University of Mississippi

eGrove

Electronic Theses and Dissertations Graduate School

2012

A Historical Analysis of Living Blues Magazine

Melanie Young

Follow this and additional works at: https://egrove.olemiss.edu/etd

Part of the Music Commons

Recommended Citation

Young, Melanie, "A Historical Analysis of Living Blues Magazine" (2012). *Electronic Theses and Dissertations*. 324.
https://egrove.olemiss.edu/etd/324

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at eGrove. It has been accepted for inclusion in Electronic Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of eGrove. For more information, please contact egrove@olemiss.edu.

A HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF *LIVING BLUES* MAGAZINE

A Thesis

Presented for the

Master of Arts

Degree

The University of Mississippi

Melanie Young

December 2012

Copyright Melanie Young 2012
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines *Living Blues* magazine and its history through its stated cultural focus on African American music.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the founders of *Living Blues*; to the editors, staff, writers, and photographers past, present, and future; and to all of the blues artists who have been—and will be—represented within its pages.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I express my deepest appreciation to my committee chair, Dr. David Wharton, and committee members, Dr. Ted Ownby and Dr. Adam Gussow. In addition, I thank graduate advisor Dr. Kathryn McKee for her kind assistance throughout my career as a student at the University of Mississippi.

My assistantship as circulation manager in the *Living Blues* office, awarded by the Center for the Study of Southern Culture and supervised by publications manager Mark Camarigg, provided necessary financial assistance for my studies in Oxford. My editorial internship under current *Living Blues* editor Brett Bonner resulted in my first publishing credit, and both experiences have proved fundamental to my understanding of the history and progress of the magazine. Bonner was also a constant source of advice throughout the completion of this thesis, for which I am especially grateful.

The founders of *Living Blues*—Jim O'Neal, Amy van Singel, Paul Garon, and Bruce Iglauer—were an invaluable source of information and insight, and I am thankful to them for sharing their memories and observations with me.

I am likewise indebted to writer, researcher, and former *Living Blues* editor Scott Barretta, who granted unlimited access to his private collection of *Living Blues* magazines. Without his generosity, this project could not have been completed.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 1

I. "BLUES SPEAKS FOR ITSELF": LIVING BLUES VOL. 1, NO. 1 6

II. "A BLACK AMERICAN WORKING-CLASS MUSIC":

LIVING BLUES' EDITORIAL STATEMENT 22

III. "THE MAGAZINE OF THE AFRICAN AMERICAN BLUES TRADITION":

A SURVEY OF *LIVING BLUES* THROUGHOUT THE YEARS 41

IV. *LIVING BLUES* AND *BLUES REVUE*:

A COMPARISON OF TWO AMERICAN BLUES PERIODICALS 60

CONCLUSION 84

BIBLIOGRAPHY 89

VITA 95

INTRODUCTION

"The seventies," declared author Gérard Herzhaft, "were the darkest years for the blues, in Chicago and elsewhere. Only the old blacks and young whites were interested in it" (38). That young whites had become enthusiastic about the genre was not in doubt, as the 1960s folk-blues revival had inspired a generation to seek out the music and the musicians. Yet if you asked some of these "blues-freaks," as they often referred to themselves, if the blues was indeed dead, you were likely to get a very different answer.

In late-1960s Chicago, Bob Koester's Delmark Records and Jazz Record Mart was a gathering place for those interested in the blues to acquire and share knowledge of their favorite music. One day Koester posted a notice seeking parties interested in starting a blues magazine, remembered blues producer and writer Dick Shurman:

> I was at the U. of Chicago in 1968-9 and it didn't take me long to find my way to the Jazz Record Mart. . . . I love(d) the blues, have always been a writer and had what passed for editorial experience on both my high school yearbook and literary magazine. So I was the first (if I remember correctly) to sign up. But I decided to go back to Seattle (where I was raised) to finish school before returning to Chicago, because it was too much of a tug-of-war between school and the blues scene in Chicago. There were never any meetings or further discussion about the magazine before I left town, and I never saw any submissions" (E-mail 16 Nov. 2012).

At least one person recalled submitting something prior to Shurman's departure. Blues fan and Record Mart regular Jim O'Neal wrote a review of a concert featuring B. B. King, Albert King, and Paul Butterfield at the Kinetic Playground in Chicago. "But I didn't meet Dick then,"

O'Neal remembered; "I must have given the review to Bob Koester" (E-mail, "The blues magazine that would have been," 16 Nov. 2012). It was ultimately left to O'Neal and a group of like-minded enthusiasts to found what would become America's first blues magazine.

Delmark shipping clerk Bruce Iglauer first encountered blues publications on a trip across Europe in 1969. "While I was in England I went to the famous Dobell's Record Shop," he recalled, "and was surprised to find copies of *Blues Unlimited* and *Blues World*, the two British blues magazines. I don't think I knew blues magazines existed before that" (E-mail 21 Mar. 2011). He approached O'Neal and asked him why there were no comparable stateside publications.

Amy van Singel, a blues radio deejay at Northwestern University and former employee of Koester's, met O'Neal, a journalism student, on a blind date in 1968. She brought him to the Record Mart, where he eventually wrote liner notes for some Delmark releases, including Magic Sam's 1969 album *Black Magic*. Van Singel was well aware of the existence of the European publications, having been a subscriber to *Blues Unlimited* since high school:

> They were interesting to read, but often I did not have access to the vinyl or quite understand the discographies. Or the record auctions! It also seemed strange to have to read about American music from a European point of view. Very often, the stories merely detailed information about the artists' records. I wanted to hear about the MUSIC and the creators of the music, not just statistics (Senkowsky, "Q & A").

Koester was naturally supportive of their venture and suggested they include Paul Garon, another former employee and early blues expert (Garon, E-mail 3 Apr. 2010). Iglauer held a meeting at his apartment in early 1970 with van Singel, O'Neal, Garon, and others who were interested in starting a magazine with them (Iglauer, E-mail 21 Mar. 2011).

The name *Living Blues* was Iglauer's idea. "I think it was at [the first] meeting that I pushed hard for the name *Living Blues* to distinguish us from the British magazines which tended

to focus on blues history and records. I felt that, since we were on the scene, we should be writing about what we were seeing and hearing. I think we kicked around some article topics for the first issue that night" (E-mail 21 Mar. 2011). O'Neal described that vibrant local scene: "We [had] started going to black blues clubs on the South and West Sides (there were only a couple of white clubs in Chicago then) and the more I experienced that culture and got to know the people, seeing where they lived and worked, the more I felt a calling to make blues my life's work. I regard my first blues club experience—hearing Otis Rush at Pepper's Lounge—as a life-altering moment" (E-mail, 12 Oct. 2012).

Koester lent them some seed money—$300, Iglauer recalled—and they proceeded to put the magazine together themselves (E-mail 21 Mar. 2011). Iglauer did not imagine that they would publish *Living Blues* for very long; O'Neal remembered that "at one of our first meetings Bruce said, 'Well, we'll all do this for about five years, and by that time everybody will have read the magazine and learned everything they'll need to know about blues, and that'll be it" (Guralnick viii-ix). They knew nothing of periodical production, and had little but their own enthusiasm to go on. "We should have failed!" exclaimed van Singel (9 Oct. 2012).

But they did not.

Forty-two years later, *Living Blues* is still in production, reaching subscribers around the world. Though it has undergone changes since 1970—most dramatically, relocating from Chicago to Oxford, Mississippi, in 1983—the magazine's operation is still guided by the founders' vision inherent in its title: that it document a *living*, active musical tradition. This thesis explores the general history of *Living Blues* through its stated editorial focus on blues music as African American culture, and how that emphasis has—or has not—evolved over time.

Chapter I, "'Blues Speaks For Itself': *Living Blues* Vol. 1, No. 1," deconstructs each

feature and section of the premier issue, as it would set the template for every *Living Blues* magazine that followed.

Chapter II, "'A Black American Working-Class Music': *Living Blues*' Editorial Statement," focuses on the declaration of the magazine's content focus in *LB* #13 and the resulting controversy.

Chapter III, "'The Magazine of the African American Blues Tradition': A Survey of *Living Blues* Throughout the Years," traces the magazine's cultural definition and physical history through selected issues.

Chapter IV, "*Living Blues* and *Blues Revue*: A Comparison of Two American Blues Periodicals," analyzes a recent issue of *Living Blues* with that of its main competitor in the blues periodical market in order to deduce their similarities and differences.

My research for this thesis included interviewing each major editorial figure in its history (with the exception of Peter Lee, whom I was unable to locate), and examining every print issue of the magazine. I also have a unique perspective in that I have been a contributing writer for *Living Blues* for over three years—since *LB* #202 (August 2009). My first feature, "Gip's Place: Where All The Cats Play," about Henry Gipson's Bessemer, Alabama, juke joint, was published in *LB* #203 (October 2009, 34-35). With *LB* #202, I additionally assumed the role of circulation manager, which I held for one year (through *LB* #208, August 2010). My first-hand experience with the magazine industry has led me to the same conclusion as former editor Lee, who wrote in his final editorial:

> For those directly involved with putting ***Living Blues*** together, the magazine is more than just paper, ink, and a few staples. And the real force behind making ***Living Blues*** more than just a music magazine is the selflessness and dedication of our contributors. They bring their knowledge to you for

little reward other than their love for the music (*LB* #104, 2).

As I have worked for and written about *Living Blues*, I have learned that it represents not just the music and the culture it documents, but the lives of those who have worked diligently to promote and celebrate it. In the process, some have sacrificed greatly, and that part of the story, while not told here, is nevertheless important and worthy of being shared.

Likewise, there are many ways one could analyze the history of *Living Blues*, not to mention the sheer amount of information one must process—currently, the magazine boasts over 20,000 pages of print. Therefore, this is by no means an exhaustive historical account of the publication, but is rather an overview of what makes *Living Blues* unique in the annals of American musical print media: its focus on the blues as an African American cultural expression.

CHAPTER I

"BLUES SPEAKS FOR ITSELF": *LIVING BLUES* VOL. 1, NO. 1

Living Blues Volume 1, Number 1 was published in the spring of 1970 by *Living Blues* Publications, located at "917 West Dakin St., Room 405, Chicago, Illinois 60613" (1). Though the physical form of the magazine would evolve significantly over the next four decades, the premiere issue of *Living Blues* established a precedent for the magazine's content and editorial vision that, as subsequent chapters will show, has survived largely intact to the present day.

LB #1 was produced on a typewriter, according to Amy van Singel ("Boot Camp Typesetting"). Its cover was black and white, with "*Living Blues*" spread across the top in large block letters called Letraset, or "rub-on type" (van Singel, E-mail 10 Oct. 2012). "Vol. 1, No. 1," "Chicago, Illinois," and "Spring, 1970" was printed in a single line underneath the title in a much smaller, typewritten font. Initially, the cost per issue was fifty cents; the price was also included in a miniature version of the sans-serif title font. The text was arranged carefully directly above and to the right of the cover image—an atypical portrait of bluesman Chester Arthur Burnett, better known as Howlin' Wolf, taken by the documentarian Les Blank. Wolf was onstage: there is a microphone stand in front of him, and he held a mic in his right hand; there was also a stage light behind and to his left. (This is confirmed by an additional photo by Blank on page 15; eyes narrowed, Wolf held the mic close to his mouth and gestured towards an unseen audience with his left hand.) He wore short shirtsleeves and a backwards baseball cap,

instead of his more familiar suit-and-tie performance attire. He looked to his right, his mouth open, as if in surprise, at some unknown action happening outside of the frame.[1]

In a sense, this photograph symbolized *Living Blues*' modus operandi. The unusual, almost intimate nature of the image, coupled with the in-the-moment pose of its subject, are indicative of a documentary focus as defined by Robert Coles in *Doing Documentary Work*:

> The word documentary certainly suggests an interest in what is actual, what exists, rather than what one brings personally, if not irrationally, to the table of present-day actuality. . . . Through documents themselves, through informants, witnesses, participants, through the use of the camera and the tape recorder, through letters or journals or diaries, through school records, court records, hospital records, or newspaper records, a growing accuracy with respect to a situation, a place, a person or a group of people begins to be assembled (5).

This idea of a seemingly objective, documentary presentation of "a situation, a place, a person or a group of people" *as is*, without any influencing personal bias, and based on facts, first-hand accounts, and research is certainly what the founders had in mind when they published the first issue of *Living Blues*. On the first page of Vol. I, No. 1, there was a short statement printed underneath the "Contents" listing, separated from the rest of the text by thick, black horizontal lines placed above and below the paragraph:

> Blues speaks for itself. We do not intend to explain, define, or confine the blues. We believe that the blues is a living tradition, and we hope to present some insights into this tradition.
>
> Articles and photographs are welcome, as well as your comments and criticisms. Peace.
>
> - - The Editors

They were not specific regarding the type of blues music or musicians they planned to cover, but there was an expectation implicit in the text that their audience will recognize what blues is—"Blues speaks for itself"—as well as an educational tone—"we hope to present some insights."

As Peter Narváez pointed out, their editorial statement indicates a desire to "inform their peers," and assumes that their audience was like-minded and eager to learn (247).

Yet the editors did present a very specific kind of blues in their magazine. With the exceptions of print advertisements for an album by a white British blues-rock band and from record labels marketing white artists alongside African American ones, the music profiled in the thirty-seven pages of the premiere issue is African American in orientation. From the very beginning, *Living Blues* was issuing a clear statement about its perception of blues music: it is a *cultural* product, inseparable from the people and circumstances that created it.

The issue's contents were printed on page 1 above the editorial statement: "Remembering Magic Sam" (2-10); "Uncle Sam Gonna Take Me Away, Part 1" (11-12); "*Living Blues* Interview: Howling Wolf" (13-17); "Blues and the Church: Revolt and Resignation" (18-23); "Record Reviews" (25-36, erroneously listed in the contents as beginning on page 23); and "Blues News" (37). Below the statement, the names of the editors were listed: Diane Allmen, Paul Garon, Bruce Iglauer, Jim O'Neal, Andre Souffront, Amy van Singel, and Tim Zorn. There were also three contributors to this issue, identified in the space beneath the editors as Clas Alstrand, Kathleen McLaughlin, and Leroy Pierson. At the very bottom of page 1 was the journal's publication information and mailing address, along with a statement which implied that reader submissions are welcome: "Materials submitted for publication should be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope."

Inside the front cover, *Living Blues* looked ahead to its next issue by printing the planned features for No. 2: a Wisconsin Blues Festival report, an interview with Chicago bluesman Floyd Jones, "an appreciation of Robert Pete Williams," the second part of the "Uncle Sam Gonna Take Me Away" essay, and an "Introduction to St. Louis Blues, by Leroy Peirson" [*sic*]. It also

promised “Record reviews, Book reviews, Blues news, and the proverbial ‘more,’” and asked readers to consider subscribing as “Our distribution scene is still a little shaky”—four issues for $2.00, sample issues $.50 (“one to a customer”). Like the cover, the contents of the magazine were printed in black and white, and with the exceptions of the article and section titles, all of the text was typewritten.

The first feature in *LB* #1 focused on the late Chicago blues singer and guitarist Samuel “Magic Sam” Maghett. Originally from Grenada, Mississippi, Maghett passed away from a heart attack on December 1, 1969 at just 32 years of age. “Remembering Magic Sam 1937-1969” eschewed standard obituary form: instead of writing from a single-author, third person point of view, Bruce Iglauer and Jim O’Neal interviewed friends and colleagues of Maghett’s and compiled observations excerpted from these conversations into a lengthy, detailed tribute. There was discussion of featuring Sam on the cover, according to O’Neal, but he “pointed out that if we were going to call the magazine *Living Blues*, then it wasn’t a good idea to put a dead bluesman on the cover of the debut issue” (E-mail, 12 Oct. 2012). The artists and associates O’Neal and Iglauer spoke with were “Syl Johnson, a popular Chicago-based soul singer; Mack Thompson, Sam’s bass player for many years; Jimmy ‘Fast Fingers’ Dawkins, blues guitarist on the West Side; Mighty Joe Young, second guitarist on Sam’s LPs; Luther Allison, Chicago blues singer and guitarist; Eddie Clearwater, well-known soul singer based in Chicago; and Bob Koester, who produced Sam’s two LPs [*West Side Soul* and *Black Magic* for Delmark Records].” They also interviewed musicians Otis Rush, Buddy Guy, and Billy Warren, but their remarks “could not be included for reasons of space” (3).

The subjects told Maghett’s life story through their quotes, strung together chronologically by Iglauer and O’Neal. Syl Johnson and Mack Thompson grew up with Maghett in Chicago:

Johnson "taught him how to play the blues, what little I knew," and they stole candy, skipped, and ultimately quit school together (3). Thompson recalled playing his first gig with Maghett at a club called the Wagon Wheel, and that he bestowed him with the stage name Magic Sam (5-6). Mighty Joe Young and Jimmy Dawkins both described Maghett's unique tremolo, finger-picked style of guitar playing (4-5). Sam spent time in "Uncle Sam's old jive army," which "ruined his career," according to Johnson. He further stated that Maghett went AWOL, but was arrested and incarcerated for six months, after which he was "never the same" (6-7). Luther Allison concurred "something happened" to Maghett while he was in the service, and that he felt it was because he "had something out there to do for the world. A musician's job is to keep people happy" (7). Bob Koester stated that Maghett was "very much in charge of [the recording] sessions" and that it "rarely took Sam more than one or two takes" to record a song (9). According to John Fishel, "Sam didn't do anything differently before a black audience than before a white audience . . . Sam just got up and played music"—which, Thompson said, he continued to do as he lay on a hospital bed near the end of his young life (9-10). By utilizing the musicians' first-hand accounts of Maghett, the effect was more immediate and personal than that of a traditional obituary. The artists' words were transcribed as close to their natural speech patterns as possible, and were both a reflection of their reality and a literal manifestation of the blues speaking for itself (4).

Considering the claims of Syl Johnson and Luther Allison regarding the Army's effect on Maghett's career, O'Neal's article "Uncle Sam Gonna Take Me Away, Part One" is especially poignant when paired with his tribute. Examining the lyrics of several protest blues songs from the early 1940s, O'Neal identified three categories: "songs of reluctance (but not resistance) to go, usually tied in with leaving loved ones behind; the blues of the 4-F'ers and the other men

who stayed at home to take care of a 'million lonesome women'; and the patriotic and heroic blues which did not always show an eagerness to fight, but reflected willingness to go because there was no way out" (11).

The essay was brief—only two pages long; Part Two appears in *LB* #2 (10-13). Yet much like the previous feature, O'Neal presented the excerpted lyrics largely without commentary, except to briefly categorize each war blues song according to type. Brownie McGhee's "Million Lonesome Women," Bukka White's "Army Blues," and Blind Boy Fuller's "When You Are Gone" were classified as stay-at-home blues, while Dr. Clayton's "Pearl Harbor Blues" and Sonny Boy Williamson I's "Win the War Blues" were both in the patriotic/heroic style. Likewise, the lyrics that opened the article, from Big Bill Broonzy's "That Old Number of Mine (Number 158)," would place the song in the latter category (11).[2] Besides allowing the bluesmen—and, by extension, the blues—to speak for themselves by quoting their songs, O'Neal also made these past-generation blues relevant to the present by identifying them as protest numbers.[3] As the United States was currently engaged in the Vietnam War, O'Neal acknowledged that "the draft . . . was an immediate concern of mine at the time" (E-mail 10 Oct. 2012).

The issue's cover portrait of Howlin' Wolf heralded the subject of the next feature, which is also the first "*Living Blues* Interview" (13-17). Born near West Point, Mississippi, in 1910, the influential blues musician relocated from Memphis to Chicago in 1953 after signing exclusively to Chess Records (Davis 192). His recordings for that label, including "Smokestack Lightnin'," "Spoonful," "Back Door Man," and "Killing Floor," are today considered classics of the genre. He enjoyed popularity in both the South and the North during his lifetime, as well as

crossover audience appeal resulting from rock and roll musicians covering his songs (Mississippi Blues Trail, "Howlin' Wolf").

