Blues Routes
Blues & Jazz · Worksongs & Street Music · Heroes & Tricksters

1. Gandy Dancers  Rooster Call  3:59
2. John Cephas and Phil Wiggins  John Henry  5:15
3. Warner Williams  Step It Up and Go  2:40
4. Luther “Guitar Junior” Johnson and Willie “Pinetop” Perkins  Flipping and Flopping  3:39
5. Erbie Bowser, T.D. Bell, and the Blues Specialists  Twenty-four Hours a Day  4:10
8. Abner Jay  Bluetail Fly  2:33
9. Don Vappie and the Creole Jazz Serenaders  Gut Bucket Blues  4:15
10. Claude Williams  That Certain Someone  4:33
11. Sammy Price  Harlem Parlor Blues  2:51
12. Booker T. Laury  Early in the Morning  3:05
14. Rapper Dee, C.J., and Five Gallons of Fun  My Mind Has No Color/Doing It the Go-Go Way  4:40
15. Georgia Sea Island Singers  Hambone, Where You Been?  2:24
17. Joe Louis Walker and the Boss Talkers  Bluesifyin'  8:43

Blues Routes is a resonant almanac of blues and blues-related music performed live by master musicians in a renowned series of concerts in the 1990s. Includes Memphis and Harlem piano styles, Delta and Piedmont blues guitar, Kansas City and New Orleans jazz; Mardi Gras Indian chants; Texas jump blues and Louisiana Creole zydeco; street go-go bucket drummers, railroad track-lining gandy dancers, and more. The diversity of American blues and blues-influenced styles and the unity of their African influence come alive in these great performances recorded for the influential Folk Masters concert and radio series. 68 minutes, 28-page booklet, photographs, bibliography, discography.

Folk Masters CD Series produced by Nick Spitzer; edited by Leslie Spitz-Edson
Funding for this recording was provided by the National Endowment for the Arts and the Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund.
**Blues Routes**

Blues & Jazz • Worksongs & Street Music • Heroes & Tricksters

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1. **Gandy Dancers** Rooster Call 3:59
   March 11, 1999, Wolf Trap

2. **John Cohen and Phil Wiggins** John Henry 5:15
   November 5, 1999, Carnegie Hall

3. **Warner Williams** Step It Up and Go 2:40
   March 19, 1999, Wolf Trap

4. **Luther “Guitar Junior” Johnson** and **Willie “Pinetop” Perkins** Flipping and Flapping 3:39
   March 12, 1994, Wolf Trap

5. **Ernie Bowser, T.D. Bell, and the Blues Specialists** Twenty-Four Hours a Day 4:30
   March 12, 1993, Wolf Trap
   (L. Levine, D. Leake/Alley Music, BMI)

6. **Robert Jr. Lockwood** Little Queen of Spades 4:13
   April 28, 1992, Wolf Trap
   (Robert Johnson/King of Spades Music, BMI)

7. **Etta Baker** One Dime Blues 3:43
   April 11, 1992, Wolf Trap

8. **Abner Jay** Bluetail Fly 2:33
   March 20, 1993, Wolf Trap

9. **Don Vappie and the Creole Jazz Serenaders** Gut Bucket Blues 4:15
   March 11, 1994, Wolf Trap
   (Louis Armstrong/MCA Music Publishing, ASCAP)

10. **Claude Williams** That Certain Someone 4:33
    April 14, 1992, Wolf Trap (Claude Williams)

11. **Sammy Price** Harlem Parlor Blues 2:51
    November 3, 1990, Carnegie Hall
    (S. Price/Smithsonian Folkways Publishing, BMI)

12. **Booker T. Laury** Early in the Morning 3:05
    March 24, 1995, Wolf Trap (L. Hickman, L. Jordan,
    D. Bartley/Chorio Corporation, BMI)

13. **White Cloud Hunters Mardi Gras Indians** Sew, Sew, Sew 5:09
    November 27, 1990, Carnegie Hall

    the Go-Go Way 4:40
    April 22, 1992, Wolf Trap
    (Carl Jones/Smithsonian Folkways Publishing, BMI)

15. **Georgia Sea Island Singers** Hambone, Where You Been? 2:24
    March 11, 1995, Wolf Trap

16. **Boo Boo Chavis and the Magic Sounds** Uncle Bud 2:55
    April 17, 1992, Wolf Trap
    (W.A. Chavis/Flat Town Music Company, BMI)

17. **Joe Louis Walker and the Boss Talkers** Bluesyfim 8:43
    April 7, 1995, Wolf Trap
    (J.L. Walker/BossTalkin Music, BMI)

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The blues as a sound and spirit has its roots in the artistic traditions of West Africa's Senegambian Basin. From the small, plucked string instruments made with gourd resonators and the complex patterns of drumming, to the Islamic-influenced scales and the griots' tradition of explicating history, philosophy, and the pleasures and perils of life, blues routes led to a new world of music in the American South from the Mississippi Delta to the Eastern Piedmont and beyond to cities like New Orleans, Memphis, Chicago, Detroit, Los Angeles, and all the highways and rail lines in between.

