

# BLUE RHYTHMS SIX LIVES IN RHYTHM AND BLUES CHIP DEFFAA

ROTH BROWN

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LITTLE JIMMY SCOTT

CHARLES BROWN

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# Blue Rhythms Six Lives In Rhythm And Blues

**David Freeland**



## **Blue Rhythms Six Lives In Rhythm And Blues:**

**Blue Rhythms** Chip Deffaa, 1996 Chip Deffaa profiles Ruth Brown the most popular female black singer of the early 1950s LaVern Baker who succeeded Brown Little Jimmy Scott who Madonna calls the only singer who ever really made her cry Charles Brown master of the club blues style he popularized Floyd Dixon a more rambunctious fellow traveler and Jimmy Witherspoon whose blend of earthiness and urbanity helped earn him as big an r b hit as was ever recorded **Together Let Us Sweetly Live** Jonathan C. David, 2007 Together Let Us Sweetly Live THE SINGING AND PRAYING BANDS By Jonathan C David UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS PRESS Copyright 2007 the Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois All right reserved ISBN 978 0 252 07419 6 List of Hymn Notations ix Preface xi Map xxi Introduction 1 1 Alfred Green 1908 2003 43 2 Mary Allen b 1925 59 3 Samuel Jerry Colbert b 1950 75 4 Gertrude Stanley b 1926 100 5 Rev Edward Johnson 1905 91 128 6 Cordonsal Walters b 1913 149 7 Susanna Watkins 1905 99 164 8 Benjamin Harrison Beckett 1927 2005 and George Washington Beckett b 1929 176 9 Gus Bivens 1913 96 197 Sources 209 A Note on the Recording 215 Index 221

Introduction IN THE EARLY YEARS of the twentieth century according to the older people of today many African American residents of tidewater Maryland and Delaware would in late summer set aside their tools leave their cornfields just when the tassels on each stalk turned golden and the tips of each blade changed from green to brown abandon their tomatoes when a soft blush of red appeared on the hard green fruit allow for a time their beans and sweet potatoes and melons to mature on their own and make their way by horse and wagon by car or by bus to a Methodist camp meeting to attend to their sacred work Those who had moved to the nearby cities of Baltimore Wilmington or Philadelphia in search of the higher wages and the excitement that urban life seemed to offer returned home by land or by water traveling perhaps on one of the ferries that plied the Chesapeake or Delaware bays from city to town from shore to shore and back again If the camp meeting was nearby some individuals families or groups of unrelated church members might attend nightly services and return home to sleep to work the next day perhaps but then steadfastly to make their way right back to that same camp meeting for the next night s service and the next until that camp meeting s final cathartic day During several of the old time country camp meetings however many would unhitch their horses arrange all the separate wagons into a circle around a wooden roofed tabernacle arch a sheet of canvas over each wagon and stay right there on the church ground for the duration of the meeting Women would bring baskets and cheese boxes filled to the brim with fried chicken home smoked ham biscuits cabbage and green beans Men and boys would dig up old pine stumps and pile them high on the campgrounds to be placed on fire stands and set ablaze to give light to each evening s spectacle In the heat of the summer when the ground might be parched and dust might billow when you couldn t even walk across the ground barefoot it was so hot everyone lived in the shade and everyone had a good time as one person recounted later For two weeks an intense but relaxed joyful communal laboring in the Spirit manifested itself in a day after day pattern of an exuberant testimony service followed by a rousing preaching service

