



CHICAGO CALLING

THE ROOTS OF THE BRITISH BLUES / R&B BOOM

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LONNIE DONEGAN with CHRIS BARBER'S JAZZ BAND *Diggin' My Potatoes (live)*
CYRIL DAVIES *KC Moan*
CHRIS BARBER with LONNIE DONEGAN'S SKIFFLE GROUP *Harmonica Blues*
JOHNNY PARKER'S WASHBOARD BAND *No.69*
KEN COLYER SKIFFLE GROUP *Streamline Train*
BIG BILL BROONZY *It Feels So Good*
Southbound Train
BERYL BRYDEN *Rock Me*
JOSH WHITE *I Know How To Do It*
Mint Julap

ALEXIS KORNER'S BREAKDOWN GROUP
 ft. **CYRIL DAVIES** *Leaving Blues*
Roundhouse Stomp

ALEXIS KORNER'S SKIFFLE GROUP
I Ain't Gonna Worry No More

SISTER ROSETTA THARPE with CHRIS BARBER'S JAZZ BAND *Up Above My Head (live)*

SISTER ROSETTA THARPE & OTTILIE PATTERSON
CHRIS BARBER'S JAZZ BAND

When The Saints Go Marching In (live)

CHRIS BARBER'S JAZZ BAND ft. **OTTILIE PATTERSON**

Georgia Grind (live)

SONNY TERRY & BROWNIE MCGHEE with OTTILIE PATTERSON & CHRIS BARBER'S JAZZ BAND

When Things Go Wrong (live)
Do Lord (live)

CHRIS BARBER *introducing Muddy (live)*

MUDDY WATERS with CHRIS BARBER'S JAZZ BAND

Hoochie Coochie Man (live)
I Can't Be Satisfied (live)

LONNIE DONEGAN *I've Got Rocks In My Bed*

ALEXIS KORNER'S BLUES INCORPORATED
 ft. **CYRIL DAVIES** *Sail On*

SONNY TERRY & BROWNIE MCGHEE
 with **CHRIS BARBER'S JAZZ BAND**

Key To The Highway
Glory

CHAMPION JACK DUPREE
Don't Leave Me Mary
Bad Life

MEMPHIS SLIM

Memphis Slim, USA
Caught The Old Coon At Last
Fattening Frogs For Snakes

CHRIS BARBER'S JAZZ BAND ft. **OTTILIE PATTERSON**

Mama, He Treats Your Daughter Mean

LITTLE BROTHER MONTGOMERY

I Keep Drinking
Old Maid Blues

SPECKLED RED *Oh, Red*

CHRIS BARBER'S JAZZ BAND ft. **OTTILIE PATTERSON**

Lordy, Lordy It Hurts So Bad
Only The Blues

JAMES COTTON

Dealing With The Devil
Rock Me Mama
Jimmy's Jump

ROUNDHOUSE JUG FOUR *Short Legs Shuffle*

DAVY GRAHAM & ALEXIS KORNER *3/4 A.D.*

LITTLE BOY BLUE AKA *Down The Road Apiece*

JOHNNY KIDD & THE PIRATES

I Just Want To Make Love To You

ALEXIS KORNER'S BLUES INCORPORATED

She Fooled Me

JIMMY POWELL *Sugar Babe Parts 1&2*

ALEXIS KORNER'S BLUES INCORPORATED

Gotta Move

I Wanna Put A Tiger In Your Tank

How Long, How Long Blues

Night Time Is The Right Time

BLUES INCORPORATED *Up-Town*

CYRIL DAVIES & HIS R&B ALL STARS

Country Line Special
Chicago Calling
Preachin' The Blues
Sweet Mary

2CD Set

RHGB 41

Released November 13th 2015



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Received wisdom would have us believe that British Blues began in 1962, when **Alexis Korner** and **Cyril Davies** opened the celebrated Ealing Club. But things are never quite as straightforward as "received wisdom" would have us think and the roots of British R&B/Blues do, of course, go back a decade earlier. Moreover, although the opening of said club was an important milestone, it wasn't the first Blues club that Cyril and Alexis had opened together... and rather more to the point, whilst it has become de rigueur to embrace messrs Korner and Davies as the joint Godfathers of the genre, the pivotal figure in the growth of UK Blues was actually **Chris Barber**, a man whose role and importance is usually overlooked.