In his interview for *Living Blues*, Wolf touched upon each of these matters. He told the unidentified interviewer[4] that his birthplace was Aberdeen, a town near West Point in northeastern Mississippi. He thought his first recording was "Smokestack Lightnin'"; an editorial note states that, according to the reference guide *Blues Records 1943-1966* by Leadbitter and Slaven, it was actually Chess 1515, "Saddle My Pony/Worried All The Time," recorded in 1948 in West Memphis (14).[5] Wolf said that he began his recording career in 1948, but that he had been performing long before that, "doin' out the South" (14). When asked about the "psychedelic album [he] made for Chess"—1969's *The Howlin' Wolf Album*—Wolf was dismissive: "I just don't like it. I still don't like it. But the teenagers go for it, you know" (15).

Though he may not have cared for the style, Wolf was rather sanguine about rock musicians covering his songs. When told that British guitarist Jeff Beck had recorded "I Ain't Superstitious," Wolf responded that he was "glad somebody thought enough of it to take it and do somethin' with it . . . I don't feel bad about it because when somebody take your number and use it, why that's lettin' 'em know that they really appreciate your sound, you know. I wished a lot of 'em would take 'em" (16). Though he did not directly mention the obvious financial benefits of cover versions, he demonstrated an awareness of this fact when asked if he still wrote songs: "Some of 'em. Some of 'em I get from different fans, you know. Give 'em their portions, their writers' portion when the royalties come out . . . They always keep me in song because I make 'em, why, they know they gonna get their writer's share, you know" (16).

However, Wolf was not afraid to criticize the younger musicians copying his songs and style. Though he called him "a nice boy," he expressed unhappiness about what he viewed as

harmonica player and vocalist Paul Butterfield's penchant for keeping "the colored boys"—referring to bassist Jerome Arnold and drummer Sam Lay, Wolf's former band members—in his own group, the Paul Butterfield Blues Band, "until [Butterfield] got straightened out like he wanted" and replaced them (16). He stopped short of comparing himself with other African American blues musicians, refusing to comment on Muddy Waters' choice of performance venue or give his opinion on the best harmonica player (14, 15).

His most interesting comments centered around the blues itself. Located at the very beginning of the interview, and not preceded by a question, Wolf stated that

> I don't play anything but the blues, but now I never could make no money on nothin' but the blues. That's why I wasn't interested in nothin' but the blues, you know . . . The reason I play 'em, I come up hard. I suffered 'em, a lot of places. Person ain't never had no hard times, why, they don't know what the blues mean anyway. Take this young generation. They don't understand it. They're tryin' to learn it. But see, men from me on back up, they know what it means . . . Take these peoples over here. They wouldn'ta even know, they wouldn't even a' thought about the Negro sounds as well as they do until the English boys come over here and made a fortune and went back home, you see. Then everybody wanted to know the Negro sounds . . . just about every young cat you see playin' anything, he gon' play him some blues before he done, because conditions make you have the blues, makes you be content, you know. If you ain't got it, you got to be content (13).

Wolf placed the blues firmly within an African American cultural context, averring that the art form cannot be completely understood without direct, personal experience of suffering—and that of a very particular kind. The next generation may have been "tryin' to learn it," but they lacked the gravitas of musicians like Wolf because they did not "come up hard" within the same segregated society as he and his contemporaries had.

Wolf located the blues within a historical context as well. In the paragraph directly following, Wolf said that young African Americans "don't understand it. Forty percent of dudes, they say they don't like the blues, but whenever they get to a place and get to drinkin', then they

fall right back on this old inherit, you know—the blues. . . . That's the way it is with these here Negroes. My people. Can't leave your inheritance, I don't care how far you go. You got to look back at it. To save your skin" (13). For Wolf, the blues was the inescapable birthright of the African American, something that must be remembered and considered by each successive generation. It is the expression of "lived experience, an encounter with the contradictions of American society but a refusal to be conquered by it" (Cone 124). Its songs of strife, suffering, and hard times contain their past—and to forget that past, Wolf argued, would be fatal. While other musicians may imitate the sounds of the blues, they cannot emulate the bone-deep, life-and-death understanding that comes with the experience of being African American in the 20th century.

A part of this experience—specifically, that represented by what Tracy calls the "line of demarcation between the blues and Christian sacred music"—is explored in the next feature (213). In "Blues and the Church: Revolt and Resignation," Paul Garon declared that the expression of religious skepticism and the desire for personal freedom were inherent in the blues, thus distinctly separating it from African American gospel music (18-23).[6]

Similarly to O'Neal in "Uncle Sam Gonna Take Me Away," Garon used lyrics to support his hypothesis. Hi Henry Brown's "Preacher Blues" and Joe McCoy's song of the same name both detailed the hypocrisy of sexual licentiousness exhibited by some spiritual leaders (18-19). Garon presented the Mississippi Blacksnakes' "Five Pound Ax Blues," Peetie Wheatstraw's "Tennessee Peaches Blues," and Sleepy John Estes' "You Shouldn't Do That" as songs celebrating sensual freedom (20-21). Further, he cited the law enforcement references in Estes' lyric, in Julius Daniels' "My Mamma Was a Sailor," and in Wheatstraw's "Crapshooter's Blues" as exemplary of the collusion of the church and the police in oppressing black society,

due to their consensus on ideas of social vice. Drawing parallels between these pre-war blues and his contemporary moment, Garon posited: "As many Americans become increasingly aware of the degree to which our country becomes a police state, it must be remembered that things have always been that way for the black man" (21-22).

Though Garon acknowledged the detrimental effects of alcoholism and gaming, he nevertheless stated that the blues musician's viewpoint is one of absolute autonomy apart from religious duplicity. "[I]n dealing with these matters, good or evil," Garon declared, "the human spirit must be free, the hypocrisy of the church ignored, dismissed, or destroyed, and above all, man is no less noble for having drunk or gambled" (22). For Garon, a line from Champion Jack Dupree's "Rum Cola Blues"—"Some people call her Rumhead, but I call her plain Babee"—summed up "how far removed from the moralizing proclivities of society (and the church) the blues singer actually is" by referring to a woman who drinks alcohol with a term of endearment (22). Further, he argued that black and white society, via Christianity's "norm inculcation," have acted together as agents of suppression: Christianity was used by whites to "'civilize,' or destroy, other cultures," and blacks adapted the "'civilizing' aspects" of the religion with their own native beliefs. Gospel music may look forward to eternal life and express acquiescence to present difficulties, but Garon found these outlooks inherently repressive and opposed to "the qualities of revolt and liberation" present in blues music. He acknowledged that this is not a fixed type and that attitudes are fluid, but did not believe this invalidated his argument; rather, he did not wish musical stereotypes to obscure "the poetic force of great power and inspiration that, indeed, *is* the blues" (23). Like O'Neal, Garon breathed new life into music of a past age by viewing it through the lens of protest. Though his surrealist interpretation was by definition an explanation (and an unusual one), its separation of blues and gospel into distinct genres was nevertheless in

tandem with the prevalent Christian—and African American—notion that blues is "the devil's music," and therefore incompatible with the church (Humphrey 108).[7]

The record reviews section followed Garon's article, which contained five critiques of current record releases (25-36). All of the artists represented are African American; the albums were introduced by artist and title, followed by label name and number, and a track listing. The reviews were each allotted a page or more of print space, and were signed with the author's initials.

Amy van Singel found Big Joe Williams' *Hand Me Down My Old Walking Stick* (World Pacific 21897) to be "one of [his] most lifelike, non-studio-sound recordings," despite technical issues with the record itself (27). Jimmy Rogers' *Chicago Bound* (Chess 407) consisted of recordings made in the early 1950s, and was considered by Bruce Iglauer to represent "some of the finest of that early electric [Chicago] sound" (29). The compilation *Guitar Wizards* (Yazoo L-1016) contained reissued tracks from eastern blues artists Carl Martin, Billy Bird, Blind Blake, Tampa Red, Sam Butler, and William Moore; Jim O'Neal called this "a nice sampling" of songs by musicians who, at the time, had not received as much attention as those from the Mississippi Delta (32). Little Sonny's (Aaron Willis) *New King of the Blues Harmonica* (Enterprise ENS 1005) underwhelmed van Singel; his harmonica playing style and the music both showed rock and soul influence, and therefore she cannot "recommend this LP to stone purist bluesfreaks." The music was repetitive to van Singel's ears, but she liked his voice and felt the album might have been better if Sonny had "sung more and blew less" (33). Iglauer heard subtlety and subversion in Blind Willie McTell's *1940: The Legendary Library of Congress Session* (Melodeon MLP 7323). McTell's "mixture of rags, ballads, blues, gospel, and old time hillbilly" rendered "ultimate whitey" John Lomax's recording session into a "joyous folk singer's

performance" (35, 36). In discussing the music, the review writers displayed a thorough knowledge of blues history, styles, and recordings, comparing various tracks on the albums to previous releases when applicable.

Nine advertisements were scattered throughout the review section, several of which were for record companies and their product. The ad for Imperial Records featured four "Legendary Masters Series" albums "never released before" that contained "the music that started it all"—*Urban Blues, Vol. 2: New Orleans Bounce*; *Rural Blues, Vol. 3: Down Home Stomp*; *Rhythm 'N' Blues, Vol. 2: Sweet N' Greasy*; and *Gospel Music, Vol. 1: Soul Stirrers* (24). Delmark Records/Jazz Record Mart's ad copy simply read "More Blues From That Chicago Label—Delmark," and offered Magic Sam's *Black Magic*, *Carey Bell's Blues Harp*, *Jimmy "Fast Fingers" Dawkins*, Sleepy John Estes' *Electric Sleep*, Luther Allison's *Love Me Mama*, Arthur *Crudup's Mood*, and *Roosevelt Sykes in Europe* for sale via the record store's "fast, efficient mail-order service" (26). Biograph Records proclaimed "I Got The Blues!" and listed thirty-three new and previous releases by both black and white blues, folk, jazz, and country artists, including Buddy Moss' *Rediscovery*, Tom Winslow's *It's the Clear Water*, and Ethel Waters' *Oh Daddy! 1921-1924* (28).

The Chess Records ad on page 30 was especially interesting: it consisted of liquor bottles whose labels have been replaced with names and images of bluesmen, such as Sonny Boy Williamson II, Albert King, and Otis Rush. Titled "The Hard Stuff," it proclaimed that "They told you when you first turned-on to Rock & Roll it would lead to harder stuff." It was both clever—implying that African American blues is more "hard" and "real" than rock and roll—and troubling for its stereotypical coupling of blues music and alcohol and drug consumption. A mail order coupon for albums by the advertised artists was located at the bottom of the page.

Arhoolie Records offered its double-LP anthology *The Roots of American Music, Vol. 1* for sale in its ad (36). The album featured "a delicious slice of real American folk music with deserved emphasis on black blues," according to the review snippet from *Jazz & Pop* included in the copy; Big Mama Thornton, Clifton Chenier, and Juke Boy Bonner were among the musicians included. The Arhoolie label purchased a quarter-page ad, taking up a small, single column's worth of space, while Biograph's was half-page. Those from Imperial, Delmark, and Chess were each full-page.

There was another full-page advertisement—for a single album—on page 34. The Imperial release *Blues Obituary*, from the white British rock group the Groundhogs, was described as "An album to proclaim the end of their blues period and herald the dawning of their new era." The amusing irony of advertising a record named *Blues Obituary* in the premier issue of *Living Blues* notwithstanding, the only other mention of white artists occurred in the ads for Biograph and Arhoolie records, which promoted country, folk, and gospel musicians, such as the Stanley Brothers and Del McCoury, alongside their black blues performers.

The remaining ads were for an artist management company and two blues publications. Richard A. (Dick) Waterman's half-page ad for Avalon Productions roster featured Luther Allison, Buddy Guy, J. B. Hutto, Junior Wells, Arthur "Big Boy" Crudup, Son House, Fred McDowell, and Robert Pete Williams; the late musicians Magic Sam, Skip James, and Mississippi John Hurt were also included "in memoriam" (29). England's *Blues Unlimited*, billed as "Britain's First Blues Magazine," was presented on the bottom third of page 33. *Living Blues* echoed a similar distinction on the back cover; the text "America's First Blues Magazine" was printed underneath the title and above *LB* #1's table of contents. Located on the bottom

third of the last page of Howlin' Wolf 's interview, the ad for *Blues World*, another British periodical, exhorted the reader to "Try [them] for the best in blues writing" (17).

A list of photography credits for the images in the issue was printed to the left of the Arhoolie ad on page 36. The photos of Howlin' Wolf on the cover and on page 15 were by Les Blank; those of Magic Sam on pages 2, 4-7, and 10 by Ray Flerlage, Diane Allmen, Jim Brinsfield, and Tim Zorn; and the Holy Light Baptist Church (location unknown) on page 19 by Andre Souffront. Beneath the credits, a request was included for donations of "historic and current photos of blues musicians" to the *Living Blues* Photo Archive.

A list of current blues news summaries appeared on page 37, reporting on such happenings as the reopening of the Chicago blues club Sylvio's as The Riviera following its destruction in the 1968 Chicago riots. Also mentioned are the potential roster of artists appearing at the 1970 Ann Arbor Blues Festival; Brownie McGhee's plans "to record an album of Lonnie Johnson songs"; Chicago bluesman Carey Bell's wedding; and the availability of Les Blank's film *The Blues According to Lightnin' Hopkins* for rental from Flower Films, Blank's production company.

The final news item read thusly:

> Within the last six months, a number of major blues musicians have died: Skip James; Slim Harpo; T. V. Slim; Magic Sam; Wynonie Harris; L. C. McKinley. Also J. T. Brown, who played saxophone and clarinet with Elmore James, J. B. Lenoir, Muddy Waters, Jimmy Rogers, and virtually every other great Chicago bluesmen [*sic*], has passed. But the blues will never die—in the same period, debut albums appeared by Guitar Junior, Carey Bell, Little Sonny, Koko Taylor, Jimmy Dawkins, Washboard Willie, John Littlejohn, Willie Dixon, Luther Allison, Big John Wrencher, Sam Lay, and soon to be released are LPs by "Moose John" Walker, Charles Brown and Mighty Joe Young.

This paragraph contained the essence of *Living Blues*, both the art form and the magazine.

Though members of both the previous and current generations of blues performers had begun to pass away, established and rising artists were continuing to make music. Over the next forty-two years, *Living Blues* would document the blues, its artistic characteristics and shifts, and the people and culture that create(d) it—looking back while simultaneously looking forward. The founding editors did not overtly state this as their objective at the outset, yet they did so by virtue of their subject material and manner of presentation. Very soon, the founders would declare their chosen focus directly, and this editorial statement remained a source of controversy in the ensuing decades.

NOTES

1. We are not told the location of the action in the magazine, but O'Neal confirmed that both images were taken at the first Ann Arbor Blues Festival in Ann Arbor, Michigan, in 1969 (E-mail 16 Nov. 2012).

2. The second half of this article discussed post-World War II blues, categorized under O'Neal's songs of reluctance rubric.

3. This has been a much-contested theory; Charters (152-73) and Titon (186-189) both argue that there is little protest inherent in the blues. See also Tracy, Part 7, "Racism and Social Protest."

4. Peter Guralnick credited Bruce Iglauer with this interview in *Feel Like Going Home* (256). However, Iglauer himself disputed this, as he has no memory of it (E-mail, "RE: Living Blues thesis—one more question," 8 Oct. 2012). Both he and Amy van Singel have confirmed that the latter interviewed Wolf on her Northwestern University/WNUR blues radio show (E-mail, "RE: Living Blues—one more question," 11 Oct. 2012). Jim O'Neal corroborated this both on his *BluEsoterica* website, where he re-transcribed and published the Wolf interview in full, and in an e-mail interview ("RE: Thesis interview questions pt 1," 12 Oct. 2012). He and Dave Loebel were also present on the date of the interview—October 10, 1969—and participated in asking Wolf questions ("The Voice of the Blues").

5. The correction itself was incorrect, "but that's what we had to go on, based on the version of *Blues Records 1943-1966* that was available at the time" remembered O'Neal (E-mail, "Thesis notes," 16 Nov. 2012). Wolf's first recording session took place in 1951; he cut demos of "Baby Ride With Me (Ridin' In The Moonlight)" and "How Many More Years" for Sam Phillips, but they remained unreleased until Bear Family issued them on *Howlin' Wolf: Memphis Days—The Definitive Edition, Vol. 1* in 1989 (BCD 15460). Wolf recorded additional unreleased demos of these songs at a second session for Phillips that were later issued by Ace in 1982 (*Ridin' In The Moonlight*, Ace CH 52) and by Bear Family in 1990 (*Howlin' Wolf: Memphis Days—The Definitive Edition, Vol. 2*, BCD 15500). His first actual release, "Moanin'

At Midnight"/"How Many More Years," was recorded at a third Phillips session in 1951 and issued on Chess 1479 (Wirz, "Howlin' Wolf Discography").

6. Garon explicated his ideas more thoroughly in *Blues and the Poetic Spirit*.

7. There are many examples of artists who have blended blues and gospel in various ways, or who find similarities beyond the "vocal and instrumental styles" that Garon noted (18). See Tracy, Part 4, "The Blues and Religion"; Keil, *Urban Blues*, 143-48. Cone took this a step further by declaring the blues a "secular spiritual" (97-127).

CHAPTER II

"A BLACK AMERICAN WORKING-CLASS MUSIC":

LIVING BLUES' EDITORIAL STATEMENT

At the outset, the *Living Blues* founders explicitly stated that their intention with the magazine was not to "explain, contain, or define" the art form. Its title and content implied a particular focus—one that seemed self-evident to the editors. "I guess the policy that *LB* was going to be about black musicians was just assumed by all of us, although I don't recall a particular discussion," remembered Jim O'Neal (E-mail, 12 Oct. 2012). Within a few years, the editors of *Living Blues* would make just such a formal declaration in response to a dispute generated within the publication's pages.

For *LB* #10 (Autumn 1972), Amy van Singel[1] wrote a review of the third Ann Arbor Blues and Jazz Festival, held on September 8-10, 1972 in Ann Arbor, Michigan (6-9). Ann Arbor was "a major center of anti-establishment activity" during the sixties, and in 1969 a group of University of Michigan students, funded by the University Activities Center and the student Episcopalian organization Canterbury House, organized the first major American festival to showcase electric blues music (Glenn, "Singin' the Ann Arbor Blues"). In Jim O'Neal's words, it "set the stage and the standard for all the blues festivals that followed." He and van Singel had attended the premiere event in 1969, taking photographs and recording video of the performing artists, including Luther Allison and Magic Sam. After co-founding *Living Blues* in early 1970,

O'Neal and van Singel traveled to the second festival later that year with copies of *LB* #1 and #2 to sell, hoping to finance future issues of the magazine (O'Neal, "Ann Arbor: A Rite of Passage,").

Though artistically successful, only the first Ann Arbor Blues Festival was financially profitable. The 1970 event suffered significant losses, likely due to a combination of factors—gate crashers; the competition from the rock-oriented Goose Lake Festival held the same weekend in nearby Jackson; poor planning on the part of the organizers. Though a benefit concert staged by blues-rock guitarist and Ann Arbor performer Johnny Winter, along with several other festival artists, helped regain the sponsors' investment, the University of Michigan was reluctant to risk another event (Glenn, "Singin' the Ann Arbor Blues"). After consulting with university events director Peter Andrews, the University of Michigan did not stage the festival in 1971 (Erlewine 21).

Determined to rescue the festival, Andrews and activist/blues enthusiast John Sinclair formed the Rainbow Multi-Media production company and re-branded it as the Ann Arbor Blues and Jazz Festival. They expanded the lineup to include artists such as Ray Charles and Miles Davis in a bid to broaden its commercial appeal; the festival had previously been criticized as "too esoteric," and the deaths of several seminal blues artists in the interim made organizing a similar all-blues lineup problematic (Erlewine 20, 21).

