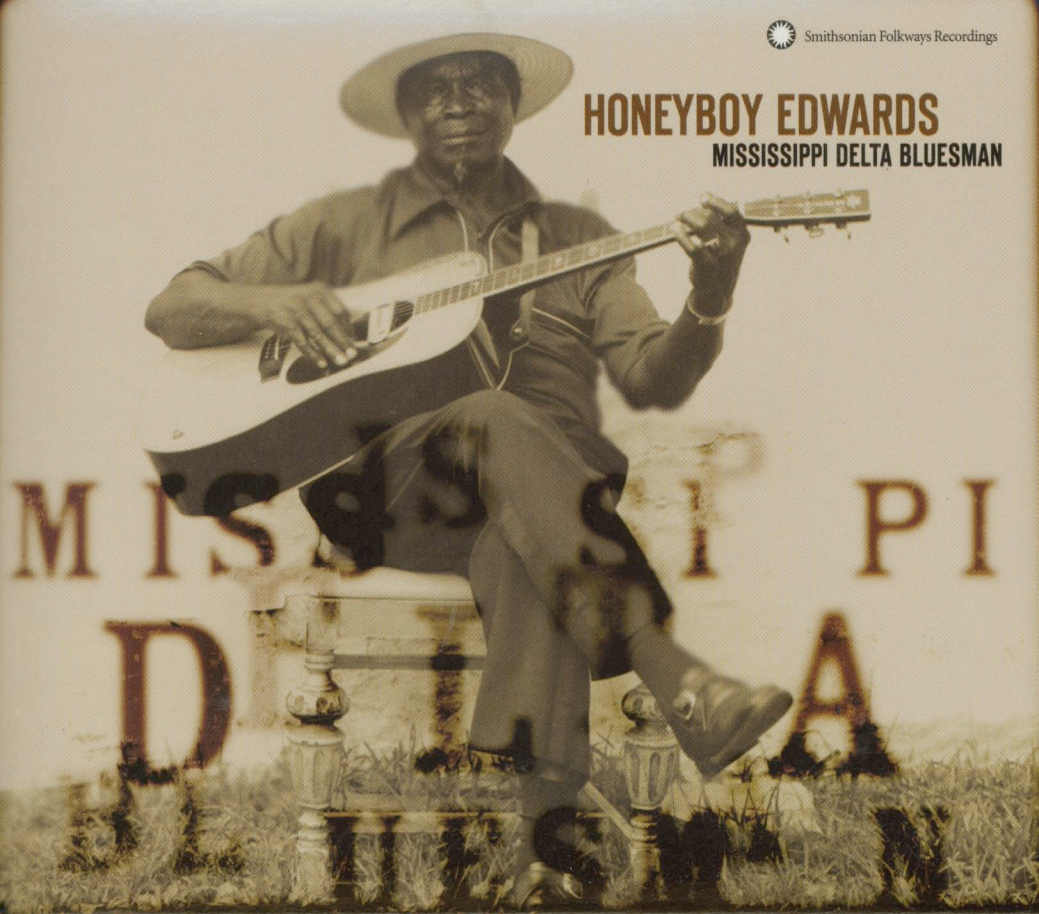




Smithsonian Folkways Recordings

# HONEYBOY EDWARDS

MISSISSIPPI DELTA BLUESMAN



# Honeyboy Edwards: Mississippi Delta Bluesman

SFW CD 40132 © 2001 Smithsonian Folkways Recordings

1. BIG FAT MAMA

*(Tommy Johnson)*

2. CATFISH BLUES

*(Robert Petway/Universal Duchess Music, BMI)*

3. SWEET HOME CHICAGO/DUST MY BROOM

*(Robert Johnson/King of Spades Music, BMI)*

4. BLUES WORRY ME ALL THE TIME

*(David Edwards)*

5. RIDE WITH ME TONIGHT

*(Chester Burnett/ARC Music, BMI)*

6. NEXT TIME YOU SEE ME

*(Earl Forest-Bill Harvey/Universal Duchess Music, BMI)*

7. REMARKS BY HONEYBOY EDWARDS

8. PONY BLUES

*(Charley Patton/EMI Longitude Music, BMI)*

9. THINGS GONNA BE ALRIGHT

*(Sam Maghett)*

10. I FEEL SO GOOD TODAY

*(David Edwards)*

11. FURTHER ON UP THE ROAD

*(Don Robey-Joe Veasey/Universal Duchess, BMI)*

12. YOU'RE THE ONE FOR ME

13. BUMBLE BEE

*(Memphis Minnie)*

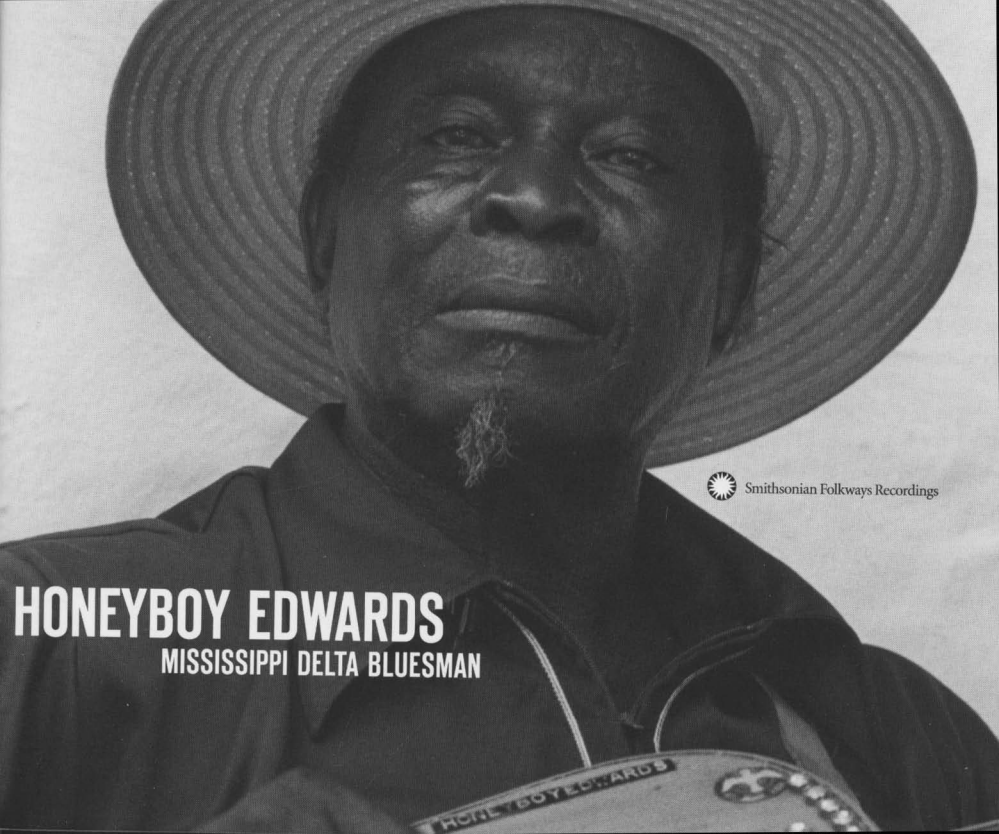
David "Honeyboy" Edwards embodies blues continuity from its Mississippi Delta roots to electric Chicago blues. Honeyboy's string snapping guitar riffs and soulful voice harken back to his friends and teachers Charley Patton, Big Joe Williams, Tommy Johnson, and Robert Johnson, who first forged the blues in Delta jooks and at country suppers during the Depression. Edwards crisscrossed the South in the company of such blues giants as Big Walter Horton, Sonny Boy Williamson, and Little Walter