followed at last by a climactic regionally distinct Singing and Praying Band service During this latter service in a maneuver that scholars might refer to as a ring shout participants formed a circle with a leader in the center singing and clapping their hands stamping their feet and swaying their bodies all the while they slowly raised several hymns and spirituals to a raucous rejoicing shouting crescendo concluding the meeting with an ebullient march around the entire encampment Although these bands shocked some outsiders and reminded other observers of Africa committed participants considered them to be the foundation of the church Camp meetings were not unique to this area or to that time at the dawn of the twentieth century Drawn by the heady combination of religious salvation and spiritual democracy advocated in these festivals Americans of various backgrounds had been making such yearly treks to camp meetings for over a hundred years Those early meetings gave form to a religious movement attuned to the ethos of the new nation In the frontier areas of Tennessee and Kentucky where they began camp meetings sponsored by various Protestant denominations became temporary sacred cities places of equality of souls and social solidarity that tempered the struggle to survive in the wilderness In the states of the upper South and in Pennsylvania these meetings also thrived Here where the camp meetings were predominantly organized by Methodists both free and enslaved African Americans participated in large numbers along with English and German speaking European Americans Perhaps because of Methodism's original antislavery witness in Maryland for example this denomination received most of the black converts while in 1800 approximately one fifth of the Methodists in Virginia were black At the beginning of the nineteenth century white and black people alike frequently attended the same religious services though often in segregated and unequal seating arrangements Yet that century witnessed a complex and powerful movement to establish separate religious institutions for black Methodists First came the effort to set up separate churches for Africans Eventually the Methodist Episcopal Church organized a separate conference for all black churches within its denomination A related movement led to the founding of independent African Methodist denominations Finally beginning before Emancipation but accelerating after freedom a similar but less remarked effort saw African American Methodists starting camp meetings of their own In the mid Atlantic region in particular these large outdoor African American religious events were the meetings that the grandparents and great grandparents of today's participants built and today's older people witnessed when young These camp meetings continue even in the twenty first century The camp meetings that the old soldiers of today recall were not unique they were merely one echo of the religious festivals that became a new secular democracy's first religious mass movement Yet the old timers of today recall above all other things those aspects of their camps that were unique That is they speak mostly about the Singing and Praying Bands for whom the camp meetings in this area became the primary regional showcases these bands made these meetings special They tell of the prayer meetings from which the camp meetings originated They speak also of the march around Jericho in which the Singing and Praying Bands led those at the camp meeting in a grand march around the entire campground on the final day of the meeting The Singing and

Praying Bands of this area were special not just for the generations of participants in the African American camp meetings of the Atlantic coast states of the upper South. The antecedents of the twentieth century bands seem to have played a clandestine but significant role in the development of African American culture in general. Therefore the bands can stake a claim as important forces in the cultural and social history of America as a whole. Here is how it happened. At the end of the eighteenth century when enslaved Africans in this area began to take to Methodism in a big way the process of culture building by which Africans of various ethnic backgrounds began to transform themselves into one people was well underway. Yet that process was still incomplete. The new African American identity became consolidated throughout the South only during the first half of the nineteenth century when hundreds of thousands of enslaved Africans were traumatically sold from the states of the upper South to cotton growing areas of the Deep South. In the eighteenth century prior to this mass transfer of human property there had been two primary centers of slavery on the Atlantic coast of North America: coastal South Carolina and the Chesapeake Bay area. The ethnic mix of Africans imported into the two areas differed somewhat leading to the possibility that the emerging African American cultures of these areas might also have differed. Of these two centers the Chesapeake area had the larger number of slaves. In 1790 of all thirteen states Virginia had the largest population of Africans with 305,493 people. Maryland was second with 111,079. Virginia also had the largest number of enslaved Africans, 292,627, while Maryland's enslaved population of 103,036 was third largest. These two states also had the largest population of non-slave Africans at the time. In 1790 nearly 53 percent of the African population and 58 percent of the enslaved Africans in the country were in the upper South in the states of Virginia, Maryland, and Delaware. The nearby black populations of southeastern Pennsylvania and southwestern New Jersey had extensive cultural ties to their brethren in the upper South. This area where the upper South meets the mid Atlantic states seems to have been one of several areas central to the formation of African American culture in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Among the Africans in America of that time, for example, those who lived in the mid Atlantic region and upper South were pioneers in building specifically black institutions. In 1787 Richard Allen, Absalom Jones, and others founded a mutual aid organization in Philadelphia called the Free African Society, initiating in the words of W. E. B. DuBois the first wavering step of a people toward organized social life. Numerous other grassroots benevolent and mutual aid organizations sprouted up at this time aiming to provide members financial assistance in case of sickness or death in the family. Under the leadership of Richard Allen in Philadelphia a group of black Methodists established the Bethel African Church in that city in 1794. In 1816 Bethel joined ranks with other independent black Methodist churches in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Baltimore to form the African Methodist Episcopal A. M. E. denomination. In Wilmington the denomination called the Union Church of Africans was established just prior to the founding of the A. M. E. Church. Along with new institutions a distinctly African American expressive culture was emerging in the upper South and mid Atlantic region at the dawn of the nineteenth century. In 1819, for example, a white minister named