Van Singel reviewed this revamped 1972 roster—which also included Dr. John, Bonnie Raitt, and Sun Ra among many other blues, blues-rock, and jazz musicians—for *LB* #10. It "*was* a success," she wrote, but she felt many attendees were more interested in "festivaliz[ing]" than in the music onstage. She also wished the festival had retained its blues focus, or featured "a

more eclectic choice of artists and styles" (9). Her review was largely centered to the blues artists, which she clarified:

> I won't comment on the jazz, other than to say that '70s jazz has gone *way* beyond its blues roots. No comments either on [the] Siegel-Schwall [Band] (who were "chosen to represent the rainbow blues movement") or the Boogie Brothers and the Mojo Boogie Band, who "were added to demonstrate one of the most exciting contemporary permutations of the blues." I still get my kicks from black bluesmen (7).

Van Singel's remarks spurred subscribers to submit their own opinions to *Living Blues*—some in agreement, others opposed. "Some of your readers seem to have forgotten or ignored the fact that blues is a black cultural music form and as such it is best played by blacks," admonished Burnham Ware—himself an African American who would later become a contributor to the magazine—in *LB* #12 (4). Just below Ware's letter, Yazoo and Blue Goose Records founder Nick Perls—who, along with Dick Waterman and Phil Spiro, had relocated Son House in Rochester, New York, in 1964 (Guralnick 13)—warned that *Living Blues*' "expressed editorial policy of 'blacks only' can only be counter-productive to the musical genre of pre-war country blues," and expressed his belief that the best modern pre-war stylists are white musicians.[2]

In the same issue, Paul Garon addressed this matter in an editorial:

> The editorial policies of *LIVING BLUES* are based on a firm commitment to the fact that the blues can only be understood and appreciated as an art with its own historical, cultural, economic, psychological, and political determinants.
>
> *LIVING BLUES* does not accept an acoustic definition of the blues. We feel that the blues is a black American working-class music that developed in response to numerous determinants; that these determining factors were in a real sense specific to the black working-class is borne out by the fact that it was they, and they alone, who produced the blues.
>
> The subtle shifting of these pressures, creating today a fragmentation and isolation of the blues and its outstanding black artists, has also created an enormous white audience made up of listeners, collectors, and performers, all, nonetheless, an audience. By definition, the blues was and will always be a black American working-class music, in spite of the number of performers who adopt

> the genre as their own. If we are not sympathetic to pleas for the legitimacy of white blues, regardless of the technical proficiency of the various performers, it is because we feel that deprived of its historical base by the white performers, the blues, as purveyed by whites, is no longer the blues, and thus is not the concern of *LIVING BLUES* (4).

Garon, the eldest member of the original *Living Blues* staff, remembered that he became "the chief articulator of the position" as he was likely "the most radical of the founders" (E-mail 3 Apr. 2011).[3] A pre-war blues expert and member of the American surrealist movement, Garon found in early blues lyrics the expression of uninhibited imagination that surrealism prizes. Though scholars such as Ulrich Adelt have noted the problematic ascription of a white European mode of thought to the American black working class (131), Garon's surrealistic interpretation allowed for viewing the blues as both a means of revolt against an unequal, oppressive society and as an art form worthy of consideration on its own merits (Garon 6-7, 10).[4]

Speaking for his fellow editors, Garon elucidated the thesis that had been implicit within the pages of *Living Blues* from the beginning: that the blues is not simply an artistic product, but a cultural one, influenced by the life circumstances of African American musicians. Viewing blues as strictly a musical form risks diminishing the history and perspectives of the artists that originated it. This kind of appropriation "places the art of an oppressed minority in the hands of individuals who, despite being culturally and racially linked to historical oppressors, act as if racial politics had no meaning in the context of artistic expression" (Gerard 11). Adelt has criticized Garon's statement for what he perceived as its "racialized perception of the blues" (130). Though race may indeed be a social construct, and the development of blues and other forms of music less segregated than genre definitions might suggest,[5] these factors do not negate either the existence of the concept of race or the effects of racism and inequality on American culture at large.

At this time, white blues musicians were enjoying great success. That Ann Arbor Festival organizer John Fishel asked Johnny Winter to perform a benefit to help recoup the lost finances of the 1970 event was testament to his drawing power (Glenn, "Singin' the Ann Arbor Blues").[6] Winter had a higher profile with the American public than most of the other artists on the roster. He had been featured in a cover story on Texas music in the December 7, 1968 issue of *Rolling Stone*, which also mentioned African American bluesmen such as Blind Lemon Jefferson, Lightnin' Hopkins, Pee Wee Crayton, and T-Bone Walker, but only in the context of their influence on the current Texas rock scene—not on their own merit as musicians. The same year, Winter signed a $600,000 contract with Columbia Records—at the time, the largest in history—while Son House, the highest-earning traditional blues performer on Dick Waterman's Avalon Productions roster, only commanded $500-$600 per appearance (O'Neal, "I Once Was Lost," 386).[7] Garon stated in an essay for the radical publication *Race Traitor* in 1993 that "for those interested in the support and study of African-American culture, blues as purveyed by whites appears unauthentic and deeply impoverished; further, it too often represents an appropriation of black culture of a type sadly familiar. Finally, it can be economically crippling to black artists through loss of jobs and critical attention." Though blues musician and scholar Adam Gussow has argued that certain African American blues artists suffered more financially from "the loss of the black youth market" than from "any such white appropriations" (243), the founders of *Living Blues* nevertheless perceived an inequality of public visibility—and its accompanying financial disparity—between black and white artists that they hoped their publication would help rectify.

Garon further explained the publication's stance in another editorial in *LB* #13. As far as the "technical proficiency" of white blues artists is concerned, that issue

> lies outside the domain of our interest. . . . We readily grant that there are a number of white peformers who meet certain undeniably vague

> criteria of excellence—but as our definition of blues is not merely an acoustic one, the white performers are outside our definition for historic, economic, political, and cultural reasons, and the question of whether or not they are "good" is simply irrelevant. . . .
>
> Further, the question of the place occupied by white on the "evolutionary scale" is indeed a relevant question for a magazine devoted to American music as a whole, but as LIVING BLUES deals only with blues as a black American working-class music, the position occupied on the evolutionary scale of American music by white blues performers is simply removed from that specific portion of the continuum with which we deal, and thus does not concern us (3).

The interest that white performers and documentarians showed in black blues music during the folk-blues revival—and before—certainly contributed to its modern preservation. Previously, white folklorists such as John and Alan Lomax sought only to document the blues; however, white musicians in the 1960s adopted a more "hands-on" method of "keep[ing] the blues alive by performing it" (Davis 219). The blues was viewed (and marketed) during this time period as a roots music form, a "venerable rustic style" that gave birth to jazz and rock and roll—and one that, due to changing tastes in a post-war, Beat Generation-influenced society, had become more palatable than the latter (Filene 112-113, 115-116). White musicians had taken to the blues as "authentic" and "antiestablishment" and began playing it themselves, whether in the more-or-less traditional manner of Charlie Musselwhite and the young Bonnie Raitt, or the rocking electric styles of groups like the Paul Butterfield Blues Band, the Rolling Stones, and Canned Heat (Filene 115). And as Garon acknowledged in his editorial, their musical prowess was not in question; according to blues promoter Dick Waterman, such was Canned Heat founder Al Wilson's mastery of slide guitar forms that he "taught Son House how to play Son House" by virtue of re-familiarizing the elderly musician with the chords and tunings to his own songs (Davis 219).[8]

However skilled these artists may be, does the ability to replicate or originate sounds, or empathize with African American suffering, give cultural legitimacy to white blues—even if the performers had been mentored by black musicians? Garon and his fellow founders argued not, and they were not alone in this regard. Gussow has noted that they shared "an uneasy alignment" of viewpoints with certain members of the Black Arts Movement (242). African American theatre scholar Larry Neal's definition of the aesthetic as "radically opposed to any concept of the artist that alienates him from his community" is in tandem with *Living Blues*' editorial policy, even as Neal also called for "the destruction of the white thing, white ideas and white ways of looking at the world" (29, 30). Neal's statement, itself rooted in the Black Power movement, shared the revolutionary sentiment of the surrealist influence of Garon's editorial, and also ascribed primacy to African American voices, clearing space for them to "define the world on their own terms" (Neal 29).

The decision to publicly state *Living Blues*' policy was also spurred by another print incident in 1973. "A white blues/jazz piano player was quite angry (and neglected?) by our lack of coverage of whites," Garon recalled, "and he took his complaint to Harriet Choice who wrote a jazz column for the *Chicago Tribune*. She invited us to come to her office and give our side of the story, before she wrote a column on our 'position'" (E-mail 3 Apr. 2011). Her "Jazz by Choice" column addressing the controversy appeared in the August 19, 1973 issue of the *Tribune*. In "All about blues: No whites on a black background," Choice pondered the ethics of a magazine about black music with an all-white editorial staff, and Garon, O'Neal, and van Singel responded that "they are intellectually documenting the history of blues and that white people can understand and sympathize with the black experience in the blues even with all of the 'historical, cultural, economical, psychological, and political determinants.'" Although this

explanation likewise created a space for the performance of white blues, it is worth remembering that *Living Blues*' editorial statement never denied the existence of the genre, nor explicitly stated that whites could not technically perform African American music.

Choice also wondered why *Living Blues* had no African Americans writing for them. "They would desperately like to have black writers on their staff," she reported, "but feel that the young, black intellectuals 'identify with the more progressive art forms.' Until they can find black writers, the white staff will continue to do all reporting and interviewing." One explanation is that African Americans writers found other avenues of expression. Gussow has pointed out that members of the Black Arts Movement were writing about the blues at this time; however, they were employing literary and poetic forms rather than documentary ones (242, 247). O'Neal recalled that other contemporary African American periodicals such as the *Chicago Defender* and *Ebony* also covered blues, though not exclusively; they reviewed other genres such as jazz and soul (E-mail, 27 Oct. 2012). Since then, other print journals have provided an African American perspective on the blues. In 1996, Garon noted the current existence of periodicals that were "providing the specific perspective that *Living Blues* was criticized for lacking," such as Chicago Beau's *Chicago Blues Annual* and *Magic Blues*, in his introduction to the new edition of *Blues and the Poetic Spirit* (xi).

In fact, *Living Blues* has had African American contributors and staff members throughout the years. Founder and Chicago filmmaker Andre Souffront was also one of *Living Blues*' first photographers, contributing a photo essay on the Wisconsin Delta Blues Festival to *LB* #2 (Summer 1970, 14-19), but he had already departed by the time of Choice's column. The aforementioned Burnham Ware had not yet joined the staff; he became contributing editor for his home state of Kentucky in *LB* #41 (November/December 1978), and was a major impetus behind

the "Kentucky Blues" series of features in *LB* #51 (Summer 1981, 25-36) and *LB* #52 (Spring 1982, 15-26). Ware remained on the masthead for over ten years, departing after *LB* #90 (March/April 1990). More recently, University of Mississippi graduate student I'Nasah Crockett served as *Living Blues*' editorial assistant for the spring 2009 semester, conducting an interview with pianist Henry Gray that appeared in *LB* #202 (August 2009, 8).

Likewise, black musicians have at different times written for *Living Blues*. In *LB* #2, Brownie McGhee wrote a moving remembrance of the late singer and guitarist Lonnie Johnson (21). Willie Dixon answered questions from staff and readers in his "I Am The Blues" column, which ran intermittently from *LB* #30 (November/December 1976) to *LB* #49 (Winter 1980-81). Corey Harris is an occasional contributor, penning "Blue Afrique," a memoir of a musical journey to Guinea, West Africa, for *LB* #173 (July/August 2004, 10-11). Using the pseudonym Clutchie Mack, Harris has also interviewed musicians Nat Reese for *LB* #214 (August 2011, 20-25) and Jeff Scott for *LB* #221 (October 2012, 26-31). Johnny Rawls wrote a "Live from the Road" column, in which he reported his experiences as a traveling musician, from *LB* #173 (August 2004, 12) through *LB* #177 (March/April 2005, 8). Chicago-based vocalist Deitra Farr's "Artist to Artist," in which she conducts a short interview with another African American musician, has been a regular feature in the magazine since *LB* #179 (July/August 2005).

This is but a sampling of known African American writers and musicians who have published in *Living Blues*. It should be noted that due to the largely correspondence-based nature of *Living Blues* communication and submissions, any information about the racial category of the contributors comes later—if at all. "Even back when writers were submitting articles by mail," remembered O'Neal, "we didn't necessarily know whether a new writer was black or white

unless they said so. Because of the cost of long distance calls back then, we often didn't talk to writers on the phone" (E-mail 28 Nov. 2012).

Current editor Brett Bonner likewise observed, "In the 'modern age' I am introduced to many of my new writers via e-mail, and in many cases never meet them or even speak to them on the phone. I have no idea if they are black or white and couldn't care less as long as they are knowledgeable about the blues and can write" (24 Oct. 2012). This considered, any assumptions regarding the collective racial status of *Living Blues*' contributors would ultimately be problematic.

Choice asked another pertinent question, which she followed with an answer:

> And tho [*sic*] they print interviews with black bluesmen "verbatim," wouldn't a black writer ask different questions of, and get different answers from, a black musician? So if the interviews in Living Blues are filtered thru [*sic*] white people, do they still stand up?
>
> Using the arguments in Garon's editorial, I would say no. But having read his and the O'Neals' articles and having talked to them at great length, I would say yes.
>
> The O'Neals and Garon have a much stronger argument for focusing on the black bluesmen. The black media ignore them, and the white blues bands are covered in such magazines as Rolling Stone. Thus, Living Blues is covering a sadly neglected area of American music.

She made a valid point in suggesting that African American musicians and writers might together produce very different interviews. O'Neal has acknowledged the creative and performative elements of blues interviews. A musician may not always tell the literal truth, for any number of reasons—perhaps for their own amusement or "self- aggrandizement," "to gain sympathy or [they] simply said what they thought the interviewers wanted to hear"—and their responses are frequently filtered through a cultural barrier as well (O'Neal xvii). Barry Lee Pearson noted that there is a "shared understanding of conditions or experiences that link [blues] artists to their constituents" despite the nonexistence of a uniform "blues life" (xv-xvi). The

communal awareness of societal prejudice and its effects might indeed induce African American blues musicians and writers to speak differently with one another. But should *Living Blues* cease publication or change its focus, risking the loss of blues narratives to history, because of a shortage of black blues documentarians?

Choice thought not; the founders' explanation of the lack of major African American media coverage of the blues, coupled with the existence of prominent periodicals featuring white blues musicians, seemed logical to her. Ulrich Adelt is likewise in agreement on this point: "Indeed, one is hard-pressed to find fault with *Living Blues*' choice and capacity to give musicians exposure whom other music magazines ignored." Yet he qualified his observation: "Rather, it was the way these musicians were picked according to racial categories that was objectionable" (130).

The magazine's stance has continued to draw critical ire over the years. Garon noted in his editorial for *LB* #13 that they received many letters opposing as well as supporting their position, though they did not include any of these in the magazine's correspondence section (3). Like Garon and the surrealists, the authors Carl Boggs and Ray Pratt also saw blues music as a means of cultural revolt, but argued that whites can similarly utilize it, noting the increase of white interest in the music and its perception as an "antimainstream" alternative during the 1960s (287-288). Peter Narváez called *Living Blue*s' point of view "bankrupt" in 1988; he further opined that the magazine's refusal to deviate from "its former exclusivistic, narrowcast code with a dogmatic fervor . . . is slowly eroding its credibility as a contemporary journal" (252).[9]

Narváez failed to provide any direct evidence or outside commentary to support his opinion. Neither would Garon's editorial in *LB* #13 be his last word in *Living Blues* on the subject. The renewed interest in blues music in the early 1990s had in turn reignited the debate

over white blues. In an August 1990 editorial for *Guitar Player* magazine, writer and composer Lawrence Hoffman[10] stated that “blues is the profound and glorious musical expression of the triumphant survival of the black race in America.” Further, he considered white musicians to be “copyists” whose playing was “killing the language of the blues” (Adelt 133). In *LB* #109 (June 1993), editor David Nelson called upon Garon to reiterate the magazine’s policy for a new opinion column entitled “Speak My Mind.” According to Nelson, it would “not necessarily reflect the opinions of ***Living Blues*** and its editorial staff. In this case, however,” he continued,

> Paul Garon’s column is meant as an explanation and justification of the editorial focus of ***Living Blues*** on African American blues artists. After receiving several letters and inquiries on the topic, we decided that it needed to be addressed so that readers, especially those new to the magazine, might understand our position and know that our focus has been in place since the magazine started in 1970. In those early days the magazine’s position was also quite controversial and Paul Garon, as a founding editor, articulated the magazine’s philosophy in editorials in ***LB*** 12 and 13. Our focus on a cultural, rather than acoustical, definition of blues remains unchanged and we thought it appropriate that Paul be the one to reiterate that philosophy here (2).

In “Speak My Mind,” Garon restated what the magazine had never questioned to begin with—that “anyone can play the blues,” even acknowledging that some white musicians became “innovators” and had likewise suffered personally, socially, and economically. Yet he again asserted an African American cultural context for blues: “*Only the complex web of racist oppression suffered by blacks at the hands of whites produced the blues, regardless of the many types of suffering with which the blues deals in the manifest content of its songs*” [emphasis his]. This policy, he continued, is also why *Living Blues* covers “‘soul artists’ like Tyrone Davis and Denise LaSalle” rather than “‘blues artists’ like Stevie Ray Vaughn,” which reader J. W. Wallace had questioned in a letter to the editor in *LB* #107 (February 1993, 5). “From a cultural point of view,” Garon explained, “Davis and LaSalle are of greater concern. And in the light of one of

Living Blues' founding purposes, 'to give credit to the black artists who created the music and sustained it as a living tradition [Jim O'Neal, editorial in ***LB*** 75] black artists need ***Living Blues*** more than ever" (53). In other words, what African American audiences perceive as blues is likewise important to *Living Blues*' editors, and these artists have always shared a focus alongside those understood within a more traditional context.[11]

Yet despite—or because of—Garon's explanation, once again the dispute over white blues inspired letters, both positive and negative, from readers of the magazine.[12] Those opposed generally echoed Narváez's sentiment: that *Living Blues*' refusal "to accept an acoustic definition of blues" and its "blacks only" policy is "demeaning to contemporary blues artists" (252, 253). However, the accusation that the magazine has completely ignored other cultural contributions to black music is not truthful. *Living Blues*' adherence to its policy throughout the years has, at times, actually *allowed* space within its pages—and on its cover—for the contributions of non-African Americans to the art form.

The cover of *Living Blues* serves as a visual representation of the magazine's focus, stating what the publication represents as well as alluding to its contents. Yet white artists have appeared on the cover of *Living Blues* four times. Memphis guitarist Lee Baker, a celebrated local player and member of the blues-metal band Moloch, performed onstage with Bukka White at that city's River City Blues Festival in 1971, and Amy van Singel's photograph of them together was printed on the front of *LB* #7 (Winter 1971-72). Johnny Ace, the bassist for the Brooklyn Blues Busters, is pictured with pianist Victoria Spivey on the cover of *LB* #14 (Autumn 1973). Adam Gussow's musical partnership with Harlem-based blues guitarist and singer Mr. Satan (Sterling Magee) was *LB* #129's cover feature (September/October 1996, 14-25). In his editorial for this issue, David Nelson recognized that those familiar with the

magazine's history might be astonished at the sight of Gussow on the cover. Reminding readers of Baker's appearance on *LB* #7, Nelson argued that granting Satan and Adam space on the cover "does not represent a departure from the focus of ***Living Blues*** on blues as an African-American creation and heritage; rather, it is an acknowledgement that Satan and Adam are a duo, and recognition that such musical partnerships are increasingly common on today's integrated blues scene" (6).[13] The complexities that surround such cultural exchanges are something that *Living Blues* has always considered, Nelson stated, citing as examples the influence of the Anglo ballad tradition on early blues lyrics—mentioned by Paul Oliver in *LB* #54 (Autumn/Winter 1982, 28)—and the development of the modern soul-blues genre from various musical influences—traced through the career of Denise LaSalle, who was profiled by Nelson in *LB* #101 (January/February 1992, 20-24). Kenny Brown, the fourth and most recent white musician to appear on the front of *Living Blues*, was another example of such cultural exchange (*LB* #189, April 2007). Brown was part of a cover portrait of several seminal North Mississippi Hill Country blues artists. In his feature, he told of growing up across the street from Otha Turner, learning to play guitar from neighbor Mississippi Joe Callicott, and later joining R. L. Burnside's band (24-26).