In America the term “blues” was first used around 1900 to describe a new amalgam of musical expressions whose influences included field hollers, worksongs, spirituals, ballads, and reels and other dance tunes. Some ascribes the origins of the word blues to the Medieval English belief in mischievous spirits or “blue devils.” Whatever the sources, blues has become a unifying term for a core aesthetic in an array of Black secular musical styles that continue to evolve: jazz, swing, jump blues, urban and city blues, rhythm and blues, soul, funk, rap, go-go, and hip-hop. Beyond musical genres, the blues is an expression of the everyday suffering and triumphs of individual African-Americans who sing about their experience of life's joys and struggles. This is the tie that binds these selected Folk Masters artists together. To this we add our penchant for performances and performances that were exciting for concert and radio audiences.

A "purist" notion of blues might focus exclusively on "roots" genres, born and raised to maturity on the historical landscapes of West Africa and the agrarian South. While celebrating blues as roots music on this recording, we have also used Blues Routes as our title to embrace the metaphor of the traveler, the crossroads, the

Cover art: "Gandy Men" by Jonathan Green, 1990, 98" x 47" oil on canvas, Collection of William Boone

Back Cover: Gandy Dancer John Henry Meating at Folk Masters. Photo by Jeff Tinsley, Smithsonian Institution.
diaspora, and the migration, whether enforced by slavery or undertaken voluntarily toward social and economic freedom—not to mention artistic inquiry and ambition. The performers here have collectively traveled many routes—rural South to the urban North and West Coast, countryside to nearby cities, away from and back to their art, out of and deeper into their roots. Their performances provide a compelling account of both the continuities and transformations in the most ancient and modern styles of blues.

So it is that the blues aesthetic in this collection ranges from ritual and festival to work and play, from tales of love and loss to stories about heroes and tricksters, from lowdown juke joint and street styles to uptown parlor and nightclub soirées. The cast of characters includes the noble John Henry alongside the mischievous Hambone, the mysterious Little Queen of Spades and the tough, bawdy Uncle Bud. The Mardi Gras Indian chief is here, along with the all-night bluesman, the street go-go raconteur, and the minstrel figure in “Blue Tail Fly.” Youngful Joe Louis Walker of Oakland, California, claims his place among the swaggering heavyweights of blues history, while in the hot Alabama sun, men in pressed overalls tamp the heavy rails with muscular dignity. This is music from many times and places—blues in the broadest sense possible. Blues Routes harks back to African roots, reaches forth to African-American routes, and ultimately travels beyond popular music worldwide.

cotton or hauling in fish. Black laborers also became known for their use of such rhythmic songs to “line” railroad track. Usually a White foreman stood at a distance from the “section gang,” inspecting track for replacement and sighting how it should be straightened. Groups of men followed the calls of a song leader, who relayed the foreman’s instructions. They moved the rail (which could weigh up to 400 pounds per ten-foot segment) in time with the song, leaning into their hand-held bars, levering the track sideways, and punctuating their response with “huh!” at the moment of collective power.

...Known as “gandy dancers” in reference to Gandy Manufacturing of Chicago, the makers of tools associated with the trade, these men from around Birmingham, Alabama, spent much of their work lives as caretakers of the Southern Railroad lines. Ranging in age from sixty-six to eighty-nine, their songs are drawn from their memories of fixing cross-ties, tamping grade stone, pounding spikes, and lining track.

Group leader Cornelius Wright Jr. identifies three types of calls: fun or “kiddy” calls; religious calls drawn from spirituals and other sacred music; and sexual calls that entertain, boast, or ridicule. The most appropriately named song leader, John Henry Mealing, notes that the words and rhythms motivated the men. “When you sing, that makes them uplifted. You got to have someone to preach to them.” In his call, Mealing runs the gamut from boastful images of prowess with the ladies and trickery over the bossman to an ironic occupational comment: “You better lay me down, bury me deep down between the ties so I can hear the Frisco train come passing by... When I die bury me deep, a jug of molasses at my feet, ten thousand biscuits in my hand. I’m a sot my way to the Promised Land.”

Gandy dancers historically had high status as industrial laborers traveling through mostly agrarian communities. They were noted for their fancy railroad caps, pressed blue jeans, and pocket watches on fobs. Gandy dancing came to signify their social dignity and prowess as workers.

Machines introduced in the 1940s can do in a day what these hand-laborers did in a month. Today the men look back upon the labor and music with pride—and as part of a new consciousness of African roots. We chose the remarkable painting of “Gandy Men” by South Carolina artist Jonathan Green as this CD’s cover because it embodies the notion of a blues “route” literally and metaphorically. The Black railroad worksong in style and content has both been drawn on and contributed to the stream of music called

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Blues Routes: The Music and the Musicians

1. **GANDY DANCERS** Rooster Call
   John Henry Mealing, lead vocals; Allen Jones, Elder Brown, and Charlie Vinson, backing vocals; group leader, Cornelius Wright, Jr.

Music for timing group labor has strong African ties, particularly for agricultural work in the South such as chopping and baling...
blues. It has long attracted outside observers, and the Gandy Dancers' visit to Wolf Trap became part of a CBS Sunday Morning feature on the history of this workshop form and its new place on the concert stage.

**Recording:** Gandy Dancers (28 minute video) produced by Maggie Holzberg, Georgia Council for the Arts, 530 Means Street, N.W., #115, Atlanta GA 30318; 404/651-7934.