Jacobs. He settled in Chicago, where a post-WWII electric blues boom set the pattern for modern rock and roll. This recording captures him in a relaxed, unplugged, solo moment. Deep Delta blues from Robert Johnson's sidekick whose searing vocals and stinging guitar bridge pre-war to post-war blues. 44 minutes, 24-page booklet, photos, lyrics.



Smithsonian Folkways Recordings

Center For Folklife and Cultural Heritage | 750 9th St, NW, Suite 4100 | Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC 20560-0953  
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Originally issued in 1979 by Moses Asch as Folkways 03539

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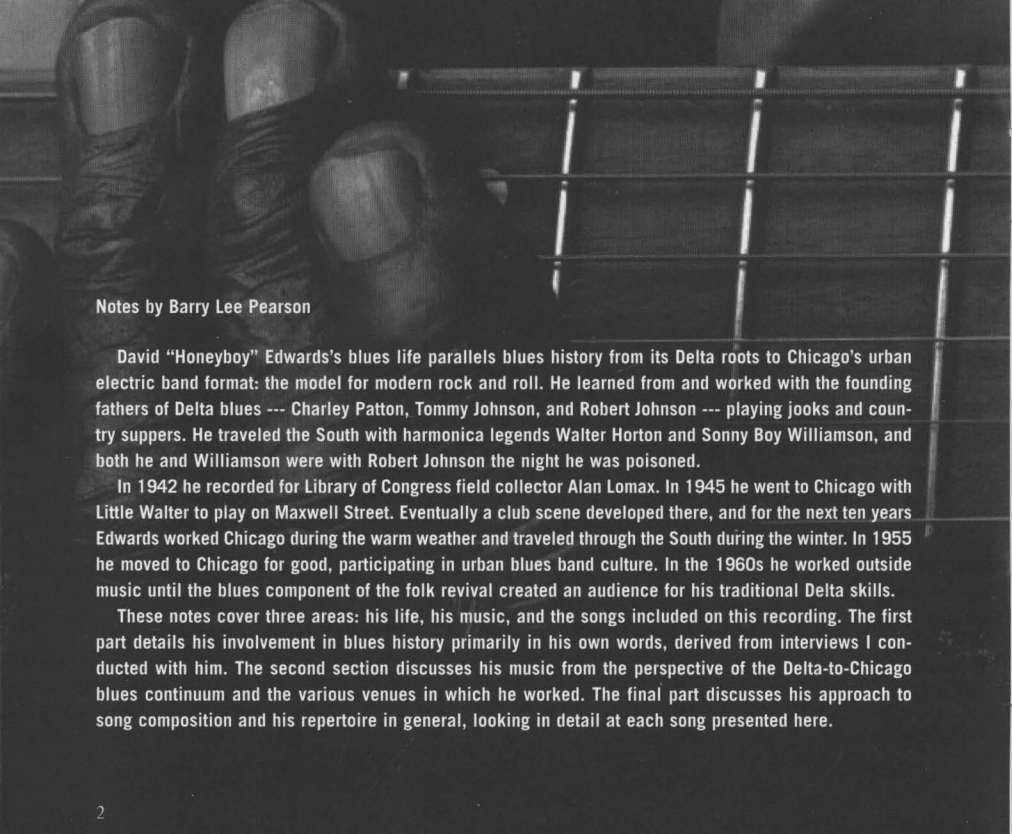
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*Inside cover: Performance at the 50th anniversary of the Library of Congress Archive of Folksong, Washington, D.C. November 16, 1978. Photo by Carl Fleischhauer.*



Notes by Barry Lee Pearson

David "Honeyboy" Edwards's blues life parallels blues history from its Delta roots to Chicago's urban electric band format: the model for modern rock and roll. He learned from and worked with the founding fathers of Delta blues --- Charley Patton, Tommy Johnson, and Robert Johnson --- playing juoks and country suppers. He traveled the South with harmonica legends Walter Horton and Sonny Boy Williamson, and both he and Williamson were with Robert Johnson the night he was poisoned.

