

Larry Garner

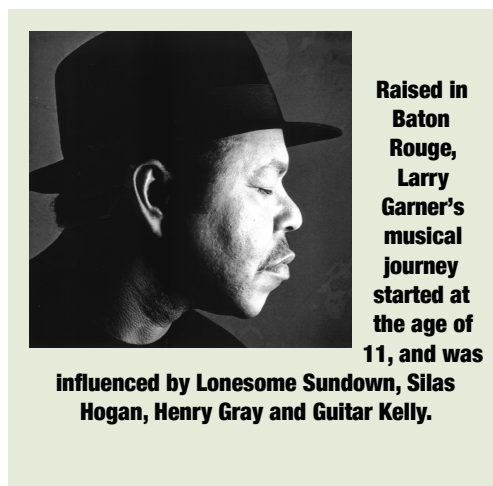
From Berlin to Budapest, from Ponchatrain to Paris and beyond, Larry Garner has played the blues all over the world. But he always comes home to Baton Rouge.



Larry Garner was comfortable in the 9-to-5 routine of commuting to his day job, and making a good salary working for Dow Chemical. On his drive home one night, he was forced to take an alternate route. "There was an accident on the interstate, and I took a detour to avoid it," remembers Garner. "I drove by this place that had a sign outside on wheels, with a couple lights that said, 'Blues Jam Tonight.' I went in, and they said to be back at 10 that night. I went home and told my wife about it. She said, 'You know you've got to go to work tomorrow.' I went anyway, played, and got home at 2:30 in the morning. That was Tabby's Blues Box."

The scene at the legendary Baton Rouge blues hotbed was a marked contrast to the occasional weekend gigs Garner was playing at the time. It was the early 1970s, and Garner had just returned from an 3 year tour in the army. "There were no gigs," he remembers. "It was all disco. There were occasionally American Legion gigs or weddings or rent parties. I played in my garage. I took a job with Dow Chemical, and I rarely played in public."

Garner started moonlighting for the first few years he played out at Tabby's Blues Box. He met such Baton Rouge bluesmen as Silas Hogan, Whispering Smith, Arthur Kelly and Rafal Neal. He occasionally played in New Orleans at Rhythms on Bourbon Street, or with Bryan Lee at the late, lamented Old Absinthe Bar. But eventually he couldn't keep burning the candle at both ends. He recalls



Raised in Baton Rouge, Larry Garner's musical journey started at the age of 11, and was

influenced by Lonesome Sundown, Silas Hogan, Henry Gray and Guitar Kelly.

hanging out at Tabby's one night with Kenny Neal, who'd just finished touring. When Neal pleaded with him to stick around for another drink instead of getting ready for work in the morning, Garner tried to explain. "He said, 'You got to quit that job.' I said, 'I know, but I still got to go to work in the morning.' I left, but Kenny saying that stuck in my head. I had to quit."

It was a chance for Garner to play the music he'd loved since his early childhood. Growing up near Baton Rouge in the small town of Oaknolia, Garner heard the music coming from the church near his house. "There were traveling preachers coming through, and I heard that, and I listened to WLAC in Nashville on Friday and Saturday night," he says. "I started playing guitar because I had an

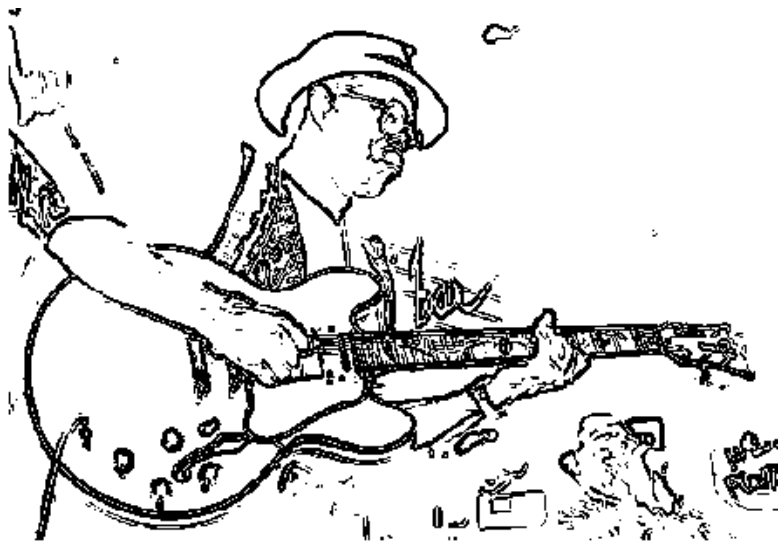
uncle, George, who taught me. He was a paraplegic, and he played like Jimmy Reed. I learned through him, and started playing at the church and behind a gospel group that played on the radio.