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2. **JOHN CEPHAS AND PHIL WIGGINS**

John Henry

*John Cephas, guitar and vocals; Phil Wiggins, harmonica*

Among the rolling hills, small farms, mills, and coal and railroad camps of the rural East Coast Piedmont, between Tidewater coast and the Appalachian Mountains of Virginia, the Carolinas, and Georgia, Black and White economic and cultural patterns have overlapped considerably—more so than in nearby areas or the Deep South. Piedmont blues style reflects this, meshing traces of gospel, fiddle tunes, blues, country, and ragtime into its rolling, exuberant sound.

"Bowling Green" John Cephas grew up in Washington, D.C., with frequent visits to country kin in the wooded farmland north of Richmond, Virginia. As a boy he sang with church *a cappella* gospel quartets and was at the same time enamored of the Piedmont blues guitarists at country house parties. He describes the style as, "alternating thumb and finger picking, where I keep a constant bass line going with my thumb, I pick out the melody or the words. I'm singing with my fingers on the treble strings at the same time. It's almost like the guitar is talking." Cephas's repertoire is shot through with a stylistic mix of blues, country, gospel, and ragtime. He is absolutely masterful in his blues ballad singing about the Black heroes like "Staggerlee" and, here, railroad legend "John Henry"—a tunnel-digging worker challenged by the introduction of the steam drill. John Cephas is a retired carpentry foreman and something of a "John Henry" in his own right—both as a worker and as a teacher and scholar—in keeping his style of blues vital for another generation. For these efforts, he received a National Heritage Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts in 1989.

Cephas is joined by his partner, "Harmonica" Phil Wiggins of Washington, D.C. As a child Wiggins heard street singer Flora Molton, the Piedmont blues of John Jackson from Fairfax, Virginia, and lined-out church hymns during summer stays in Alabama with his grandparents. Together, Cephas and Wiggins hold to an intricate balance of musicianship that links the generations, as well as urban and rural sensibilities, in ways that have rebuilt Piedmont blues and fortified it for the future.

**Recordings:**

- *Guitar Man Flying Fish 70470, Flip, Flop, & Fly* Flying Fish 70580.
- *Chill Out Alligator* 4838.

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3. **WARNER WILLIAMS**

Step It Up and Go

*Warner Williams, guitar and vocals; Jay Summerour, harmonica*

Warner Williams is from a large, musical family in Takoma Park, Maryland, outside of Washington, D.C. He grew up playing hymns and—for special occasions like parties and picnics—blues. Nurtured within a Piedmont and Tidewater blues tradition like John Cephas, he also listened to records by Lightnin' Hopkins, Blind Boy Fuller, and Muddy Waters, as well as country performers Gene Autry and Ernest Tubb. Williams played blues clubs in Washington as a teen in the late 1940s, a time when the city was more attached to its southern heritage.

Today, a half-century older and retired from his day job driving a garbage truck, Williams is a central figure on Washington's newly revitalized blues scene. Songs of all eras and styles pour out as he sits Buddha-like, wearing shades. He dutifully handles a request for "Danny Boy," rhymes a quick toast, comes back with Hank Williams or Lead Belly, and ends up on a country blues boogie like this "Step It Up and Go," associ-
Biscuit Time radio show from Helena, Arkansas. In 1951 he recorded at Sun Records in Memphis, and he played with B.B. King on his WDIA broadcasts. Later Perkins traveled down Highway 61 to Clarksdale, where he influenced the young Ike Turner and played with Howlin’ Wolf—having an important, but largely anonymous, impact on the development of rock and roll through these men. By the 1960s, Pinetop moved to Chicago where he played with performers ranging from Earl Hooker and Bobby “Blue” Bland to Little Milton and Kokomo Taylor. He joined Muddy Waters when pianist Otis Spann departed.

Luther Johnson is from Itta Bena, Mississippi. Over a generation younger than Pinetop, Johnson came to Chicago in the 1950s and moved with his family to the West Side. In 1973 he joined Muddy Waters, where he fronted the band before bringing Waters on to perform—a long-standing tradition of apprenticeship in urban blues. In 1980 Johnson started a solo career that has brought him a Grammy and a W.C. Handy Award. He is known for adding a wonderful soul funk style to the electric city blues while maintaining the great West Side Chicago style of single note leads alternating with driving “power chords.”

Calvin “Fuzz” Jones was born in Greenwood, Mississippi, in 1926. His bass and vocals have propelled great bands including those of Little Walter, Howlin’ Wolf, and Muddy Waters. Together with youthful drummer Keith Clark, these veteran blues performers—a each a hero in his own right—expand on the classic Muddy Waters sound.

Recordings by Luther “Guitar Junior” Johnson:
- Slammin’ on the West Side Telarc CD 83389. Got to Find a Way Telarc CD 83445. I Want to Groove with You Bullseye/Rounder CD BB 9506. Live at the Rynborn M.C. Records CD MC0037.

Recordings by Willie “Pinetop” Perkins:

Ernie Bowser, T.D. Bell, and the Blues Specialists: Twenty-Four Hours a Day
T.D. Bell, electric guitar and vocal; Erbie Bowser, piano; Mel Davis, harmonica; Reggie Crawford, saxophone; Len Nichols, bass; Donald “Duck” Manor, drums

Jump blues is a special brand of rhythm and blues. Usually with one or more horns, some jazz-influenced chord progressions, and an emphasis on tight ensemble play that moves easily from cool and slow to swinging, uptempo arrangements, jump blues does not have the ragged edge of electric city blues.
formed the Cadillacs. As the house band at the Victory Grill, a Black cultural mecca in east Austin, the Cadillacs backed blues artists that came through town, including T-Bone Walker, B.B. King, Gatemouth Brown, Bobby "Blue" Bland, and others.

