



**TEACHER'S GUIDE:**

# **BLUES BRANCHES, MUSIC THAT GREW OUT OF THE BLUES**

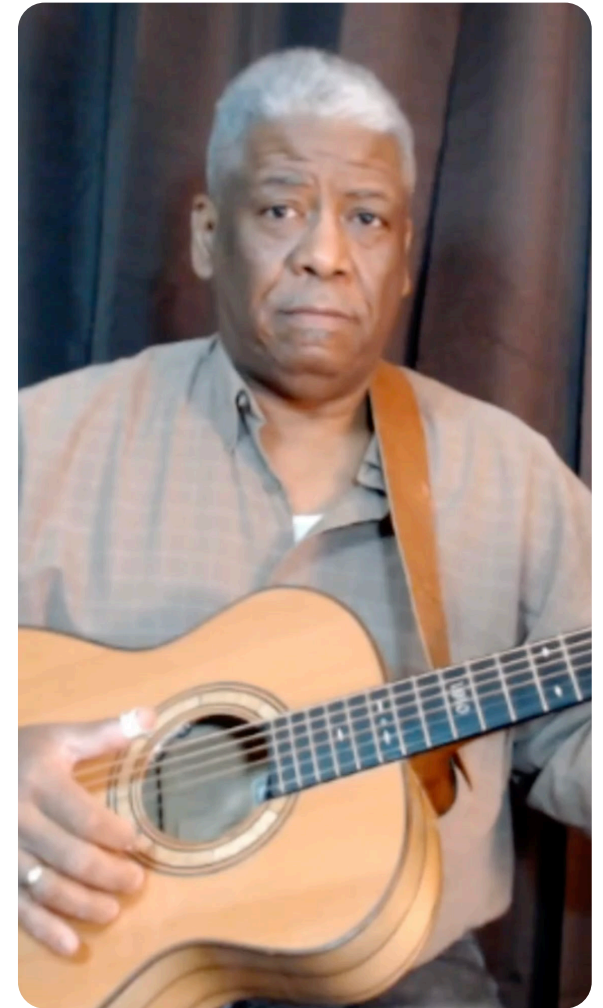
**WITH ROBERT JONES**

**B-6; 21:35 MIN**

# LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of the video, “Blues Branches; Music that Grew Out of the Blues,” the students will be able to:

1. List some of the genres of music that grew out of blues music.
2. Describe the scale, chords and notes identified with blues music.
3. Identify the shift in one musical element, common among many genres that grew out of blues music.
4. Describe what Jimmie Rodgers is known for.
5. Describe what Chuck Berry and Elvis Presley are known for.
6. Explain how blues came to influence music in the churches.
7. Explain how blues music functions as a universal language.



**1. LIST SOME OF THE GENRES OF MUSIC THAT GREW OUT OF BLUES MUSIC.**

**Video:**

Gospel, Country, Bluegrass, R & B (Rhythm and Blues),  
Rock 'n' Roll, Rap

**2. DESCRIBE THE SCALE, CHORDS AND NOTES IDENTIFIED WITH BLUES MUSIC.**

**Video:**

Pentatonic scale, three to four chords and five notes

**3. IDENTIFY THE SHIFT IN ONE MUSICAL ELEMENT, COMMON AMONG MANY GENRES THAT GREW OUT OF BLUES MUSIC.**

**Video:**

The tempo of blues music was often sped up, made faster.

**4. DESCRIBE WHAT JIMMIE RODGERS IS KNOWN FOR.**

**Video:**

Father of Country Music

## 5. DESCRIBE WHAT CHUCK BERRY AND ELVIS PRESLEY ARE KNOWN FOR.

### Video:

Elvis Presley is known as the king of rock 'n' roll, though Chuck Berry is famous as well for his up-tempo blues tunes that comprised this genre.

## 7. EXPLAIN HOW BLUES MUSIC FUNCTIONS AS A UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE.

### Video:

Blues bridged the gap between different genres of music as elements of the blues were common to different types of music. Also, blues bridged a gap between people of different races and cultures whose common love of blues music brought them together.

## 6. EXPLAIN HOW BLUES CAME TO INFLUENCE MUSIC IN SOME CHURCHES.

### Video:

During the economic depression, piano players who played boogie-woogie lost their commercial jobs and turned to the churches as an outlet for their music. They played spiritual music with an upbeat, blues rhythm, helping to create the genre of gospel music.

