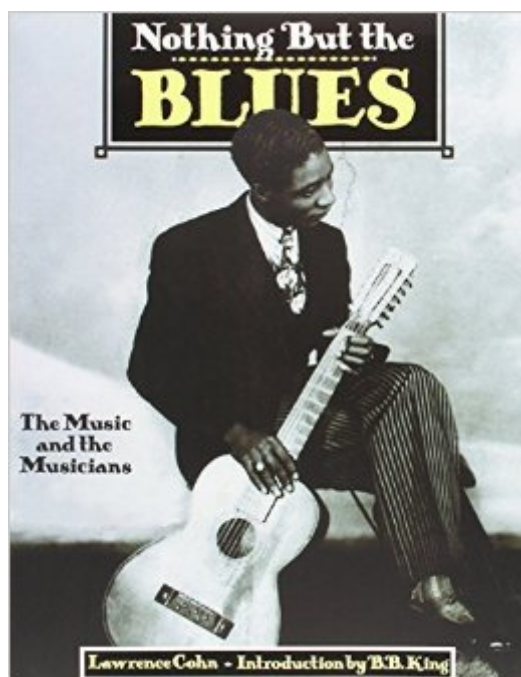


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# Nothing But The Blues : The Music And The Musicians



## Synopsis

It is our most passionate music, rooted in ancient Africa but brought to blossom in America at the doorstep of the twentieth century. It is a living heritage of song born in poverty, persecution, and hard labor, born of love and love betrayed, of holiness and sin, the pleasures and the pains of the flesh, the experience of tragedy, comedy, drunkenness, despair, desolation, and pure joy. It is the blues. At root, the blues is rich in its simplicity, but it has flowered across the years in a variety of rare complexity. Perhaps no form of popular art is more immediately appealing than the blues, yet so rewards a thorough knowledge of its finer points. In eleven authoritative essays commissioned especially for the book, *Nothing But the Blues* traces the African-American origins of the music, its early development as popular entertainment, its early recorded manifestations, its regional differentiation (Mid-South, Tidewater-Piedmont, Chicago, Detroit, New York, Los Angeles), its many stylistic dimensions, and its contemporary manifestations. Country blues, urban blues, the evolution of rhythm and blues, rock 'n' roll, and the blues revival are all fully covered. But the written history is only part of the story. Blues fans have always treasured rare photographs of their heroes, and *Nothing But the Blues* is gloriously illustrated with posed and candid shots of the musicians as well as photographs of such one-of-a-kind artifacts and documents as Leadbelly's NYPD rap sheet and classic recording contracts. *Nothing But the Blues* features an introduction by one of the genre's living legends, B. B. King, and a comprehensive "best of the best" discography, including current and rereleased recordings as well as the collectors' treasures to go after. Blues is more popular than ever before. Not only are reissues of historical blues classics selling in unprecedented numbers, but a whole new crop of vital young blues artists is active in clubs and on record today. *Nothing But the Blues* is a lavishly illustrated comprehensive history of the music and the musicians, as well as the promoters, producers, and others who have shaped--and continue to shape--this powerful and enduringly popular American musical art form.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

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.

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