



Chicago Blues as seen from the inside - The Photographs of Raeburn Flerlage

From Brand: ECW Press



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Chicago's greatest blues artists are captured in Flerlage's photos, from Howlin' Wolf performing at legendary Pepper's Lounge to Otis Spann and James Cotton playing in Muddy Waters' basement. 150 photos.

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Editorial Review

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Reviewed with Murray Garret's *Hollywood Candid: A Photographer Remembers*.

Professional performers are supposed to look good, but none of them scorns a good photographer's help. Flerlage helped blues musicians and Garret, movie stars. In new books, they share some favorite recollections and favorite images. Flerlage's pictures are more famous among blues fans than Garret's are among movie buffs. Why? Simple: they graced the covers of LPs from the foremost blues labels--Chess, Prestige, Testament, Delmark--and appeared in the foremost blues, folk, and jazz magazines. The fans know and love them, which is only right. Flerlage took up photography to shoot the blues, and no one did it better or more comprehensively. He snapped folk bluesmen like Son House and Fred MacDowell, Chicago bluesmen like Little Walter and Howlin' Wolf, big band bluesmen like B. B. King and Bobby Bland, and even soul pioneers like Jackie Wilson and Martha Reeves. He also took pictures of the performers' contexts, onstage and off. He had a terrific eye and terrific luck, such as when he was shooting an interview with John Lee Hooker, who called Muddy Waters to come over, which he did. Flerlage also had the foresight to shoot his interviewing partner, Mike Bloomfield, playing the stars' guitars not long before he became the first white Chicago blues guitar star. Garret, a Hollywood pro from 1946 to 1973, specialized in getting "candid" glimpses of the stars. Culling an archive much bigger than part-timer Flerlage's, Garret fields an album bursting with freshness. Here are Marilyn Monroe, looking ravishingly inadvertent at Grauman's Chinese Theater; Jack Benny in Roman drag, wryly clutching a cigar; Eddie Cantor showing a dance step to 16-year-old Joel Grey; Gary Cooper playing hairdresser for wrestler Gorgeous George; and lots of a Garret favorite, Bob Hope. Like Flerlage, Garret tells a little about the circumstances of certain shoots and what it was like to work with particular stars. Lengthier than Flerlage's comments, Garret's are more pat, too. Since the movies are more popular than the blues, though, Garret's deliberately appealing pictures may catch more eyes than Flerlage's ultimately more valuable volume. plain0fs17 *Ray Olson*

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From the Publisher

A stunning collection of photographs from Chicago's foremost blues photographer When Raeburn Flerlage was asked to take a picture of Memphis Slim in 1959, he began a career that would produce some of the most fascinating and important photos ever taken of blues musicians. By shooting concert performances, studio sessions, interviews, and club shows, he became a fixture of the Chicago blues scene during the 1960s and early 70s, and captured some of America's greatest blues artists at the pinnacle of their careers: Muddy Waters, Little Walter, Howlin' Wolf, Otis Spann, James Cotton, John Lee Hooker, Son House, and many more. Here, for the first time, are Raeburn's greatest photos, reproduced in a beautiful format. From Howlin' Wolf performing at legendary Pepper's lounge to Otis Spann and James Cotton playing in Muddy Waters' basement, these pictures bring to life one of the most incredible periods in American musical history, and will make you feel like you're right there in that smoky bar, listening.

From the Author

Raeburn Flerlage began taking blues photographs in 1959 and is the most recognized and acclaimed chronicler of the Chicago Blues scene. His photos have appeared in numerous blues magazines, including *Singout*, *DownBeat*, *Living Blues*, *Rhythm & Blues*, and *Blues Access*; books, such as *Urban Blues*, *Who's Who in the Blues*, *Blues Legends*, and *Portraits of the Blues*; and on record covers for labels like Chess, Delmark, Folkways, Prestige, and RCA. His work was featured in the ECW Press publication, *Muddy*

Waters: The Mojo Man (1997).

Users Review

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