John Fanning Watson who lambasted many Methodists for what he saw as excesses in their worship gave us one of the earliest reports of a specifically black religious song tradition writing that the coloured people get together and sing for hours together short scraps of disjointed affirmations pledges or prayers lengthened out with long repetition choruses In the same paragraph Watson s description of these sacred performances by black worshippers is strikingly evocative of outdoor singing circles that the Singing and Praying Bands continue to this day This account predates by over twenty five years the earliest known description of a ring shout from the Atlantic coast area of the Deep South Another writer a Quaker schoolboy from Westtown School outside Philadelphia described black worshippers at an outdoor camp meeting in 1817 marching around an outdoor tabernacle singing a spiritual chorus and blowing a trumpet in a reenactment of the march around Jericho by Joshua and the Israelites that is similar to the march that the Singing and Praying Bands continue to do today If we look at these historical references with minds informed by the bands of today we can project the current tradition to have been already thriving two hundred years ago in the early years of the nineteenth century This nascent African American expressive culture articulated new belief systems that were forming among Africans in this area also to a certain extent in the context of Protestant evangelism Africans in America developed a variant of this branch of Protestantism that expressed protonationalist African American identity According to this theology of resistance African American Christians began to associate their experience in America with that of the Israelites in Egypt and the person of Jesus took on some of the qualities of Moses who would not fail to liberate the enslaved It was to some extent in the religious meetings of the upper South and in the language of this distinctive African American perspective that Gabriel Prosser and Nat Turner situated their rebellions in Virginia Continues Excerpted from *Together Let Us Sweetly Live* by Jonathan C David Copyright 2007 by the Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois Excerpted by permission All rights reserved No part of this excerpt may be reproduced or reprinted without permission in writing from the publisher Excerpts are provided by Dial A Book Inc solely for the personal use of visitors to this web site      *Charles Ives Reconsidered* Gayle Sherwood Magee,2008 An engaging new portrait of the seminal American composer      *That Toddlin' Town* Charles A. Sengstock,2004 That Toddlin Town looks at the history of the white dance bands theater orchestras radio studio ensembles and nightclub bands Charles Sengstock examines these bands not only in terms of the music they played but also in the context of the venues in which they performed and Chicago s volatile economic and social climate Viewing the bands as an economic system he analyzes them as businesses with all the usual pressures brought on by ambition personality clashes and the overriding need to serve clients Jacket

**Colin McPhee** Carol J. Oja,2004 A study of a pioneer among American composers his life his influences on fellow musicians and his struggles as a composer      **Marian McPartland's Jazz World** Marian McPartland,2003 Updated edition of jazz pianist and radio host Marian McPartland s tribute to legendary musicians      *Sacred Steel* Robert L. Stone,2010-08-30 A Pioneering work on the emergence development and current status of a vital but long overlooked

tradition Enlightening and engaging Scott Barretta musci historian and former editor of Living Blues magazine

