there were still exhilarating moments of Josh Altheimer's piano or Washboard Sam's songs or Big Bill's personality to give it all a freshness and interest. The Chicago blues of the 'thirties was a blues school, but somebody was always showing up late or starting off on a chord pattern nobody else had thought of to keep it exciting. Even when they weren't singing about much important their evident pleasure in the sound gave the period in Chicago blues a distinctiveness that was to mark it off from the blues that had already been in the 'twenties, and the blues that were to come in the 'forties.

SIDE ONE

1. BIG BILL BROONZY -- "WHEN I HAD MONEY"

Acc. by own gtr. and probably Blind John Davis
(pno.) and Fred Williams (dms.) with unknown sbs.
Chicago, April 17, 1940

I listened to my baby when she was tellin' me her
dreams, (repeat)
Lord, every thing now, baby, would be peaches and
cream.

I had money on the horses, money on one, two, three,
(repeat)
Now, my water got muddy and my horse run into a tree.

(Spoken) Play it, Mister Josh. Yessir.

Now, when I had money I had friends and a real good
home,
When I had money I had friends and a real good home,
Lord, I done lost my money, babe, my friends and home
is gone.

Lord, my mother tried, Lord, to make me do right,
My mother tried, Lord, to make me do right,
Lord, I would stay drunk all day, baby, and I wouldn't
come home at night.

Lord, if I'd'a listened to my mother, Lord, what she'd
say,
Lord, if I'd'a listened to my mother, Lord, to what
she'd say,
Lord, I would not have been here now, baby, layin' in
this old hospital bed.

2. BIG BILL -- "I'VE GOT TO DIG YOU"

Same personnel and date as above.

Goin' to tell you women and it goes for the men,
Don't fool with me 'cause you sure can't win,
(CHORUS) Now you know I've got to dig you,
Yes, I've got to dig you,
Now you know I've got to dig you, baby,
And it sure ain't gonna take me long.

You's all right, baby, but your line's too short,
Give me back my hat and shoes now, baby, I bought,
(CHORUS) Gal, you know I've got to dig you, etc.

You may be fat, woman, slim or tall,
I've got somethin', gal, that can kick in your stall,
(CHORUS) Baby, you know I've got to dig you, etc.

(Spoken) Play it, Mister Josh.

I asked my wife where she'd been all night,
She said, "What you care long as I treat you right,"
(CHORUS) But woman, I sure got to dig you, etc.

Gonna tell you, baby, like the farmer told his potato,
I'm gonna plant you now, woman, but I will dig you later,
(CHORUS) Baby, you know I got to dig you, etc.

3. BIG BILL -- "KEEP YOUR HANDS OFF HER"

Acc. by own gtr. and probably Black Bob (pno.)
and unknown sbs. Chicago, October 31, 1935

I've got a gal here in this town, don't want nobody to
bother but me, (repeat)
Boy, she strictly tailor-made, boy, she ain't no hand-
me-down,
Catch you messin' with her, boy, I sure shoot you down.
Now keep your hands off her, don't you dare touch her,
You know she don't belong to you (repeat).

Ah, keep your hands off her, now don't you dare touch
her,
You know she don't belong to you.
Keep your hands off her, told you don't you dare touch
her,

You know she don't belong to you.
She got little bitty hands, them great big legs,
She sure looks good 'cause everybody says it,
Keep your hands off her, now don't you dare touch her,
You know she don't belong to you, tole you last night,
You know she don't belong to you.

Ah, keep your hands off her, now don't you dare touch
her,
You know she don't belong to you.
Keep your hands off her, now don't you dare touch her,
You know she don't belong to you.
She got some real dark eyes, now real curly hair,
Big deal is goin' to follow that woman everywhere.
Keep your hands off her, etc.

Keep your hands off her, now don't you dare touch her,
You know she don't belong to you.
Keep your hands off her, don't you dare touch her,
You know she don't belong to you.
You can look her up and you can look her down,
She got a heaven, boy, ain't never been found.
But keep your hands off her, etc.

Keep your hands off her, now don't you dare touch her,
You know she don't belong to you.
Keep your hands off her, don't you dare touch her,
You know she don't belong to you.
Ah, watch her, boy, as she pass by,
Because the day I catch you with her, boy,
That's the day you're gonna die,
Keep your hands off her, told you don't you dare touch
her,
Know she don't belong to you (repeat).

4. MEMPHIS MINNIE -- "HOLD ME BLUES"

If he holds me in his arms, whispers darling, oh what
a thrill,
When he holds me in his arms, whispers darling, oh
what a thrill,
'Cause I live the life I love and I love the life I live.

Now he give me a big fine car,
A nice roll in the bank,
That will please me awhile
'Til I sat down and think,

Well, the judge said, "Minnie, what make you mistreat
your man?"
"Judge, you know you ain't no woman and you sure can't
understand,"
'Cause he holds me, whispers darling, oh what a thrill,
'Cause I live the life I love and I love the life I live.