*Answers to Multiple Choice Quiz:*

*1. E 2. B 3. A 4. C 5. B 6. A 7. C*

## Additional Learning, from Robert Jones

*Boogie-Woogie: Boogie-Woogie is a style of music that uses a three chord progression (I-IV-V) and the major pentatonic scale. While the minor pentatonic scale tends to be used for melody and improvisation, the major pentatonic scale plays a great role in rhythm. In this lesson we use Charles "Cow Cow" Davenport's (1894-1955) piece "Cow Cow Blues," as an example of boogie-woogie piano. The major pentatonic scale can be clearly heard throughout the piece.*

*Gospel Music: Songs like "This Little Light Of Mine" and "Since I Laid My Burden Down" utilize the same basic chord structure along with both the same major and minor pentatonic scales as blues music. The "Father of Gospel," Thomas A. Dorsey (1899-1993) started his musical career as a blues piano player, thus when he was looking to revitalize sacred music in the late 1920s and early 30's he started combining sacred lyrics with blues rhythms, thus producing and naming a new style of sacred music, calling it Gospel—literally, "Good News."*

*Country Music: Country music had its' start in the Appalachian Mountains when early immigrants from England, Scotland and Ireland came to America, bringing their music with them. This music mixed with African American music styles like blues and over a long period of time this music came to be called "Old Time" music. In 1927 during a talent search in the town of Bristol, a town that straddles the state borders of Tennessee and Virginia, two acts changed the face of American music. The Carter Family (A. P., Sara and Maybelle) formed a trio (recording from 1927 to 1956) that sang many old songs that had been preserved in the mountains for generations. The other act was Jimmie Rodgers (1897-1933). Rodgers combined blues music that he learned from Black railroad workers while he worked as a brakeman in his native Mississippi, with a yodel that he picked up from a group of traveling European musicians. Thus was born Jimmie Rodgers, "The Singing Brakeman." This lesson showcases a soundie (a short American musical film with sound, usually shown between two feature films) of Rodgers singing his hit, "Blue Yodel No. 1," also known as "T For Texas." This song is basically a 12-bar blues song.*

*Bluegrass: Bill Monroe (1911-1996) was known as the "Father Of Bluegrass." Monroe combined the sound of Old Time fiddle, learned from his uncle Pendleton "Pen" Vandiver, and the blues he learned from an influential Black blues guitarist named Arnold Schultz. Monroe would call this new hybrid style of music, bluegrass. Monroe was primarily a singer and mandolinist, while his brother Charley also sang and played guitar. The Monroe Brothers eventually parted and Bill Monroe started to experiment with the sound of his band. Eventually, the bluegrass sound came to consist of mandolin, guitar, banjo, fiddle and bass. Monroe's most successful guitar player was a man named Lester Flatt (1914-1979). Flatt pioneered a famous guitar lick called "the G-run." The G-run is a major pentatonic run that Flatt would use to end or tag bluegrass verses. "Goin' Down The Road, Feeling Bad" shows how the G-Run works in a typical bluegrass tune. The G-Run uses the same notes as the boogie-woogie.*

*Rhythm and Blues: Ray Charles (1930-2004) was a singer, pianist and bandleader who helped to pioneer Rhythm and Blues, also known as R&B. Charles, who was blinded at an early age, had grown up in the black church and was attracted to the sound of blues piano when quite young. As his success grew, Ray Charles started to combine secular lyrics with sacred music, almost the exact opposite of what Thomas A. Dorsey had done with his Gospel music. Ray Charles' music thus combined many influences, namely gospel, blues, jazz, swing and more. One night in the early fifties, Charles was forced to make up a song, extemporaneously, in order to complete a short set. He called the song, "What'd I Say?". It too is built on a major pentatonic scale and depends heavily on "Call And Response" singing.*

*Rock N' Roll: The connection between Blues and Rock N' Roll music should be obvious. Some have said, rather simplistically, that Rock N' Roll is just Blues, sped up. In the 1950's artists like Elvis Presley and Chuck Berry pioneered this music that crossed racial and social lines and that had existed, especially in the South, for generations. Both Presley and Berry drew from blues and bluegrass for inspiration.*

## Additional Learning, from Robert Jones (continued)

*Motown: In 1959 a young Detroit music producer named Berry Gordy (b.1929) established a record label called Motown. The idea was to produce and record music that could be enjoyed by a wide variety of audiences. Motown included influences from Blues, Gospel, R&B, Jazz, and with the addition of violins, even Classical music. One of Motown's premier groups was the Temptations. As a representation of Motown, this lesson features the song "My Girl", which has one of the most identifiable musical figures in popular music. That riff is built on the same pentatonic scale as the boogie-woogie and the G-Run.*

*Rap: Again, the lesson comes full circle, back to Son House's "Death Letter Blues." I discovered, quite by accident, that the rhythmic template of the blues and all of the other styles that we've talked about, also works with modern music styles. Thus, by speeding up the tempo of Son House's 92-year-old "Death Letter Blues," we arrive at a song that sounds remarkably like modern Rap music.*

*Every "new" style of music tends to evolve from cultures and musicians combining old styles in new ways. The great tree of American music has common roots and blues music represents the spine of most American popular music.*



# QUIZ – MULTIPLE CHOICE

For a Google Form version of this quiz, go to:  
[MVBS.org/Teacher-Resources](https://www.mvbs.org/Teacher-Resources)