In his editorial, Nelson also mentioned other articles from the publication's history that have featured non-African Americans. Two of his examples involved musicians: guitarist and Muddy Waters sideman Bob Margolin shared his memories of the Chicago blues great in *LB* #99 (September/October 1991, 22-23), and guitarist Steve Freund, saxophonist Sam Burkhardt, and drummer/journalist Ben Sandmel remembered Sunnyland Slim as part of a tribute to the late Chicago blues pianist in *LB* #121 (June 1995, 51-62).[14] Other non-African American musicians who have appeared in *Living Blues* include Doc Pomus, who remembered the late Big Joe Turner

for *LB* #69 (1986, 12-13); and harmonica player Charlie Musselwhite, who was interviewed about Big Joe Williams for *LB* #177 (March/April 2005, 78-81) and later wrote about Big Walter Horton for *LB* #193 (December 2007, 68-73). For *Living Blues*' "Katrina and the Blues" special feature in *LB* #182, Louisiana songwriter Bobby Charles briefly related his heartbreaking circumstances following the devastation of Hurricane Rita (January/February 2006, 24). Multiracial ensembles the Mannish Boys and the Bo-Keys were profiled in *LB* #195 (April 2008, 12-21) and *LB* #214 (August 2011, 12-19). Natchez musician Gray Montgomery recalled his experiences with the local scene for *LB* #210 (December 2010, 30-31), as did Louisiana swamp pop pioneer Warren Storm for *LB* #215 (October 2011, 35-37).

Nelson likewise acknowledged the coverage *Living Blues* has given to other non-African American cultural figures, citing the articles published on Trumpet Records owner Lillian McMurry in *LB* #67 (1986, 15-28), and Chicago's Chess brothers in *LB* #88 (September/October 1989, 22-32) and *LB* #89 (December 1989, 25-29). Others have included the previously mentioned interview with scholar Paul Oliver, ethnomusicologist Richard A. Waterman in *LB* #6 (Autumn 1971, 30-36), the blues and Cajun recording scene in Louisiana in *LB* #13 (Summer 1973, 9-12), KFFA announcer and "King Biscuit Time" host Sonny Payne in *LB* #97 (May/June 1991, 36-39), folklorist Alan Lomax in *LB* #168 (48-55), MCM label owner Marcelle Morgantini in *LB* #205 (February 2010, 78-83), Arhoolie Records founder Chris Strachwitz in *LB* #211 (February 2011, 28-33), and ARC Records salesman and Robert Johnson traveling companion Ernie Oertle in *LB* #220 (August 2012, 70-72). Delmark Records and Jazz Record Mart owner Bob Koester shared his memories of Big Joe Williams alongside Musselwhite and folklorist George Mitchell; Koester also recounted his career in the music business and shared his photos, taken under the pseudonym Greg Roberts, in *LB* #170 (November/December 2003, 114-119).

Living Blues has also allowed white artists to advertise in the magazine since *LB* #1, and has for some time reviewed their albums, as well as covering them in its "Blues News" and "*LB* Talks To . . ." sections. Harmonica Frank Floyd was pictured inside the front cover of *LB* #8 (Spring 1972), along with a review of his "rediscovery concert debut" in Chicago on April 29th of that year. O'Neal recalled that they were "proud to have the 'scoop' of being the first magazine to publish a photo" of him (E-mail, 27 Oct. 2012). Bob Dylan's name was the first mentioned in the "Blues News" section of *LB* #23; a short notice and photograph of Dylan performing with Bob Margolin, Muddy Waters, Shena, and Perry Robinson at the Bottom Line in New York on June 30th appeared on the back cover of the September/October 1975 issue. The "*LB* Talks To . . ." series of short interviews, focusing specifically on the artist's latest release, generally appear in the "Reviews" section paired with the album review. Recent columns featured Kenny Wayne Shepherd in *LB* #188 (February 2007, 34), Warren Haynes in *LB* #213 (June 2011, 40),[15] and Johnny Winter in *LB* #215 (41).

This is not a complete list of articles focusing on, or including interviews with, non-African American blues figures, but these examples should demonstrate that despite any critical claims to the contrary, *Living Blues* has not ignored their contributions to the culture. What to make, then, of "The Magazine of the African American Blues Tradition" that has allowed for their inclusion—and at an admittedly increasing rate in recent years? As Nelson explained in our interview, *Living Blues* makes "a distinction between a features section that was about blues as black culture, and a review section that was trying to serve our readers with opinions about just everything that was out there." According to Nelson, this allows the current staff to respect "the magazine's founders and their vision of it" while also acknowledging the wider, changing scope

of the blues scene and simultaneously maintaining its documentary focus on African American culture.

Though *Living Blues* did not publish features on Lee Baker or Johnny Ace, that they, Gussow, and Brown have appeared on the cover does not violate the magazine's editorial stance: each were/are active participants in black cultural circles, regularly performing with African American artists. Likewise, the non-African American musicians, recording industry figures, folklorists, and scholars whom *Living Blues* has featured have each observed and contributed to an understanding of African American culture by recording the musicians, writing about their music, or otherwise documenting their lives and work.

The founders of *Living Blues* have each stated that one of the reasons they started the magazine was to provide coverage of musicians that they felt were overlooked by the press. "White blues was just getting off the ground," said Garon, "and I think we all agreed that the white players were getting attention that should have gone to black players" (E-mail 3 Apr. 2011). O'Neal remembered the first time he heard guitarist Albert King: "I found an Albert King LP at K-Mart for 47 cents and when I listened to it at home I was stunned. Here were all these songs and guitar licks I had been hearing from [Eric] Clapton, [Mike] Bloomfield, et al., and it seemed like there must have been a giant conspiracy to prevent the public from knowing about the Albert Kings of the blues" (E-mail 12 Oct. 2012). Van Singel "wanted to hear the musicians' stories in their own words, and get them DUE CREDIT [emphasis hers] for their musical genius because of/in spite of tremendous adversity" (Senkowsky, "Q &A"). Bruce Iglauer recalled that they "hoped *LB* would accomplish a lot—shine the spotlight on worthy artists, [and] let the world (or a bit of it) know that there was an extremely active blues scene in the black community that was getting almost no media attention (the Chicago newspapers didn't

even list the ghetto blues gigs)" (E-mail 27 Mar. 2011). As the perceived disparity of popular media focus in favor of blues-playing rock musicians was a factor that all of the founders agreed upon, one wonders why Garon did not specify this in his original *Living Blues* editorials as he did in his "Speak My Mind" essay for *LB* #109. Perhaps they simply felt that their readers would infer this by *Living Blues*' declaration of the magazine's cultural focus on blues music—a statement that, Garon's initial stridency considered, is nevertheless rooted in artistic and political ideals of social justice and equality.

Narváez's charge that this policy demeans contemporary blues artists was also unfounded, as the perception of what constitutes contemporary blues music varies according to audience. A common complaint made by *Living Blues*' critics is that it ignores the non-African American musicians who are "keeping the blues alive." Yet implicit in such a statement is the notion that non-African Americans are the *only* ones performing and innovating the art form, or that their contributions are solely worthy of note. As previously stated, *Living Blues* has always paid attention to what African American audiences perceive as blues—which is not always in tandem with the tastes of white audiences, or as visible to the mainstream. *Living Blues* has sought to correct this lack of cultural awareness since the beginning, providing print coverage of historically traditional figures while observing current trends in blues and blues-influenced genres.

NOTES

1. Credited to Amy O'Neal in the magazine, as she was married to fellow *Living Blues* founder Jim O'Neal at the time. Their wedding announcement was printed in the "Blues News" section of *LB* #2 (inside front cover).

2. This was not the first time that the legitimacy of white blues had been debated in musical print media. Similar ground had already been covered in *Sing Out!*, *Blues Unlimited*, and *Rolling Stone* (Adelt 116-118).

3. Garon viewed this as his main contribution to *Living Blues*: "I find it somewhat difficult to describe *my* role without it appearing that I am claiming a major role for myself in putting out the magazine. My feeling is that while I played a major role in developing our political position—if you want to call it that—I didn't play much of a role in the magazine except for that role, or affair. Bruce did all of the bulk distribution while Jim and Amy handled subscriptions, but more and more, it was Jim and Amy who put the magazine together" (E-mail 3 Apr. 2011).

4. *Living Blues* published a "Surrealism and the Blues" special feature in conjunction with the Chicago Surrealist Group, led by Franklin Rosemont, in *LB* #25 (January/February 1976, 19-34).

5. See Adelt 115-116; Wald 14-42; Wolfe, "A Lighter Shade of Blue."

6. Fishel also told Glenn that the organizers attempted to secure the Rolling Stones for the benefit, but that "Their schedule didn't allow [for it]. Maybe if they had been there we would have raised sufficient money to not only pay the debt off, but also to continue the thing in '71 and it might have been a different reality."

7. O'Neal erroneously listed the amount of Winter's contract as $300,000; see Sullivan 94.

8. Phil Spiro insisted the "taught Son House to play Son House" remark is somewhat of an exaggeration; see Gioia 374.

9. Narváez originally presented this essay at a "Blues People and Blues Cultures" panel at a Popular Culture Association conference in New Orleans in 1988. William Ferris was the panel chair: "At the time he mentioned that my criticisms and concerns were appreciated and that they were shared by others; he asked me for a copy of the presentation. I am pleased to report that since then, for whatever reasons, *Living Blues* has altered its content and is addressing criticisms regarding race and bluesmen. *Living Blues* has improved" (254). As he alluded, it is impossible to say if his comments had any effect on any changes that may have occurred at the magazine since then, but as I have shown, the charge that *Living Blues* has ignored white contributions to black music is not truthful.

10. Hoffman was also at the time a regular *Living Blues* writer, having joined the masthead in *LB* #105 (September/October 1992). His contributions included an article on slide guitarists for that issue, and an interview with Mississippi John Hurt's son John William for *LB* #109 (38-42).

11. I discuss this further in Chapter III.

12. See *LB* #111 (October 1993, 4-6).

13. This feature elicited more negative reader responses regarding the editorial policy; see #131 (7).

14. Nelson only mentioned Freund's contribution to "A Tribute to Sunnyland Slim" in his editorial, though Burkhardt and Sandmel also participated (6).

15. I conducted the interview with Haynes for *LB* #213.

CHAPTER III

"THE MAGAZINE OF THE AFRICAN AMERICAN BLUES TRADITION": A SURVEY OF *LIVING BLUES* THROUGHOUT THE YEARS

Living Blues' editorial statement has proven to be malleable over time, allowing for flexibility as blues culture evolves. Yet each subject's inclusion has always been within the context of the blues as an African American cultural expression, and this documentary framework has continued to define the development of the magazine. The audience for the blues has changed during the last four decades, as has the culture itself. In turn, these shifts have influenced *Living Blues*' content. What follows is a brief overview of the history of *Living Blues* analyzed through selected issues, chosen because they represent important moments for the publication, the culture, or both. This analysis is by no means all-inclusive, yet it should illustrate how the publication's cultural approach continually explores the blues as a vital, current art form.

I. The 1970s

As the magazine's founders were based in Chicago during a high point in the city's electric blues scene, *Living Blues* retained a largely local orientation throughout its first decade. "It seemed insane to have to learn about the music [and] musicians from Europe," recalled Amy van Singel, "when they were available at my back door!" (Senkowsky, "Q&A").

LB #4 (Winter 1971-71) illustrated their initial Chicago focus. Guitarists Hound Dog Taylor (4-7) and David "Honeyboy" Edwards (19-24) were both based in the city. "The Other Chicago Blues" focused on the lesser-known Olin Hughes, a friend of Edwards'; nicknamed "Grandad," he was only in his thirties at the time, and played in an older, country blues style (25-26). Chicago pianist Cripple Clarence Lofton's career was briefly summarized, and a transcription of his song "I Don't Know" was provided (8-9). A "Live Chicago Blues" listing of clubs on the West, South, and North sides, including names of performers who have recently appeared at each location, appeared on page 24. Yet the editors were already beginning to look farther afield for subjects; the second half of Detroit musician Bobo Jenkins' feature is on pages 27-28.

The cover image is of vocalist Bobby "Blue" Bland in performance, taken by Andre Souffront. "Bobby Bland!," which documented a recent appearance by the singer at the South Side nightclub Burning Spear, is the lead feature. It was divided into two parts: the first was "Onstage," a detailed review of both Bland's performance and the venue's social scene by Amy van Singel (10-13). She described the excitement Bland inspires in the audience: "The crowd wouldn't settle down; both men and women repeatedly cried, 'Sing it, Bobby!'" Van Singel was complimentary of both Bland's performance and that of his backing ensemble, led by saxophonist/flautist Ernie Fields, Jr. "And Bland SINGS," she wrote. "His voice has grown deeper and rougher over the years, but at the same time it has perhaps become more effective. . . . His delivery is as smooth as ever, though, and Bland's sense of timing makes all of his songs come out mellow" (11). Bland performed three sets, late into the night, and flashed a peace sign to the crowd as he left the stage for the final time (13).

The second part was titled “Backstage,” and consisted of an interview Jim O’Neal conducted with Bland between sets at another South Side establishment, the High Chaparral (13-18). O’Neal stated that he “hadn’t read much about Bland in blues publications,” but found the popular performer a seasoned interviewee. Bland told of his life in music, relating details of his gospel roots in Memphis, the development of his signature singing style, his admiration for such white “crooners” as Tony Bennett, Perry Como, and Andy Williams, and working with Junior Parker (13-16). “Bland’s style,” said O’Neal, “thus built out of this amalgam of gospel, blues, and ballads, has made him one of the biggest names of the last decade in black music.” He also noted that Bland “doesn’t appeal to white audiences like Muddy Waters and Howlin’ Wolf do” (15). Indeed, Amy van Singel recalled that British blues fans were nonplussed by their coverage of Bland, as they did not consider him a traditional blues artist (9 Oct. 2012). Yet he was “an idol of the black public, women in particular,” noted author Gérard Herzhaft (14), and his popularity with African American audiences, as this article underscored, made him an ideal subject for *Living Blues*.

From the beginning, *Living Blues*’ primary feature has been its “*Living Blues* Interview,” in which a musician provides an in-depth chronicle of his/her life, work, and experiences. It is often presented in chronological, question-and-answer fashion, with the subject’s responses transcribed and edited as close to his/her natural speech patterns as possible. “To us, their spoken words were paramount,” said O’Neal:

> With no editors, publishers, or designers to contend with other than ourselves, and with total disregard for recommended magazine advertising-to-editorial content ratio, we printed the interviews in much greater length than other publications might have allowed. We did edit them down, despite some readers’ assumptions that the conversations were printed verbatim. But once we’d decided which words were going in, we made sure they got in (xvi).

Occasionally this resulted in the dispersing of interviews across more than one issue, as with the previously mentioned Bobo Jenkins article. Though the number of interviews per magazine varies, there is always at least one "*Living Blues* Interview" present. At times, there is accompanying explanatory text, which usually takes the form of a brief opening statement orienting the reader with the artist; there are also interviews in which the musician's words are woven into this text in a more traditional journalistic format. But in general, the "*Living Blues* Interview" grants the greatest amount of space to the subject's personal narrative.

Perhaps the best example of this feature was the Houston Stackhouse interview, printed in *LB* #17 (Summer 1974, 20-36). One of the longest interviews *Living Blues* has ever published, Jim O'Neal interviewed Stackhouse in Memphis and Chicago over a three-year period from 1972-1974. Though a fairly obscure blues artist, he was nevertheless an important local cultural figure in the Mississippi-Arkansas Delta, as he was connected to many musicians in the area. He learned to play guitar from the influential Tommy Johnson and his brothers Mager and Clarence; a first cousin to Robert Nighthawk, Stackhouse was related by marriage to Memphis guitarist Joe Willie Wilkins and Mississippi Sheik Sam Chatmon. Stackhouse in turn gave lessons to Nighthawk, and eventually performed with him on Helena, Arkansas' KFFA Radio; later, he joined Wilkins, pianist Pinetop Perkins, drummer James "Peck" Curtis, and Sonny Boy Williamson II on the "King Biscuit Time" program. Though several of his contemporaries and protégés had successful, higher profile careers, Stackhouse largely remained in the Delta area for most of his life. The memories that he shared at great length with O'Neal are considered one of the most definitive first-hand accounts of the early to mid-century Delta blues scene in existence (O'Neal 70). Stackhouse represents the quintessential "*Living Blues* Interview" in that he not

only discussed his own life, but the lives and circumstances of those around him—documenting a cultural moment that might have otherwise been lost to time.

II. The 1980s

The *Living Blues* editors were beginning to look at musicians beyond Chicago as early as *LB* #3. By the end of the 1970s, they were exploring other communities across the country and uncovering their indigenous blues scenes. A two-part survey of "Kentucky Blues" appeared in *LB* #51 (Summer 1981, 25-36) and *LB* #52 (Spring 1982, 15-28).

Though the magazine had already published a special on modern Arkansas blues (*LB* #32, May/June 1977), the Kentucky blues review was unusual in that it explored a scene virtually unknown outside of the area. "Its black population is smaller than that of any of the Southern states, and of course Kentucky's main claim to fame is bluegrass," observed O'Neal in the article's preface. "But Kentucky blues in fact played an influential role in the development of white bluegrass and Western swing today," he continued, quoting bluegrass pioneer Bill Monroe's statement that "things in [his] music" could be credited to African American guitarist and fiddler Arnold Schultz. Louisville's Sylvester Weaver was the first guitarist to record country blues songs using the slide guitar style; his 1923 recording of "Guitar Rag"[2] was later re-recorded as "Steel Guitar Rag" by Bob Wills and His Texas Playboys (25).

These notable artists considered, Kentucky was still a place most musicians left for larger urban centers, or passed through on the traveling circuit. "Whatever blues scene has existed in Kentucky for the past two decades or more has at best been a scattered and sporadic one," wrote O'Neal (26). Yet with the assistance of local contributing editor Burnham Ware, they were able to locate several musicians across the state and interview them for the magazine: bones and spoon player Will Moore, harmonica player Harvey Blakeman (28), guitarist John

Wesley Townsend (29), pianist William "Fess" Hamilton, guitarist Jack Gaines (30), and fiddler Bill Livers (31-33). All are elderly; Moore had already passed away prior to printing. Most performed locally, either solo or in dance bands, though Townsend traveled the rails and spent twenty-three years working construction in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (29). They each held down other jobs for a living, from stone mason (Gaines) to tenant farmer (Livers). For these musicians, playing music was a means of entertainment—"to have a little fun," in Gaines' words (30). Pursuing it was not without risks, however; Blakeman recalled being harassed by whites while performing on the street. Now living at the Andersen County Home for the Aged and Infirm—where he is the only African American resident—he continues to play "because, as he says, 'I've got to have my music'" (28).

Louisville, Kentucky, did have a noteworthy blues tradition during the first half of the twentieth century; according to scholar David Evans, the local style was more "sophisticated and oriented toward ensemble work rather than solo blues in the country manner" (67). The first part of the "Kentucky Blues" special was rounded out by an interview with Henry Miles, in which he recounted his days as a member of various Louisville jug bands (34-36).