In 1942 he recorded for Library of Congress field collector Alan Lomax. In 1945 he went to Chicago with Little Walter to play on Maxwell Street. Eventually a club scene developed there, and for the next ten years Edwards worked Chicago during the warm weather and traveled through the South during the winter. In 1955 he moved to Chicago for good, participating in urban blues band culture. In the 1960s he worked outside music until the blues component of the folk revival created an audience for his traditional Delta skills.

These notes cover three areas: his life, his music, and the songs included on this recording. The first part details his involvement in blues history primarily in his own words, derived from interviews I conducted with him. The second section discusses his music from the perspective of the Delta-to-Chicago blues continuum and the various venues in which he worked. The final part discusses his approach to song composition and his repertoire in general, looking in detail at each song presented here.

### David "Honeyboy" Edwards: Mississippi Delta Bluesman

The African American folk and popular song form commonly known as blues developed in the Mississippi Delta around the turn of the century. Over the past one hundred years it has evolved in many ways, categorized and marketed as rhythm and blues or soul blues or tied to specific regions or cities such as Delta blues, Memphis blues, or Chicago blues. Such divisions may be of use to scholars or members of the recording industry, but blues musicians, while they understand such categorization, are more likely to consider their art form a more unified tradition. Viewed from a more holistic perspective, blues have proven to be the twentieth century's most durable and influential song form, its roots and branches touching most forms of American music including jazz, country music, and rock and roll.

Guitarist and Delta bluesman David "Honeyboy" Edwards embodies the continuity of the blues tradition and the various pathways it has taken. He has witnessed the story of the blues, particularly the Delta-to-Chicago blues continuum. He listened to, learned from, and worked with the founding fathers of Delta blues: Charley Patton, Tommy Johnson, Big Joe Williams, and Robert Johnson. He played in Memphis in its heyday, working the streets and parks with the Memphis Jug Band and harmonica legend Walter Horton. In Chicago he worked the streets and small clubs with harmonica innovator Little Walter Jacobs and guitarists Jimmy Rogers and Magic Sam, all of whom were key players in the development of the post-war electric band format considered to be the immediate predecessor to rock and roll.

Edwards's life experiences and song repertoire provide crucial links to pivotal points in American music history. Fortunately, he is also blessed with a keen sense of observation and a remarkable memory. But prior to his current role as storyteller and tradition-bearer, he was a man in motion, one of the original blues travelers, bringing his music and message to African American audiences throughout the South.



Promotional photo used for the National Folk Festival. Courtesy of the National Council for the Traditional Arts. Photographer unknown.

Edwards's one-time mentor Big Joe Williams called him a walking musician. "He was a walking musician just like myself all down through that Delta and all through the hills: Vicksburg, Leland, Clarksdale, all over there." For over forty years Edwards plied his trade as a walking musician, one of many itinerant bluesmen and women who traveled throughout the South, Southwest, and Midwest. As Edwards himself put it, "I was just a road tramp. If I couldn't make a quarter in a city, I was gone."

This recording, made some twenty-one years ago when he was sixty-four, captured him playing alone in a relaxed moment, wandering back along the musical pathways of his life. It offers today's listeners inroads into older blues styles and ways of approaching music which were common down in the country at the suppers and jook houses where the blues began.

### Honeyboy's Story

Born in the heart of the Delta in Shaw, Mississippi, in Sunflower County, 28 June 1915, Edwards was surrounded by music. His mother, Pearl Phillips, played guitar, and his father, Henry Edwards, was an accomplished fiddler and guitarist who played old-time standards such as "John Henry" and "Stagolee" at local dances. Following a shooting scrape at a country dance, his father quit playing dances but taught his son the rudiments of guitar and songs like "Stagolee." David, or Honey, as his family called him, was more interested in blues, and when the family moved to Wildwood Plantation near Greenwood in 1927, he had a chance to hear musicians like Tommy Johnson. Edwards recalls:

*Tommy Johnson come to Wildwood in 1929. I was fourteen then. They come from Crystal Springs, Mississippi. They had an old T-Model Ford. They come up picking cotton by the hundred, and they had a big double house they stayed in. A great big old house, and they'd pick cotton all through the day, and at night they'd sit around and play the guitars. I used to go over*

*there. He was playing "Canned Heat," "Big Road," and he was playing "Bye and Bye." And I used to stand around in the house right around the corner here, and every night I would listen at them play. Sounds so good to me. Drinking that white whiskey — that moonshine. I'd just sit and look at them. I said, "I wish I could play." And then in '30 my daddy bought me a guitar. He ordered that guitar in '29. I know when he got it. The same year Tommy and them were playing, he ordered it.*

In Greenwood he followed local musicians Robert Petway and Tommy McClennan, and at age seventeen he met Big Joe Williams, who took him on the road. By the time he returned home, the novice had become a professional. As his sister put it, "Little Honey can play now." Edwards tells his own version of the transition from can't to can:

*I would just go around Greenwood and take a little peek at Tommy McClennan and Robert Petway, and they didn't fool with me 'cause, see, I was young. And they'd say, "Yonder Honey comes," and they'd run off and leave me 'cause it looked like they didn't want me to learn 'cause I was so worrisome [in] that every which way that they do, I was right behind them. I wanted to learn. "Yonder comes Little Honey, let's go." They'd jump in the car and leave me. I'd just stand there lookin' at 'em and let 'em go. Well, what kicked me off was when I went with Joe Williams and Joe Williams leaved me, and I went back to Greenwood, and Robert and Tommy were surprised at my playing. They stand around, and then they let me play with them then.*

He also sought out the Delta's first recognized blues artist, Charley Patton, and when Patton died in 1934, Edwards filled in for him at a local jook run by Patton's uncle.

