



The Rough Guide to The Blues

Nigel Williamson

Foreword by Robert Plant



“At the age of fifteen, I first experienced the late curtain calls of the last messengers of the seminal Delta music and its contemporary cousin, reaching out from south side Chicago and Detroit. Son House, Bukka White, John Estes, Skip James, and the Howlin’ Wolf appeared before me.... the sight and sounds of these men has left a shudder of unknowing and mystery with me that still thrills and inspires today.

Nigel Williamson has transported these angel wraiths into the 21st century – breathing new life into a glorious kaleidoscope of Afro-American music.”

Robert Plant

[The Rough Guide to The Blues](#) is the essential blues companion, telling its fascinating story and giving the lowdown on all the grittiest singers, bottleneck guitarists, belt-it-out divas and wailing harmonica players. It covers the whole journey from its roots in Africa, to how the blues crawled from the Mississippi Delta, went electric in the cities, and spread across the world.

Detailing hundreds of artists from folk heroes like Son House, Leadbelly and Robert Johnson, through the legends of B.B. King, Muddy Waters and John Lee Hooker, to the great blues rockers of the 60’s and 70’s, Led Zeppelin, Jimi Hendrix and Cream, [The Rough Guide to The Blues](#) offers the most thorough and meticulous consolidation of blues biography yet assembled. Accepting the blues as a broad church, author Nigel Williamson profiles artists and bands that have played their own significant role in blues history.

“Where did the blues begin?... the truth is surely that the blues began several million times over. It was born again and again, every time another African gazed for the last time at the land of his or her birth.”

Those new to the blues, or fans in a particular frame of mind, will appreciate the inclusion of ‘Playlists’ to download to your iPod or MP3. Choose between individual artist ‘best ofs’ or check out the ten greatest slide guitar tracks or harmonica solos. And for those in the mood for sex, drugs and alcohol – the blues, and the playlists, have these covered too.

For review copies, extracts and author interviews, contact Rough Guides Publicity:
press@roughguides.com; tel 020 7010 3701.

[Nigel Williamson](#) grew up a long way from the Mississippi Delta in the leafy environs of Kent. He discovered the blues as a teenager in the 1960s via the records of John Mayall, Cream, The Doors and others and swiftly realised that he preferred the originals to the imitators. His natural inclination to support the underdog not only gave him a natural affinity with the music but led him into the world of radical left-wing politics. He worked for the British politicians Tony Benn and Neil Kinnock and went on to edit a number of Labour Party publications before becoming a senior executive on *The Times*. Tiring of the office routine he recklessly gave up the security of a staff salary for the precarious existence of a freelance music critic in the mid-1990s. He is the author of *The Rough Guide to Bob Dylan*.

Notes to Editors

The Rough Guide to The Blues, by Nigel Williamson

ISBN: 9781843-53519-5

Published: February 2007

Price: £16.99

Format: Large Format, 384 pages, 2-colour, illustrations throughout

Playlist - The blues had a baby

Ten songs the world knows as rock'n'roll classics - and the blues originals they came from.

1. [That's All Right](#) Arthur "Big Boy" Crudup
But you'll know it better as Elvis Presley's first single
2. [Mystery Train](#) Little Junior Parker
Another early Elvis single
3. [Crossroads](#) Robert Johnson
A staple for Eric Clapton and Cream
4. [Good Morning Little School Girl](#) Sonny Boy Williamson II
Later covered by the Yardbirds, Van Morrison and countless others
5. [Little Red Rooster](#) Howlin' Wolf
A 1964 hit for the Rolling Stones
6. [Crawling King Snake](#) John Lee Hooker
Hooker learned the song from Big Joe Williams. Some 22 years later it appeared on the Doors album 'LA Woman'.
7. [Baby Please Don't Go](#) Big Joe Williams
Gave Van Morrison and Them one of their early hits
8. [Key to the Highway](#) Big Bill Broonzy
Appeared on Derek and the Dominos' 'Layla and Other Assorted Love Songs'
9. [I Can't Quit You Baby](#) Otis Rush
Featured on the debut album by Led Zeppelin
10. [Trouble So Hard](#) Vera Hall
"Natural Blues" on Moby's multi-platinum album, 'Play'.

For review copies, extracts and author interviews, contact Rough Guides Publicity:
press@roughguides.com; tel 020 7010 3701.