In *LB* #52, the special concluded with documents from Sylvester Weaver's scrapbook, acquired by Kentucky native Paul Garon from Weaver's widow after sixteen years of persistent searching (16-20). The archive included correspondence, newspaper and magazine clippings, and royalty statements concerning Weaver's recordings. These were especially telling: over a four-year period from 1924 to 1928, Weaver received $137.84 for nine compositions from the Clarence Williams Music Publishing Company (19). Included is a letter from the publisher, stating in response to Weaver's recent inquiry about royalties for his hit "Guitar Blues/Guitar Rag" that "if you are pressed for funds and desire to sell your share of the numbers it may be

possible for us to come to an agreement" (20). If Weaver had sold the rights to the songs, he "might not have earned any royalties at all" (19). He was paid less than one-half of one cent writer's royalties, and "$25.00 per side for 'recording work' on the songs he wrote and recorded" for the OKeh label. This was apparently a good rate in the late twenties—and remained so even in the early eighties, underscoring the predation often practiced by record companies on African American artists:

> While Weaver obviously never achieved riches through recording, it should be noted that he was paid substantially more in both recording fees and royalties than were many famous blues artists in the '30s and '40s, when payments of $5 to $15 per side and royalties of 15 percent of 1¢ per record were common—and even today, $25 per side is more than many bluesmen receive for recording albums" (20).

This was followed by a Weaver discography (22); a brief account of the career of Weaver's colleague Sara Martin (23); and an interview with Louisville native Helen Humes, a famed singer with Count Basie's orchestra who recorded her first sides for OKeh with Weaver's assistance (24). The section was rounded out with short profiles of singers Elmore Morris (26) and Jeffery Orr (28); a photograph of pianist Charlie "Buck" Payne (26); an interview with Roy Lee Townsend, John Wesley's nephew (27), and listings of other area artists provided by reader Karl Gert zur Heide and Jim O'Neal (27). The breadth and scope of this documentary of a little-known blues scene revealed the richness inherent in local musical cultures that, for many reasons, were/are less visible to the greater public.

By the time the tenth anniversary issue was published (*LB* #45-46, Spring 1980), Paul Garon and Bruce Iglauer were listed as "consulting editors," as their regular involvement with the magazine had largely ceased by this point. Iglauer was especially busy with Alligator Records, the independent label he had founded in 1971; his unique, epistolary advertisements have appeared in *Living Blues* consistently since *LB* #28 (July/August 1976, 43). O'Neal and

van Singel also found themselves becoming increasingly involved with the blues business. They had begun operating a mail-order service selling records and books to help fund magazine production, and musicians they interviewed for *Living Blues* would ask them for assistance with artist management, or in obtaining performing or recording engagements (*LB* #45-46, 3; O'Neal, E-mail 27 Oct. 2012). An ad for their Rooster Blues label appeared inside of the back cover of *LB* #45-46.[3] "Amy and I acted as middlemen to put artists in touch with club owners, festivals, tour promoters, record companies, and television crews. . . . (We did try running an actual booking agency for a while when we had Rooster Blues, but that was harder than any other aspect of the blues business)," remembered O'Neal (E-mail 27 Oct. 2012).

In a review for Los Angeles-based blues musician Cleo Page's album *Leaving Mississippi* in *LB* #45-46, *LB* writer Jim DeKoster wondered if "Chicago will be challenged as the center of living blues in the 1980s" (72). This remark would prove somewhat prophetic, but not in the way he had imagined. In 1983, *Living Blues* relocated from one blues culture to another—Oxford, Mississippi, halfway between the Delta and the Hill Country. This move was announced in *LB* #53 (Summer/Autumn 1982): " . . . we are on the verge of a major reorganization and affiliation with the Center for the Study of Southern Culture at the University of Mississippi" (4).

O'Neal and van Singel transferred the publishing rights of *Living Blues* to the University in 1983 (O'Neal, "Memorandum" 1). They additionally gifted print and photographic research archives, related ephemera, tape recordings, and over 13,000 records (12-inch LPs, 7-inch 45s, and 10- and 12-inch 78s)—the bulk of their personal collection, appraised at over $100,000—to the University to establish a Blues Archive built from the O'Neal, B. B. King, and Kenneth Goldstein collections (O'Neal, "Deed of Gift" 1, 3).

LB #57 (Autumn 1983) was the first issue to be published after the transfer. The issue appeared in a larger, 8½ by 11-inch format, and was printed on heavier cardstock. In the opening editorial, O'Neal acknowledged that *Living Blues* "and its archival accumulations have outgrown our ability to manage [it] as a homegrown enterprise," noting that "perhaps it's been the very necessity of keeping up with all the performing and recording activity in the city that has made it so difficult to maintain our [magazine] production schedule on top of our interviewing, record collecting, and other blues-related projects" (3). Center founding director William Ferris, a noted blues scholar who occasionally contributed to *Living Blues*, felt that the university's "resources"—"the journalism school, the library"—would "help keep it afloat." He also observed the "irony that this great music did not have a home in the place where it began," and noted both the university's troubled, racially-charged past and its history of visiting blues performers, such as W. C. Handy, Muddy Waters, Howlin' Wolf, and Bo Diddley. Bringing *Living Blues* to, and establishing the archive at, the University of Mississippi, Ferris felt, would "help build a deeper understanding and respect for the black experience" in Mississippi (4 Oct. 2012). O'Neal shared this sentiment, and also "liked the idea of bringing the blues back home—to the state where so much of it came from and to my familiar homeland as well, and to Oxford and Ole Miss where I had lived as a preschooler while my father was a med student there" (E-mail 15 Nov. 2012).

The issue's cover art was titled "A Tribute to the Greats"—a portrait of Sam Chatmon, Big Joe Williams, Muddy Waters, and Furry Lewis, painted by Lisa Hanson. This was also the title of 1983's Mississippi Delta Blues Festival, held in Freedom Village, Mississippi. A rural community located near Greenville, it was founded during the Civil Rights movement in the mid-'60s as a haven for dispossessed agricultural workers. The festival was organized by

Mississippi Action for Community Education members Charles Bannerman and Kay Morgan in order to "honor an art form that was born in the Mississippi Delta cottonfields and was birthed by workers and a way of life whose hardships we must never forget." One of the oldest blues festivals in the country, it was eventually relocated closer to Greenville, where it is held annually to this day (Mississippi Blues Trail, "Freedom Village"). The 6th annual festival memorialized the "Greats" in the portrait, all past festival performers and Mississippi natives (22).

LB #57 doubled as the festival's program, and included a proclamation from Governor William Winter declaring September 17, 1983, as Delta Blues Festival Day (19). The festival featured two stages showcasing performers such as the Mississippi Fife and Drum Band, John Lee Hooker, Bobby Rush, and Lonnie Pitchford (18). The focus on Mississippi performers, combined with the political undertones in both the relocation of *Living Blues* and the history of the Delta Blues Festival, signaled a subtle shift in the perception of blues in the state most often considered its birthplace.

For a time, O'Neal and van Singel continued to edit *Living Blues* from Chicago; the last issue that listed their Chicago office's mailing address was *LB* #70 (1986). They moved to Mississippi later that year, where O'Neal remained editor until *LB* #76 (1987). In his editorial, titled "Mississippi Magic," O'Neal revealed that he and van Singel were no longer married; she was now the operator of Back 40 Records and Little Village Record Distributors in Oxford, while O'Neal had moved to the Delta to pursue scholarly and recording projects. Though Chicago was experiencing a new blues revival, he wrote, the business had changed; the artists' newfound popularity with more lucrative white audiences had drawn black artists out of the neighborhoods, resulting in the closures of a number of blues clubs:

> Chicago still has a diversity of blues styles, from the down home to the modern blues-rock hybrid; the quality of the bands is high. It still is,

> and always will be, *the* city for blues. But when we sit in a cozy North Side bar, in a room filled with businessmen and tourists, we sometimes miss the excitement of the days when a drive down Roosevelt Road or Madison Street led to the best blues in town, played by bands in the local taverns for their friends and neighbors who grew up with the blues. That element of the Chicago blues scene has diminished, and some day after the present blues boom is history, it will gain strength again.
>
> Mississippi abounds with people and places that produce that intense kind of roots spirit, that fellowship, that tension soothed by the blues, at home and at ease. The juke joints, cafes, pool halls, picnics, house parties, nightclubs, and homegrown outdoor "festivals" exude an almost timeless quality. . . . Rarely, even in the ghetto clubs of Chicago, have I heard music so raw and so free. It is unaffected. It is blues at the source. . . . It is a scene that is seldom documented, either in print or on record. After all, conventional history would have us believe that the blues only left a few stragglers behind when it "moved" to Chicago. It's time to do a little rewriting, and recording (3).

Ironically, the increased demand for Chicago blues—which *Living Blues* certainly played a part in—had altered the local culture the original editors prized.[4] "The blues has found success in Chicago," stated O'Neal, "but as the challenge has been met, for some of us the sense of purpose is gone; the crusade is over" (3). O'Neal eventually relocated to Clarksdale, where he operated Rooster/Stackhouse Records, a recording label and retail store; as of August 2008, he is living in Kansas City, Missouri, and remains an occasional contributor to the magazine while working on other blues-related projects, including researching and writing for the Mississippi Blues Trail. Amy van Singel continued to work for *Living Blues* as a typesetter from *LB* #81 (July/August 1988) through *LB* #87 (August 1989); she was also the subscription manager from *LB* #87 through *LB* #88 (September/October 1989). She likewise continued her broadcasting career as a volunteer blues deejay. Van Singel later left Oxford for Alaska, and is currently living in Belfast, Maine.

The next editor of *Living Blues* was Peter Lee.[5] Lee, who moved from South Africa to Mississippi to accept the position, contributed "Can't You Hear Me Cryin'," about his

experiences with the blues in South Africa and Mississippi, to *LB* #70 (1986, 25-28). He served as researcher from *LB* #70 through *LB* #72 (1986) before assuming editorship with *LB* #76.

III. The 1990s

During Lee's tenure, the magazine began to focus more frequently on other blues cultures, as exemplified by *LB* #98 (July/August 1991) and *LB* #100 (November/December 1991). *LB* #98 was the first issue completely devoted to zydeco, Louisiana's indigenous blues form—or "blues with an accent," in the words of Maison de Soul label owner Floyd Solieau (2). Zydeco, like other musical genres, has its own regional distinctions, Lee wrote in his editorial; "there is citified zydeco, there is the zydeco preferred in the small towns of the prairie, and then there is the zydeco that has left Louisiana to spread the word to the rest of the world," referring to the late Clifton Chenier (3). Soileau was profiled (23-26) along with accordionists Rockin' Dopsie (the cover artist, 10-15), Boozoo Chavis (16-19), Chubby Carrier (20-22), John Delafose (27-29), and C. J. Chenier (30-33). Sunny Slim Baker, Clifton Chenier's last road manager, conducted the interviews with Delafose and C. J., Chenier's son (33). The special concluded with "Zydeco Sont Pas Sale," a photo essay featuring several other notable performers, including Stanley "Buckwheat" Dural and Jo Jo Reed (34-37).

LB #100 showcased O'Neal's "blues at the source"—the modern Mississippi scene. Delta guitarist Roosevelt "Booba" Barnes graced the cover (10-15), and was interviewed along with "Oil Man" Big Jack Johnson (22-26), and Hill Country artists Jessie Mae Hemphill (16-21) and Junior Kimbrough (27-29). A survey of "Mississippi Country Blues Today" (31-35); an overview of the fife and drum band tradition, which included an interview with Otha Turner (36-38); and a traveler's guide to the Mississippi Delta (39-42) completed the section.

That the world was paying more attention to these scenes was acknowledged in Jim O'Neal's "Pay-for-Play in the Delta" editorial, which advised for-profit media, such as film crews, to consider paying musicians for their time and performances, as many were still struggling financially (39-42). Zydeco music was also undergoing changes. Businessman Soileau favorably noted the expanding audience for the genre, while accordionist Delafose lamented the lack of Creole French-speaking singers on the current circuit: "[t]he young generation didn't want to speak it. And the number one thing is that the schools weren't teaching it" (28). These issues of *Living Blues* both highlighted vibrant local cultures while underscoring their fragility and susceptibility to outside forces.

Lee, who later helped found Oxford's Fat Possum record label, remained editor until *LB* #104 (Mississippi Blues Trail, "Documenting the Blues"), when David Nelson assumed the role. Nelson, a graduate of the University of Mississippi's Southern Studies master's program, had been working at *Living Blues* variously as an editorial assistant, copyeditor, contributing editor, and associate editor since *LB* #90 (March/April 1990). Nelson's first issue as editor, *LB* #105, featured soul singer Tyrone Davis on the cover. His feature, titled "I Am Not a Blues Singer," was provocative; Davis expressed frustration with the blues label and was adamant that he performed rhythm and blues. He distinguished the genre thusly: "Rhythm and blues has got more rhythm. The song has more rhythm. That is what it is" (16). He admitted that, at the beginning of his career, he was "trying to sing like Bobby Bland . . . and I thought that maybe I was a blues singer, you know. But when my first record came out it sold three-and-a-half million. You tell me this—how many blues singers you ever seen get a record to sell three million?" (16). Yet black radio was reluctant to play his music, as they considered it blues; at the time, they were giving airplay to more generally popular artists who borrowed from black styles,

such as singer Michael Bolton and hip-hop group the Beastie Boys (17). "[R]adio will not touch the new Bobby Bland LP even though it's the biggest-selling album in Chicago for the past three weeks. Why not??? It's too black!!" Davis exclaimed (17). Davis was, by his own admission, seeking crossover success as well, but as with Bobby Bland in the early '70s, white audiences did not consider Davis a blues artist; he noted their indifference toward him when he opened for vocalist Koko Taylor—whose records his had outsold—at the Apollo Theater in Harlem, New York (17). Though Davis did not think of himself as a blues singer, his primary audience—African Americans—did. *Living Blues* was sometimes criticized for its coverage of artists like Davis (see J. W. Wallace's letter in *LB* #107), yet soul-blues musicians, who "were really perpetuating the blues at the grassroots kind of level in their communities," certainly fall within the magazine's cultural definition (Nelson 15 Apr. 2010). The publication continues to cover the genre, proving that "blues music for certain sectors of the black community is alive and well" (Gussow 248).

Nelson also witnessed the return of the black/white blues debate during his tenure, discussed in Chapter II. The blues revival in the early 1990s—which, among other things, resulted in the proliferation of print competitors such as *Blues Revue*—rekindled the controversy.[5] "[S]ometimes we would get criticized for being so-called "blues purists" when really I felt that we weren't that at all," Nelson remembered. "You know, we were focusing on a lot of the soul blues artists, the younger artists who were doing different things, and so I think it really all came back to that question of not featuring the white blues artists in the features section" (15 Apr. 2010).

There were plenty of rising blues artists to focus on. The 25th anniversary issue (*LB* #120, March/April 1995) was devoted to "The Next Generation of Blues"; one article focused

solely on up-and-coming blues artists, "Forty Under Forty" (77-90). A few issues later, Nelson put one of those younger musicians, Corey Harris, on the cover as part of an acoustic special, which included Alvin Youngblood Hart and Elmer Lee Thomas (*LB* #126, March/April 1996). Harris was originally from Denver, Colorado, and had traveled to Africa to study language; Hart was from Oakland, California, but had Mississippi familial ties. They were not blues artists in the traditional sense, but their roots music explorations "were taking the music in another direction" (Nelson 15 Apr. 2010). Nelson also supervised *Living Blues'* most recent physical alterations: the introduction of perfect binding (*LB* #114, April 1994) and four-color printing (gradually incorporated beginning with *LB* #116, August 1996). This more professional appearance allowed for the expanded size of the magazine and increased revenue due to the sale of color advertisements (Bonner 27 Jul. 2012).

Nelson's last issue as editor was *LB* #148 (November/December 1999); he relocated to North Carolina, where he currently resides. Nelson recruited blues researcher and writer Scott Barretta, who had previously been editor of the Swedish blues publication *Jefferson*, for the position. The two had met previously at the Delta Blues Festival, and Barretta began writing for *Living Blues* while still editing *Jefferson.* His background in sociology enabled him to approach the blues "objectively, versus as a fan," and "keep an open mind about things out of . . . a sociological curiosity" (15 Sept. 2010).

IV. The 2000s

LB #157 (May/June 2001) was a prime example of Barretta's method, with Rudy Ray "Dolemite" Moore as the cover artist (12-21). Having begun his career as a bluesman, Moore spent forty years as a comedian; his "blue" street raps were similar to early blues lyrics in that both were rooted in African American oral traditions, such as signifying and "the dirty dozens."

Barretta noted in his editorial "that one of the personas adopted by Moore was "Peetie Wheatstraw, 'the devil's son-in-law,' a streetwise, boastful character created by St. Louis bluesman William Bunch" (6). Moore has since been hailed by black musical artists as the "Godfather of Rap," and *Living Blues'* feature outlined the cultural connections between these two genres.

Barretta's editorship lasted through *LB* #166 (November/December 2002). He announced his resignation in the next issue "in tandem with a reorganization of ***Living Blues'*** procedural operations" (6). Barretta remains in Oxford; he teaches sociology at the University of Mississippi, and hosts the long-running Mississippi Public Broadcasting blues program *Highway 61 Radio*. He is an active blues writer and researcher, contributing regularly to *Living Blue*s and to the Mississippi Blues Trail, along with Jim O'Neal.

In the same issue, Brett Bonner introduced himself as the new editor (6). Bonner has been the *Living Blues* advertising manager since *LB* #75, and thus has worked with every previous *Living Blues* editor. Like Barretta, Bonner is a sociologist, having earned his degree from the University of Mississippi, and has written many articles and photographed for the magazine (16 Sept. 2010).

Bonner's interest in the sacred steel genre led him to put Robert Randolph on the cover of *LB* #169 (September/October 2003, 22-27). Randolph had grown up with the House of God tradition, and he quickly earned fame outside of the sanctuary for his prowess on the steel guitar. The links between blues and gospel have been well documented;[6] according to Bonner, "you can never separate African American blues and the gospel. If you do, you're only getting half the picture." Sacred steel player Chuck Campbell also informed Bonner that "the basic tuning for the pedal steel guitar in the church is an open E—the base chord of blues music" (6). Blues has

often been referred to as a “roots” music form, and this feature connects the ways in which blues has itself been nurtured by other genres.

The largest issue of *Living Blues* published to date was *LB* #172 (March-June 2004). Supported by a grant from the Mississippi Development Authority, the publication hailed “Mississippi Blues Today!” with a cover photograph by Bill Steber of B. B. King standing on a railroad track with his arms outstretched. This style of portrait—artists in their cultural environment, as opposed to appearing on a stage—would become increasingly characteristic, as Bonner wanted the magazine to reflect its cultural stance visually (16 Sept. 2010). King contributed heartfelt opening remarks (10-11), as did actor and blues entrepreneur Morgan Freeman (9). Governor Haley Barbour included a letter noting that the previous year had been designated “The Year of the Blues” by Congress, and invited tourists to visit Mississippi (8). Sections devoted to “North and East Mississippi” (34-45, 146-150), “Jackson, Mississippi” (46-58), and “South Mississippi” (60-69) surveyed blues in every part of the state. At 176 pages in length, it heralded the establishment of blues tourism as an industry in Mississippi and showcased the immense wealth of blues still to be found locally—even if, as writers Andria Lisle and Amos Harvey noted, “you just have to dig a little deeper” (35).

Hurricane Katrina devastated the tourism industry in coastal Mississippi and Louisiana—along with almost everything else—in August 2005. Bonner devoted *LB* #182 (January/February 2006) to documenting stories of the musicians from the region who had been affected by the storm and its aftermath. “Katrina and the Blues” featured interviews with fourteen artists, including guitarists Vasti Jackson, Walter “Wolfman” Washington, and Little Freddie King; singers Irma Thomas and Clarence “Frogman” Henry; bassist George Porter, Jr.; and songwriter Bobby Charles (8-27). New Orleans Mayor C. Ray Nagin contributed a letter noting the cultural

legacy of the city, its connection to the development of the blues, and that the national discussion of the restoration of New Orleans "desperately needs to be informed with the historical perspective of why America needs to help save [it]" (3). The "Blues News" section included status updates on New Orleans music clubs and weblinks to charity organizations receiving aid for displaced musicians (5), while the "Reviews" section featured several Katrina benefit releases (36-37). The most traditionally journalistic issue to date, *LB* #182 connected the blues to an international news event and emphasized how fragile and ephemeral local cultures can be.