*I was big enough to get to know Charley Patton. He died in 1934. I was nineteen when Charley died. He was kind of out there from Dockery out there betwixt Cleveland and Ruleville on Number Eight Highway. When he died, he had come up to Holly Ridge where his Uncle Sherman lived. I came by there, that was on Tuesday. Never forgot it, on a Tuesday the last of March [April] in '34. I come along walking there with a guitar on my shoulders. I was a youngster. I came to a store there, and some boys were sittin' at the store. The store had some benches nailed to the porch where you could sit. And I walk in the store, get a nickel's worth of bologna and some crackers, and we got to talking, and the boy said, "You know Charley?" I said, "Yeah, I know him." He said, "That's his grave right out there." I said, "When did Charley die?" He said, "Charley died about two days ago. See, that's Charley's grave." I said, "Oh." I said, "Sure enough," and it just — the grave — it was gumbo mud, black mud, it was just big hunks lying on top.*

*You know they couldn't spread it. They just dug it, and you could see all the shovel prints.*

*And his Uncle Sherman, he stayed across the field about two blocks from the store. So I went over there to Sherman's house, and he said, "Oh well, Charley died." I said, "Yeah, I know. I just seen it." So I stayed over there about a week with Sherman, and he was giving country dances and Charley was playing for him. And I played there a couple of Saturday nights, and then I left. And Bertha was still over there, Charley's wife was still over there. I know about these things, I was lucky enough to be right around.*

That same year he went to Memphis, where he played with the Memphis Jug Band and met such blues notables as Frank Stokes, Little Buddy Doyle, and his lifetime partner and friend, Walter Horton. As Edwards recalled, he and Horton worked Church Park and the streets fending off Depression hard times:

*That was our hustle, right there in the park. And we'd serenade at night go around the Peabody Hotel in the daytime, and White people sitting out in the lobby resting, and sometimes we played, and they'd chuck us quarters and nickels and dimes. At nighttime we'd go down onto the river front or Front Street. Go down by the whorehouses around there, and they'd pay us to play for them. Drink moonshine whiskey. We'd come along playing the blues late at night, you know, hitting the blues, just me and him. "Come on in here, come on play us some blues. Why here's a quarter, I'm gonna give him a quarter." And back in that time Roosevelt Sykes and Memphis Slim were playing on Beale Street. Memphis Slim was playing at the Chicago House, and Sykes was playing at the Midway, about a block apart on the same street. Beale Street, it's about a block walk from one barrelhouse to the other. A dollar a night, that's all they was getting. One dollar a night. And we would make more money than them because we would make those quarters and dimes on the streets, and we could tote our guitars up and down the streets, but they couldn't carry the piano nowheres. See, so we could hustle better than they was.*

In 1935 the political climate made Memphis less hospitable to musicians, and Edwards returned to his walking musician lifestyle.

*I used to walk all through the country, and I would...I'd play a little town. I had it mapped out like I wouldn't play the same town every Saturday. I'd play on the street corners, and people would give me quarters, nickels, and dimes and pennies to play different numbers. Like this weekend I'd be in Cleveland, Mississippi. Next weekend I'd go to Leland, that's about twenty miles apart. I'd play in Leland, and the next weekend I'd go over to Greenwood, that's twenty or thirty miles apart. I wouldn't be at the same town every weekend. I'd come back around every two or three*

*weeks. I'd come through there again, and the people would want to hear me play the blues again. I'd make the same amount of money. I wouldn't stay in no place too long — no place too long. Sometimes I would end up in my hometown on a Saturday, and they say, "Well, Honey's in town today."*

As Edwards tells it, a musician's life was dangerous in the 1930s, when the majority of the Black population was trapped in the sharecropping system and musicians were viewed as subversive non-laborers.

*Well, I'm gonna tell you, the White people down South really didn't care much for the blues, back in that time. They were the old-time White people way back in the 1800s there, on the farm, used to have the Negro for their slave, work for nothin', and they found out that if a Negro learned how to play the guitar, learned how to play blues good enough to make him a quarter, he wouldn't work for 50 cents a day. Would you? So when he sees one coming with a guitar on his shoulder, he get madder than hell. Them old farmers, they'd rather see a dog than to see you coming down the street with a guitar. You got that machine on your back, "He won't work." Sometimes they pick you up and try to put you on a county farm, anything, you had to dodge that bullshit.*

Walking musicians like Edwards adapted survival strategies to cope with the system.

*I wouldn't come out until six o'clock 'cause they might pick me up and arrest me 'cause I ain't choppin' no cotton or pickin' cotton. I wasn't going out there. I stay in the house, put a fan on, stay in the house all day long. Stay until six o'clock when I come out, they don't know if I had been in the country or not.*

Through his cousin Willie Mae Powell, he met Robert Johnson in Greenwood, Mississippi, in the fall of 1937.

*I was twenty-two years old when Robert was between twenty-six and twenty-seven. He was a few years older than me. So I met him on Johnson Street one Saturday, playing his guitar on Johnson Street. And I walked up and just stood there and looked at him. He had a cup on his guitar. One lady walked up and said, "Mister, if you play me 'Terreplane Blues,' I'll give you a dime." He said, "That's my record." So he started playing "Terreplane Blues," and she said, "I believe that is the man." So we started drinking and having fun.*

In the summer of 1938 Johnson returned to Greenwood. Edwards was with Johnson the August night he was poisoned at the Three Forks jook.

Several years later folklorist Alan Lomax was in Mississippi looking for traditional blues players such as Johnson, Son House, and Muddy Waters when he ran into Edwards outside Clarksdale. Edwards made his first recording for the Library of Congress in July 1942 at a school in Clarksdale. He remembers the session fondly:

*We recorded there that day, and in the middle of the recording session there come a big storm. I mean a big storm. They had to quit recording me in the middle of that storm till it was over, then they started back in again and finished recording. He give me twenty dollars. That was a whole lot of money then. Twenty dollars, man, was a whole lot of money. You worked all day long for a dollar a day down there, a dollar a day. He went on down to Rolling Fork and recorded Muddy then, the same year.*

Like Muddy Waters and other Delta musicians in the 1940s, Edwards's orbit also included the Midwestern cities of St. Louis and Chicago as well as the connecting towns of Steele and Carruthersville, Missouri, and Cairo, Illinois.

