



**THE CENTER FOR POPULAR MUSIC
MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY, MURFREESBORO, TN**

“BLUES BEFORE SUNRISE” AUDIO TAPES

90-062

Creator:

Cushing, Steve

Type of Material:

Audio tape copies

Physical Description:

1 digital cassette audio tape (TCD 0134)
18 analog reel to reel audio tapes (TTA 0134A/R)

Languages:

English

Dates:

1990-1992

Repository:

Center for Popular Music, Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, TN 37132,
(615) 898-2449

Access/Restrictions:

The Center's agreement with Mr. Cushing stipulates that "no copies can be made or direct quotes used for publication in any form" without his written permission. *Center staff are able to assist with copyright questions for this material.*

Preferred Citation: (Tape ID, Show), “Blues Before Sunrise” Audio Tapes 90-062,
Center for Popular Music, Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro,
Tennessee

Provenance and Acquisition Information:

Taped for the Center by Middle Tennessee State University's public radio station WMOT with the permission of producer Steve Cushing from satellite transmissions by WBEZ, Chicago Illinois.

Subject/Index Terms:

Blues Music
Radio Show
Oral History

Agency History/Biographical Sketch:

"Blues Before Sunrise" is a series of public radio programs on blues and blues artists produced by Steve Cushing, a life long blues fan and a blues festival and workshop coordinator and participant, journalist and disc jockey, for station WBEZ (Chicago, Illinois) and distributed by the National Public Radio Network.

The Center has selected for retention only those programs which include interviews with blues performers as well as performances. The interviews which appear on these tapes came from Cushing's personal collection and were conducted by him over a number of years.

Scope and Content:

The first program (TCD 0134) includes performances by a variety of blues artists; the audio log which follows provides a complete list of performers and song titles in the broadcast.

The second program (TTA 0134A and B) which was taped 21 October 1990 is an interview with Roosevelt Thomas Williams "The Gray Ghost". The interview covers his childhood and other employment as well as a personal history of his career as a Texas barrel house pianist and singer and a discussion of his lack of commercial recording opportunities.

The third program (TTA 0134C) is an interview with Percy Mayfield about his work as a composer and arranger with Ray Charles in the late 1950's.

The fourth program (TTA 0134D) which was taped 11 May 1990 is an interview with Andrew Tibbs [Melvin Andrew Grayson] who discusses his family history, work in club gigs and show business, his reaction to the release of his record "Union Man" and the destruction of his musical career by addiction to narcotics and alcohol.

The fifth program (TTA 0134E) includes first recordings released by Ma Rainey, Memphis Minnie, Sister Rosetta Tharpe, Ruth Brown, Little Esther, Big Mama Thornton, the Inkspots, Charles Brown, Percy Mayfield, Joe Williams and the Chocolates, Roosevelt Sikes, Big Bill Broonzy and John Thomas, B.B. King, and Lightin' Hopkins.

The sixth program (TTA 0134F) which was taped November 1991 features pianist Little Willie Littlefield who discusses his family history; other musicians from the Houston TX area; his role models; first recording sessions, discography, record producers and changing record labels; road gigs with his own band; new style gigs in Europe; other expatriates; and physical aspects of piano playing and plays a number of his songs.

In the seventh program (TTA 0134G/H) Johnny Hartsman, in an interview taped January 1988, discusses the first time he heard the blues; his early musical influences including records he purchased, high school band mates and specific performers; and early recordings dates and live gigs and performs a variety of songs.

The eighth program (TTA 0134I) which was broadcast in August 1992 was drawn from a 1982 interview with Robert "Junior" Lockwood in which Lockwood discussed his

relationship with Robert Johnson, his Chicago career recording with Peter "Doc" Clayton and others, and his later work with Sunnyland Slim and Sonny Boy Williamson in Mississippi and with Little Walter Jacobs in Arkansas and performed several songs.

Sippie Wallace, who was interviewed for and performed on the ninth program (TTA 0134J/K) listened to records by Ma Rainey and Mamie Smith before beginning her career in tent shows. In this interview she discusses her first marriage which ended in divorce; her move to Chicago and work with her brother songwriter George Thomas; her recording career; musicians with whom she has worked; her relationships, personal and professional, with other members of her family; and other women blues singers with whom she worked and who influenced her style and career. She also performed songs of her own as well as songs by her brother George and others.

Programs ten (TTA 0134L), eleven (TTA 0134M), twelve (TTA 0134N), thirteen (TTA 0134O), and fourteen (TTA 0134P) feature interviews and occasional performances by a variety of performers who are listed on the audio logs which follow. Many of these interviews deal with the musical influences on and the early careers of the performers. Programs fifteen and sixteen document the University of Chicago Blues Workshop of the Chicago Folk Festival spotlighting Jacks Owens and Bud Spires (TTA 0134Q) and Mose Vinson (TTA 0134R) and emceed by Jim O'Neal.

Materials Cataloged Separately:

No items from this collection have been separated.

Location:

Audio visual materials are filed first by format, then by tape number in the audio-visual archives.

Related Materials:

Special collection press kits, performance documents, trade catalogs, photographs, sound recordings, rare books, and reading room materials related to the subjects of this collection are also held by the Center and searchable through the CPM website database or MTSU Walker Library catalog.

Reading Room book: Cushing, Steve. Blues before Sunrise : The Radio Interviews.
University of Illinois Press, 2010 Call Number: ML394 .B646 2010

Processed 1991,
Reprocessed and updated Olivia Beaudry, CA May 2024.