

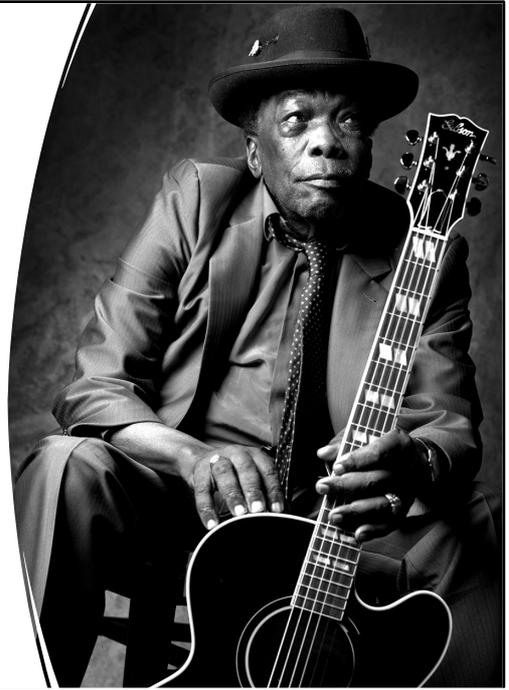


Blues

History and
Development

Genres

- Acoustic Blues
- Electric Blues
- Rhythm and Blues



- Pictured: John Lee Hooker

Key Facts

- Evolved from African-American Folk Music
- Migrated to urban areas and began to include electric instruments
- Reflected melancholic themes



- Pictured: Lead Belly
- Evolved from things like work songs and spirituals
- Originated from the rural south of the USA (Mississippi) in the late 1800s/ early 1900s
 - Black plantation workers playing acoustic instruments
- Not much commercial success at its inception
 - Big record companies didn't promote it due it being classed as 'race music'
 - Independent record companies emerged during the 40s to release and promote the music
- Relationship and money problems, oppression
 - Also reflected some spiritual/religious themes

Early Acoustic Blues

Main Artists

- Robert Johnson (*Cross Road Blues* – 1936)
- John Lee Hooker
- Lead Belly
- Tampa Red
- Big Joe Williams
- Bessie Smith (*St. Louis Blues* – 1925)

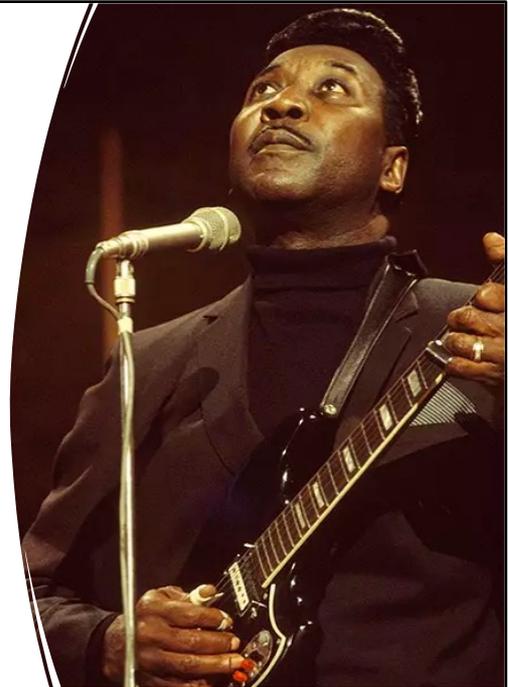


- Pictured: Bessie Smith

Electric Blues

Main Artists

- Muddy Waters (*Rollin' Stone* – 1950)
- Buddy Guy
- T-Bone Walker
- Howlin' Wolf
- Elmore James
- B.B. King (*Three O'Clock Blues* – 1951)



- Pictured: Muddy Waters

Rhythm and Blues

Main Artists

- Ray Charles (*Georgia On My Mind* – 1960)
- Ruth Brown
- The Drifters
- Ben E. King (*Stand By Me* – 1961)
- Sam Cooke



- Pictured: Ray Charles
- R&B = loose term used to replace the term 'race music' by music journalists in the 40s and 50s
- R&B had separate charts from the mainstream charts
- Forms a clear link between blues music and soul music
- Term is used today to refer to urban black music styles that have been influenced by soul, hip-hop, pop and other electronic music

Independent 1950s Record Companies

- Sun Studio
 - Set up in Memphis by Sam Phillips
- Chess Records
 - Set up in Chicago by Leonard and Phil Chess
- Atlantic Records
 - Set up in New York by Ahmet Ertegun and Herb Abramson



- Pictured: Big Joe Williams
- Sun studios recorded many local blues artists such as B.B. King as well as developing new country and rock'n'roll artists such as Johnny Cash and Elvis Presley
 - Sam Phillips is very much associated with the use of slap back tape delay in rock'n'roll music
- Chess records produced many of the biggest names in blues music and went to to record soul artists in the 60s
- Atlantic records was primarily known for jazz recordings but became an important label for soul music in the 60s and became extremely successful, signing artists such as Led Zeppelin

Technology and Production

- After WWII, better recordings were able to be captured
- Recordings would have been captured live
- Use of the electric guitar and guitar amplifiers



- Pictured: The Drifters
- Access to better mixing desks and better quality microphones compared to before the war
- Live recordings allowed for interaction between performers and for improvisation
- Blues players were instrumental to the development of the overdriven guitar and creating a thicker tone that made the music sound more aggressive