These *Living Blues* issues, and the moments in time they represent, are only a few of the 221 that have been published to date. Yet through them can be traced a thread that has defined the magazine from the beginning—blues as culture. Each *Living Blues* editor since the departure of Jim O'Neal and Amy van Singel has found ways to develop the publication's focus while maintaining the cultural definition the founders established. Peter Lee, David Nelson, Scott Barretta, and Brett Bonner have continually reiterated the idea of blues as a *living* musical form by exploring different blues-related genres, blues scenes, up-and-coming artists, and current events that directly affect the lives of musicians. *Living Blues*' African American cultural emphasis remains constant, yet as the culture itself constantly changes, the magazine likewise expands to accommodate it.

NOTES

1. The recording date for Weaver's "Guitar Blues" was erroneously listed as 1920 in the article (25). See Herzhaft 269; Wolfe 262; *LB* #52, 18.

2. According to O'Neal, Rooster Blues was also co-owned by two British partners, Cilla and Mick Higgins (E-mail 27 Oct. 2012).

3. In his book *Blue Chicago*, David Grazian discussed his perceptions of O'Neal's "stereotypical depictions of blackness" and "racially tinged bias" when describing the authenticity of certain Chicago nightclubs; see 179-181. O'Neal remembered his interview with Grazian thusly: "Grazian coaxed me into describing a stereotypical ghetto club or juke

joint after I did not give him the answer he was looking for at first. I remember beginning by specifically describing how moved I had been by a recent performance in Kansas City by Ida McBeth, in an elegantly decorated, high-dollar club with posh furniture; in order words, I explained, blues didn't have to be performed in a down-and-dirty juke joint to be sung with feeling. Then he said something like, yeah, but don't you like to hear blues in a real juke joint and asked me to describe one, which I did. To tell you the truth, after I read what he wrote, I was so disgusted that I never opened that book again" (Email 28 Nov. 2012).

4. Peter Lee was the only former editor that I did not interview for my thesis, as I was unable to locate him.

5. I analyze this further in Chapter IV.

6. See Chapter I, note 5.

CHAPTER IV

LIVING BLUES AND *BLUES REVUE*:

A COMPARISON OF TWO AMERICAN BLUES PERIODICALS

The founding of *Living Blues* in 1970 was, among other things, an attempt to fill a perceived void in American musical print media. As there were no magazines in the United States at the time that focused specifically on blues music, American scholars and enthusiasts were dependent upon foreign publications, such as the British-based *Blues Unlimited* and *Blues World*, for blues-related news and information. The Chicago-based coterie of blues enthusiasts who launched *Living Blues* knew that "their location gave them a strategic advantage, and they wanted to exploit it" (Narváez 242). As Amy van Singel remembered, "It seemed insane to have to learn about the music [and] musicians from Europe, when they were available at my back door!" (Senkowsky, "Q & A") Their proximity to the epicenter of the contemporary blues revival coupled with their lack of domestic competitors facilitated the establishment of the magazine as the American blues journal of record.

Living Blues remained largely unchallenged in this position until the 1990s, when the reissue of many seminal blues recordings in compact disc format (such as Columbia Records' two-CD set *Robert Johnson: The Complete Recordings*, which sold well over a million copies) helped usher in a period of renewed interest in the genre. New publications such as *Blues Revue* and the now-defunct *Blues Access* attempted to serve this growing audience. Founded by Bob

Vorel in 1990, *Blues Revue* has now survived half as long as *Living Blues* and remains its main rival in the American blues periodical market.

In some aspects, *Blues Revue* has followed a path similar to its predecessor. It also originated as a quarterly, but is now published six times a year. There are congruencies of format, feature, and design as well. Yet there are crucial differences that separate the two magazines, and these are revealed by a close examination of two recent issues.

Living Blues and *Blues Revue* are both released at approximately the same time every two months. Issue #207 of *Living Blues* is dated June 2010; Issue #124 of *Blues Revue* is dated June/July 2010. They are each proportioned approximately 8 x 10 ¾ inches in size and feature four-color-process printing, though *Blues Revue* employs a glossy cover while *Living Blues*' is matte.[1] They are similar in page length; *LB* #207 is 80 pages, and *BR* #124 is 72 pages. The spine for *LB* utilizes perfect binding; much like a paperback book, it is flat, and the pages are attached to it with flexible glue. *BR*'s spine is saddle-stitched, or stapled together.

Living Blues' title is placed on the upper-left-hand quadrant of the cover. The letters *LB* are in a prominent, white, hand-painted-style font, with the letter *L* placed slightly above the letter *B*. The full title "*Living Blues"* is positioned below the *L* and to the left of the *B*. As 2010 was *Living Blues*' 40th anniversary year, there is a yellow and blue medallion with the text *40 Years* printed inside of it, and a yellow ribbon with *Living Blues* in a blue sans serif font draped across it. This slightly overlaps the large *L* on its left. All of the magazine's title text is placed against a red square background, with the letters *LB* and the medallion overlapping the square's borders. *Blues Revue*'s title text is printed in a large, white, block sans serif font that encompasses the entire top edge of the magazine's front cover.[2]

Both issues feature African American musicians on their covers. *LB* #124's cover artist is Detroit-based harmonica player Aaron "Little Sonny" Willis. There is a 12-page in-depth interview by Jon Penney in which Willis discusses his life and career ("Little Sonny's Detroit," 9-19). Blues artist, producer, and songwriter Joe Louis Walker is on *BR* #124's cover, and inside Sandra Pointer-Jones talks with him about his life in music ("Joe Louis Walker: The Great Modern Troubadour," 8-14). There is also a sidebar with Duke Robillard about Walker's latest two albums, which Robillard produced for Stony Plain Records (14).

The table of contents for each magazine can be found on the first page. *LB* #207 has three feature stories; besides the cover story on Little Sonny, the Canadian blues artist Harrison Kennedy talks to Scott M. Bock ("Harrison Kennedy: From Soul To Blues," 20-24), and Vince Jackson tells the story of Clemson, South Carolina's Littlejohn's Grill ("Littlejohn's Grill: Discovering Clemson's Stop Along the Chitlin' Circuit," 74-77; the table of contents erroneously lists 72 as the first page). Upon turning to each story, these articles' titles are revealed to be slightly different from their table of contents counterparts—"Harrison Kennedy: This is fun for me. It's more real," and "It Don't Jump Like It Used To: Littlejohn's Grill—Clemson's Forgotten Blues Heritage," respectively.

The other major feature in this issue is "*Living Blues*—The 1990s" (26-33). *LB* #205, #206, #207, and #208—February, April, June, and August 2010—each contain a special retrospective section dedicated to a specific decade of *LB*'s existence. They follow the same template: current editor Brett Bonner contributes a short essay summing up the activity at the magazine during this time period, which is framed by photographs of artists, magazine personnel, and covers and features from selected issues.

LB #207 focuses on the 1990s. There are three photographs of then-editor David Nelson: one alone in his office, one with production manager Jennifer Langston and art director Susan Bauer Lee, and one with photographers Jack Vartoogian, Laurie Lawson, and Jack Barclay. There is also a photograph of Vartoogian and Barclay with photographer Jim Fraher, one of Brett Bonner with Otha Turner, and one of contributing writer John Brisbin with bassist Dave Myers. Covers illustrated include the 20th anniversary issue (*LB* #99), "The Death of Robert Johnson" (*LB* #94), and Lil' Ed Williams (*LB* #95). Articles featured are "Mississippi Blues Today," interviews with Johnny Shines and Guitar Shorty, and the 1990 Festival Guide. There is also an advertisement from Chess Records for the *Muddy Waters Chess Box* and records by Ramsey Lewis and Billy Stewart.

Subsequent pages in this section showcase more magazine covers. On pages 28-29, we see Pinetop Perkins (*LB* #97), Booba Barnes (*LB* #100), Robert Ward (*LB* #106), Willie Kent (*LB* #108), "Zydeco: Blues with an Accent," with Rockin' Dopsie as the cover artist (*LB* #98), Little Milton (*LB* #114), R. L. Burnside (*LB* #117), and Charles Brown (*LB* #118). Selections from the various magazines' contents include an interview with Chris Thomas King ("A Kick In The Ass From The Heart"); features on Junior Kimbrough ("The Beginning and the End of Music"), Big Walter, Little Milton, Charles Brown, R. L. Burnside ("Well, Well, Well!"), and "A Tribute to Albert Collins." Also pictured are advertisements for a Benson & Hedges-sponsored multi-city blues celebration ("Blues '91"); the Cambridge, Massachusetts House of Blues; a series of blues artist stamps from the U. S. Postal Service; and CD reissues from Rhino Records.

Pages 30-31 present more of the same. The selected magazine covers and cover stories include Junior Wells (*LB* #119), Luther Allison (*LB* #125), the 25th anniversary of *Living Blues*

(*LB* #120), the “New Orleans Special” issue featuring Irma Thomas (*LB* #128), Marvin Sease (*LB* #134), Billy Branch (*LB* #139), and Otha Turner (*LB* #144). Other articles highlighted are interviews with Smokey Wilson (“Corn Shuckin’ Blues”) and Abu Talib (“The Real Thing at Last”); the stories “Zydeco Beat,” “Heaven on Earth,” and “The State of the Blues in Mississippi”; and an ad for summer blues festivals sponsored by the House of Blues.

Finally, there are lists of “Thirty of the Very Best Blues Albums” “And Another 30 You May Have Missed” (pp. 32-33). Compiled alphabetically by longtime contributor Jim DeKoster, the albums recommended include Luther Allison’s *Soul Fixin’ Man* (#1, “Thirty Best”), Junior Kimbrough’s *All Night Long* (#17, “Thirty Best”), Chico Banks’ *Candy Lickin’ Man* (#1, “Another 30”), and Otha Turner’s *Everybody Hollerin’ Goat* (#27, “Another 30”). The 60 recordings listed range from the soul blues of Shemekia Copeland’s *Turn The Heat Up* (#7, “Thirty Best”) to the Chicago blues of Jimmy Davis’ *Maxwell Street* (#7, “Another 30”). The lists are surrounded by images of selected album covers.

Issue #207 finishes up with an extensive new-release record review section (34-65), a reissue section (66-70), and a book review section (72-73; the table of contests incorrectly states that it begins on page 70). Brett Bonner’s editorial is on page 2; letters to the editor are on page 3. There is also a section of “Blues News” headlines (5-6); an “Artist to Artist” short interview with Bobby Parker by Deitra Farr (7); “In the Groove,” a vinyl record review column by Roger Gatchet (43); the 2010 *Living Blues* Awards Reader’s Ballot (71); and the *Living Blues* Radio Charts for March and April 2010, compiled by Jim McGrath (80). There are many ads printed throughout the issue as well, mainly for records and blues festivals. One ad, a full-page offering from Alligator Records, is also a column written by *Living Blues* and Alligator founder Bruce Iglauer (69).

The June/July 2010 issue of *Blues Revue* features five profiles, including the cover story on Joe Louis Walker. On pages 15-17 there is an interview with guitarist Louisiana Red; on pages 18-21, with saxophonist Eddie Shaw; on pages 22-25, with Mississippi native Zac Harmon; and on pages 26-29, with vocalist Thornetta Davis. On the cover, the artists are categorized by the type of blues that they play. "Louisiana Red and Eddie Shaw embody old school blues," the blurb reads, and "Zac Harmon and Thornetta Davis explore new blues trends." Red and Shaw are indeed blues veterans; both have played with Muddy Waters, and Shaw was also a member of Howlin' Wolf's band from 1961 to 1976. Harmon's career took him from his hometown of Jackson, Mississippi to Los Angeles, where he would write and produce for R&B performers like the O'Jays and Gladys Knight (25). Davis is a Detroit-based blues vocalist who has been a backup singer for rock acts such as Bob Seger and Kid Rock (29).

Two more items printed on the cover of #124 are a reference to the CD reviews section (52-62, 71-72; "New Jimi Hendrix CD and many others reviewed) and a giveaway competition for a Gibson Epiphone guitar and two tickets to a Joe Bonamassa concert (64). The only printed references to the inside comments on the cover of *LB* #207 are for the features articles.

Like *Living Blues*, *Blues Revue* #124 also has several different columns and departments, all listed in the table of contents on page 1. Publisher Chip Eagle has a column called "From The Top" (5), and Art Tipaldi's "Editor's Solo" is on page 6. Roger Stolle, the proprietor of Clarksdale, Mississippi's Cat Head Delta Blues and Folk Art, reports on the latest happenings "Down in the Delta"; in this issue, he interviews vocalist Mary Ann "Action" Jackson (36-37). Over time, blues guitarist and former Muddy Waters sideman Bob Margolin earned the sobriquet "Steady Rollin'," and he uses it as the title for his column. His contribution to this issue is a short fictional piece called "Blues Time." The nameless "guitar player in a touring blues band"

who compares his life on the road in 1975 to his present-day existence seems a thinly veiled proxy for Margolin himself (38-39).

The "Letters" to the magazine are printed on page 3; the latest "News From the Field" on page 4. "Knee To Knee" is a new feature as of this issue; its format is of a younger artist interviewing a more established performer about their musical methods and philosophy. In the inaugural column, Canadian guitarist JW-Jones talks to Charlie Baty of Little Charlie and the Nightcats (30-33). Another debut feature is "Global Blues"; as the anonymous author states, "*Blues Revue*'s mission in the new millennium is to connect blues lovers around the world" (50). Quoting blues musician Watermelon Slim's pronouncement that "Blues is a culture without borders," the column will "introduce its readers to the broad scope of blues across the globe" (50, 51). There is a harmonica lesson from David Barrett on pages 40-41 ("Right On The Number"), a "Q&A" with blues-rock guitarist Nick Curran (34-35), an obituary listing called "Last Notes" (69), and a classified section (70).[3] *LB* #207 features classifieds as well (78), though they are not listed in the table of contents; there is usually an obituary section, but there is not one present in this particular issue.

Like *Living Blues*, *BR* #124 has more than one review section. "Club *BR*" highlights recent live performances by the Holmes Brothers in Rosedale, Maryland, on February 27; the Tuareg ensemble Tinariwen in Toronto on March 4; "The Perfect Age of a Rock 'n' Roll Blues Band" concert starring Pinetop Perkins, Hubert Sumlin, Bob Margolin, Bob Stroger, Willie "Big Eyes" Smith, and Sugar Blue in San Diego on April 3; Beverly "Guitar" Watkins and Mudcat in Atlanta on January 22; and Christine Ohlman and Rebel Montez in New York City on March 9 (43-48).[4]

The CD reviews are on pages 52-62 and 71-72. Interspersed among them are smaller focus pieces, such as the "Deja Revue" of the Wilson Pickett retrospective *Funky Midnight Mover: The Atlantic Studio Recordings (1962-1978)* (54); the "Spotlight" on up-and-coming soul blues singer Shakura S'Aida's album *Brown Sugar* (59); and a "*BR*avo!" list of the currently-reviewed recordings on heaviest rotation in the *Blues Revue* offices (62). The latest "Blues Books" are discussed on pages 64-66, and several more albums are reviewed briefly in "Blues Bites" (67-68). As with *Living Blues*, there are many ads for albums, blues festivals, and the like to be found throughout the magazine.

It seems at first view that these publications are similar—almost interchangeable in some aspects. They both feature interviews, book and CD reviews, blues news items, classifieds, editorial columns, and letters to the editor. They even share a number of advertisements: for example, on the inside front cover of each, there are virtually identical spreads from the Delta Groove Music label; the 19th Annual Pocono Blues Festival and the 2nd Annual Vermont Blues Festival have duplicate ads on page 10 of *BR* #124 and page 49 of *LB* #207; and they also share ads for the Crescent City Blues & BBQ Festival (*BR* #124, 20; back cover of *LB* #207) and for Blind Pig Records (*BR* #124, 49; *LB* #207, 53).

Though there is a degree of overlap between *Living Blues* and *Blues Revue*, a close reading of both texts reveals some crucial content and philosophical differences. The printed text on each cover heralds the contents of the magazines. At the very top edge of *Blues Revue*'s cover is the ad for the Joe Bonamassa guitar giveaway. Bonamassa is a white blues artist, a young guitar prodigy who opened for B. B. King when he was eleven years old. There is also the mention of the Jimi Hendrix CD review, and that Zac Harmon and Thornetta Davis "explore new blues trends." The text on the cover of *Living Blues*, while referential of its articles, makes

no mention of any progressive tendencies on the part of the music or musicians inside. Though the very title of the magazine itself —***Living** Blues*—might imply that the musical form is an evolving one, the artists profiled perform within a more traditional framework, rarely veering out of conventional blues or blues-based genres (acoustic blues, Chicago-style electric blues, soul-blues, zydeco).

The two magazines also treat their articles differently. *Blues Revue* has advertisements scattered throughout its features, while *Living Blues* has no ads between pages 9 and 33 with the exceptions of those reprinted in the 1990s retrospective section. There is nothing to distract the reader from the content at hand—the in-depth stories of the musicians' lives. Though both magazines are funded by subscription sales and advertising, the absence of ads throughout the feature articles of *Living Blues* seems deliberate. The displacement of advertising in this section is indicative of a documentary presentation of its subject matter—a sensibility that *Blues Revue* lacks.

Each issue has a lead review, and both are rock oriented: *Blues Revue*'s is of the Jimi Hendrix release *Valleys of Neptune* (52), and *Living Blues*' is of Bettye LaVette's *Interpretations: The British Rock Songbook* (34). Both contain songs written and originally performed by others; besides his own compositions such as "Red House," Hendrix covers Elmore James' "Bleeding Heart" and "Hear My Train A-Comin'," and Cream's "Sunshine of Your Love." LaVette's album is entirely comprised of covers; as the title suggests, they are all songs made famous by British rock artists and groups such as The Who ("Love, Reign O'er Me") and the Animals ("Don't Let Me Be Misunderstood").

Yet there are subtle differences here as well. Hendrix will always be known primarily as a rock and roll performer, while LaVette is a soul singer. Hendrix was certainly steeped in blues

and soul; besides the aforementioned blues covers, according to his official website biography, he played guitar for Little Richard, Ike and Tina Turner, and Sam Cooke, among others.[5] Yet the psychedelic quality of his best-known music roots it firmly within the spectrum of late-'60s rock and roll. LaVette is also known for interpreting a variety of music; she has recorded rock (Lucinda Williams' "Joy," Fiona Apple's "Sleep To Dream") and country (Dolly Parton's "Little Sparrow," Rosanne Cash's "On the Surface") along with rhythm and blues. But her style is steeped in soul—she could never be mistaken for any other kind of musician. LaVette herself confirms this; in Rob Bowman's profile essay "Who Is Bettye LaVette?," posted on her website, he quotes her thoughts on the matter: "I'm a soul singer. If I did an aria, it would be being done [*sic*] by a soul singer. I don't know how to sing any other way." The fact that *Living Blues* gave primacy of place in their review section to a *soul* vocalist, and that *Blues Revue* gave theirs to a *rock* musician, speaks to each publication's perception of what type of music is acceptably defined as blues—or, put another way, reflects what each magazine accepts as blues according to their specific definition of the genre.

Further comparison of the review sections reveals a surprising fact: there are only two records reviewed by both issues. Sharon Jones and the Dap Kings' *I Learned The Hard Way* and the Kilborn Alley Blues Band's *Better Off Now* both receive favorable reviews in each magazine. This is not surprising in and of itself; Jones and her backing band create music evocative of horn-heavy '70s soul, while Kilborn Alley's conglomeration of '50s Chess Records and '70s funk has a dash of Rolling Stones thrown in for good measure (indeed, lead vocalist and guitarist Andrew Duncanson has a tone color that at times evokes Mick Jagger). Both albums are based in a traditional blues or blues-derived style enough to be appropriate for review by either publication.