Erbie Bowser was born in 1918 in Davilla, Texas and, like Bell, was raised in a musical family. He played piano and sang in the church choir, later joining the Sunset Royal Entertainers, a touring swing orchestra. During World War II he played USO shows in North Africa and Europe. Bowser met Bell working at a sulfur plant in Odessa, Texas, in 1955. With the Cadillacs, they played the oilfield honky-tongs of west Texas and they became established at the Victory Grill. Erbie Bowser died in 1995, but T.D. Bell carries on in the Texas jump blues tradition.

**Recordings:** It’s About Time Spindletop SPT 1001. T.D. Bell and Erbie Bowser Black Magic 9019.

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**ROBERT JR. LOCKWOOD**

**Little Queen of Spades**

Robert Jr. Lockwood, electric guitar and vocals

Born in Marvel, Arkansas, in 1915, Robert Jr. Lockwood was encouraged to play by legendary Delta blues guitarist Robert Johnson.

“Robert followed my mother home when I was thirteen. That’s the beginning of it. And every time he’d set the guitar down, I’d steal it. So I kept doing that until he decided to teach me.” Johnson’s Delta blues style featured complex single-string work and call-and-response techniques reminiscent of West African music from the Senegambian Basin. Lockwood absorbed these approaches, but as a youth he also spent time with family in St. Louis, where he heard other sounds, including ragtime and jazz. Combining these elements and, eventually, rhythm and blues, Lockwood developed his own style.

As a young man Lockwood toured the region with Sonny Boy Williamson, and they later played on the King Biscuit Time radio program over KFFA in Helena, Arkansas. Later, at Chess Records in Chicago, he worked with bassist Willie Dixon and drummer Fred Below in sessions that shaped the growth of rock and roll. In 1961 Lockwood moved to Cleveland and quit playing music, working first as a chauffeur and later managing a nightclub. A serious, introspective man, Robert Jr. Lockwood’s talent is finally getting more recognition; in 1995 he received a National Heritage Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts. This is his ethereal read on Robert Johnson’s image-rich “Little Queen of Spades.”

**Recordings:** What’s the Score Lockwood Records, 7203 Lawnview Avenue, Cleveland, OH 44103. Steady Roll’n Man, Delmark Records, 4243 N. Lincoln Avenue, Chicago IL 60618. Hangin’ On (With Johnny Shines) Rounder 2023.

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**ETTA BAKER**

**One Dime Blues**

Etta Baker, guitar

Etta Baker, from the Piedmont town of Morganton, North Carolina, embodies a crossover in musical styles similar to that of Warner Williams and John Cephas (see both above). In this largely rural region, country musicians from the mountains have histori-
ABNER JAY Bluetail Fly

Abner Jay, banjo and vocals

The stringed gourd instrument that was the ancestor of the banjo came to America with enslaved West Africans. By the early 1800s, White minstrels were mocking rural Black banjo performers for urban audiences as a precursor of the ethnic stereotyping that evolved into early vaudeville. As the banjo made its way into “upper crust” parlor, Appalachian stringband music, and jazz, its association with White minstrelsy appears to have limited its appeal to many Black players, who transferred their banjo techniques to the guitar and the blues.

A good musician is ten cents a dozen.
Entertainers are born. Musicians are made.
I’m a born entertainer.”

During the latter part of his life, Abner Jay toured the countryside in his camper, converted to a portable minstrel stage, performing on banjo and bones at flea markets, shopping malls, and wherever he could draw a crowd. A one-man minstrel show with a profound sense of history, he brought nearly sixty years of experience to this performance of the classic “Blue Tail Fly” — considered by scholars to be secretly subversive — recorded shortly before his death in 1993.


DON VAPPLE AND THE CREOLE JAZZ SERENADERS Gut Bucket Blues

Don Vappie, six-string banjo; Stan Joseph, drums; Richard Moten, bass; Don Suhor, clarinet; Wendell Brunious, trumpet; Steve Pistorius, piano

Traditional New Orleans jazz embodies the mingling of African and European music and performance practices within an African-
a penetrating, percussive sound. Noted banjo player Johnny St. Cyr, who played with Papa Celestin, Jelly Roll Morton, and Louis Armstrong, also occasionally took some leads, though he was noted for his bass runs. "Papa" Don Vappie never met Johnny St. Cyr but is often compared to him. Born in 1956 and raised in uptown New Orleans, Vappie comes from a musical Creole family. His career began in the 1970s, playing guitar with local hotel bands. Don became frustrated with the advent of DJs, who displaced live musicians, and turned to the traditional New Orleans jazz of his ancestors. While working at a music store, Vappie began to take four-string banjos off the wall and play them in guitar tuning. Soon he was bringing a banjo along on jobs to supplement the guitar. Ironically, it was the offer of a steady job on the riverboat Natchez that led Don to work more on solo banjo. Out of this solo work, along with his experience on the guitar, he has developed his own style, adding solos, rolls, and trills where many traditionalists would not play them.

Vappie has played in Lincoln Center tributes to Jelly Roll Morton with Wynton Marsalis and with the late trumpeter Teddy Riley. More recently he has worked with the Historic New Orleans Collection on lost Morton music manuscripts and has recorded a CD of King Oliver's material.