*In 1945 I brought Little Walter to Chicago before anyone know'd him. Come to Chicago in '45 and played all summer of '45 on the streets. Me and Little Walter, Jimmy Rogers, Earl Hooker, Snooky Pryor, Floyd Jones, John Henry Barbee, Baby Face Leroy. We were playing right there on Maxwell Street every day. Robert Nighthawk would come and sit in sometimes, but he was playing in a little club at night. It wasn't as many clubs as there are now, but we made more money on the streets because a club will pay you a certain amount, about ten or twelve dollars a night at that time, but we were making more than that on the streets. We'd make fifteen or twenty dollars apiece in the streets sometimes. There were so many people come from the South to get a job. That's right after wartime, and all the stockyard and steel mills were open and people were working.*

For the next ten years Edwards returned to the South during the cold weather, ranging to Louisiana and out to the Southwest. In 1947 he met his future wife Bessie Mae. They married in 1952, remaining together for the next twenty years until her death. From the mid-1950s he made Chicago his home, participating in the flourishing post-war blues boom which reshaped Southern traditions into a harder ensemble sound. His partners Little Walter and Jimmy Rogers teamed up with Muddy Waters to create the seminal Chicago blues ensemble. For his part Edwards turned to old friends and other Mississippi musicians:

*We started hustling together, me and Big Walter and Johnny Young and Old Man Johnny Temple and Big Dukes on drums. Sometimes Good Rockin' Charles come in. J.B. Hutto used to come in and sit in with us too. Magic Sam was playing on 59th and State. He called me up, and I played a couple of numbers. Magic Sam was going on the road that summer, and his band liked my style of playing so he left me with the band until he come back.*

He also worked with Louis and Davey Myers, Junior Wells, Sunnyland Slim, and Carey Bell playing South and West Side clubs. During the 1950s Edwards recorded but with little success. In Houston in 1951 he recorded four sides for ARC with two sides issued, "Build a Cave" and "Who May Your Regular Be." He recorded several sides for Sam Phillips's Sun label in Memphis in 1952/1953, but they were not released. In 1953 he recorded several more sides for Chess in Chicago, including "Drop Down Mama," but they also were not released until years later. Edwards maintained that Muddy Waters's style and his own were too similar for Chess to promote his records.

In the 1960s urban renewal and the construction of the Dan Ryan Expressway cut into the club scene, and Edwards looked to non-musical work in construction or other day jobs. But by the end of the 1960s the so-called blues revival had begun, and African American blues artists found themselves working more and more for White audiences on the North Side of the city. The revival sparked an interest in older traditions, which the White audiences understood to be "folk" music. Edwards's ability to work older traditional styles and his first-hand relationship with these earlier artists became an asset, and the stylistic limitations which may have restricted his work in 1960s blues band formats now proved increasingly valuable on the new festival circuit.

Beginning in 1964 he recorded for various revival-oriented companies: Milestone, Testament, Blue Horizon, Adelphi, Trix, Blue Suit, and Earwig. With the support of his manager Michael Frank he began to work, touring Europe and participating in all the major American festivals. He also appeared in various films both as musician and as historian, such as *The Search for Robert Johnson* (1992) and *Can't You Hear the Wind Howl* (1997), and was a central participant in the Smithsonian Institution's Festival of American Folklife's *Roots of Rhythm and Blues: A Tribute to the Robert Johnson Era* in 1991. Today at eighty-five he remains his art form's foremost historian.



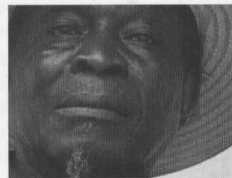
### Honeyboy Edwards's Music

Edwards's guitar style and repertoire draw from three connected sources: the Mississippi Delta; Memphis, an urban extension of the Delta; and Chicago, an even more urbanized repository of Delta culture. They also represent three decades, the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s. Their roots lie with the Delta musicians from whom he learned and the initial musical events in which he participated. His teachers included his father; Greenwood stalwarts Tommy McClennan and Robert Petway; Big Joe Williams, with whom he served an apprenticeship; and Charley Patton and Robert Johnson, the Delta's two most influential artists. These men played on street corners for tips or at country suppers, jook houses, or other informal gatherings which combined liquor, music, and dancing. They played acoustic instruments, working alone or in tandem with one artist playing lead and the other seconding behind him. In Memphis he sometimes worked with the Memphis Jug Band, a throw-together assortment of street musicians combining guitar, harmonica, and other novelty rhythm instruments, but more commonly teamed up with a single partner, harmonica virtuoso Walter Horton. Later he teamed up with harmonica players Sonny Boy Williamson Number Two and Little Walter Jacobs, and in Chicago he worked in relatively loose small-band formats, never completely at home with the fully integrated format which Muddy Waters's band typified.