However, it is the *lack of overlap* between the blues magazines' respective review sections that is noteworthy. To be fair, there are albums that are reviewed in this issue of *Blues Revue* that are covered in other issues of *Living Blues*. For example, Joe Bonamassa's *Black Rock* is reviewed in *LB* #208; the Holmes Brothers' *Feed My Soul*, Nick Moss' *Privileged*, Nick Curran and the Lowlifes' *Reform School Girl*, Moreland & Arbuckle's *Flood*, Guitar Shorty's *Bare Knuckle*, and the Cash Box Kings' *1-94 Blues* in *LB* #206; and Tail Dragger's *Live at Rooster's Lounge* in *LB* #205. Likewise, it is not unheard of for *Living Blues* to review a rock and roll record, and even give primary place to said review. In *LB* #205, the lead review in the Reissues section was for the deluxe re-release of the Rolling Stones' 1970 live album *Get Yer Ya-Yas Out! The Rolling Stones In Concert*. However, though the Stones are undeniably blues-influenced—arguably more so than any other rock band—*Living Blues*' review of this particular record is due to the addition of the B. B. King and Ike and Tina Turner opening sets to the original release. Indeed, reviewer Mark Camarigg makes special note of this fact (70). *Blues Revue*, in turn, will also review more traditional, raw blues records, such as T-Model Ford's *The Ladies Man* (72).

With all of these factors taken into account, there are a great many records that are not covered by either issue. Moreover, the albums covered by *Living Blues*—such as John Jackson's *Rappahannock Blues*, Rev. Gary Davis' *At Home And Church 1962-1967*, and Chicago Bob Nelson's *Tell Me Mama*—are largely oriented towards a more traditional blues aesthetic than those covered in *Blues Revue*, with the Jimi Hendrix album being the best example of the latter.

The choices of what and whom to cover appear deliberate, and the magazines themselves suggest this. Under *Living Blues*'s title in its credits column is the description "The Magazine of the African American Blues Tradition" (2). *Blues Revue*, however, describes itself as "The

World's Largest Blues Publication Devoted to the Listener and Musician Whose Musical Passion is the Full Spectrum of the Blues" (6). This suggests a conscious crafting on the part of the magazines' creators and personnel. They are, of course, catering to the blues audience, a small subsection of the music-consuming public by default. Yet not only are they courting this particular audience—though, by *Blues Revue*'s own definition, its aim is broader—they are each defining blues according to their own aesthetic parameters.

At the beginning, *Living Blues*' stated aim was not to "explain, define, or confine the blues" (*LB* #1, 1). They wanted to portray it as they saw it in early-'70s Chicago: a vital, current art form. Yet this blues music that was burgeoning all around them, that they were passionate about and wanted to document, was blues music as created and performed by African Americans, with all of the accompanying cultural contexts and connotations. By their choices of feature subjects, cover stories, and various blues-related consumer products for review (i.e., albums, books, and films), the staff of each magazine is, by default, presenting their definition of blues to the public. To a certain degree, each magazine performs the role of "cultural middleman" by making "judgments about what constituted America's true musical traditions" and "help[ing] shape what 'mainstream' audiences recognized as authentic" (Filene 5).

Living Blues is the stronger example of this sort of cultural mediation. The *LB* #207 cover story on Little Sonny is typical of the magazine's presentation of blues as an African American cultural product. The expansive interview covers the blues harmonica player's entire career, from the first harp he ever owned—a toy his mother had given him (12)—to the present day. Besides being a record of Sonny's musical achievements, it also documents the Detroit blues scene that he was a part of. Having moved to the Motor City from his native Alabama in 1953 to escape Jim Crow, he sought out live music in the local clubs, where he saw the likes of

John Lee Hooker and Eddie Burns perform (13). Sonny was inspired to become a professional musician after seeing Sonny Boy Williamson II play, and he eventually became known as the "Harmonica King" of Detroit; from the late-'50s through the mid-'70s, he held down a rotation of standing gigs at virtually every club in town (13, 11). He never became a national presence due partly to his aversion to touring (not having known his own father, he did not wish to spend much time away from his wife and children), as well as to the paucity of his commercial recordings (despite being signed to Enterprise, a subsidiary of Stax Records, in 1970, he only recorded three albums before the label folded in 1975) (11, 19). He made a good living as a live performer, and his deep immersion in the Detroit scene established him as both an active participant in the local blues culture and someone who documented it at the same time.

Sonny has long been a passionate photographer. Before he became a performer, he made money by taking and selling photographs of the patrons of the clubs he frequented (13). The article is peppered with photos from Sonny's own archive, and they provide an intimate view inside a culture that might never have been available otherwise. There are also many images of Sonny on stage, of him posing with various individuals (including a portrait with John Lee Hooker on Hastings Street, giving us a glimpse of what it looked like in 1959), and a youthful snapshot of Maggie with their two sons, Aaron Jr. and Anthony. Almost all of these photos are from Sonny's personal archive.

Though author John Penney avers that Sonny "didn't exactly play traditional blues"—he spent a five-year residence at the East Side jazz venue Congo Lounge, and many of Motown Records' famous "Funk Brothers" performed in Sonny's bands—the music that he performed has distinct African American aesthetic and cultural roots (16). Further, as an active participant in a specific, localized blues subculture, Sonny had an access unavailable to most outside of the

community he lived and worked in. His photographs both authenticate and preserve for posterity the indigenous scene he was an integral part of.

An examination of other sections of the magazine also reveals the documentary stance that is central to *Living Blues*' aesthetic. "Littlejohn's Grill" is similar to Little Sonny's feature in that it is also a record of a particular place during a particular time period—in this case, a historically significant stop on the chitlin' circuit in pre-integration Clemson, South Carolina. In the 40th anniversary insert, the artist images that are reproduced for commemoration are those of traditional, African American bluesmen, save for a few soul, soul-blues and zydeco artists (Marvin Sease, Rockin' Dopsie, and Irma Thomas—the sole woman). The only other people present in these images are of *Living Blues*' '90s-era staff and photographers, all of whom are Caucasian. Besides being representative of the magazine during this particular moment in time, these pictures subtly underscore *Living Blues*' perception of the blues as African American cultural product. The magazine's personnel seem to approach this culture—in turn permitting the readers to participate in it as well—in terms of a "bystander role," defined by Peter Narváez as "[*Living Blues*]'s encoded message that whites should assist a living black blues tradition but they should not actively interact with it in performance except as an audience" (247). In one photo, Brett Bonner watches Otha Turner as he describes the process for cutting a cane fife; in others, we see the staff consulting over the latest issue, or photographers posing together at festivals. In none of the images do we see the staff and contributors do anything other than observe, inspect their printed product, and/or pose for the camera. They appear to be involved only with the process of gathering material for publication. If so, then by packaging and presenting their interpretation of blues to their readership, they have, in a sense, become *de facto* creators. Though *Living Blues*' staff may not have participated in the origination of the cultural

product itself, they are providing a forum for this music—one that, arguably, might not be available otherwise—as well as cultivating an audience for it.

As with Little Sonny, *Blues Revue* #124's cover story on Joe Louis Walker is likewise a barometer of the magazine's aesthetic stance.[5] Though it also discusses Walker's life and career in detail, the article is much shorter than its *LB* counterpart, and does not shed a special spotlight on any particular scene. There are only a few photographs accompanying the text, and they are all publicity-style performance shots, as opposed to the personal photographs from Little Sonny's own collection.

Walker's career path has also been quite different from Sonny's. Whereas Sonny went from Alabama to Detroit, making the latter his home base, Walker was raised in San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury neighborhood to parents from Arkansas and Mississippi (11). He came of age during the late '60s, performing while still a teenager with the likes of Fred McDowell, Lightnin' Hopkins, Thelonious Monk, and Steve Miller (11). He hung out with the Grateful Dead, Jefferson Airplane, and Jimi Hendrix, and was best friends and roommates with Mike Bloomfield. A Chicago native who cut his teeth in the city's famed blues clubs, Bloomfield was able to connect Walker to some of his blues idols, such as Otis Rush (12). Walker ultimately returned to California, and from there his very successful career has taken him all over the world. He has won many Grammys and W. C. Handy (Blues Music) Awards, having received more nominations for the latter than B. B. King; he is also a successful producer and songwriter (12). He called himself "an amalgamation of music. If I had stayed in Chicago, I would have just been a Chicago guy amongst many Chicago guys. Things work out for a reason" (12).

Though his name may not have the household cachet of a B. B. King or a Buddy Guy, Joe Louis Walker has nevertheless had a much higher-profile career than Little Sonny. Walker

has recorded more prolifically, has won prestigious music industry awards, and has collaborated with some of the most important blues and rock artists of the 20th century. Though he stresses the importance of staying true to "the essence" of the blues in performance, he nevertheless "effortlessly glides between the world of blues and rock" in a way that Little Sonny never did (12).

The references to rock music underscore the divergence in *Blues Revue*'s view of its cultural-middleman position. Rather than presenting the blues as a cultural product of exotic "others," *Blues Revue* more or less envisions it as strictly a musical form or genre. The willingness of its staff to feature artists who have made careers performing blues-oriented rock supports the idea that blues is accessible to anyone who wishes to play it, regardless of ethnicity, economic background, or cultural frame of reference—or lack thereof.

The presence of certain columns in the magazine furthers this impression. David Barrett's harmonica lesson in "Right On the Number" coaches the reader and budding harpist in the playing of octaves on a C harmonica; it is presented in a clear, precise manner, easy for anyone to understand. There is no mention in the article of history, of famous harmonica players, or any other sort of context; it is solely instructional.

"Knee to Knee" frames blues within a similar, if modulated, context. Though guitarist Charlie Baty does advise JW-Jones (as well as the reader) "to be mindful of the players of the past . . . and study their work," this admonishment is again couched in the language of performance and ability—"the drive and fresh approach of Charlie Christian's playing," "Charlie Parker's infinite arsenal of ideas and technical prowess"—rather than that of heritage and culture. Baty believes that

> the tone, the focus, and the personality of earlier players are important to study and learn. We should all strive towards a unique tone and personality

> so as to be instantly aurally recognizable, like Albert Collins, B. B. King, Sonny Boy, Kenny Burrell, and Django Reinhardt. It's important to learn something about music theory, if just to be able to communicate to other musicians what you want to play and which chords you want to hear behind you (33).

There is no doubt that the possession of a singular instrumental tone (or voice, for a singer), a command of said instrument, and a flair for showmanship are all crucial elements in the establishment of a successful musical career. Yet it is interesting to note that not once in this article did Baty advise young musicians to investigate the *cultural* roots of the music they wish to play. All of his suggestions are based in elements of musical *performance*—which, by their very nature, imply that they are accessible to all who desire to learn them.

It is safe to assume that Bob Margolin—a former sideman for Muddy Waters—possesses both technical skill and an intimate knowledge of blues and its history. In this issue's edition of "Steady Rollin'," Margolin's short story "Blues Time" chronicles the similarities and changes in an unnamed artist's career from 1975 to the present, especially where technology is concerned. In 1975, he ponders the fact that "he has to spend up to half an hour on the phone a couple of times a week to keep his business and social affairs moving along," which he does not enjoy; in 2010, he marvels at the capabilities of his Smartphone, while noting that his life has not gotten any easier with the developments in communication technology. The one thing that remains relatively the same is the music itself, and the connection that he as a performer is able to make with his listeners. "He plays some Old School Blues, a style that was already old in 1975. He and the audience find a feeling in 2010 that transcends the constant crap of 2010. . . . It's 2010, but at this moment, it still feels like 1975" (38, 39).

The character, much like Margolin himself, loves playing "Old School Blues" so much "that he can't imagine that it won't be a lifelong commitment." Likewise, he reveres the masters who have come before him. Rather than listen to "cheesy radio or nothing" while he and his

1975 bandmates travel by van to their next gig, he is able—by the marvels of current technology—to play dubbed cassette tapes of LPs by "Jimmy Rogers, Lowell Fulson, Jimmy Reed, Tyrone Davis, Little Walter, and Lil' Son Jackson" (38). Yet even with dropped names of blues masters and references to times present and past threading the short story together, there is not a single mention of history or context for the music that he plays. The music is presented as performance *only*; though he plays "with all the soul and desperation and redemption he can find," the only troubles the troubadour needs saving from are lonely nights on the road, travel-induced ennui, and information overload courtesy of his Smartphone. There is no consideration given to the thought that, as a presumably white blues performer in the latter quarter of the 20th/beginning of the 21st century (though the protagonist's race is not specifically mentioned, Margolin is Caucasian), he has a freedom of movement and a certain level of success as a musician that may not have been available to, or that eluded, his African American idols.

Perhaps the best example of the philosophy behind *Blues Revue* can be found in #124's "Global Blues" column. "*Blues Revue*'s mission in the new millennium is to connect blues lovers around the world," states the unidentified author. Noting the popularity that American blues music has enjoyed abroad for nearly half a century, the writer quotes the white blues artist Bill "Watermelon Slim" Homans: "Blues is a culture without borders" (50). The article catalogues the wealth of blues festivals to be found in Europe, Canada, and Australia/New Zealand; notes that publication of European blues periodicals preceded that of any American counterparts; discusses the foundation of the European Blues Union, a non-profit publicity network/website; lists such European labels as Bear Family, Document, and Ace that produce blues recordings; and recognizes the pan-national variety of today's performing blues artists.

"There are no borders to this culture," the author reiterates at column's end, and indeed it would seem that blues music has become a worldwide phenomenon.

However true that may be, it is still troubling for a white musician to claim that there are no borders in blues. According to the biography on his website, Watermelon Slim is the son of a progressive attorney who was also a freedom rider; he first heard John Lee Hooker songs sung by the family's housekeeper. He left college before graduating and went to Vietnam; he later recorded *Merry Airbrakes,* "the only known protest record" released by a Vietnam veteran during the war. Slim has since worked a staggering array of jobs to support himself and his family, from truck driving to watermelon farming (from which he acquired his stage name). He has also completed two bachelor's degrees, one master's degree, and became a member of Mensa. Though he has indeed lived a rich, colorful, and at times hard life, it has nevertheless been defined by choice. His comfortable background, nationality, and ethnicity have allowed him options not always available to his blues forebears—for whom life as a blues performer was a means of survival in more ways than one. It is disingenuous for a white musician who first heard blues sung by an employee of his family to then claim that genre for not only himself, but for the entire world, and without a single acknowledgement or reference to the people and culture responsible for its genesis.

Too, the nameless author's exhortation for the reader to "plan your next vacation around a foreign blues festival where you can party with the music you love in a dreamy, old world setting" is also disconcerting (51). Blues artists may indeed enjoy a level of success in Europe that they are unable to achieve stateside; the writer points out that "While many of the blues men and women we love can't put together a one week tour [i]n the U. S., these same musicians can often string together two or three weeks of very profitable, overseas gigs, with first class

accommodations and travel" (51). Yet there is still something unsettling to anyone well-versed in blues history about the idea of "partying" in "dreamy" locales to music born of suffering and racial/social/economic inequality—and whose performers often return home to poverty as well. It is the paradox of the blues world that scenes so far removed from the art form's immediate origins have sustained its life in modern times.

To be fair, *Blues Revue* does acknowledge more traditional African American artists, as this issue's profiles of Louisiana Red, Roger Stolle's "Down in the Delta" interview with Mary Jackson, and performance reviews of Beverly "Guitar" Watkins, the Holmes Brothers, and Pinetop Perkins attest to. It even goes a step further in reviewing the Tuareg performance group Tinariwen; by covering this south Saharan group in its pages, it in turn recognizes the African ancestry of the blues. Reviewer Eric Thom even notes that some of their music is evocative of Lightnin' Hopkins and John Lee Hooker (44).

Yet Thom also states that the band is "clearly influenced as much by blues and rock as they are loyal to the haunting, traditional roots of their homeland"; he remarks on the similarities between some of their music and "early Doors," and notes the "rap-like attack" of their song "Arawan" (44). Though blues, rock, and rap all share a common ancestry with African music, the reverse—that this group is itself influenced by modern popular musical forms—is also likely. For example, Tinariwen utilizes electric guitars in performance. Though the Tuaregs are primarily nomadic, the availability of electricity and electric instruments would imply that they are modernized to a degree, and would possess some awareness of popular music trends in other parts of the world.

This underscores a more important issue: that just as white artists are influenced by the blues, African American (as well as African) artists are themselves influenced by rock and roll

and other forms of popular music. Likewise, the younger vanguard of modern African American blues artists "want their skills to compete among all blues performers, and as musicians with increasingly similar backgrounds to their white contemporaries, their understanding of blues, like that of whites, has become more acoustic, intellectual, and less derived from actual Jim Crow experience" (Narváez 253). In his feature interview, Joe Louis Walker discussed finding his "rock roots" just as rock musicians had discovered their "blues roots"; in hers, Thornetta Davis expresses her desire to find a record "label that does it all and is accepting of a blues artist with a rock edge to them" (12, 29). The review of the Hendrix album—and upcoming *Blues Revue* cover story, which Hal Horowitz mentions at review's end—indicate that his example and legacy loom large. He spun his blues and rock influences together to create a sound so singular that to this day he is regarded as a "guitar giant" (52).

That being said, the blurring of genre boundaries is not solely a post-'60s or post-electric phenomenon. Even prior to the advent of the civil rights movement in America, African American and white musicians were inspiring each other. The pairing of Louis Armstrong and Jimmie Rodgers on the latter's "Standin' On The Corner (Blue Yodel No. 9)" is but one example. Rodgers has become as renowned as a blues musician as much for being "the Father of Country Music," as his dual Mississippi Blues and Country Music Trail markers suggest. No less an African American bluesman than B. B. King has publicly praised Rodgers' greatness, as I personally witnessed at King's Club Ebony performance on September 13, 2008. Similarly, Elijah Wald makes a convincing argument in *Escaping The Delta* that the recordings of white vocalists Al Bernard and Marion Harris "paved the way for Mamie Smith and Alberta Hunter as surely as Smith and Hunter paved the way for Bessie Smith and all that followed" (27). As for vice versa, the best example must be that of the young Hank Williams taking guitar lessons from

bluesman Rufus “Tee Tot” Payne. From Bessie Smith’s white admirers to the African American singers and mourners at Hank Williams’ funeral, race has never been an impermeable barrier to the appreciation and exchange of musical ideas in America. To suppose that one style of music exists in a vacuum apart from all others is naïve at best.

Though ideological distinctions exist between *Living Blues* and *Blues Revue,* they do not make one magazine, or its definition of blues, “better” than the other. All their differences considered, each magazine is able to serve the overall blues audience in its own way. They do share some of the same ads and album reviews, and both magazines believe that these festivals and records are noteworthy and of interest to their readership. Likewise, there is congruence of artistic subject matter; for example, Louisiana Red, Pinetop Perkins, and Beverly Watson have all been profiled in *Living Blues*.

Blues Revue will prominently cover blues-oriented artists who have spent significant time performing and/or recording in a rock capacity. *Living Blues*, on the other hand, presents such artists and music as they pertain to a stricter definition of blues—i. e., a recording of a Rolling Stones concert that features B. B. King and Ike and Tina Turner as performers—but then only in a specific, limited context, such as a record review or an album ad. *Living Blues* does not *feature* artists who perform anything but blues or blues-based, traditionally African American genres, such as soul, funk, or zydeco. To present the blues in any other aspect would be to deviate from and diminish its self-defined status as “The Magazine of the African American Blues Tradition.”

Further, *Living Blues* projects and emphasizes a bystander role for those of ethnicities other than African American, while *Blues Revue* possesses a more catholic, participatory aesthetic. Though both magazines are, in a sense, “creating” by virtue of the definitions they impose upon blues culture, the product itself—the music—must already exist before any labels

can be placed upon it. It is in the *choice* of cultural product, its *presentation*, and above all *the view of the role that race plays in the creation and presentation of said product* that the magazines differ.

Despite these differences—or, rather, because of them—the viewpoints of *Living Blues* and *Blues Revue* allow us a richer, more complete view of blues music. The publications each espouse a definition of the art form—one culture-based, the other performance-based. From *Living Blues*, we can learn about its tradition and history, and how it survives in the present day; from *Blues Revue*, we can see how some artists innovate the customary forms of the music to create new sounds. Though these important focal divergences separate them, nevertheless, by reporting on current happenings in different corners of the blues spectrum, both magazines work to preserve the blues and forward its progress.

