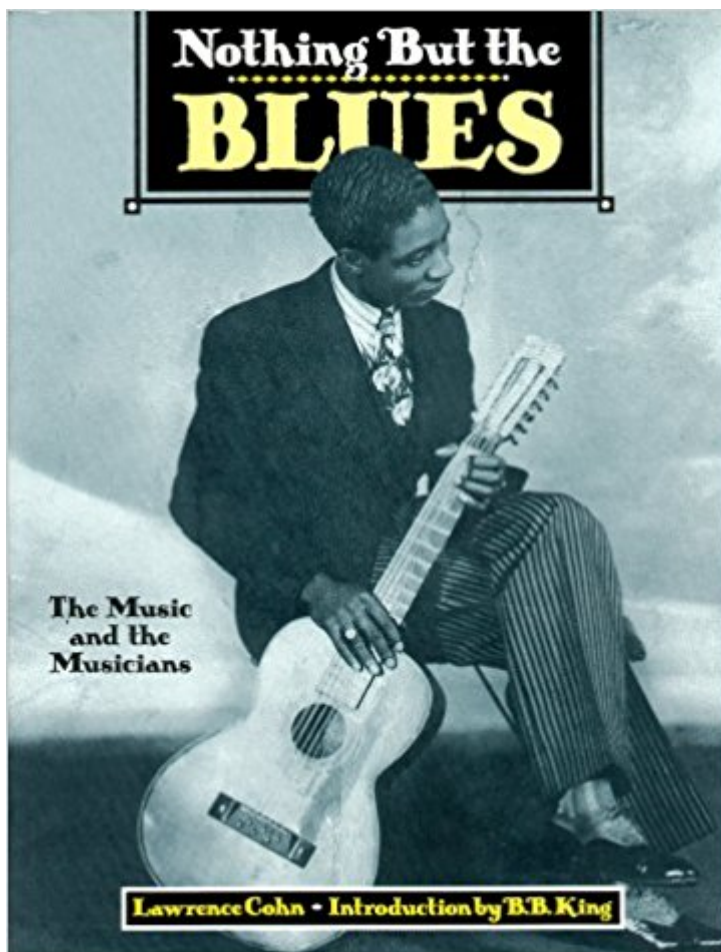


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# Nothing But The Blues: The Music And The Musicians



## Synopsis

Like Abbeville's "Country: The Music and the Musicians", "Nothing but the Blues" is an illustrated, comprehensive history of music and musicians, also covering promoters, producers and others who have shaped this powerful and enduringly popular American musical art form. A "guide to the best" discography is included at the back of the book which will appeal to blues fans and record collectors. Tracing its origins to slave-era work songs and "hollers", blues is more popular than it has ever been. Larry Cohn, principal author of "Nothing but the Blues", is the producer of a five-year CBS/Sony Music historical reissue of classic blues recordings. The first two-CD set in the series, featuring the music of blues "father" Robert Johnson, earned Cohn a Grammy. While country music commands a large but unfocused audience, the blues draws on a more concentrated and committed audience, many of them avid blues recording collectors, who subscribe to scores of blues-oriented publications. In 12 essays commissioned specially for the book, "Nothing but the Blues" traces the African American origins of the music, its early development as popular entertainment, its first recordings, its regional differentiation, its many stylistic dimensions, and its contemporary manifestations. County blues, urban blues, Cajun and Zydeco influences, the evolution of rhythm and blues, rock 'n' roll, and the blues revival are all fully covered.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In this extensively illustrated, comprehensive volume, Grammy-winning CD producer Cohn provides an elegant pictorial and intellectual history. In the first of 11 essays, Samuel Charters writes on the

roots of the blues; in others, David Evans digs into Texas and Deep South blues and Mark A. Humphrey examines the gospel and urban traditions of the blues. Bruce Basti, Jim O'Neal and Mary Katherine Aldin are among the writers covering such topics as white country blues, the 1960s blues revival and the blues today. Richard K. Spottswood offers an excellent essay on women and the blues. The 325 illustrations include Leadbelly's NYPD rap sheet, recording contracts and rare historic photos of blues performers making their music. Cohen does full justice to this rich and vibrant chapter of American musical history. Copyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc.

