

Hill Country Picnic 2010

Document\_type [log]

Date 25 June 2010

Audio file [burnside\_cedric\_and\_lightning\_malcolm.wav]

[0:00:33] Cedric describes how he grew up listening to R.L.'s music (with other of R.L.'s grandchildren) during parties on the porch. He cannot explain why the Northern sound is so different, but explains that people really enjoy the music and dance to it.

[0:01:18] Malcolm explains that the Hill Country sound is different because it comes out of the country. This makes it different from "city music." Country music has different rhythms and is about "driving down backroads." It stays closer to its roots because it is still played in neighborhoods and homes. People played it at barbecues and it was not about the money. They played the type of music they loved and made them have a good time. The rest of the world caught on and labeled it Hill Country, but before that it was "roots music."

[0:02:24] Cedric explains that the Hill Country blues sounds different from other types of blues and has a different rhythm. He can't explain why Hill Country blues took so long to catch on especially when R.L. had been playing for so long, but he thanks G-d that it did catch on eventually.

[0:03:46] Malcolm explains that it finally caught on because music is popular in cycles. He asserts that blues is always present even though it is usually not best-selling. He thinks it caught on, in part, because R.L. toured extensively throughout the world. Like Cedric, he believes that the Hill Country blues catching on when it did was "better late than never." He feels that he is part of a younger generation that is keeping the Hill Country blues alive.

[0:05:04] Cedric doesn't know why more young black kids don't listen to the blues. He shares how when he was younger, his friends used to ask him why he liked the blues. He told his friends that he thought that he "was the blues." His friends would be reluctant to come to juke joints and listen to the blues, but when he managed to persuade them to come, his friends loved the music and came back almost every weekend. He reasserts that he doesn't know why more young people don't listen to the blues, but explains that when they hear it, they often like it.

[0:06:12] Malcolm talks about how he met some "forty-year-old ladies" whose talked to him and told him how their thirteen-year-old kids love his music. He asserts that young people just need to be exposed to and hear blues. He mentions that the majority of kids don't hear blues.

[0:07:07] Malcolm explains how he sometimes plays differently depending on the race of the audience. He mentions how if he is playing R.L.'s music he can "stretch more off-beat" for a white audience, while he has to "stay right on beat" for a black audience or they will "throw you out."

[0:07:27] (In response to a question about whether he plays differently depending on the race of the audience:) Cedric says that people who have listened to the music over time and came to R.L.'s picnics will notice if you mess the music up. He explains that when he and Malcolm started playing together (almost six years ago) they usually played to white audiences, yet more recently they have been attracting more blacks.

[0:09:34] Malcolm explains that the North Mississippi sound owes a lot to its country setting. He asserts that it is different from city blues, because in the cities there are no porches or yard parties where artists could get raw. He goes on to say that when you live on a farm you can play all day and your kids can learn from you. He asserts that over time this develops into a style. The city is more formal because to play you have to “rent a rehearsal space.” In the country you have barbecues and play all day.

[0:10:17] Cedric discusses how he likes Chicago bluesmen like Muddy Waters, Buddy Guy and explains how they are examples of how “you can take me out of Mississippi, but you can’t take Mississippi out of me.” While they went to Chicago, they still had the Mississippi rhythm and Mississippi blues. They thus exposed Mississippi to Chicago. Cedric explains how he has always enjoyed Mississippi and exclaims that he wouldn’t leave Mississippi for “nothing in the world.” While he has been to many “beautiful places” he “loves” Mississippi and wouldn’t leave.

[0:11:50] Malcolm explains that, in the past, North Mississippi’s isolation may have contributed to a unique sound, but now, there’s “internet in the cottonfields,” so the area is no longer ‘isolated.’ People from all over the world may love the Hill Country sound more than your “neighbor” does. People “with it” sometimes don’t appreciate it as much.

[0:13:40] Cedric explains how he and his uncle, Garry Burnside, used to play at “the juke joint” when he was 10 and Garry was 11. They would play with David Kimbrough, Kenny Kimbrough, but sometimes when the Kimbroughs were late, Cedric and Garry would fill in with the band despite their young age (they would often be hid from the police). Cedric explains how he grew up on the Hill Country blues and calls it his “heart, soul, and bones...[his] life.”

[0:14:34] Malcolm explains how he grew up in a whole different neighborhood and listened to all kinds of music. Yet, he stresses how important the music from the Hill Country was and is to him. His own music is based on the music he grew up on and what he learned from major figures like R.L. (who taught him how to play and how to be a good man) and R.L.’s sons Daniel and Joseph. He calls R.L. and his son’s sound “brand-new old-school.” He also discusses how he learned from David and Kenny Kimbrough and Duwayne and Garry Burnside. He mentions how those guys back each other up with the perfect sound. He ends by saying that the North Mississippi sound is very influential on many people.

[0:15:39] Interview ends.