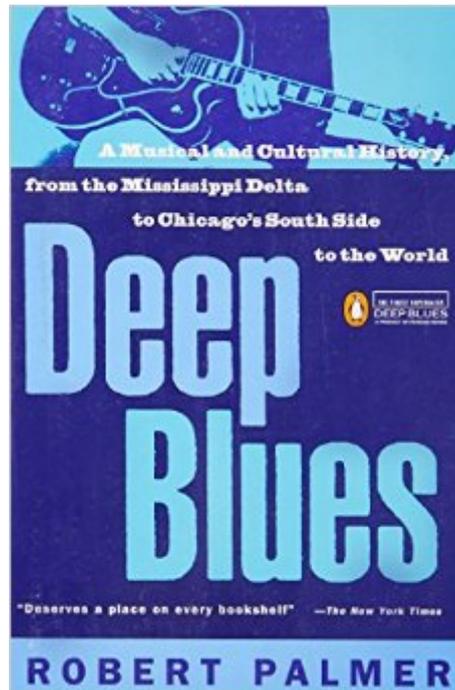


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Deep Blues: A Musical And Cultural History Of The Mississippi Delta



Synopsis

Music category type book. Paperback. Robert Palmer, Author. Lightly age toned pages. A Penguin Book. 1982 reprinted in 1988. Printed in USA. Total 310 pages. Approximate size, 5 x 7.75. Brown covers with pictorials of Blues singers, band on the front cover - one guy wearing a blue suit. Pages clean with no markings or tears. Spine is tight and straight. A nice book that is quite educational about the "Blues" singers! See our photo, not like the one is showing on the presentation. *8BC2

Book Information

Paperback: 320 pages

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Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (58 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

Palmer's love of the blues shines through in this exceptional book. He's not interested in showing off his knowledge of the form (although that knowledge is exceptional); he's interested in illuminating for the reader the roots of a great indigenous art form and how that form developed in the 20th century. In that effort, he succeeds masterfully. A fine early section explores how the music that we call the blues was seeded in N. America by African music. That chapter is a mini-history lesson in itself; Palmer shows how the music of slaves from W. Africa was viewed as subversive and dangerous by whites in the new land. The remainder of the book is chock full of portraits of the heroes of early blues in the Mississippi Delta, from Charley Patton to Son House to Robert Johnson to Little Walter to Muddy Waters and beyond. Palmer shows how these men developed a music that grew directly out of the soil of the Delta, making do with the instruments they had and often living itinerant lives, moving from tiny town to tiny town to play dances and juke joints to keep the music alive. The book also describes the historic migration of African-Americans from the Deep South to the industrial cities of the North, most importantly, of course, Chicago, where the musicians

transformed the blues again, creating the electrified sounds that exerted such a powerful influence on white rock musicians from London to Liverpool to La Jolla, California. Palmer has given us a great work with "Deep Blues," one that should be read by students of music and social history alike. It deserves a prominent place on the bookshelf of any serious lover of music.

There's no other way to put it, this is simply the best book out there on the blues both as a music form and as force in shaping American culture. At once simple and concise, yet broad and in depth enough to tell a very complete story, this one work should satisfy everyone from the novice to the experienced blues fan. Meticulously researched, Palmer uses Muddy Waters as a jumping off point to explore the history and evolution of the blues as music as well as the society and culture from which it sprang. He peppers his work with amazing anecdotes, from the story of Robert Johnson, the Band meeting a dying Sonny Boy Williamson, an aging Howlin' Wolf giving a phenomenal concert that add color to his story and helps make his frequent forays into musicology more tolerable to the non-musician. Best of all is the sense of time and place the book evokes, from plantations and dark swamps in rural Mississippi, to the noisy, crowded streets of South Chicago at the peak of the Great Migration, to small clubs and long forgotten juke-joints. I read this book for the first time 10 years or so ago and have probably reread it 5 times since. I keep coming up with new things to admire about the book every time. That so much richness can be packed into such a short readable work is amazing. This book triumphs over everything else written on the subject and only leaves you wanting to explore further.

Palmer's book was my introduction to the blues and I'm very glad of it because it's so wide and deep (like varying parts of the Mississippi River). You read this, you get the big picture story of the Delta Blues, how the music migrated to Chicago and other big cities and why it's so important to so much great music that came after it. It begins with musical historian Alan Lomax's fruitless search for Robert Johnson and ends with an older Muddy Waters, successful and wealthy, reflecting on his amazing journey. In between, we meet all the other players in Delta Blues, learn how the genre sprang up and see how it was adopted and copied wholesale by a slew of successful British and American rock 'n' rollers. Palmer never talks down to the reader but keeps his prose lively enough to entertain and educate a person with knowledge of the blues yet accessible enough to teach a neophyte. I find I come back to this book often to flesh out details of stories or anecdotes I've read elsewhere.

Robert Palmer's DEEP BLUES is a great & encyclopedic work on the blues. A resident of New Orleans for the last few years of his life, he was a close neighbor and friend of John Sinclair, poet, d.j., and the original artistic director of the Ann Arbor Blues and Jazz Festival. Both men had similar passions for the blues and all jazz-related music and relocated to the Crescent City for the reason that, in Ernie K-Doe's words, "I'm not sure, but I'm almost certain, that all music came from New Orleans." Palmer relied heavily upon original interviews and interviews conducted by other researchers, and DEEP BLUES reflects a directness and authenticity cross-pollinated by great musical erudition that includes not only the birthplace of the blues, but also its ancestry in Africa. This authenticity inspired another artist whose passion for the gut-level honesty of the blues became part of his own aesthetic. While reading and taking notes from DEEP BLUES, John Sinclair noticed that his jottings took the form of short-lined verses, and that the words of the musicians he loved had the impact of poetry. It was almost as if their words surpassed the poetry of the songs themselves. John fashioned some into poems. Later, upon meeting Palmer, he asked for permission to go further. It's a measure of the generosity of Robert Palmer, his love of the music, and the incredible heart that beats in the passages of DEEP BLUES, that he gave Sinclair the green light. John Sinclair's masterwork, FATTENING FROGS FOR SNAKES: DELTA SOUND SUITE (Surregional Press, 1999) owes its birth to Robert Palmer's own magnum opus.

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