

## Impact of the Blues on Other Forms of Popular Music

Blues musical styles, forms (12-bar blues), melodies, and the blues scale have influenced many other genres of music, such as rock and roll, jazz, and popular music.<sup>[127]</sup> Prominent jazz, folk or rock performers, such as **Louis Armstrong**, **Duke Ellington**, **Miles Davis**, and **Bob Dylan** have performed significant blues recordings. The blues scale is often used in popular songs like **Harold Arlen's** “Blues in the Night”, blues ballads like “Since I Fell for You” and “Please Send Me Someone to Love”, and even in orchestral works such as **George Gershwin's** “Rhapsody in Blue” and “Concerto in F”. Gershwin's second “Prelude” for solo piano is an interesting example of a classical blues, maintaining the form with academic strictness. The blues scale is ubiquitous in modern popular music and informs many modal frames, especially the ladder of thirds used in rock music (for example, in “A Hard Day's Night”).

Early country bluesmen such as **Skip James**, **Charley Patton**, **Georgia Tom Dorsey** played country and urban blues and had influences from spiritual singing. Dorsey helped to popularize Gospel music.<sup>[128]</sup> Gospel music developed in the 1930s, with the **Golden Gate Quartet**. In the 1950s, soul music by **Sam Cooke**, **Ray Charles** and **James Brown** used gospel and blues music elements. In the 1960s and 1970s, gospel and blues were these merged in soul blues music. Funk music of the 1970s was influenced by soul; funk can be seen as an antecedent of hip-hop and contemporary R&B.

R&B [Rhythm & Blues] music can be traced back to spirituals and blues. Musically, spirituals were a descendant of **New England** choral traditions, and in particular of **Isaac Watts's** hymns, mixed with African rhythms and call-and-response forms. Spirituals or religious chants in the African-American community are much better documented than the “low-down” blues. Spiritual singing developed because African-American communities could gather for mass or worship gatherings, which were called camp meetings.

Edward P. Comentale has noted how the blues was often used as a medium for art or self-expression, stating: “As heard from Delta shacks to Chicago tenements to Harlem cabarets, the blues proved—despite its pained origins—a remarkably flexible medium and a new arena for the shaping of identity and community.”<sup>[129]</sup>

**Duke Ellington** straddled the big band and bebop genres. Ellington extensively used the blues form.<sup>[130]</sup>

Before **World War II**, the boundaries between blues and jazz were less clear. Usually jazz had harmonic structures stemming from brass bands, whereas blues



had blues forms such as the 12-bar blues. However, the jump blues of the 1940s mixed both styles. After WWII, blues had a substantial influence on jazz. **Bebop** classics, such as **Charlie Parker's** "Now's the Time", used the blues form with the pentatonic scale and blue notes.

Bebop marked a major shift in the role of jazz, from a popular style of music for dancing, to a "high-art," less-accessible, cerebral "musician's music". The audience for both blues and jazz split, and the border between blues and jazz became more defined.<sup>[130][131]</sup>

The blues' 12-bar structure and the blues scale was a major influence on **rock and roll** music. Rock and roll has been called "blues with a **backbeat**"; **Carl Perkins** called **rockabilly** "blues with a **country** beat". Rockabillyies were also said to be 12-bar blues played with a **bluegrass** beat. "**Hound Dog**", with its unmodified 12-bar structure (in both harmony and lyrics) and a melody centered on flatted third of the tonic (and flatted seventh of the subdominant), is a blues song transformed into a rock and roll song. **Jerry Lee Lewis's** style of rock and roll was heavily influenced by the blues and its derivative boogie-woogie. His style of music was not exactly rockabilly but it has been often called real rock and roll (this is a label he shares with several African American rock and roll performers).<sup>[132][133]</sup>

Many early rock and roll songs are based on blues: "**That's All Right Mama**," "**Johnny B. Goode**," "**Blue Suede Shoes**," "**Whole Lotta Shakin' Goin' On**," "**Shake, Rattle, and Roll**," and "**Long Tall Sally**." The 12-bar blues structure can be found even in novelty pop songs, such as **Bob Dylan's** "**Obviously Five Believers**" and **Esther and Abi Ofarim's** "**Cinderella Rockefella**."

Early country music was infused with the blues.<sup>[134]</sup> **Jimmie Rodgers**, **Moon Mullican**, **Bob Wills**, **Bill Monroe** and **Hank Williams** have all described themselves as blues singers and their music has a blues feel that is different to the country pop of **Eddy Arnold**. A lot of the 1970s-era "outlaw" country music by **Willie Nelson** and **Waylon Jennings** also borrowed from the blues. When **Jerry Lee Lewis** returned to country after the decline of 1950s style rock and roll, he sang his country with a blues feel and often included blues standards on his albums.

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