**Recordings:** Creole Blues Vapielle Records VR971-CD. Vapielle, Inc. 1705 S. Jahncke Ave., Covington, LA 70433-4137. In Search of King Oliver APVCD 001. Allen/Parker/Vappie Productions, 803 Woodburn Road, Raleigh, NC 27605; 888/323-5299.

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**CLAUDE WILLIAMS**
That Certain Someone
Claude Williams, violin; James Chirillo, guitar; Keter Betts, bass

Claude Williams' career as a jazz violinist bridges Black stringband traditions, swing, bebop, and standards. Born in Muskogee, Oklahoma, in 1908, his early musical life revolved around his brother-in-law's string band. Williams took up the violin after hearing jazz violinist Joe Venuti at an outdoor show, where he had to listen from outside the fence of the segregated concert. He spent two years with the jazz band Clouds of Joy, based in Dallas, and by 1929, Williams had made it to Kansas City. In spite of Prohibition the regional center boasted a vibrant nightlife and fiercely competitive music scene, with improvisation or "cutting" contests lasting through the night.

Williams went on to New York, playing both guitar and violin for Count Basie in the mid 1930s. In 1938 he received the Downbeat readers' poll award for best jazz guitarist. He returned to Kansas City in the 1950s. Although the jazz violin has few remaining proponents, Claude Williams has continued to tour widely and has played with musicians ranging from Alison Krauss to Jay McShann. He received a National Heritage Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts in 1998.

Four- and six-string banjos have historically propelled the rhythm sections of traditional New Orleans club jazz bands with
Texas has a distinctive blues tradition. In the 1920s, Dallas, in particular, was host to bluesmen including Lead Belly, Blind Lemon Jefferson, and T-Bone Walker, all playing the clubs of the Central Track—the Black entertainment district. Somewhat isolated at the time from musical centers like New Orleans and St. Louis, the Texas blues developed a shuffling, jazzy feel.

Though he settled in Harlem in 1937, the late Sammy Price grew up in the north central Texas town of Honey Grove. He was a dancer and piano player on the Black traveling vaudeville circuit and also spent time in Dallas before moving on to the Kansas City and Chicago jazz scenes in the twenties and thirties. For a time he was the house pianist for Decca Records' blues, race, and rhythm and blues catalogs, and he toured with gospel singers Rosetta Tharpe and Evelyn Knight, and jazzmen Lester Young and Jimmy Rushing.

Price's career spanned seventy years. Beyond playing with a vast number of jazz and blues artists, helping to found the Philadelphia Jazz Society, and being part of the legendary New York jazz club scene Cafe Society Downtown, Price has also been a civil rights leader, educator, and author of the autobiography *What Do They Want?* He once said, "I can play any song. But I'm at my best, I think, playing the blues." Beyond the show tunes and city jazz of his nocturnal sets at New York's Blue Note was the rich, rolling barrelhouse style of his youth. His elegant "Harlem Parlor Blues," performed at Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall, suggests the array of influences in the musical personality of this Texas and Harlem legend.


"BOOKER T. LAURY Early in the Morning
Booker T. Laury, piano and vocal"

Born in Memphis in 1914, Booker T. Laury played church music on his family's pump organ before his feet could reach the pedals—which his mother worked for him. He learned the blues on his own and favored records by Blind Lemon Jefferson and Bessie Smith. He especially admired Clarence Williams, Smith's "classic blues" pianist, which may help explain his polished approach to even the most "low-down" barrelhouse tunes. In 1932, with the sometime nickname of "Slop Jar," Laury began to perform on Beale Street, Memphis' legendary Black entertainment district. In these clubs, restaurants, and dance halls, where gambling supported a flourishing music scene, he developed an informal style of extemporaneous banter and a repertory encompassing the full range of blues tempos and moods.

Laury associated with many Memphis bluesmen of the time, including childhood friend Memphis Slim, Roosevelt Sykes, Walter Davis, Peetie Wheatstraw, and Sunnysland Slim. Unlike many of these men, Laury never sought a Chicago base or a recording career but stayed true to Memphis and his solo barrelhouse style—even turning down the chance to work in B.B. King's band. He also retained his association with Beale Street through its decline in the 1960s and into later urban renewal and revitalization efforts. A dapper man of pressed suits and ringed fingers, Booker T. Laury held the audience spellbound in this performance, leaping to heights of vocal
show respect for the American Indians' resistance to colonial domination as well as fascination with Wild West show costumery and images. Each of these "tribes" includes a "Big Chief," "Wildman," "Spyboy," and "Flagman." As they dance and chant along their neighborhood route, the "Indians" confront other tribes. Historically, fights for turf control and individual esteem were played out at these encounters, but today most of the battling is done with costume and song.

Lead singer for the White Cloud Hunters is Chief Charles Taylor, a sign painter and industrial worker. Taylor and the others sing familiar songs in blues-inflected call-and-response form like "Lil' Liza Jane" and "Shoo Fly" alongside Mardi Gras Indian chants like "Tu-way-pak-a-way" and "My Big Chief Gotta Go to Town." "Sew, Sew, Sew" refers to the intense work men pridefully do on their elaborate costumes in the time leading up to Carnival.

With beads, sequins, and colored plumage more dazzling than the chandeliers at Weill Recital Hall, the White Cloud Hunters leaped offstage and danced through the aisles, much to the dismay of Hall management.