Well, he served two years in the army in (---) across
the sea,
But he would knock me cold when he would write to me,
'Cause he holds me, whispers darling, oh what a thrill,
'Cause I live the life I love and I sure love the life I live.

5. MEMPHIS MINNIE -- "KILLER DILLER"

Well, the ugliest thing I ever seed before,
He gives me the cramps, he's a hobo,
(CHORUS) But he's an ugly little something on a scout,
He's a terrible somethin' hush your mouth,
He's the awfulest creature,
He's a killer diller from the South.

Well, he walks up to the store where I was at,
And in his face looked like a crying cat,
(CHORUS) 'Cause he's an ugly little something on a
scout,
He's a terrible little creature, hush your
mouth,
He's the awfulest thing,
He's a killer diller from the South.

When he walks down the street lookin' in the showcase,
The statue walks out, says you can take my place,
(CHORUS) 'Cause you're an ugly little figure on a scout,
You's a terrible little something, hush your
mouth,
You's an awful little creature,
You's a killer diller from the South.

Well, he walked into the hotel, everybody left,
He lifted his glass and he smiled to himself,
(CHORUS) Sayin' I'm an ugly little figure on a scout,
I'm a terrible little something, hush your
mouth,
I'm an awful little creature,
I'm a killer diller from the South.

6. JOHNNIE TEMPLE -- "NEW LOUISE LOUISE BLUES"

Acc. by possibly Horace Malcolm (pno.), possibly
Charlie McCoy (gtr.) with unknown sbs.
Chicago, May 14, 1937

Louise left me this mornin'
She never said a word,
And she left me 'bout something that she heard,
Louise, baby please hurry home,
I ain't had no lovin' since my Louise been gone.

Louise got ways like a rollin' stone,
When she leave a man he have to grieve and moan,
Louise, baby please hurry home,
I ain't had no lovin' since Louise been gone.

I got a gal named Yola,
She treats me nice and kind,
I don't care what she do, Louise is on my mind.
Louise wasn't so good lookin'
And her hair wasn't red,
But she cooked my breakfast, brings it to the bed,
Louise, baby please hurry home,
I ain't had no lovin' since my Louise been gone.

7. JOHNNIE TEMPLE -- "SO LONELY AND BLUE" Same personnel and date as above.

Baby, I'm feelin' so lonely and I'm feelin' so blue,
Well, I'm feelin' so lonely and I'm feelin' so blue,
I just sittin' here thinkin' what in the world has become
of you.

I had a gal and her name was Lou,
Great God almighty, that woman she would do,
And I am feelin' so lonely and I'm feelin' so blue,
I'm wonderin' what in the world, baby, has done
become of you.

You got ways draggin' my heart around,
Some of these days, baby, I'm goin' to leave this town,
Then you will be sorry that you treated me so low down,
And you will be feelin' so lonely and you will be feelin'
so blue.

Have you ever woke up in the mornin'
Your bed goin' round and round,
You know about that baby, you have done thrown me
down,
Then you be feelin' lonely and you be feelin' so blue,
And I wonder where, baby, in the world has done
become of you.

SIDE TWO

1. JAZZ GILLUM -- "KEY TO THE HIGHWAY" Acc. by own hca., Big Bill Broonzy (gtr.), possibly Alfred Elkins (imitation sbs.) Chicago, May 9, 1940

I got the key to the highway,
Billed out and bound to go,
I'm goin' to leave here runnin'
Because walkin' is most too slow.

I'm goin' back to the border
Where I'm better known,
'Cause you haven't done nothin'
But drove a good man away from home.

Give me one more kiss, mama,
Just before I go,
'Cause when I'm leavin' here
I won't be back no mo'.

When the moon creep over the mountain,
Honey, I'll be on my way,
I'm goin' walk this highway,
Until the break of day.

Well, it's so long, so long, baby,
I must say goodbye,
I'm goin' to roam this highway
Until the day I die.

2. JAZZ GILLUM -- "GO BACK TO THE COUNTRY"

Acc. by own hca., Blind John Davis (pno.), Big
Bill Broonzy (gtr.), and probably Alfred Elkins
(sbs. or imitation sbs.)

(Spoken) Baby, you'd better go back to the country.

Now you clown with your grocery man
'Cause your bill is too high,
You don't want to pay taxes
You just wants to get by,

(CHORUS) You'd better go back to the country,
Way back out in the woods,
I'm tired of hearin' you hollerin'
Hoo, hoo, hoo, city life ain't no good.

You want the finest house in town,
For two or three dollars a month,
You seem to think it's all right for you
To go out in the park and hunt.

CHORUS

You wants a whole lot of credit
To pay off once a year,
But you owe the salary you make
For just liquor and beer.
You'd better go back to the country,
Way back out in the woods,
'Cause the way you run your business,
Hoo, hoo, hoo, you can't do no good.

Now you decorate your window
With your big rusty feet,
You want hogs in your front yard,
So you can have plenty of meat.
You'd better go back to the country,
Way back out in the woods,
Plant you forty acres of cotton
And try to do yourself some good.