This compilation of 11 articles, edited by Grammy Award-winning blues producer Cohn, examines the beginnings and progress of the blues. The book starts with a penetrating essay by noted blues writer Samuel Charters, who investigates the origins of the blues. It follows with chapters that clearly, extensively, and intelligently describe early blues in the Deep South and Texas, women and the blues, urban blues, the Sixties blues revival, and such often-neglected aspects of the blues tradition as gospel, Piedmont regional blues, white country blues, and the role of music researchers like John and Alan Lomax. Only chapters about the current blues scene and rhythm and blues offer disappointingly superficial treatment. Lavishly illustrated, well researched, and written in a lively style, this book should become a standard on the topic for both the general public and scholars. Recommended for most collections. The publisher is releasing a limited edition of this work that includes a compact disc.--Ed.- David Szatmary, Univ. of Washington, Seattle Copyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc.

We were looking for some background information of old time blues performers and their music and found this book, lovingly used but in great condition, and what a find! This goes waaaay back and talks about so many great people and the areas where the blues was born. Since reading we have been able to make a few purchases of great blues musicians (on , they have everything!) like Blind Lemon Jefferson, Leroy Carr, Dr. Ross, and so many more. It's so great to now have such a valuable reference book so we can look up song titles and see who wrote/who recorded them. Would recommend this to anyone who wants to learn more about this national "treasure" of music and musicians.

Short review: This is an excellent over-view of the blues. It provides some technical information and rich detail, but it is still very readable. I have one criticism. A section on British Blues and 1960s/70s blues rock in the US, UK, and Australia should have been included. Some of the best blues songs

of the era (for example, Hendrix's Red House) were a part of this development of the blues.

An excellent book. Lost original copy so owned it even though I had read it. Would make a great coffee book as its loaded with pictures along with excellent narrative.

A pretty comprehensive history of the blues with many interesting photographs. I sometimes skipped around to escape endless facts. Overall enjoyable and interesting.

If you ever want to know if a blues musician is worth their weight, check the index of this book. Every major blues musician is mentioned in this book. A must own if you enjoy music.

When I ordered this book, they said it was a so-so condition and it was fairly cheap. When it arrived, on-time, it looked brand-new and it also has that brand-new book smell.

This is a very enjoyable read. While fundamentally a blues history book, the chapters are organized topically along lines that will make sense to any blues enthusiast, and there are lots of pictures that (for me, anyway) help to cement the content in memory. Shots of musicians and albums pepper almost every last page. Comments on individual albums and songs, short anecdotes, and quotes keep the text moving at a brisk pace. Chapters cover the topics of roots, Texas and Deep South blues, women in the blues, gospel influences, urban blues, East Coast and Piedmont blues, a chapter on the various "field trips" taken by several people to record early blues, the roots of R&B, and blues today. The individual chapters were written by different authors, variously ranging from academics to blues publication writers. The material hangs together extraordinarily well, though - to the point where the differing authorship is hardly noticeable, in the best intended sense. Unusual for most blues titles is also in-depth coverage of white blues, including commentary of the cross-overs between country music, particularly early country music, and the blues. The book includes a discography and bibliography. I would have really liked to have had some commentary with both, however, as they are pretty simplistic listings. For perspective on individual recordings, you'll have to go elsewhere. I use the "All Music Guide to the Blues" - *All Music Guide to the Blues: The Definitive Guide to the Blues*. As B.B. King says in his short introduction - this is a "loving presentation" of the blues. This is not a deep dive into controversies or academic arguments over roots and development. Rather, it focuses on sub-genres, artists themselves, labels, and recording and entertainment history. I'd recommend it anyone looking for perspective across the entire genre.

Every once in awhile a book comes along that can virtually answer all your questions and at the same time incorporate stories on artists both obscure and well-known...that keeps you from putting it down [very difficult for a book that can be considered a reference work].The pictures included alone are well worth the price of the book. Many of them rare and never seen before by many of the blues fans who would be interested in this work. If you are going to have one book in your home library on Blues....this is the one to have. Tom tkdp@castle.net

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