

Guidelines for what constitutes “Blues” music.

Blues genre is a sound, a style, a spirit.

Guidelines for expressions of interest – Launceston Blues Club Inc. Gigs

1. These are based on the Rules for International Blues Challenges:
 - 1.1 The sound and feel of the music should be true to any of the blues sub categories: Traditional blues, country blues, southern soul blues, blues/rock and contemporary blues
 - 1.2 New takes on old blues standards(for examples of what might qualify as a “blues standard” see appendix)
 - 1.3 New originals that reflect a blues background.

Blues as African/American music traverses a wide range of emotions and musical styles. “Feeling Blue” is expressed in songs whose verses lament injustice or express a longing for a better life and lost loves, jobs and money.

“Ain’t but one kind of blues and that consists of a male and female that’s in love” Son House (Mentor to Robert Johnson and Muddy Waters)

APPENDIX

Identifying Blues Music

1. Familiar “blue notes” Flatted third and seventh notes
2. Three lines in AAB verse form
3. Characteristic use of familiar chord progression (12 bar structure)
4. Strong 4/4 rhythm

Types of “blues” music

1. **Classic blues** – driven by 1920’s female stars like, Memphis Minnie, Ma Rainey and Bessie Smith who generally operated in jazz style combos.
2. **Country blues 1920’s on from the Delta, Texas, and Piedmont in southeast.** Male dominated guitar, piano, harmonica, primitive percussion. Blind Lemon Jefferson, Blind Boy Fuller, Charley Patton, Son House, Robert Johnson. Texas blues was a style that usually had more jazz/swing than other styles. Blind Lemon Jefferson was a major exponent of this style. Singers like Blind Willie Johnson and then future bluesmen like Lightin’ Hopkins, T Bone Walker, Mercy Dee Walton, Frankie Lee Sims, Bessie Tucker and Big Mama Thornton emerged. The 1950’s spawned electric Texas blues of Johnny Copeland, Albert Collins and in 1960’s and 70’s Johnny and Edgar Winter, Jimmie Vaughan and Fabulous Thunderbirds, and Stevie Ray Vaughan and Double Trouble, Marcia Ball and Lou Ann Barton
3. **Jump/Swing blues up tempo style consisting of a heavy insistent beat (Boogie Woogie).** Popular in 1940’s as precursor to R and B and Rock and Roll. Artists like

Louis Jordan, Big Jo Turner, T Bone Walker, Joe Jackson, Brian Setzer, Nellie Lutcher, Rhythm Rockets, Casey Hensley, Gina De Simone and the Moaners, and Rick Estrin and Nightcats.

4. **Chicago blues.** Electrified blues from a Delta blues background. Artists like Howlin' Wolf, Muddy Waters, Buddy Guy, Otis Rush, Willie Dixon, Koko Taylor, Bonnie "Bombshell" Lee, Mary Lane and Big Time Sarah.
5. **Classic Southern Soul** – southern states of the U.S. originated as a combination of styles, blues (12 bar and jump), country, early rock and roll, strong gospel influence. Artists like, Ray Charles, Bobby "Blue" Bland, Allen Toussaint, Booker T and MG's, Eugene Hideaway Bridges, Staple Singers, Mavis Staples, Candy Staton, Vick Allen, Millie Jackson, Denise La Salle, Etta James and Aretha Franklin.
6. **Contemporary Blues** draws on traditional and electric blues. Offers a more smoothed-out-take on the genre that incorporates influences of rock, pop, R&B and/or folk. As such, contemporary blues is most often (though not always) electric, and rarely(though once in a while), purist. Definitely soulful but not quite as earthy or as gritty as the music that pre-dates it. It is not as aggressive or fiery as modern day electric blues from Chicago, Texas and beyond (Blues/Rock).

Artists in the Contemporary category include Robert Cray, Keb Mo, Kenny Wayne Shephard, Ruthie Foster, Shemika Copeland, Bonnie Raitt, Heather Gillis, Tedeschi/Trucks Band, Taj Mahal, Deborah Coleman, John Hammond Jnr, Sonny Landreth, Gary Clarke Jnr, Robben Ford, Harry Manx.

Artists in the Blues/Rock category include the earlier British invasion – Cream/Eric Clapton, Animals, Rolling Stones, Yardbirds, John Mayall's Blues Breakers and the Original Fleetwood Mac. Later examples might include: Allman Brothers Band, Janis Joplin, Stevie Ray Vaughan, ZZ Top, Gary Moore, Canned Heat, Doors, Jimi Hendrix, Rory Gallagher, Beth Hart, Joe Bonamassa, Jack White, Black Keys, Ana Popovic, Samantha Fish, Larkin Poe, Danielle Nicole, A.J. Ghent and Kris Barras Band.

Blues Standards – this is not an exhaustive list

Ain't Nobody's Business- Anna Meyers and the Original Memphis Five

All Your Love- Otis Rush

As the Years Go Passing By- Gary Moore

Baby Please Don't Go- Big Joe Williams

Big Boss Man- Jimmy Reed

Boom, Boom – John Lee Hooker

Born in Chicago- Paul Butterfield Blues Band

Born Under a Bad Sign- Albert King

Caldonia- Louis Jordan

Help Me - Sonny Boy Williamson 11

I'm a King Bee- Slim Harpo

I'm Ready- Muddy Waters

I'm the Hoochie Coochie Man – Muddy Waters

I'm Tore Down- Freddie King

Killing Floor – Howlin' Wolf

Pride and Joy- Stevie Ray Vaughan

Red House- Jimi Hendrix

Rock me Baby- B.B. King.

See See Rider- Ma Rainey

Sky is Crying- Elmore James

Spoonful- Howlin' Wolf

Stormy Monday- T Bone Walker

Sweet Home Chicago – Robert Johnson

That's Alright- Jimmy Rogers

The Thrill is Gone – B.B. King

Trouble in Mind- Bertha "Chippie" Hill

Ball and Chain – Big Mama Thornton

Nobody Knows You When You're Down and Out- Bessie Smith

If you want to hear examples of a “new take or a change from the original” – some of the above fit that category, for example “As the Years Go Passing By” originally recorded and released by Fenton Robertson in 1959. Some current examples:-

Harry Manx – Baby Please Don't Go, Sitting on Top of the World

Jack White – Death Letter Blues (original Son House)

In parting the late great Willie Dixon had a good handle on what the “Blues” was

“.....the blues are the roots – the other musics are the fruits.....”