"My parents didn't want me playing the blues," Garner continues. "They thought it was the devil's music — then I guess the juke joint a quarter-mile down the road was the devil's recruitment office. I never went into the juke except during the day, when it was a store."

Garner continued playing music during his military service, and playing in army bands — while stationed in Korea — steeled him for the life of a full-time musician. Leaving Dow Chemical was initially tough for him, but now he has a devoted following throughout the country and across the Atlantic Ocean. "I'm on tour all the time," he says. "I go to Europe and England a few times a year. Over there they really like my original stuff. They hear guys playing the blues, but when I come in, they come right up and say, 'Thank God — a real blues band.' We take it for granted here. They're really appreciative there, and so am I.

I'm also on the road here in the US all the time," says Garner. "I have a 2000 Ford van. It's got 365,000 miles on it, and I bought it new. You do the math."

Art Tipaldi- Editor, Blues Revue



“I was told I was ‘too blues.’ Can you believe it- a bluesman is ‘too blues’? “

Festivals & Venues



Larry has played at festivals and venues around the world, including Abu Dhabi Jazz Festival, Alveston Blues Weekend, Belgian Rhythm'n'Blues Festival, Bricktown Blues Fest, Burnely Blues, Big Wheel Blues Festival, Biscuits & Blues, Blues by the Sea, BLUES Chicago, Blues from the Top, Blues on Grand, Bluesnight, Bradfordville Blues Club, Buddy Guy's Legends, Burnely Blues Fest, Cafe Boogaloo, Cambridge Folk Fest, Chicago Blues Festival, Chord on Blues, Cisco Blues Fest, Cognac Blues Passions, Corralejo Blues Festival, DC Blues Festival, Dusk to Dawn Festival, Efes Pilsen, Eureka Springs Blues Weekend, Dodgeville Blues Fest, Famous Dave's BBQ & Blues, Gaildorfer Blues Fest, Gladstone SummerTime BluesFest, Great British R&B Festival, Green Parrot Bar, Guinness Blues Fest, Harvest Time Blues Festival, Helena Music Festival, Hudson River Blues & BBQ Festival, Jazz Club Lionel Hampton, KCK Street Blues Festival, KClinger's Tavern, Knucklehead's Saloon, Montreal Jazz Fest, Montreaux Jazz Festival, New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival, North Atlantic Blues Festival, Ottawa Blues Fest, The Pearl, Peer Blues Fest, Portsmouth Blues Fest, Railroad Blues, Rauma Blues Festival, Salaise Blues Fest, Saskatchewan Blues Fest, Satchmo's, Slippery Noodle, Terrassa Jazz Festival, Texas Blues Fest, Three Rivers Blues Fest, Toronto Waterfront Blues Festival, Virginia Blues and Jazz Festival, Waterfront Blues Festival, Winterpark Blues Fest, Ziquodrome, Zoo Bar and many, many more.

Reviews



Larry Garner is perhaps the most talented blues songwriter alive today, one of the top five bluesmen on the planet.- *Real Blues*

Garner's mellifluous lead guitar chops are akin to B.B. King's and are relatively free from rock influences ... Extremely musical and imminently listenable blues that should bring the name Larry Garner to a large audience.- *Blues Revue*

If you haven't discovered the blues brilliance of Larry Garner, then you should jump on this bandwagon. These are blues for today, good to the last note stuff.- *Big City Blues*

Larry's an undiscovered treasure lurking in the bayous. "Dr.Blues" himself thinks that you should give him a spin. It's superior blues!- *Backyard Blues, Long Island Blues Society*

Is Larry Garner the best songwriter in blues today? Yes, easily!.- *West Coast Blues Review*

In a decade when veterans and youngbloods alike rely too heavily on overdone standards and cover material, Garner churns out clever, challenging, uncompromising and thoroughly contemporary songs.- *Living Blues*

Awards & Discography



Awards

Larry Garner and The Boogaloo Blues Band won the 5th Annual International Blues Challenge back in 1988, and has toured extensively since. Larry is a five-time Blues Award nominee, once for Most Promising Artist, and four times for Contemporary Male Blues Artist. Larry was inducted into the Louisiana Blues Hall of Fame in 2002. The BBC honored Larry as its Bluesman of the Year, and Larry was honored as Blues Songwriter of the Year three times. Larry was twice named Bluesman of the Year Award by Real Blues Magazine.

Discography

- Too Blues (JSP 2111)
- Double Dues (JSP 273)
- You Need To Live A Little (PGD 523759)
- Baton Rouge (Evidence 26106)
- Standing Room Only (Ruf 1024)
- Once Upon The Blues (Ruf 1044)
- Embarrassment To The Blues? (Ruf 1078)
- Here Today, Gone Tomorrow (Dixiefrog 132)
- Live At The Tivoli With Norman Beaker & Friends