Edwards's style illustrates the continuity of Delta tradition in several ways. First, like many Delta artists he shows a pronounced preference for the key of E. In fact, all but two songs on this recording are in E major, and even his slide songs remain in standard E rather than either of the common slide tunings Sebastapol or Spanish. Secondly, most of what he plays is rooted in rhythm guitar bass runs stemming in part from Robert Johnson's piano-derived walking bass innovations and the extension of these acoustic patterns by the first wave of Memphis and Chicago electric guitar players working in small-band formats. Thirdly, although this is a solo album, his guitar playing and vocal phrasing represent a more interactive tradition dating from his first duets with Big Joe Williams to the guitar harmonica duets which characterized so much of his musical life. He himself played harmonica along with his guitar as a young man, as evidenced on such cuts as "Blues Worry Me All the Time." But over the years he preferred working with other harmonica players, including the greatest in all blues lore. His guitar

would serve as a rhythmic foundation for the harmonica, but it looks back to an older tradition in which musicians listened closely to each other, working off of interactive call-and-response patterns, rather than adhering to a predetermined, shared understanding of when to make chord changes. Edwards's solo efforts reflect a looser approach to time, which musicians who can only play within a rigid band format will find disconcerting. However, he is not unique in this approach. Other Delta artists of the same era including such notables as Arthur Crudup, Jimmy Reed, John Lee Hooker, Roosevelt Sykes, and to a certain degree B.B. King shared the older approach. To work with them you have to listen closely and change when they do.

Playing alone, Edwards exercises his rights as a blues veteran to go where he wants, when he wants, without ever deviating too far from the main blues highways. Parallel to his earlier wandering lifestyle, his music combines constant motion and abrupt changes. It may be busy and percussive with string snapping suggestive of the music of Joe Williams and Charley Patton or more flowing like Robert Johnson. He may use the guitar like a drum, make dynamic use of silence as a rhythmic device, or speed up on an instrumental to maximize effect, but throughout, his beat remains solid.



*Photo by James Fraher.*

## Honeyboy Edwards's Songs

The songs on this recording derive from the late 1920s to the mid-1950s, illustrating Edwards's equal familiarity with pre-war and post-war blues. The pre-war standards Tommy Johnson's "Big Fat Mama," Charley Patton's "Pony Blues," Robert Johnson's "Sweet Home Chicago," Robert Petway's "Catfish Blues," and Memphis Minnie's "Bumble Bee" are marked as tributes, to some degree emulating the signature style of their creators. The post-war material from Memphis- and Chicago-based artists also employs musical phrases associated with the original recording, as with Junior Parker's "Next Time You See Me" or Magic Sam's "Things Gonna Be Alright." In general, however, songs he adapts from other artists are changed to suit his purpose or mood, and even his own creations include verses found in other songs. His remarks on track seven describe his fluid approach to composition.

*I used to sit down, think up my songs, and make them up and set 'em down. And sometimes I write them down and name them, you know, when I put a name to them, you know, blues. Then (at times,) I plays some other people's songs, but they already have a name because other people recorded them. But then you rearrange them and change them around, you know what I mean. Because you hardly play anything too much all the way through of your own stuff. You got to use some verses of somebody else's sometimes. And you gonna have to turn that thing around.*

He seldom sings the same song in exactly the same way, deleting, adding, or repeating verses to suit his mood or, in his earlier days, to suit the needs of his audience. This practice harks back to the days when songs went on as long as the dancers stayed on the floor or were cut short to make room for another request and another nickel or dime.

## SONGS

### 1 BIG FAT MAMA

"Big Fat Mama" was originally recorded by Tommy Johnson as "Big Fat Mama Blues" for Victor (V38535) in Memphis in August 1928. Edwards first heard Johnson play in Wildwood the following summer. "Big Fat Mama Blues" became traditional throughout the region. Edwards plays in the key of E, whereas Johnson played in D.

1. *Big Fat Mama, meat shake on her bone (2x)*

*Every time she shake it's a fat mama's out of her home.*

2. *Big Fat Mama, where you been so long (2x)*

*I want you to quit your foolishness and bring your clothes back home.*

3. *Repeat 2.*

4. *Going away, baby, and I won't be back for fall (2x)*

*If my mind don't change, I won't be back at all.*

5. *Big Fat Mama, meat shake on her bone (2x)*

*Every time she shake, it's a fat mama's dollar gone. (2x)*

### 2 CATFISH BLUES

"Catfish Blues" was recorded by Robert Petway for Bluebird (B8838) in March 1941 in Chicago, and it is closely associated with Edwards's Greenwood mentors, Petway and Tommy McClennan, so he heard it much earlier. It possibly dates back to the 1920s and has been kept alive in the repertoires of Delta artists ranging from B.B. King to Muddy Waters. Edwards uses a verse from Waters's "Rolling Stone," and his version emulates Waters's approach to the song. Basically, it's a one-chord song based on repeated riffs and note bending in the key of E.

1. *If I was a catfish swimming in the deep blue sea*

*I'd have all these women now, now / Fishing after me.\**

2. *Yes, I'm going, yes, I'm going / And your crying won't make me stay*

*More you cry darling, now, now / Further you drive me away.*

3. *Well, my mama told my pappa / Just a day before I was born*

*Boy child's coming, now, now / Going (to) be a rolling stone.*

4. Repeat 2.

5. *Well, I'm going, mama, yes, I'm going / I might get lonesome here*

*I'm going, pretty mama, I know / You don't bid more care.*

\* *The last phrase of the second line of each verse is repeated four to six times.*

### 3 SWEET HOME CHICAGO/DUST MY BROOM

"Sweet Home Chicago/Dust My Broom" is a medley of two songs recorded by Robert Johnson during his first recording session for ARC in November 1936 in San Antonio, Texas. "Sweet Home Chicago" was issued on Vocalion (V003601), and "I Believe I'll Dust My Broom" was issued on ARC (7-04-81), as well as on Vocalion and Conqueror. The second and third songs Johnson recorded, the two pieces incorporated his major musical innovations and went on to become traditional standards of Chicago blues. "Dust My Broom" became closely associated with Elmore James, while "Sweet Home Chicago" was recorded by Edwards twice in 1953 for Sun and Chess. The first two verses are from "Sweet Home Chicago," though Johnson did not sing the second verse. The final three come from "I Believe I'll Dust My Broom." Edwards plays in standard E using a metal slide.