**American National Biography** John A. Garraty, Mark C. Carnes, 2005-05-12 American National Biography is the first new comprehensive biographical dictionary focused on American history to be published in seventy years Produced under the auspices of the American Council of Learned Societies the ANB contains over 17 500 profiles on historical figures written by an expert in the field and completed with a bibliography The scope of the work is enormous from the earliest recorded European explorations to the very recent past

*Composing a World* Leta E. Miller, Fredric Lieberman, 2004 Since its original publication *Composing a World* by Leta E Miller and Fredric Lieberman has become the definitive work on the prolific California composer Lou Harrison often cited as one of America s most original and influential figures *Composing a World* presents a compelling and deeply human portrait of an exceptionally beloved pioneer in American music This paperback edition is an updated version of the highly acclaimed Lou Harrison *Composing a World* The product of extensive research as well as seventy five interviews with the composer and those associated with him over half a century this new edition features an updated works catalog reflecting compositions completed after 1997 adds a brief description of the circumstances of Harrison s death and corrects a few minor errors It also includes an annotated works list detailing more than 300 compositions and a CD featuring over 74 minutes of illustrative Harrison compositions including several unique and previously unrecorded works Extending beyond simple biography *Composing a World* includes chapters on music and dance intonation and tuning instrument building music criticism political activism homosexuality and Harrison s Asian influences among other topics This indispensable study of Harrison s life and works currently out of print will be welcomed back by performing artists students and scholars of American music

**The Propaganda of Freedom** Joseph Horowitz, 2023-09-26 The perils of equating notions of freedom with artistic vitality Eloquently extolled by President John F Kennedy the idea that only artists in free societies can produce great art became a bedrock assumption of the Cold War That this conviction defied centuries of historical evidence to say nothing of achievements within the Soviet Union failed to impact impregnable cultural Cold War doctrine Joseph Horowitz writes That so many fine minds could have cheapened freedom by over praising it turning it into a reductionist propaganda mantra is one measure of the intellectual cost of the Cold War He shows how the efforts of the CIA funded Congress for Cultural Freedom were distorted by an anti totalitarian psychology of exile traceable to its secretary general the displaced Russian aristocrat composer Nicolas Nabokov and to Nabokov s hero Igor Stravinsky In counterpoint Horowitz investigates personal social and political factors that actually shape the creative act He here focuses on Stravinsky who in Los Angeles experienced a freedom not to matter and Dmitri Shostakovich who was both victim and beneficiary of Soviet cultural policies He also takes a fresh look at cultural exchange and explores paradoxical similarities and differences framing the popularization of classical music in the Soviet Union and the United States In closing he assesses the Kennedy administration s arts advocacy initiatives and their pertinence to today s fraught American national identity

