

HOW DO YOU DEFINE THE BLUES?

There seems to be a lot of “discussion” on what genre of music constitutes the blues. With all of the various opinions, I’d like to share my own with some humor and some truth. Most forms of music have a feel that stimulates an emotional reaction from a given listener. Musical preference, in my opinion then, is the form of music that gives you the most listening enjoyment. Some folks prefer classical, some prefer rock, some prefer country, some prefer jazz, and some prefer blues. Emotions are the result of stimulation of various “levels” of the human consciousness. At the lowest level are the primitive feelings. At the highest level are the intellectual thoughts. In other words, somewhere between your soul and your mind, you relate to music at a certain level. Often, people who enjoy classical music feel that those who don’t are not “cultured” (a measure of social experience/hierarchy) enough to understand or relate to classical. Often, people who enjoy the blues, feel that those who don’t, have never experienced the “hard times” (a measure of emotional experience) in their life so they do not understand or relate to the blues. At times you may see someone walk into a blues bar with their nose held high and a polo player on their shirt. Most often they turn around and walk back out. You’re also not likely to see a cat wearing blue jeans, a black short brim hat and a harmonica in his pocket attending an opera. Some say it is a “simple” music form because it often contains only three chords known as the 1 4 5 pattern (tonic, dominant, and subdominant for you intellectual types) and repeats itself every twelve bars. Some blues even stays in the same tone (never leaves the tonic) for the entire song. I do love all forms of music when done well and with feel, but the blues? Oh lordy, gimme some! The blues IS about expression of the soul. The blues IS interpreted in many ways, both electric and acoustic. There is the Delta sound, and the Chicago sound, and the Texas sound, and the Tulsa sound, and the... I do think that the Blues has a hell of a lot more to do with “feel” than it does with technical ability of the source... So... How do you define the blues?? I don’t have a clue! But I know it when I hear it! I especially like it when it has a good groove, and a sufficient amount of FAT.

Larry Watt