Recordings: Though this is Charles Taylor and the White Cloud Hunters' first recording, many Mardi Gras Indian CDs are available, including the anthology Mardi Gras Indians Super Sunday Showdown Rounder 2113 and I'm Back...At Carnival Time (Bo Dollis & The Wild Magnolias) Rounder 2094, Life Is a Carnival (The Wild Magnolias) Blue Note, and They Call Us Wild (The Wild Magnolias) Polygram.

Rapper Dee, C.J., and Five Gallons of Fun My Mind Has No Color / Doing It the Go-Go Way

Carl Jones, vocals and saxophone; Rapper Dee, percussion, paint buckets, and other found objects; Antoine Gardner, paint buckets and vocals

Among the unofficial and less well-known features of life in Washington, D.C., are go-go music in youth night clubs and its associated street bucket-drumming ensembles. Go-go, a unique creation of Washington's young people, can be compared to hip-hop and rap, which had similar beginnings among urban youth elsewhere. Go-go, however, has not gone national, and it retains a close symbiotic relationship to street bucket-drumming—which both imitates and inspires it.

As played in clubs, go-go uses elements from older styles including funk, disco, and rhythm and blues. It features complex shifting backbeats punctuated by improvisatory percussion riffs, and synthesizer chords and runs. The audience participates through call-and-response lyrics and dancing. Street bucket-drummers echo the percussion of nightclub go-go as they perform for contributions from passersby. Their plastic five-gallon, paint-bucket drum sets, mounted on milk crates and augmented with coffee tins,
garbage cans, broom handles, and highway cones— in pursuit of a suitable spot with many listeners and few cops. Legendary go-go sax player Carl “CJ” Jones, formerly of the club-based group Experience Unlimited, calls the street bucket-drumming “the raw go-go.” His percussive counterpart from the streets, Rapper Dee, calls it “folk go-go.”

Together under the name Five Gallons of Fun on this memorable night at Wolf Trap, Rapper Dee, CJ, and Antoine Gardner won the cheers of the audience with their ribald and raw, tragic and comedic raps and improvised rhythms.

**Recording:** The Music District (57-minute video) produced by Susan Levitas, about traditional music in Washington, D.C., includes go-go and street bucket-drumming, California Newsreel, 1-800-621-6191.

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**15 GEORGIA SEA ISLAND SINGERS**

**Hambone, Where You Been?**

Doug Quimby, lead vocals; Frankie Quimby, Tony Merrell, Van Merrell, Jennifer Jones, Joseph Jones, Joangelia Stevens, Albert Stevens, background vocals

The Georgia Sea Island Singers perform music handed down for over two centuries by African-American fishermen, farmers, and former plantation workers on the Southeast coast. Their sound pre-dates the blues yet maintains its continuity with Black musical styles today, nearly a century after the blues was born.

Group leader Frankie Quimby traces her ancestry to the town of Kinah in what is now Nigeria. The family was enslaved on the Hopeton and Altama Plantations on the Georgia coast. Quimby learned the old slave games and songs from older children and relatives and spent several years with the legendary “Miss Bessie” Jones and the Georgia Sea Island Singers. Frankie’s husband Doug grew up in interior Georgia, but his grandfather spoke Gullah, the English Creole language of the South Carolina Low Country and Georgia Sea Islands.

The Singers’ intent is explicitly pedagogical: wearing overalls and stylized house dresses they adapt religious “shouts,” protest songs, narratives, and children’s play songs to stage and festival, presenting the Sea Islands in folk opera and theatrical productions, as well as Civil Rights, African heritage, and school programs. Here, Doug performs the traditional body percussion known as “hambone.” Frankie calls hambone, “...a game that was made up on the plantation, because when they would kill hogs, they wouldn’t give the slaves any of the good parts of the meat, and they would cut all the meat off of a hambone, and give the bone to one of them. That person would cut that bone up and share it with the others all around that plantation, helping each other to survive. That’s why the famous line is...’Hambone, hambone, where’ve you been?’ The response is, ‘All around the world and back again.’...And when Doug was calling out ‘Hambone,’ can’t you see that M.C. Hammer did not create rapping? Our ancestors were rapping on those plantations years and years ago.”


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**16 BOOZOO CHAVIS AND THE MAGIC SOUNDS**

Uncle Bud

Boozoo Chavis, diatonic accordion and vocals; Carlton “Guitar” Thomas, guitar; Charles Chavis, frottoir; Classic Ballou Jr., bass; Nathan Fontenot, rhythm guitar; Rellis Chavis, drums

Unique to the Creoles of southwest Louisiana, zydeco is a mix of Cajun tunes, African-American blues, and Caribbean rhythms. Backed by a rhythm section of frottoir (rubboard), guitar, and bass, a diatonic button or chromatic piano accordion takes the lead on fast, syncopated two-steps, walzets, and blues. The music is performed wherever Creoles gather to dance—at nightclubs, church halls, benefit dances, baseball games, and trail rides—from the Lafayette area west in south Louisiana and on to Houston, Texas, as well as in California cities like Oakland and Los Angeles with large
immigrant Creole communities. Urban zydeco musicians, following the lead of the late Clifton Chenier, have largely left behind the truncated scales and choppy, acoustic sound of the diatonic button accordion. But in the hands of a master like Wilson "Boozoo" Chavis, the possibilities of the smaller squeezebox become obvious. Chavis actually made commercial zydeco records before Chenier, but after his 1954 regional hit *Papier dans ma soulier* ("Paper in My Shoe") he became disenchanted with the music business and turned to training racehorses and raising a family. In 1983 Boozoo went public again in a triumphant appearance at the newly founded Southwest Louisiana Zydeco Festival.