Challenging long entrenched myths The Propaganda of Freedom newly explores the tangled relationship between the ideology of freedom and ideals of cultural achievement      **Charles Ives Remembered** Vivian Perlis,2002 Through their reminiscences Ives s relatives friends colleagues and associates reveal aspects of his life character and personality as well as his musical activities      **In It for the Long Run** Jim Rooney,2014-02-28 Inspired by the Hank Williams and Leadbelly recordings he heard as a teenager growing up outside of Boston Jim Rooney began a musical journey that intersected with some of the biggest names in American music including Bob Dylan James Taylor Bill Monroe Muddy Waters and Alison Krauss In It for the Long Run A Musical Odyssey is Rooney s kaleidoscopic first hand account of more than five decades of success as a performer concert promoter songwriter music publisher engineer and record producer As witness to and participant in over a half century of music history Rooney provides a sophisticated window into American vernacular music Following his stint as a Hayloft Jamboree hillbilly singer in the mid 1950s Rooney managed Cambridge s Club 47 a catalyst of the 60 s folk music boom He soon moved to the Newport Folk Festival as talent coordinator and director where he had a front row seat to Dylan going electric In the 1970s Rooney s odyssey continued in Nashville where he began engineering and producing records His work helped alternative country music gain a foothold in Music City and culminated in Grammy nominations for singer songwriters John Prine Iris Dement and Nanci Griffith Later in his career he was a key link connecting Nashville to Ireland s folk music scene Writing songs or writing his memoir Jim Rooney is the consummate storyteller In It for the Long Run A Musical Odyssey is his singular chronicle from the heart of Americana      **Go Cat Go!** Craig Morrison,1996 Looks at the history of rockabilly music profiling such greats as Elvis Jer Lee Lewis Malcolm Yelvington and Roy Hall      [The Music of Bill Monroe](#) Neil V. Rosenberg,Charles K. Wolfe,2024-04-22 Spanning over 1 000 separate performances The Music of Bill Monroe presents a complete chronological list of all of Bill Monroe s commercially released sound and visual recordings Each chapter begins with a narrative describing Monroe s life and career at that point bringing in producers sidemen and others as they become part of the story The narratives read like a who s who of bluegrass connecting Monroe to the music s larger history and containing many fascinating stories The second part of each chapter presents the discography Information here includes the session s place date time and producer master matrix numbers song tune titles composer credits personnel instruments and vocals and catalog release numbers and reissue data The only complete bio discography of this American musical icon The Music of Bill Monroe is the starting point for any study of Monroe s contributions as a composer interpreter and performer      [Robert Johnson, Mythmaking, and Contemporary American Culture](#) Patricia R. Schroeder,2004-06-14 Suddenly Robert Johnson is everywhere Though the Mississippi bluesman died young and recorded only twenty nine songs the legacy legend and lore surrounding him continue to grow Focusing on these developments Patricia R Schroeder s Robert Johnson Mythmaking and Contemporary American Culture breaks new ground in Johnson scholarship going beyond simple or speculative biography to explore him in his larger role as a contemporary cultural icon



Part literary analysis part cultural criticism and part biographical study Robert Johnson *Mythmaking and Contemporary American Culture* shows the Robert Johnson of today to be less a two dimensional character fixed by the few known facts of his life than a dynamic and contested set of ideas Represented in novels in plays and even on a postage stamp he provides inspiration for highbrow cultural artifacts such as poems as well as Hollywood movies and T shirts Schroeder s detailed and scholarly analysis directly engages key images and stories about Johnson such as the Faustian crossroads exchange of his soul for guitar virtuosity navigating the many competing interpretations that swirl around him to reveal the cultural purposes these stories and their tellers serve Unprecedented in both range and depth Schroeder s work is a fascinating examination of the relationships among Johnson s life its subsequent portrayals and the cultural forces that drove these representations With penetrating insights into both Johnson and the society that perpetuates him Robert Johnson *Mythmaking and Contemporary American Culture* is essential reading for cultural critics and blues fans alike

**The Incredible Band of John Philip Sousa** Paul E. Bierley, 2006 Most famous for his military marches John Philip Sousa led a group of devoted musicians around the world and shaped a new cultural landscape This book documents almost every aspect of the March King s band its history its star performers its appearances on recordings and the problems the group faced on their 1911 trip around the world

*Chosen Voices* Mark Slobin, 2002 *Chosen Voices* is the definitive survey of an often overlooked aspect of American Jewish history and ethnomusicology and an insider s look at a profession that is also a vocation Week after week year after year Jews turn to sacred singers for spiritual and emotional support The job of the hazzan much more than the traditional messenger to God is deeply embedded in cultural social and religious symbolism negotiated between the congregation and its chosen voices Drawing on archival sources interviews with cantors and photographs Slobin traces the development of the American cantorate from the nebulous beginnings of the hazzan as a recognizable figure through the heyday of the superstar sacred singer in the early twentieth century to a diverse portrait of today s cantorate which now includes women as well as men Slobin s focus on the current nature of the profession includes careful consideration of the sacred singer s part in creating and maintaining the worship service the recent relationship between the rabbi and the hazzan within the synagogue and the music that contemporary cantors sing This first paperback edition features a new preface by the author A thirty five minute cassette for use with *Chosen Voices* is available separately from the University of Illinois Press

