

= Lovesick Blues =

" Lovesick Blues " is a show tune written by Cliff Friend and Irving Mills . The song first appeared in the 1922 musical Oh , Ernest . It was recorded by Emmett Miller in 1928 and later by country music singer Rex Griffin . The recordings by Griffin and Miller inspired Hank Williams to perform the song during his first appearances on the Louisiana Hayride in 1948 . Receiving an enthusiastic reception from the audience , Williams decided to record his own version despite initial push back from his producer Fred Rose and his band .

MGM Records released " Lovesick Blues " in February 1949 , and it became an overnight success , quickly reaching number one on Billboard 's Top C & W singles and number 24 on the Most Played in Jukeboxes list . The publication named it the top country and western record of the year , while Cashbox named it " Best Hillbilly Record of the Year " .

Several cover versions of the song have been recorded . The most popular , Frank Ifield 's 1962 version , topped the UK Singles Chart . In 2004 , Williams ' version was added to the National Recording Registry .

= = Background and recordings = =

" Lovesick Blues " was originally entitled " I 've Got the Lovesick Blues " and published by Jack Mills , Inc. in 1922 ; Irving Mills authored the lyrics and Cliff Friend composed the music . It was first performed by Anna Chandler in the Tin Pan Alley musical Oh ! Ernest and first recorded by Elsie Clark on March 21 , 1922 with Okeh Records . Following the recording , Cliff and Friend copyrighted the song on April 3 , 1922 . It was featured in a show at the Boardwalk Club in New York City in June 1922 and also recorded by Jack Shea on Vocalion Records later that summer .

On September 1 , 1925 , Okeh Records sent scout Ralph Peer and a recording crew to Asheville , North Carolina . Among the aspiring artists recorded by Peer was Emmett Miller . Accompanied by Walter Rothrock on the piano , Miller cut four sides for the label , including " Lovesick Blues " . The single was paired with " Big Bad Bill ( is Sweet William Now ) " and released in November 1925 . On June 12 , 1928 accompanied by the Georgia Crackers ( Tommy Dorsey , Jimmy Dorsey , Eddie Lang , and Leo McConville ) , Miller re @-@ recorded the song , which was subsequently released to weak sales . Miller 's version was covered by country music singer Rex Griffin in December 1939 on Decca Records . Griffin rearranged the song by using the original chorus - " I got a feeling called the blues " ? as a verse and turning the verse " I 'm in love , I 'm in love , with a beautiful gal " into the new chorus .

= = Hank Williams recording = =

Hank Williams , who heard both the Miller and Griffin versions , started performing the song on the Louisiana Hayride shortly after joining in August 1948 . Horace Logan , the show 's producer and programming director for KWKH , reported that the audience " went crazy " the first time Williams performed the song on the show . In light of the live audience 's strong positive reaction , Williams decided to record the song . His decision was questioned by his musicians and also his producer , Fred Rose , who felt that the song did not merit a recording . Williams , mindful of the reaction he received live , persisted , and the recording took place during the final half @-@ hour of a session recorded at Herzog Studio in Cincinnati , Ohio , on December 22 , 1948 . For this recording , Williams replaced the jazz musicians with a modern country music band , using a rhythm guitar , mandolin , string bass , drums and a steel guitar . Williams ' session band was composed of Clyde Baum ( mandolin ) , Zeke Turner ( electric guitar ) , Jerry Byrd ( steel guitar ) , Louis Innis ( rhythm guitar ) , Tommy Jackson ( fiddle ) and Willie Thaw ( bass ) . With little time left , Byrd and Turner replicated the musical arrangement they previously used on an Ernest Tubb session for a cover of Jimmie Rodgers ' " Waiting for a Train " . In the episode of American Masters about Williams , Drifting Cowboy Don Helms recalls , " When they recorded ' Lovesick Blues , ' Fred told Hank , ' That song 's out of meter ! Got too many bars in it . And you hold that note too long . ' And Hank said

, ' Well , when I find a note I like , I wanna hold on to it as long as I can , ' you know , just tryin ' to be funny . And Fred said , ' Well , I 'll tell you what I 'm gonna do . That thing is so much out of meter , I 'm gonna get me a cup of coffee and when I get back maybe ya 'll have that thing cut . ' And they did , but it was still out of meter . So Fred lived with that the rest of his life . " Williams combined Griffin 's lyrical arrangement with a two @-@ beat honky @-@ tonk track , borrowing the yodeling and beat drops from Miller 's recording . " Lovesick Blues " was recorded in two takes .