"Uncle Bud" is one of several songs in the Creole repertoire devoted to an alternately mischievous, powerful, and benevolent figure—often an uncle. In this case Uncle Bud is portrayed as a man who "kicked the but out of Cotton-eyed Joe," an allusion to Chavis' own strong stance against local Klan activism. Boozoo, who lives on a farmstead that has been in his family since the early nineteenth century, is descended in part from antebellum gens de couleur libres (free people of color). He is the most influential traditional Creole musician alive today as he flamboyantly brings his family band from dancehalls to festival stages proclaiming, "Boozoo, that's who!"


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The West Coast blues, an urban style, was built on the work of players like T-Bone Walker, Lowell Fulson, and Jimmy McCrackin. Among the most celebrated of the new generation of urban blues guitarists, Joe Louis Walker calls the blues sound of San Francisco and Oakland "more swinging, as opposed to the real hard Windy City [Chicago] shuffle. It's more of a swing jump thing—very danceable."

Walker was born in San Francisco during the post-war period, a time when Blacks from all over the South moved to Los Angeles and the Bay area seeking employment, relief from the social restrictions back home, and a new life. These families—like Walker's—brought along the sustaining culture: soul food, mam's old-style quilts, church life and gospel, blues, and the new sounds of rhythm and blues. Several members of Walker's family were musicians, and Joe picked up the guitar at fourteen. By sixteen he was drawn into the emerging psychedelic music scene. He scanned the classifieds for a band to gig with, remembering with a laugh, "They wanted to be blues bands; I'd play the blues and they'd play the rock." In addition to rooming for a spell with blues rock guitarist Mike Bloomfield, he also briefly met the greatest fuser of these musical realms, Jimi Hendrix—with whom he is sometimes compared. In 1975 Walker quit the blues and joined the gospel group the Spiritual Corinthians. The experience allowed him to regroup and find support in the African-American church and its music. By 1985, Joe was "cleaned up" and ready to bring the subtleties of gospel harmonies and arrangements to the blues. After a chance stand-in on a blues set at the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival, where he had come to perform gospel, Walker formed the Boss
SUGGESTED READINGS


ABOUT FOLK MASTERS

From 1990 to 1996, Folk Masters presented 175 American traditional artists or ensembles in over seventy concerts, which were recorded and produced for public radio. The full-house concerts at Carnegie Hall’s Weill Recital Hall (1990) and The Barns of Wolf Trap (1992–98) explored the use of the proscenium stage and intimate concert hall to serve a variety of cultural aesthetics, setting production standards for the field of public folklore presenters. The live concerts were edited, re-mixed, and presented with commentary for radio audiences. Folk Masters was distributed by Public Radio International to over 300 stations here and abroad. The programs received multiple awards from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting for artistic and technical excellence as well as community impact.

Directed and hosted by folklorist Nick Spitzer, Folk Masters concerts unfolded as remarkable variety shows of joyously diverse but ultimately connected forms of music. Some highlighted cultural kinship; others featured a single instrument as played by masters from different traditions. The artists were assembled through original fieldwork and with the help of numerous advisors. Folk Masters emphasized virtuosity as defined by the groups in question and used local outreach to attract members of these groups to the concerts. On any given night the approach might combine Chautauqua with the Grand Ole Opry, concert hall with church service or dance hall, but it always put the music and musicians first, presenting them with intelligence, humor, and respect.

Bringing together the diversity and spirit of folk festivals with concert hall and recording studio production values, Folk Masters created a fin de siècle gathering of many of the finest traditional performing artists from America and beyond. Many of these artists either emerged from or went on to appearances at the National Folk Festival. Some had been or became National Heritage Fellows of the National Endowment for the Arts. Folk Masters was a ground-breaking collaboration between Wolf Trap, Radio Smithsonian, and Nick Spitzer. The Folk Masters CD Series on Smithsonian Folkways Recordings presents great performances selected from these wide-ranging and influential concerts.

Folk Masters artistic director Nick Spitzer received his B.A. from the University of Pennsylvania and Ph.D. from the University of Texas in anthropology. Known for his work in cultural creolization, and public folklore and the media, Spitzer served as Louisiana's first state folklorist. A former senior folklife specialist with the Smithsonian, he contributes to NPR's All Things Considered and hosts American Routes, the weekly two-hour Public Radio International program devoted to the roots and branches of popular music. Spitzer is Professor of Folklore and Cultural Conservation at the University of New Orleans.
ABOUT SMITHSONIAN FOLKWAYS

Folkways Records was founded by Moses Asch in 1948 to document music, spoken word, instruction, and sounds from around the world. In the ensuing decades, New York City-based Folkways became one of the largest independent record labels in the world, reaching a total of nearly 2,200 albums that were always kept in print.

The Smithsonian Institution acquired Folkways from the Moses Asch estate in 1987 to ensure that the sounds and genius of the artists would be preserved for future generations. All Folkways recordings are available on high-quality audio cassettes or by special order on CD. Each recording is packed in a special box along with the original LP liner notes.