## 1. What genres of music grew out of blues music?

- a. Gospel & Country music
- b. Classical & Irish music
- c. R & B and Rock 'n' Roll music
- d. Rap
- e. a, c and d

## 2. Describe the scale, chords and notes identified with blues music.

- a. Major scale with 5 chords and 8 notes
- b. Pentatonic scale, three to four chords and five notes
- c. Minor scale, 6 chords and 4 notes

## 3. What shift in one musical element was common among many genres that grew out of blues music?

- a. The tempo of blues music was often sped up, made faster
- b. The melodies were often more mournful
- c. The rhymes were less pronounced in other genres

## 4. What is Jimmie Rodgers is known for?

- a. Being a hobo who entertained railroad workers with his music
- b. Father of Bluegrass Music
- c. Father of Country Music

## 5. What are Chuck Berry and Elvis Presley most known for?

- a. Their wild dancing on stage as they played
- b. Elvis Presley is known as the king of rock 'n' roll, though Chuck Berry is famous as well for his up-tempo blues tunes that comprised this genre
- c. Both men are known as blues musicians

## 6. How did blues music come to influence music in some churches?

- a. During the economic depression, piano players who played boogie-woogie lost their commercial jobs and turned to the churches as an outlet for their music. They played spiritual music with an up-beat, blues rhythm, helping to create the genre of gospel music.
- b. People in the churches liked blues music and the hymns were sung with that influence
- c. The writers of spirituals were blues musicians

## 7. How did blues music function as a universal language?

- a. Regardless of what language you speak, you can understand the message in blues music
- b. Because blues music is performed all over the world
- c. Blues bridged the gap between different genres of music as elements of the blues were common to different types of music. Also, blues bridged a gap between people of different races and cultures whose common love of blues music brought them together.

# QUIZ – SHORT ANSWER

For a Google Form version of this quiz, go to:  
[MVBS.org/Teacher-Resources](https://www.mvbs.org/Teacher-Resources)

1. What genres of music grew out of blues music?

---

---

---

3. What shift in one musical element was common among many genres that grew out of blues music?

---

---

---

5. What are Chuck Berry and Elvis Presley most known for?

---

---

---

7. How did blues music function as a universal language?

---

---

---

2. Describe the scale, chords and notes identified with blues music.

---

---

---

4. What is Jimmie Rodgers is known for?

---

---

---

6. How did blues music influence music in some churches?

---

---

---



## MUSICIAN:



### ROBERT JONES

Rev. Robert Jones, Sr. is a native of Detroit and an inspirational storyteller and musician celebrating the history, humor and power of American Roots music. His deep love for traditional African American and American traditional music is shared in live and remote performances that interweave timeless stories with original and traditional songs. For more than thirty years Robert has entertained and educated audiences of all ages in schools, colleges, libraries, union halls, prisons, churches and civil rights organizations. At the heart of his message is the belief that our cultural diversity tells a story that should celebrate, not just tolerate.

Acclaimed photographer James Fraher writes about Robert: “Perhaps the world’s most highly educated blues musician, an ordained minister, a longtime DJ, and a living encyclopedia of blues history, the Reverend Robert Jones is comfortable among juke joint loud talkers, fancy-hatted church ladies, and PhDs alike.”

Rev. Robert Jones makes his home in Detroit while performing throughout the United States, Canada and Europe. An award-winning multi-instrumentalist, he is accomplished at guitar, harmonica, mandolin, banjo and fiddle. He has recorded six albums of original and tradition songs. Robert is the former host of the award-winning radio programs “Blues from the Lowlands” and “Deep River” broadcast on Detroit Public Radio’s WDET-FM Detroit. And, he has taught at music history courses at Wayne State University in Detroit.

In 2017 Robert and Matt Watroba co-founded “Common Chords”, 501.c3 educational organization designed to create community, cultural and historical connections through music and the arts. In 2018 Robert received a Kresge Arts Fellowship for Music Composition and Performance.

# BLUES EDUCATION EVALUATION

Your participation in this short evaluation helps ensure future grant funding to support this program. Please submit feedback regarding the course you have just completed, including feedback on course structure, and content.

*Please visit the link below!*

**[MVBS.org/Teacher-Evaluation](https://mvbs.org/Teacher-Evaluation)**

**THANK YOU!**





## MISSISSIPPI VALLEY BLUES SOCIETY

Our mission is to ensure the future of a uniquely American art form by fostering greater public appreciation through performance, education, and preservation of the Blues Heritage.

*Mississippi Valley Blues Society, a nonprofit organization*

*The Education Committee is dedicated to increasing the public's knowledge, understanding and appreciation of blues music through live and remote performances and by providing information about the music and its' history, which includes the musicians (past and present) who play it. Education Committee programs are provided for no cost to the public.*

*MVBS.org*

*1-14-21*

*B-6 (Serial Number)*