

## Uncle Ben Perry - Boogie Woogie (1992)

Written by bluesever  
Monday, 13 July 2015 15:59 -

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1. *Boogie Woogie* 2. *Every Night* 3. *Shake It Baby* 4. *Just You Wait and See* 5. *Uncle Ben's Theme* 6. *Gonna Rock Tonight* 7. *Goin' To Richmond* 8. *Saturday Night Party* 9. *Ain't It Funny* Uncle Ben Perry – guitar, vocals Ronnie Morris – guitar David Cunningham – tenor saxophone Gloria Sitz – bass David Workman – harmonica Fred Ryan – percussion + Microwave Dave – slide guitar (4) Rob Whitson – baritone saxophone (1,3) Jim McLucky – trumpet (1)

If you were on Beale Street, in Memphis, TN, any time in the last quarter of the 20th century, odds are that you heard Uncle Ben play. If you were a budding musician, chances are you sat in with him for a few tunes, and if he liked the way you played, you may even have become one of his many "nephews."

It would be impossible to keep track of the scores of kids who sat in with Uncle Ben under those trees in Handy Park (before they gutted it, put a fence around it and started calling it the "Pepsi Pavillion"). He graciously allowed pretty much anyone to play a tune with him, whether they were seasoned professionals passing through or lilly-green amateurs who didn't know a thing about the blues.

Playing the blues, year after year, for the motley assortment of tourists, winos and derelicts that congregated in Handy Park, Uncle Ben had learned a thing or two about how to deal with crowds. For those that came under his tutelage, it was an advanced course, not only in how to handle yourself on the street, but also about how to really make blues your life. Uncle Ben had been down there, banging away on that cheap guitar and hollering those same songs as long as anyone could remember. He was the real deal.

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This post collects what is - as far as I know - Uncle Ben's complete recorded output, minus the bit of him that you can see in Robert Palmer's "Deep Blues" film. The first eight tracks are from a demo that he recorded sometime in the 1980s, I believe. I know it was already a few years old when I got it from Ben in 1992. This was a cassette-only release by some little local outfit called "Alley Way Records." Clarence Covington joins him on 2nd guitar, and also handles the vocals for a couple of tunes. There are also two cuts (recorded live on Beale Street) from the High Water "Deep South Blues" record, and one other song that I found on one of Brad Webb's records.

This music is probably not for everyone. It's badly recorded and mixed, the guitars are out of tune, and it's basically raggedy as hell. But I heard Ben play these songs hundreds of times, and I'm really glad to have this musical memento of those days. I figured there might be others out there who feel the same way. Amazingly, for a guy who made such a mark on the Memphis music scene, this small handful of tunes is all we have to remember Uncle Ben by. So, I wanted to put it out there for whoever might appreciate it. ---gladdrags.blogspot.com

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