1. *Crying hey, baby, don't you want to go (2x)*

*Land of California, sweet home Chicago.*

2. *I don't drink because I'm dry, baby, I drink because I'm blue*

*I tried pretty well this morning, I can't get along with you*

*Said hey, baby, don't you want to go*

*Land of California, sweet home Chicago.*

3. *I'm gonna ring up China, see is my good gal over there (2x)*

*If she's in West Helena, she's in West Helena, that fool's in East Monroe, I know.*

4. *I believe, I believe my time ain't long (2x)*

*Well, I'm leaving in the morning, baby, I believe I'll go back home.*

5. *I don't want no woman stays drunk all the time (2x)*

*Well, stay drunk so much, I believe that fool gonna lose her mind.*

### 4 BLUES WORRY ME ALL THE TIME

"Blues Worry Me All the Time," mistitled "Blues World All the Time" on the 1979 record notes by Robert Palmer, showcases Edwards's ability to play guitar and harmonica as he did as a walking musician in the Delta. It also shows how Edwards makes up new songs using lines or verses previously used in other songs. This two-verse song shares verses with "The Woman I'm Loving" and "Every Now and Then I Wonder." For example, the first verse compares to the first verse of "The Woman I'm Lovin':

*The woman I'm lovin', she worries me all the time (2x)*

*She worries me so bad, she's about to worry me out of my mind.*

The second verse is similar to "Every Now and Then I Wonder":

*Every now and then I wonder, every now and then you fall down on my mind (2x)*

*I'm gonna get up early in the morning. I'm gonna drop on down the line.*

Such songs underscore the fluid nature of many blues songs, as well as showing how arbitrary titles can be.

1. *Blues, blues worry me all the time (2x)*

*Blues worry me so bad, so bad now, now about to worry me out of my mind*

2. *Every now and then, baby, every now and then you roll down on my mind (2x)*

*Well, worry and trouble now, baby, and I'm gonna drop on down the line*

### 5 RIDE WITH ME TONIGHT

"Ride with Me Tonight" comes from a Howlin' Wolf (a.k.a. Chester Burnett) hit "Riding in the Moonlight" recorded in West Memphis, Arkansas, in September 1951 and originally released on RPM (333). Wolf recorded the song several times and later went on to become a Chicago-based Chess recording artist second only in popularity and influence to Muddy Waters. Much the same song was recorded by Frank Frost as "Ride with Your Daddy Tonight" (Jewell 778, March 1966). Basically it's an up-tempo blues in the key of E.

1. *Pretty baby, can't you ride with me tonight? (2x)*

*I want you to ride with me while the moon is shining bright.*

2. *Pretty baby, don't you like my automobile? (2x)*

*I want you to ride with me, baby, you know how good it make me feel.*

3. *Well, baby, can't we feel good tonight? (2x)*

*Can't we feel good while the moon is shining bright?*

4. *Repeat 2.*

6 NEXT TIME YOU SEE ME

"Next Time You See Me" comes from West Memphis-born Herman Junior Parker, who recorded it for Duke in Houston in 1956 (Duke 164). Parker was an extremely popular Memphis-based vocalist and one of Edwards's favorite singers. Edwards recalled: "I sure did love to hear that boy sing... That boy had the sweetest voice I ever heard, and he could hold it right where he put it, and wouldn't bend a bit." Edwards plays it in the key of E.

1. *Next time I see you, things won't be the same (2x)*

*You're just a wrong-doing woman. I won't have to bear no blame.*

2. *Well, you lied, cheated uh oh for so long (2x)*

*You're just a wrong-doing woman, another queen is on the phone.*

3. *Next time I see you, things won't be the same (2x)*

*You just a wrong-doing woman, another queen is on the phone.*

4. *Choo-choo train all that's shining like gold (2x)*

*You just a no-good woman, I don't want to see you no more.*

5. *Repeat 1.*

6. *Repeat 4. (2x)*

7 REMARKS BY HONEYBOY EDWARDS

"My oldest sister, when I was a little baby, I guess...she said I was around about a year or so something, two years old, and I was trying to walk, you know. I was toddling. And my oldest sister, she told my mother, she said, 'Mama,' she said, 'look at little old honey boy.' She reached her hand out at me like this, and I come trying to walk to her. She say, 'Look at little old honey boy.' And everybody started to calling me Honey.

"When I got up grown a big boy, they [still] started to call me 'Honey, Honey, Honey.' Everybody called [me] Honey. And when I was out there recording, I put Honey Boy Edwards. I put the 'boy' to it myself. Because everybody around home knowed me, out in Greenwood, Shaw, Mississippi, they knowed me, a lot more places. When I...my first recording, I did. 'That's Honey, you know that?' 'Yeah, they knowed it.' Then when I go back down South..., 'I heard your recording, it sure was nice.' And I got a lot of little jobs playing, you know, and that's the way it was.

"I make enough I don't have to worry about it. I get tired of playing. Well, other words I get tired of running around. I'd just [as soon] be at home, ride around in my car – ride around the streets, have me a drink, sit on the corner, and look. But I don't actually get tired from muscles. I just [get] beat out. I like to play on account of that's my thing. When I start to play, the blues hit me when I start to play, and it comes to me more and more, it develops to you, the more you play, the more it comes to you. I can sit down and play probably a hundred songs. I start off the first, the others comes to me just like that."

8 PONY BLUES

"Pony Blues" comes from Charley Patton's Paramount recording (PM12792) recorded in Richmond, Indiana, in the summer of 1929. Patton recorded several versions of the piece, and it was a staple in his repertoire; due to his popularity the song became traditional. Edwards's version is in the key of E, and three of the four verses come from Patton's version. It is an excellent vehicle for showing such Delta techniques as string slapping. It also is quite free in its verse structure, deviating from the AAB three-line format a number of times. Such free-form playing takes us back to the early days of blues, when songs called one-verse songs often had verses in which a single line was repeated three times. The third verse of Edwards's song is typical of that tradition.