*Race, Rock, and Elvis* Michael T. Bertrand, 2000 In *Race Rock and Elvis* Michael T Bertrand contends that popular music specifically Elvis Presley s brand of rock n roll helped revise racial attitudes after World War II Observing that youthful fans of rhythm and blues rock n roll and other black inspired music seemed more inclined than their segregationist elders to ignore the color line Bertrand links popular music with a more general relaxation led by white youths of the historical denigration of blacks in the South The tradition of southern racism successfully communicated to previous generations failed for the first time when confronted with the demand for rock n roll by a new national commercialized youth culture In a narrative peppered with the colorful

observations of ordinary southerners Bertrand argues that appreciating black music made possible a new recognition of blacks as fellow human beings Bertrand documents black enthusiasm for Elvis Presley and cites the racially mixed audiences that flocked to the new music at a time when adults expected separate performances for black audiences and white He describes the critical role of radio and recordings in blurring the color line and notes that these media made black culture available to appreciative whites on an unprecedented scale He also shows how music was used to define and express the values of a southern working class youth culture in transition as young whites many of them trying to orient themselves in an unfamiliar urban setting embraced black music and culture as a means of identifying themselves By adding rock n roll to the mix of factors that fed into civil rights advances in the South Race Rock and Elvis shows how the music with its rituals and vehicles symbolized the vast potential for racial accord inherent in postwar society *Ladies of Soul* David

Freeland, 2009-09-23 American soul music of the 1960s is one of the most creative and influential musical forms of the twentieth century With its merging of gospel R B country and blues soul music succeeded in crossing over from African American culture into the general pop culture Soul became the byword for the styles attitudes and dreams of an entire era Female performers were responsible for some of the most enduring and powerful contributions to the genre All too frequently overlooked by the star making critics seven of these women are profiled in this book Maxine Brown Ruby Johnson Denise LaSalle Bettye LaVette Barbara Mason Carla Thomas and Timi Yuro Getting started during the heyday of soul each of these talented women had recording contracts and gave live performances to appreciative audiences Their careers can be tracked through the popularity of soul during the 1960s and its decline in the 1970s With humor candor pride and honest recognition that their careers did not surge into the mainstream and gain superstardom they recount individual stories of how they struggled for success Their oral histories as told to David Freeland address compelling issues including racism and sexism within the music industry They discuss their grueling hardships on the road their conflicts with male managers and the cutthroat competition in the recording business As each singer examines her career with the author she reveals the dreams hopes and desires on which she has built her professional life All seven face up to the career swings from the highs of releasing the first hit to the frustrating lows when the momentum stops Although the obstacles to stardom are heartbreaking these singers are committed to their art With determination and style these seven have pressed onward with club appearances and recordings They survive through their savvy mix of talent hubris and honesty about their lives and their music **Bluegrass** Neil V. Rosenberg, 2005 The twentieth anniversary paperback edition updated with a new preface

Winner of the International Bluegrass Music Association Distinguished Achievement Award and of the Country Music People Critics Choice Award for Favorite Country Book of the Year Beginning with the musical cultures of the American South in the 1920s and 1930s Bluegrass A History traces the genre through its pivotal developments during the era of Bill Monroe and his Blue Grass Boys in the forties It describes early bluegrass s role in postwar country music its trials following the appearance

of rock and roll its embracing by the folk music revival and the invention of bluegrass festivals in the mid\_sixties Neil V Rosenberg details the transformation of this genre into a self sustaining musical industry in the seventies and eighties is detailed and in a supplementary preface written especially for this new edition he surveys developments in the bluegrass world during the last twenty years Featuring an amazingly extensive bibliography discography notes and index this book is one of the most complete and thoroughly researched books on bluegrass ever written

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