Without wishing to get bogged down in a theological discussion about exactly what constitutes The Blues (never forget, one man's Blues can be another man's Jazz), it didn't always exist in the same format. In its embryonic form, there were far fewer guitars involved and rather more brass instruments. Indeed, back in sepia-tinted, 1950s Britain, Blues wasn't perceived as a separate, stand-alone genre, but merely a strand of Jazz - and as regards Chicago Blues, it's unlikely that apart from **Cyril Davies**, more than a handful of people were aware of its existence. Yet it's interesting to note that Rural Blues was already acknowledged as "different", as visiting US artists like **Josh White**, **Lonnie Johnson**, **Big Bill Broonzy** and **Sonny Terry & Brownie McGhee** were invariably described as "Negro Folk" musicians. And then, of course, there's the elephant in the room to consider, viz: the eternally unwanted/unloved Skiffle, which, like it or not (and most 'purists' don't), was the general UK record-buying public's introduction to Blues repertoire.

Chris Barber was a rich kid from Berkshire, who'd attended the Guildhall School Of Music. Proficient on virtually any musical instrument, he excelled on trombone, double-bass, banjo and guitar and had formed his first Jazz band in 1949. Early peripatetic members included **Lonnie Donegan** and **Alexis Korner** and in 1953 they were joined by **Ken Colyer**, at that time enjoying considerable notoriety (he'd been deported from the US after being jailed in New Orleans for playing alongside local, black musicians). Donegan, Colyer and Barber's Skiffle sets soon became the focal element of the band's live performances; Donegan, in particular, began to enjoy enormous popularity, which ultimately led to Colyer quitting.

Skiffle, of course, finally burst into the UK charts in January '56 with Lonnie's frantic 'Rock Island Line', an LP track which was already eighteen months old and had been enjoying regular radio airplay. But perhaps another early recording was rather more prescient. In October '54, the Chris Barber band had recorded a live radio broadcast at the Royal Festival Hall, during which Donegan had performed a typically ebullient version of Washboard Sam's 'Diggin' My Potatoes'. Decca belatedly issued it as a single in February '56, but the BBC took one listen and promptly banned the disc; nonetheless, it sounds to me like bona fide Blues performance; was this the first British Blues record? Meanwhile, after leaving Barber, Colyer had formed his own Jazz & Skiffle band, whose early personnel included **Alexis Korner** and **Cyril Davies** (both are on 'Streamline Train'). With his exotic Greco/Turkish/Austrian/aristocratic family background and even more exotic appearance, Alexis exuded star quality and was already something of a minor celebrity on the London scene for his guitar, mandolin and banjo skills. Conversely, Cyril - a panel beater from the Home Counties, whose prematurely-thinning pate made him look older than his mid-twenties - was a dedicated Leadbelly acolyte, remembered by everyone who played with him as being equally proficient on 12-string guitar as harmonica. Other well-travelled Jazz musos who flirted with Skiffle included singer/washboard-scrubber **Beryl Bryden** (both Cyril and Alexis are featured on her 'Rock Me') and pianist **Johnny Parker**, who was nominally in Humphrey Lyttleton's band, but also seemed to find time to moonlight with everyone else.

In 1956, Cyril and Alexis opened the London Blues & Barrelhouse Club in a Soho pub, which provided the title for the UK's first ever Blues LP, **Blues From The Roundhouse**, on which they were billed as **Alexis Korner's Breakdown Group Featuring Cyril Davis** (typo!) They stayed together a couple of years, changing the band's billing a couple of times, before settling on **Blues Incorporated** in 1958. He'd also begun organising UK tours by genuine American Blues singers, backed by his own band, and as a result of his endeavours, **Big Bill Broonzy**, **Josh White**, **Sister Rosetta Tharpe** and **Sonny Terry & Brownie McGhee** had all visited Britain between 1955-58, although his absolute crowning glory had been in bringing **Muddy Waters** and **Otis Spann** over in 1958 - the UK's very first exposure to Chicago Blues. Barber was also able to persuade Pye-Nixa to record Broonzy, White and Sonny & Brownie - again, backed by members of his band - and he'd had the foresight to record gigs featuring Tharpe, Sonny & Brownie, and Muddy.

It took a couple of years to percolate, but the knock-on effect of Muddy's 1958 visit began to make itself felt early the following decade. In December '61 Alexis and Cyril resurrected **Blues Incorporated**, forming the UK's very first electric Blues band in the process - they recorded 'She Fooled Me', with Korner on vocals, just a couple of weeks later. Unable to get a settled residency at The Marquee, they opened the Ealing Club in March '62, following which interest and Blues and R&B began to escalate.



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RockHistory.co.uk is an on-going historical project to record the background stories and the anecdotes from the people who participated in greatest British musical explosion that started back in the 1950s and that went on to reverberate right round the world. Tales about the origins of the songs, the roots of the groups and the front of the performers. These CD releases are part of a series of multi-media release that are all linked via the www.RockHistory.co.uk