Edwards learned several songs from Patton and remembers him as a hell raiser: "Every Saturday night he'd play for a country dance he'd fight. He used to break up his own dances."

1. *Hitch my buggy, baby, saddle up my gray mare (2x)*

*I got to find my woman, baby, in the world somewhere.*

2. *Get up in the morning, to meet the morning train (2x)*

*Well, the blues come down, baby, just like showers of rain.*

3. *Buy me a yellow hen, baby, already dressed. (3x)*

4. *Brown-skin woman like something fittin' to eat (2x)*

*Jet black woman, she better not put her hand on me.*

5. *Repeat 2.*

6. *Repeat 2.*

### 9 THINGS GONNA BE ALRIGHT

"Things Gonna Be Alright" comes from Grenada, Mississippi-born Magic Sam's 1957 hit "Everything's Gonna Be Alright," recorded in Chicago for the Cobra label (Cobra 5021). Magic Sam (born Sam Maghett) was projected to be the next big blues star, but he died in 1969. Although Edwards worked with Magic Sam, their styles were generations apart. Magic Sam worked in a tight band format sometimes described as the West Side Sound, generally composed of trios in which the lead guitarist played both rhythm and lead. He also played a number of his songs in a minor key. Edwards plays in the key of A, using a familiar Magic Sam minor key riff.

1. *Oh baby, things gonna be alright (2x)*

*If I go today, baby, well, I will tomorrow night.*

2. *Love me, love me, baby, love me for myself*

*Don't get you, baby, I don't want nobody else*

*Oh, things gonna be alright*

*If I go today, baby, well I will tomorrow night.*

3. *Repeat 2.*

4. *Repeat 2.*

### 10 I FEEL SO GOOD TODAY

"I Feel So Good Today" appears to be another one of Edwards's free-floating compositions. A 1974 recording for the Trix label credits the piece to Edwards. Essentially the two verses of the song are both traditional, and the juxtaposition of arriving and leaving is typical of blues poetry. Edwards uses a standard boogie run in E to carry this jump blues.

1. *Well, I feel so good, baby, feel so good today (2x)*

*I got a letter from my baby said she coming back home to stay.*

2. *Well, tell me, baby, baby, what's the matter now? (2x)*

*Well, you told me this morning you didn't need no man no how.*

3. *Repeat 2.*

4. *Repeat 1.*

### 11 FURTHER ON UP THE ROAD

"Further On Up the Road" is based on a Bobby Blue Bland hit recorded in Houston in 1957 (Duke 170). Bland was a member of Memphis Beale Streeters, a loose-knit collection of Memphis blues singers including Roscoe Gordon and Johnny Ace. Bland went on to achieve tremendous popularity in the blues field, second only to B.B. King. Edwards's version employs a signature riff associated with the piece and is in the key of E. The first line is unclear.

1. *Further on up the road, (somebody will)\* mistreat you like you mistreat me (2x)*

*Well, if you think I'm lying, darling, darling, you just wait and see.*

2. *You're laughing, pretty baby, someday you're gonna be crying (2x)*

*Well, you know by that, baby, girl, you know that I ain't lying.*

3. *Oh baby, ooh wee*

*Well, you know by that I ain't lying.*

4. *Oh baby, you know that I ain't lying*

*You gonna find out, baby, find out further down up the line.*

5. *Further on up the road.*

\* Possibly "someday I'll".

## 12 YOU'RE THE ONE FOR ME

"You're the One for Me" is an up-tempo couplet and chorus blues reminiscent of James Lane a.k.a. Jimmy Rogers's standard "You're the One" which Edwards has recorded elsewhere, but this song is not the same song. Edwards may have developed it himself, but more likely it derives from a 1940s Decca recording by Sonny Boy Williams (born Enoch Williams) which has the same title. Edwards plays this higher up the neck in the pitch D, probably using an A chord fingering capoed at the fifth fret. The fourth verse is difficult to transcribe.

1. *I was standing on the corner, just as drunk as I could be  
And some pretty (little) girl said, "You're the one for me"  
You're the one, yeah, you're the one  
You is the only one, baby, yeah now, now you is the one for me.*
2. *Well, I love you baby, cannot help myself  
If I don't get you, I don't want nobody else  
You the one, yeah, you the one  
You is the only one, baby, yeah, you're the one for me.*
3. *Repeat 1.*
4. *Well, I love you, baby/cannot be satisfied (can I satisfy?)  
(Peaceful lover)\* now, now trouble I despise  
You the one, yeah, you the one  
You is the only one, baby, yes, you is the one for me.*
5. *Repeat 2.*

\* Possibly "I'm a peaceful lover" or "peaceful love for now."

## 13 BUMBLE BEE

"Bumble Bee" was recorded originally by Memphis Minnie (born Lizzie Douglas) and Kansas Joe McCoy at her first session for Columbia in June 1929 (Co 14542-D). Edwards's lyrics, however, are closer to a version she recorded in February 1930 (Vocalion 1476). She recorded it over and over, and due to her

popularity, the song became traditional. Guitar-playing Memphis Minnie was one of the most prolific recording artists of her time. Edwards knew her later in her life when she had returned South from Chicago. Although she suffered a stroke, she continued to play small venues in Arkansas. Edwards's version is in E.

1. *Bumble bee stung me this morning/I been looking for that bumble bee all day long (2x)  
Lord, he stung me this morning, stung me in my right arm.*
2. *Come on, bumble bee, buzz, buzz, buzz / You're my bumble bee  
You know, you know your stuff  
Oh, sting me until you get enough.*
3. *Sometimes you make me happy/Then again he makes me cry (2x)  
Feel so bad/Wish to God that I could die.*
4. *Mmmm (moans) long as my right arm (2x)  
Stung me this morning/I been looking for that fool all day long.*

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