NOTES

1. *Living Blues*' cover was glossy from the mid-'70s through the '90s, but was converted to matte by *LB* #152 (July-August 2000).

2. As of #208, the 40th anniversary issue, *Living Blues* has adopted a similar title placement, centered across the top portion of its cover, and utilizing its hand-painted style font.

3. In its early days, *LB* included an occasional musical instruction column, but it was phased out by *LB* #20 (March-April 1975). Jim O'Neal remembers: "As the magazine evolved, we concentrated more and more on biographies and interviews and dropped the instructional articles altogether, once we realized that our purpose was to document the lives of the musicians who were living the blues, and not to teach our readership how to play their music. (Of course *LB* did serve on another level as a guide for musicians who wanted to learn, by turning readers on to artists and records they might not have known about otherwise)" ("RE: Thesis interview questions pt 1").

4. From the beginning, *Living Blues* also reviewed live performances, and even had a dedicated magazine section for a time. Except for the occasional festival/special event review, this column was discontinued after *LB* #55 (Winter 1982-83).

5. O'Neal recalled "that at the first, or one of the first, *LB* meetings, I said I wanted to review the latest Hendrix album, *Band of Gypsys*. I never did, for some reason, but I always regarded Hendrix as an appropriate subject for *LB*, if we focused on his blues roots, repertoire and connections, rather than his position as a rock hero" (E-mail 28 Nov. 2012).

6. Joe Louis Walker has likewise been featured in *Living Blues*; he was the cover artist for *LB* #151 (May/June 2000, 14-21) and *LB* #218 (April 2012, 8-15).

CONCLUSION

> . . . [A]ny white person who writes about black music should be made to do some serious introspection by these stories. For, if an artist must answer to his genius and his traditions, the critic must always answer to his own motivation. Surely, one is free to like a thing or dislike it for one's own reasons, but publication confers a responsibility not hastily earned (31).

Living Blues contributor Steve Tomashefsky penned these words as part of a review in *LB* #34 of Langston Hughes' book *The Ways of White Folk*, and they have remained with me ever since I first read them while researching this thesis. I do not consider myself a blues scholar, as I have only been seriously listening to blues music and studying it for the last four years. It is not a culture I grew up in, or with, and I feel I have much still to learn. Every time I write a review, a news story, or an article for *Living Blues*, I constantly question my motives and reasons for doing so. To operate otherwise, in my opinion, would be dishonest.

Like Jim O'Neal (*LB* #57, 3), I grew up in Mobile, Alabama. When I was ten years old, my family and I moved to Mississippi, where we have lived ever since. I did not become interested in the blues until I was completing my bachelor's degree in English literature at the University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg. I had originally studied classical voice when I first entered college in 1997, and came to the realization long before graduation day that, more than any literary genre, what I really wanted to write about was music. My exposure to the music of Bob Dylan had raised my awareness of another world of musical expression; when I realized that so many artists he admired were natives of my home state, I felt embarrassed that I knew almost nothing about them.

Like David Nelson, I came to the University of Mississippi to learn about the blues (15 Apr. 2010). I wanted to write for *Living Blues* magazine and to produce *Highway 61 Radio*—both of which I accomplished while a student and Oxford resident. Yet though I was centrally located to three indigenous, historical blues cultures—the Delta, the Hill Country, and Memphis, Tennessee—for various reasons I was not able to experience them as often as I would have liked. I understood what *Living Blues*' editorial statement meant when it was explained to me, but it was not until I became an active participant in blues culture that I came to a full realization of the founders' vision.

After I returned to my hometown of Lucedale, Mississippi, I began to attend local blues events and music festivals as a correspondent for the magazine. I reviewed and photographed the ShedHed Blues Festival at The Shed in Ocean Springs, Mississippi, for *LB* #210 (December 2010, 5) and *LB* #215 (October 2011, 5); the Ponderosa Stomp Festival in New Orleans, Louisiana for *LB* #216 (December 2011, 7); and the Crescent City Blues and BBQ Festival, also in New Orleans, for *LB* #210 (5) and #216 (7).

It is always interesting to note the response I receive when I tell people I represent *Living Blues*; each encounter has been unfailingly positive. The most heartening experiences have been with the musicians themselves. I had seen Bobby Rush perform once—at the 2009 North Mississippi Hill Country Picnic at Potts Camp—and met him briefly at the inaugural Clarksdale Film Festival in 2011, but had not had a conversation with him until last year's Ponderosa Stomp concert. He said he owed much of his success to *Living Blues*; the magazine had promoted his career and helped him cross over to white audiences without having to alter his somewhat risqué stage show—not an easy feat with soul-blues performers. He also gave me perhaps the nicest

compliment I have yet received as a writer: that I "have the right personality for it," and that I "should keep doing it."

At the previous year's Crescent City Festival, bassist Lee Allen Zeno approached me, offered me his business card, and indicated interest in a *Living Blues* feature. Zeno is an ideal subject for our magazine: a native of Carencro, Louisiana, he has been Stanley "Buckwheat Zydeco" Dural's bass player for thirty-six years, and has performed and recorded with many blues and zydeco artists throughout his fifty-year career. Though I ultimately did not write about him, he was featured in *Living Blues*' recent Lafayette, Louisiana special (LB #215, 21-22). I am aware that, as a member of the media, people will approach and interact with me in a certain way; yet the fondness these artists expressed for our magazine underscores its high regard in blues circles. It is not an exaggeration to consider that *Living Blues* is the *Rolling Stone* of the blues world: with over 1,000 unique artist profiles published since 1970, some of these features are the only interviews with certain musicians in existence (Bonner 16 Sept. 2010). Each artist's story is worth preserving, and enriches our understanding of their experience within the culture. If we do not document them, who will?

"One of the reasons we thought there needed to be a magazine about black blues musicians," remembered O'Neal,

> was that we felt that they weren't receiving the attention they deserved as members of the original community that created the blues, while white musicians were reaping a big share of the fame and fortune. On that basis there just as much or more need for LB to continue to document the African American blues tradition today. The white blues-rock stars continue to appeal to a wider audience and now there are dozens of blues society newsletters and festivals and some blues magazines that focus heavily on white musicians. The number of white bands is now huge, and while they are not all getting rich by any means, they are still more likely to receive or generate recognition and publicity from the white blues establishment. Only certain black artists—those with record labels and booking agents that can effectively promote them to white audiences—get the same

> degree of attention in the blues society/festival world. Black artists often don't have the same familiarity, access or connections to receive or generate the same kind of promotion within this system. And there is a natural human tendency for people from one social, ethnic or cultural group to identify most strongly with members of the same group, so young and middle-aged white audiences like to hear music from young and middle-aged white musicians. Not exclusively, of course, but I think the '60s/'70s generations of white blues listeners were more open and attuned to appreciating black blues music and culture than are the more recent generations. Black singers are still successful with black audiences on the southern soul-blues circuit but only *Living Blues* and a few other publications even cover this segment of the blues. It's rare to read about these singers, and most local traditional and contemporary black blues artists, in blues magazines and newsletters other than *Living Blues* and some of the foreign magazines (including *ABS Magazine* from France, *Juke Blues* and *Blues & Rhythm* from England, *Real Blues* from Canada, and *Jefferson* from Sweden) (E-mail 15 Nov. 2012).

My definitive awareness of *Living Blues*' cultural focus came during the Crescent City Festival on October 15, 2011, when I witnessed first-hand the phenomenon that O'Neal described. Blues-rock guitarist Kenny Wayne Shepherd was the headliner, and he, along with soul-blues singer Mel Waiters, closed out the second day of the event. Waiters played the penultimate slot, which ended at 6:45 pm; Shepherd's set began immediately after on the opposite stage across Lafayette Square Park.

One feature of the Crescent City Festival—a production of the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Foundation—is its oral history stage. Both Waiters and Shepherd participated, and I was able to interact briefly with them after their interviews. Waiters is an amiable, gracious man; his interviewer, Scott Barretta, had brought along some extra copies of *LB* #188 (February 2007, which features Barretta's cover story on Waiters) for the singer to sign. Barretta gave me one of these, which Waiters autographed for me, and I noticed that the same issue included an "*LB* Talks To . . ." interview with Shepherd. I obtained Shepherd's autograph on the issue as well, but as his audience was much larger I was unable to speak with him.

Later that evening, I attended and photographed both sets. Waiters' stage show included horn players and backing singers dressed in matching outfits; their moves were choreographed, and Waiters himself projects an easygoing stage presence. At one point, I sat down in the photographer's pit to rest, and glanced over my shoulder at the crowd. Nearly every face behind me was African American, and I realized that until that point, I had never experienced a blues performance with an African American audience.

As soon as Waiters' set was over, Shepherd's began on the other side of the park. I dashed across so as not to miss my chance to photograph him; though I had been able to take unlimited shots of Waiters, I was only allowed the first three songs to photograph Shepherd. A guitar prodigy, Shepherd's songs were high-energy and loud—a complete departure from what I had heard from Waiters. Before I exited the pit, I made a point of checking out his (much larger) audience—nearly every face was white.

Both Waiters' and Shepherd's music are described and marketed as blues, yet one could not be more different from the other. Likewise, their audiences, each of whom would describe themselves as blues fans, might not necessarily view the other artist's music as blues. I realized then that there is no monolithic blues culture, but rather different blues *cultures*. As LeRoi Jones stated in *Blues People*, "reference determines value," and Waiters' music, understood as blues by African Americans, is less visible to the general public than Shepherd's (7). *Living Blues*' focus on blues music as African American culture provides a space for the recognition of artists like Waiters, ensuring that their voices are heard.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adelt, Ulrich. *Blues Music in the Sixties: A Story in Black and White*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2010. Print.

Barretta, Scott. Personal interview. 15 Sept. 2012.

Boggs, Carl, and Ray Pratt. "The Blues Tradition: Poetic Revolt or Cultural Impasse?" *American Media and Mass Culture: Left Perspectives*. Ed. Donald Lazere. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987. 279-292. Print.

Bonner, Brett. Personal interview. 16 Sept. 2010.

---. Personal interview. 27 Jul. 2012.

---. Personal interview. 24 Oct. 2012.

Bowman, Rob. "Who is Bettye LaVette?" *Bettye LaVette—The Official Website*. Bettye LaVette, 2011. Web. 14 Oct. 2012. <http://www.bettyelavette.com/Biography/biography.html>.

Charters, Samuel. *The Poetry of the Blues*. New York: Avon, 1963. Print.

Choice, Harriet. "All about blues: No whites on a black background." *Chicago Tribune* 19 Aug. 1973: E12. *ProQuest*. Web. 15 Oct. 2012.

Coles, Robert. *Doing Documentary Work*. 1997. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998. Print.

Cone, James H. *The Spirituals and the Blues: An Interpretation.* 1972. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2004. Print.

Davis, Francis. *The History of the Blues: The Roots, the Music, the People.* 1995. Boston: Da Capo Press, 2003. Print.

"Documenting the Blues." *Mississippi Blues Trail*. Mississippi Blues Commission, n.d. Web. 28 Oct. 2012. http://www.msbluestrail.org/blues-trail-markers/documenting-the-blues>.

Erlewine, Michael. "The Ann Arbor Blues Festival: A Brief History." *Blues in Black & White: The Landmark Ann Arbor Blues Festivals as Photographed by Stanley Livingston*. Stanley Livingston and Michael Erlewine. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2010. 1-23. Print.

Evans, David. "Goin' Up the Country: Blues in Texas and the Deep South." *Nothing But the Blues: The Music and the Musicians*. Ed. Lawrence Cohn. 1st paperback edition. New York: Abbeville Press, 1993. 32-85. Print.

Ferris, William. Personal interview. 5 Oct. 2012

Filene, Benjamin. *Romancing the Folk: Public Memory and American Roots Music*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000. Print.

"Freedom Village." *Mississippi Blues Trail*. Mississippi Blues Commission, n.d. Web. 27 Oct. 2012. <http://www.msbluestrail.org/blues-trail-markers/freedom-village>.

Garon, Paul. *Blues and the Poetic Spirit*. 1975. San Francisco: City Lights, 1996. Print.

---. "Paul *LB* History." Message to the author. 3 Apr. 2011. E-mail.

---. "White Blues." *Race Traitor* 4 (Winter 1995). Web. 19 Oct. 2012. <http://racetraitor.org/blues.html>.

Gerard, Charley. *Jazz in Black and White: Race, Culture, and Identity in the Jazz Community*. Westport: Praeger Publishers, 1998.

Glenn, Alan. "Singin' the Ann Arbor Blues." *Ann Arbor Chronicle*. 27 Aug. 2009. Web. 17 Oct. 2012. <http://annarborchronicle.com/2009/08/27/column-singin-the-ann-arbor-blues/>.

Gioia, Ted. *Delta Blues: The Life and Times of the Mississippi Masters Who Revolutionized American Music*. 2008. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2009. Print.

Grazian, David. *Blue Chicago: The Search for Authenticity in Urban Blues Clubs*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003. Print.

Guralnick, Peter. *Feel Like Going Home: Portraits in Blues and Rock 'n' Roll*. 1971. New York: Harper & Row, 1989. Print.

---. "Foreword." *The Voice of the Blues: Classic Interviews from* Living Blues *Magazine*. Jim O'Neal and Amy van Singel, eds. New York: Routledge, 2002. Print.

---. "Introduction." *Between Midnight and Day: The Last Unpublished Blues Archive*. Dick Waterman. New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 2003. 13-14. Print.

Gussow, Adam. "'If Bessie Smith Had Killed Some White People': Racial Legacies, the Blues Revival, and the Black Arts Movement." *New Thoughts on the Black Arts Movement*. Lisa Gail Collins and Margo Natalie Crawford, eds. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2008. 227-252. Print.

Herzhaft, Gérard. *Encyclopedia of the Blues*. 2nd ed. Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1997. Print.

"Howlin' Wolf." *Mississippi Blues Trail*. Mississippi Blues Commission, n.d. Web. 24 Sept. 2012. <http://msbluestrail.org/blues-trail-markers/howlin-wolf>.

Humphrey, Mark A. "Holy Blues: The Gospel Tradition." *Nothing But the Blues: The Music and the Musicians*. Ed. Lawrence Cohn. 1st paperback edition. New York: Abbeville Press, 1993. 107-149. Print.

Iglauer, Bruce. "RE: Attn: Bruce Iglauer—interview request re *Living Blues*." Message to the author. 27 Mar. 2011. E-mail.

---. "RE: *Living Blues* thesis—one more question." Message to the author. 8 Oct. 2012. E-mail.

---. "RE: *Living Blues* thesis—one more question." Message to the author. 11 Oct. 2012. E-mail.

"Jimi Hendrix Biography." *The Official Jimi Hendrix Website*. Experience Hendrix, L. L. C., 2012. Web. 13 Oct. 2012. <http://www.jimihendrix.com/us/jimi>.

"Jimmie Rodgers." *Mississippi Blues Trail*. Mississippi Blues Commission, n. d. Web. 14 Oct. 2012. <http://msbluestrail.org/blues-trail-markers/jimmie-rodgers>.

"Jimmie Rodgers." *Mississippi Country Music Trail*. Mississippi Country Music Trail, n. d. Web. 14 Oct. 2012. <http://www.mscountrymusictrail.org/markers/jimmie-rodgers>.

Jones, LeRoi. *Blues People*: *Negro Music in White America.* New York: HarperCollins, 1999. Print.

Keil, Charles. *Urban Blues*. 1966. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991. Print.

Narváez, Peter. "*Living Blues* Journal: The Paradoxical Aesthetics of the Blues Revival." *Transforming Tradition: Folk Music Revivals Examined.* Ed. Neil V. Rosenberg. Urbana: University of Chicago Press, 1993. 241-257. Print.

Neal, Larry. "The Black Arts Movement." *The Drama Review* 12.4 (Summer 1968): 28-39. *JSTOR*. Web. 18 Oct. 2012.

Nelson, David. Personal interview. 15 Apr. 2010.

O'Neal, Jim, and Amy van Singel, eds. *The Voice of the Blues: Classic Interviews from* Living Blues *Magazine*. New York: Routledge, 2002. Print.

---. “Ann Arbor: A Rite of Passage.” *Blues in Black & White: The Landmark Ann Arbor Blues Festivals as Photographed by Stanley Livingston*. Stanley Livingston and Michael Erlewine. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2010. Print.

---. “RE: Thesis interview questions pt 1.” Message to the author. 12 Oct. 2012. E-mail.

---. “*LB* questions Part 2.” Message to the author. 27 Oct. 2012. E-mail.

---. “Another comment on *LB*.” Message to the author. 15 Nov. 2012. E-mail.

---. “Re: Another comment on *LB*.” Message to the author. 16 Nov. 2012. E-mail.

---. “Thesis notes—intro & chapter 1.” Message to the author. 16 Nov. 2012. E-mail.

---. “Notes on thesis.” Message to the author. 28 Nov. 2012. E-mail.

---. “The Voice of the Blues.” *BluEsoterica.* Jim O’Neal, n. d. Web. 11 Oct. 2012. <http://66.203.147.88/bluesoterica/voice.asp>.

---. “Welcome.” *BluEsoterica.* Jim O’Neal, n. d. Web. 28 Oct. 2012. <http://66.203.147.88/bluesoterica/index.asp>.

---. “O’Neal-University of Mississippi Memorandum of Agreement.” 1983. PDF file.

---. “O’Neal-University of Mississippi Archive Deed of Gift.” 1983. PDF file.

Pearson, Barry Lee. *Jook Right On: Blues Stories and Blues Storytellers*. Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2005. Print.

Senkowsky, Sonya. “Q & A: Blues author’s road to recognition leads from fandom to Lincoln Center.” *Alaska Writers Homestead*. AlaskaWriter LLC, 2004. Web. 12 Oct. 2012. <http://www.alaskawriters.com/vansingel.html>.

Sepulvedo, Larry, and John Burks. “Texas.” *Rolling Stone*. 7 Dec. 1968. 16-19. Print.

Shurman, Dick. “RE: The blues magazine that would have been.” Message to the author. 16 Nov. 2012. E-mail.

Sullivan, Mary Lou. *Raisin’ Cain: The Wild and Raucous Story of Johnny Winter*. New York: Backbeat Books, 2010. Print.

Tracy, Steven C., ed. *Write Me a Few of Your Lines: A Blues Reader*. Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1999. Print.

Van Singel, Amy. Personal interview. 9 Oct. 2012.

---. “Boot Camp Typesetting or The Alternative Press and Living the Funky Blues.” ts. Unpublished, n. d. Author’s private collection. Print.

---. “RE: *Living Blues* Thesis Interview?” Message to the author. 10 Oct. 2012. E-mail.

Wald, Elijah. *Escaping the Delta: Robert Johnson and the Invention of the Blues*. 2004. New York: Amistad/HarperCollins Publishers, 2005. Print.

“Watermelon Slim—Artist Biography.” *Watermelon Slim Online*. Watermelon Slim, 2010. Web. 14 Oct. 2010. <http://www.watermelonslim.com/slimband.asp>.

Wirz, Stefan. “Howlin’ Wolf Discography.” *American Music*. Stefan Wirz, 28 June 2012. Web. 6 Dec. 2012. <http://www.wirz.de/music/howlwfrm.htm>.

Wolfe, Charles. “A Lighter Shade of Blue: White Country Blues.” *Nothing But the Blues: The Music and the Musicians*. Ed. Lawrence Cohn. 1st paperback edition. New York: Abbeville Press, 1993. 233-263. Print.

VITA

MELANIE YOUNG

EDUCATION

B. A., English Literature, University of Southern Mississippi, 2008

EXPERIENCE

Contributing Writer and Photographer, 2009 – present
Living Blues Magazine
University of Mississippi

Circulation Manager, 2009 – 2010
Living Blues Magazine
University of Mississippi

Co-Producer and Engineer, 2009 – 2010
Highway 61 Radio
UM Media and Documentary Projects, University of Mississippi
Mississippi Public Broadcasting

Intern, 2008 – 2009
Dick Waterman Photography
Oxford, Mississippi