3. BIG MACEO -- "WINTER TIME BLUES"

Probably acc. by own pno., Tampa Red (gtr.)
and Clifford Jones (dms.).

Hello, baby, how you feel today,
I want to talk with you, baby,
Before I go away.
Have you got time to have a little talk with me?
Winter time is comin' and I'm worried as a man can be.

My overcoat's in pawn, baby,
And I haven't got a dime,

Winter time is comin' and it's worryin' my mind.
Ain't it a shame, baby, the way you treated me,
I'm blue and disgusted, worried as a man can be.

Winter time is comin', gettin' colder every day,
Well, I done got tired of being treated this-a-way.
So tell me, baby, tell me what have you got to say,
You better say it now, baby, and then I will be on my
way.

(Spoken) Play your racket, boy, play your racket.
Yes, I know.

So long, baby, if that's what you got to say,
But someday you'll need me and I'll be far away.
Then you'll be worried, worried as a gal can be,
Then you'll want to tell the whole world just what you
did to me.

4. ST. LOUIS JIMMY (JIMMY ODEN) -- "GOING
DOWN SLOW"

Vcl., acc. by Roosevelt Sykes (pno.), Alfred
Elkins (imitation sbs.) Chicago, Nov. 11, 1941

I have had my fun, if I don't get well no more, (repeat)
My health is failin' me and I'm goin' down slow.

Please write my mother, tell her the shape I'm in,
(repeat)
Tell her to pray for me, forgiveness for my sin.

Tell her don't send no doctor, doctor can't do no good
(repeat)
It's all my fault, didn't do the things I should.

On the next train south, look for my clothes home,
(repeat)
If you don't see my body, all you can do is moan.

Mother, please don't worry, this is all in my prayer,
(repeat)
Just say your son is gone, I'm out of this world
somewhere.

5. WASHBOARD SAM -- "COME ON IN"

Vcl., acc. by own wbd., Black Bob (pno.), Big
Bill Broonzy (gtr.), unknown sbs.

Chicago, Dec. 21, 1936

Come on in, ain't nobody here but me, (repeat)
Sit right down, have some fun,
My old lady out on a all night run,
Come on in, ain't nobody here but me.
(Spoken) Yeah, gal.

Come on in, ain't nobody here but me, (repeat)
I'll cook some meat, bake some bread,
If you get sleepy there's a great big bed,
Come on in, ain't nobody here but me.
(Spoken) Play it.

Come on in, ain't nobody here but me, (repeat)

Take this liquor, take this wine,

Let's get drunk, have a whoppin' good time,

Come on in, ain't nobody here but me.

(Spoken) Yeah, gal.

Come on in, ain't nobody here but me, (repeat)

You can have some of that, have some of this,

Have everything in the doggone flat,

Come on in, ain't nobody here but me.

(Spoken) Play it.

Come on in, ain't nobody here but me, (repeat)

I'm drunk and disorderly, I don't care,

Why don't you put on your underwear,

Come on in, ain't nobody here but me.

6. WASHBOARD SAM -- "YES! I GOT YOUR WOMAN"

Probably Buster Bennet (alt.)-8, probably Blind
John Davis (pno.), Big Bill Broonzy (gtr.), own
wbd./vcl. Chicago, August 5, 1940

You been tootin' your whistle,

And you been blowin' your horn,

You been raisin' sand about what's goin' on,

(CHORUS) Yes, I got your woman,

And you say that you was through,

Yes, I got your woman,

So what in the world are you goin' to do.

I wasn't botherin' your woman,

But you had left her alone,

So if she flagged my train

I'm sure goin' to take her home.

CHORUS

(Spoken) Yes, yes, yes, oh yes.

I got your woman.

Ah, you've unfastened your pistol,

You've been makin' your bogus play,

If you bother me 'bout that woman

I'm goin' to put you in your grave.

CHORUS

Ah, when you had that woman

You didn't treat her right,

Ah, she walked these blocks for you

Both day and night.

CHORUS

7. WASHBOARD SAM -- "JUST GOT TO HOLD YOU"

Same personnel and date as above.

Just got to hold you tight, (repeat)

I held so tight, she said not nice,

I just kept aholdin' her tight.

(Spoken) Yes, boy, yes.

Just kept aholdin' her tight, (repeat)

She winked her eye and said all right,

But I just kept aholdin' her tight.

(Spoken) Yeah, I was aholdin' her tight, boy.

Baby, now don't get mad,

Baby, now don't you cry,

I heard you everything you said all right

But I just kept aholdin' you tight.

Listen to that band,

Listen to it swing,

I ain't high, but I'm just in love,

I just want to hold you tight.

(Spoken) Yes, yes.

Baby, it's time to love, (repeat)

Set right down on your daddy's knee

'Cause I do want to hold you tight.

(Spoken) Yeah, hold her tight, boy. Keep
holdin' her tight. Yeah.