Smithsonian Folkways Recordings was formed to continue the Folkways tradition of releasing significant recordings with high-quality documentation. It produces new titles, reissues of historic recordings from Folkways’ and other record labels, and in collaboration with other companies also produces instructional videotapes and recordings to accompany published books, and other educational projects.

The Smithsonian Folkways, Folkways, Cook, Paredon, Monitor, Fast Folk, and Dyer-Bennet record labels are administered by the Smithsonian Institution’s Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage. They are one of the means through which the Center supports the work of traditional artists and expresses its commitment to cultural diversity, education, and increased understanding.

You can find Smithsonian Folkways Recordings at your local record store. Smithsonian Folkways, Folkways, Cook, Paredon, Fast Folk, Monitor, and Dyer-Bennet recordings are all available through:

Smithsonian Folkways Mail Order 955 L’Enfant Plaza, Suite 7300, Washington, DC 20560-0935 phone (202) 287-7298

fax (202) 287-7299

orders only 1 (800) 470-9815 (Discover, MasterCard, Visa, and American Express accepted)

For further information about all the labels distributed through the Center, please consult our Internet site (www.si.edu/folkways), which includes information about recent releases, our catalogue, and a database of the approximately 35,000 tracks from the more than 2,300 available recordings (click on database search). Or request a printed catalogue by writing to: Catalogue, Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, 955 L’Enfant Plaza, SW, Suite 7300, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC 20560-0935, USA. Or use our catalogue request phone: (202) 287-3262, or e-mail folkways@aol.com

The purpose of the Adopt-A-Tape Program is to preserve the unique recordings and documentation released on the Folkways Records label over the past fifty years. By adopting one or more recordings, your tax-deductible donation contributes to the digitization of the 2,168 master tapes, album covers, and liner notes, thus preserving the Folkways collection and insuring its accessibility in the future.

To adopt an original Folkways tape, send your check for $250.00 [per title] payable to: Smithsonian Folkways Recordings/Adopt-A-Tape, 955 L’Enfant Plaza, Suite 7300, Washington, DC 20560-0935. Please include your name, address, phone, and e-mail address. For more information, visit our Web site at www.si.edu/folkways/adopt.htm or e-mail adopt@folkways.si.edu or write to D.A. Sonneborn, assistant director (202-287-2181) at the address above.

PRODUCTION CREDITS
Producer: Nick Spitzer
Editor: Leslie Spitz–Edson
Executive producers: Paul Johnson and Anthony Seeger
Executive producers for radio: Mary Beth Kirchner and Wesley Horner
Recorded at Weil Recital Hall, Carnegie Hall by John Tyler of Radio Smithsonian in association with Leszek Wojcik (1990)
Recorded at The Barns of Wolf Trap by John Tyler of Radio Smithsonian and Big Mo Mobile Recording (1992-1996)
Remixes by John Tyler, Big Mo Mobile Recording, and Pete Reiniger, Washington D.C.
Mastered by Matt Sakakeeny at American Routes studios, New Orleans
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Notes by Nick Spitzer and Leslie Spitz–Edson
Editorial assistance by Thomas Vennum and Jeff Place
Smithsonian Folkways production supervised by Anthony Seeger and D. A. Sonneborn
Smithsonian Folkways production coordinated by Mary Monsieur
CD design and layout by Carol Hardy, Bethesda, MD
Additional Smithsonian Folkways staff: Heather Berthold, financial officer; Carla Borden, editing; Lee Michael Demsey, fulfillment; Kevin Doran, licensing, Brenda Dunlap, marketing director; Sharleen Kavetski, mail order accounts manager; Matt Levine, fulfillment; Jimmy Locklear, marketing assistant; Michael Maloney, product manager; Nakeida Moore, fulfillment; Jeff Place, archivist; Ronnie Simpkins, fulfillment; Stephanie Smith, assistant archivist.

Thanks to Martha Knouss and John Paulson at Smithsonian Productions; to Nancy Bittner and Kristin Kuhr at Carnegie Hall; to Lori Crockett, Daryl Friedman, Jim Glancy, W. Caldwell Gray, Bob Grimes, Matt Hessburg, Jo Hodgin, Craig Impink, Laurie Jacoby, Terrence D. Jones, Ann McKee, Trish Shuman, Shelton q. Stanfill, and Charlie Walters at the Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts; to Rhonda Jenkins, Julia Olin, Claudia Tellifo, and Joe Wilson of the National Council for the Traditional Arts.

Thanks to Miles Alexander, Robert Baron, Joe Beck, Barry Bergey, Horace Boyer, Joey Brackner, Lauren Callihan, Michael Denney, Deena Gift, Bess Hawes, Maggie Holtzberg, Sara Johnston, Elliott Levitas, Susan Levitas, Genevieve Leyh, Alan Lomax, Worth Long, Allison Miner, Jeff Place, Lisa Richardson, Dan Sheehy, Rob Weinstock, Dwan Winters, and Harris Wray.

Thanks also to the Washington D.C. Blues Society, Texas FolkLife Resources, and Cityflora (NYC).

Major funding for the Folk Masters concerts and broadcasts was provided by the Lila Wallace-Reader’s Digest Fund with additional support from the National Endowment for the Arts, the James H. Smithson Society, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the Billy Rose Foundation.

Funding for the Folk Masters CD Series was provided by the National Endowment for the Arts.