MGM released " Lovesick Blues " on February 11 , 1949 , coupling it with " Never Again ( Will I Knock On Your Door ) " . The single sold 50 @,@ 000 copies in the first two weeks . On its February 26 , 1949 review , Billboard opined : " Hank 's razz @-@ mah @-@ tazz approach and ear @-@ catching yodeling should keep this side spinning " . Based on votes sent to Billboard , the record was rated with 85 points by disc jockeys , 82 by record dealers and 85 by jukebox operators . Between the three , the track scored an overall of 84 . In reference to its 100 @-@ point scale , Billboard regarded the record as " Excellent " . It reached number one on Billboard 's Top C & W singles , where it remained for sixteen weeks and reached number twenty @-@ four on Most Played in Jukeboxes . The magazine listed it as the " number one country and western record of 1949 " while Cashbox named it " Best Hillbilly record of the year " . In March 1949 , Wesley Rose requested Williams to send him the records by Griffin and Miller to prove that the song was in the public domain . Irving Mills , the original lyricist , sued Acuff @-@ Rose . The suit was settled on November 1 , 1949 and it was agreed that Mills and Acuff @-@ Rose would share the publishing of Williams ' recording . Mills retained the rest of rights to the song as he had also purchased Friend 's rights during the Great Depression .

Following the success of the song , Williams was invited to appear as a guest on the Grand Ole Opry , on June 11 , 1949 . After the performance , Williams received a standing ovation . " Lovesick Blues " became his signature song , which he used to close his shows . It was also his first number one hit , and garnered Williams the stage nickname of " The Lovesick Blues Boy " . In 1949 , the singer received second billing behind Eddy Arnold on the list of the " Year 's Top Selling Folk Artists " . Williams ' version of the song was featured in the films The Last Picture Show ( 1971 ) , Forrest Gump ( 1994 ) and The Shawshank Redemption ( 1994 ) . In 2004 , " Lovesick Blues " was added to the National Recording Registry by the Library of Congress .

= = The Crickets recording = =

The Crickets released their cover of the song ( based on Williams ' version ) in 1971 on the Philips label . The song appeared originally as the B @-@ side to the single " My Rockin ' Days " . The recording lineup consisted of Sonny Curtis providing lead guitar and vocals , Joe Osborn on bass , Jerry Allison on drums , and Glen Hardin on piano . The song was performed live on The Old Grey Whistle Test in 1972 . The song was later released on the album Bubblegum , Bop , Ballad And Boogies in 1973 .

= = Other versions = =

Singer Sonny James released a version of the song on the flip side of " Dear Love " in June 1957 . The song peaked at number fifteen on Billboard 's Hot Country Songs .

Jerry Lee Lewis recorded a version for Sun Records .

Patsy Cline released a version of the song in 1960 .

Floyd Cramer 's 1962 version of the song peaked at eighty @-@ seven on the Billboard Hot 100 .

In December 1962 , Frank Ifield 's version of " Lovesick Blues " topped the UK Singles Chart , and reached number forty @-@ four on the Billboard Hot 100 the following month . Gramophone compared his singing to a " rough and raucous Jimmie Rodgers " . Meanwhile , Elizabethan delivered a negative review , stating : " No true country singer would dare do to a Hank Williams number what Frank Ifield has done to ' Lovesick Blues ' " . The review finished by declaring that Ifield had " none of Jim Reeves ' depth and character , nor of the subtle melodic quality ( of ) Don Gibson . " By the end of February 1963 , Billboard estimated that the single had sold close to a

million copies worldwide .

Merle Haggard recorded a version on his 1973 live album I Love Dixie Blues .

Don McLean recorded a version on his 1976 live album , Solo

In 1992 , George Strait released a version that reached number twenty @-@ four on the Billboard Hot Country Singles . The single peaked at number twenty @-@ two on RPM 's Country Tracks .

Loretta Lynn , Dolly Parton , and Tammy Wynette included it on their 1993 album " Honky Tonk Angels " featuring Patsy Cline .

LeAnn Rimes recorded it on her self @-@ titled album .

The Little Willies recorded the song on their 2012 album For the Good Times .

= = Chart performance = =

= = = Hank Williams = = =

= = = Other artists = = =

= = = Chart @-@ toppers = = =