



## Evolution of Blues through the decades

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### I. INTRODUCTION

Speaking on the evolution or the cultural evolution of music, there is always a starting point for something.

With the understanding we now possess of music, we will define it broadly in order to better understand our introduction. Music is a form of art, its a combination of various melody's, harmony's, rhythms etc. It is a form of entertainment that binds people together and mostly includes people singing or playing instruments.

#### Where do the roots begin?

The early decades of music, spanning roughly from the late 1800s to the early 1900s, marked a period of immense experimentation and innovation in the world of music. Several significant technological developments during this time period, such as the invention of the phonograph, contributed to the popularisation and increased accessibility of music. Classical music, which had been popular for centuries before to the development of modern technology, was one of the earliest and most significant genres of music at this time.

Some of this era's well known composers even till this day and age, such as ,Beethoven, Mozart, and Bach, were known for their detailed compositions and complex musical arrangements, which helped to shape the sound of classical music for future generations. As we went forward in time(19th century) alot of new styles of music began to emerge

"Blues & Jazz" The blues was a form of music that was borm from the African American experience and helped pave the way for many other musical genres in the upcoming decades. Even jazz was a popular form of music during this time with artists like the well know Louis Armstrong & Duke Ellington paving the way for new era of musical experimentation and creativity.

There were so many major developments . One of such developments was the rise of the Musical theater, which saw play writers and composers collabrating to create stage based productions that was a combination of music ,dance and storytelling overall the early decades of music was a time of tremendous innovation and change in the world of music. It spread from from classical music to the blues to jazz and beyond, this was the period where different music styles and forms would go on to shape the sound and spirit of music from one generation to the generations to come.

Blues is both a melodic frame and a melodic class. Blues gets its title from its unique affiliation with despairing subjects and sounds: when we have 'the blues', we're feeling pitiful. Be that as it may, blues has since created to address other subjects and feelings, embracing a more extensive reason of 'chasing the blues away' with music.

The fundamental highlights of blues incorporate: particular chord movements, a strolling bass, call and reaction, noisy harmonies, syncopation, melisma and straightened 'blue' notes. Blues is known for being microtonal, utilizing pitches between the semitones characterized by a piano console. This is often frequently accomplished on electric guitar employing a metal slide for a crying impact. As a result, blues can be intensely chromatic.

Even though a lot has changed since those early years, the spirit of experimentation and originality that defined those years of music is still very much alive and well in the modern music scene.

### II. BLUES BEFORE THE 19TH CENTURY

The origins of the blues can be traced back to the early 19th century when African Americans began to create music that blended African rhythms and melodies with like harmonies and



instrumentation . But, it is important to note that the precursors to the blues existed before the 19th century.

It was the African American brought with them musical traditions from Africa that included call-and-response patterns, improvisation, and the use of percussion instruments such as drums and shakers. Such traditions were blended with the European musical traditions of their white slave owners, which resulted in the creation of spirituals, work songs, and other forms of African American music.

One example of a precursor to the blues is the field holler, which was a type of work song used by slaves to communicate with each other while working in the fields. The field holler basically consisted of a single line melody that was repeated over and over, often with improvised lyrics.

What is field hollering?

Field Hollers and Work Songs originated during the era of slavery primarily during the 1600's-1900's. These songs were apart of an oral culture so they had no set style or uniformity and soon came to be recorded as slavery came to an end. overall, while the blues as we know of today did not emerge until the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and its roots can be traced back to earlier African American musical traditions.

Blues started within the Profound South after the US Respectful War within the 19th century, advancing from the verbal convention of African American work melodies and spirituals, which highlighted the call-and-response designs that are still conspicuous in blues nowadays. It came into standard notoriety within the 1920s when it moreover created its common AAB verse pattern.

Blues melodies were centred around the torment of misfortune and bad form but too communicated the triumph in outlasting these difficult encounters. The music moreover started with a moderate beat that has since gotten to be speedier with its increment in ubiquity.

How did African Americans express their emotions & experiences through blues ?

It is a form of expression that emerged from the experiences of African Americans living in a segregated society and facing significant social and economic challenges.

One of blues' defining traits is its ability to convey intense emotion and personal experience. Blues

were used by African Americans to express their sadness, despair, and frustration, as well as their experiences with poverty, discrimination, and oppression. They created a unique form of music that spoke to the struggles and joys of their lives by using simple melodies and lyrics, often accompanied by a guitar, harmonica, or other instruments. The blues lyrics frequently deal with themes such as love, loss, betrayal, and struggle. I for one relate alot to these songs , as it has a lot of meaning and emotions behind it .

Growing up in a household which listen to blues ,jazz&rock'n'roll it kind of gets embedded into your sense of taste & preference in music. Ray Charles was one such artist who's songs would be played on a loop (espically " Hit The Road Jack)

Hit the road Jack and don't you come back  
No more, no more, no more, no more  
Hit the road Jack and don't you come back no more  
What you say?

//CHORUS

Hit the road Jack and don't you come back  
No more, no more, no more, no more  
Hit the road Jack and don't you come back no more

Then Charles comes in:

Old woman, old woman, don't treat me so mean  
You're the meanest old woman that I've ever seen  
I guess if you said so  
I'll have to pack my things and go (that's right!)

More chorus, and then Charles responds:

Now baby, listen baby, don't ya treat me this way  
'Cause I'll be back on my feet some day

The lead female voice sings:

(Don't care if you do 'cause it's understood)  
(You ain't got no money, you just ain't no good)

Then Charles:

Well, I guess if you say so  
I'll have to pack my things and go

So in the end, Charles, the singer, is not let back home. And the song ends with him begging and pleading for his chance to be let back in. It's a cathartic tune and one that has lasted in the proverbial consciousness of American—and global



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song appreciators—for decades and should continue to do so for much more time come.

Many blues songs include references to African American folklore, such as tales of the devil, hoodoo, and conjure. These references aided in the development of a sense of community and shared experience among African Americans, who were frequently isolated and marginalised from mainstream society.

More frequently than not, blues groups highlight the taking after rebellious: guitar (as a rule electric), drums, twofold bass (pizzicato), piano, saxophone and brass disobedient (regularly with quiets). This outfit as a rule goes with a driving vocalist, but they moreover have the opportunity for instrumental solos.

### **III. BLUES DURING THE 19<sup>TH</sup> CETURY**

The social and financial reasons for the appearance of the blues are not completely known. Blues has advanced from an unaccompanied vocal music of destitute dark laborers into a wide assortment of styles and subgenres, with territorial varieties over the Joined together States. African American work tunes were an vital antecedent to the cutting edge blues; these included the melodies sung by laborers like stevedores and roustabouts, and the field hollers and "yells" of slaves. The to begin with appearance of the blues isn't well characterized and is regularly dated between 1870 and 1900, a period that coincides with the liberation of the slaves and the move from servitude to sharecropping and small-scale agricultural generation within the southern Joined together States.