

= Hoochie Coochie Man =

" Hoochie Coochie Man " ( originally titled " I 'm Your Hoochie Cooche Man " ) is a blues standard written by Willie Dixon and first recorded by Muddy Waters in 1954 . The song references hoodoo folk magic elements and makes novel use of a stop @-@ time musical arrangement . It became one of Waters ' most popular and identifiable songs and helped secure Dixon 's role as Chess Records ' chief songwriter .

The song is a classic of Chicago blues and one of Waters ' first recordings with a full backing band . Dixon 's lyrics build on Waters ' earlier use of braggadocio and themes of fortune and sex appeal . The stop @-@ time riff was " soon absorbed into the lingua franca of blues , R & B , jazz , and rock and roll " , according to musicologist Robert Palmer , and is used in several popular songs . When Bo Diddley adapted it for " I 'm a Man " , it became one of the most recognizable musical phrases in blues .

After the song 's initial success in 1954 , Waters recorded several live and new studio versions . The original appears on the 1958 The Best of Muddy Waters album and many compilations . Numerous musicians have recorded " Hoochie Coochie Man " in a variety of styles , making it one of the most interpreted Waters and Dixon songs . The Blues Foundation and the Grammy Hall of Fame recognize the song for its influence in popular music and the US Library of Congress ' National Recording Registry selected it for preservation in 2004 .

= = Background = =

Between 1947 and 1954 , Muddy Waters charted a number of hits recording for Chess Records and its Artistocrat predecessor . One of his first singles was " Gypsy Woman " , recorded in 1947 . The song shows Delta blues guitar @-@ style roots , but the lyrics place " emphasis on supernatural elements ? gypsies , fortune telling , [ and ] luck " , according to musicologist Robert Palmer .

Waters expanded the theme in " Louisiana Blues " , which was recorded in 1950 with Little Walter accompanying on harmonica . He sings of traveling to New Orleans , Louisiana , to acquire a mojo hand , a hoodoo amulet or talisman ; with its magical powers , he hopes " to show all you good lookin ' women just how to treat your man " . Similar lyrics appeared in " Hoodoo Hoodoo " , a 1946 recording by John Lee " Sonny Boy " Williamson : " Well now I 'm goin ' down to Louisiana , and buy me another mojo hand " . Although Waters was ambivalent about hoodoo , he saw the music as having its own power :

When you 're writin ' them songs that are coming from down that way [ Mississippi Delta ] , you can 't leave out somethin ' about that mojo thing . Because this is what black people really believed in at that time ... even today [ circa 1980 ] , when you play the old blues like me , you can 't get from around that .

From 1946 to 1951 , Willie Dixon sang and played bass with the Big Three Trio . After the group disbanded , he worked for Chess Records as a recording session arranger and bassist . Dixon wrote several songs , but label co @-@ owner Leonard Chess failed to show any interest at first . Finally , in 1953 , Chess used two of Dixon 's songs : " Too Late " , recorded by Little Walter , and " Third Degree " , recorded by Eddie Boyd . " Third Degree " became Dixon 's first composition to enter the record charts . In September , Waters recorded his " Mad Love ( I Want You to Love Me ) " , which Dixon biographer Mitsutoshi Inaba calls " a test piece for the forthcoming ' Hoochie Coochie Man ' " because of its shared lyrical and musical elements . The song became Waters ' first record chart success in nearly two years .

The term " hoochie coochie " , with variations in the spelling , is used in different contexts . Appearing in the late 19th century , the hoochie coochie was a sexually provocative dance . Don Wilmeth identifies it as " a precursor of the striptease ... from the belly dance but punctuated with bumps and grinds and a combination of exposure , erotic movements , and teasing . " By one account , it first appeared at the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition in 1876 and was a popular attraction at the 1893 Chicago World 's Fair . The dance is associated with entertainers Little Egypt and Sophie Tucker , but by the 1910s it declined in popularity . " Hoochie coochie " is also used to

refer to a sexually attractive person or a practitioner of hoodoo . In his autobiography , I Am the Blues , Dixon included " hoochie coochie man " in his examples of a seer or a clairvoyant with a connection to folklore of the American South : " This guy is a hoodoo man , this lady is a witch , this other guy 's a hoochie coochie man , she 's some kind of voodoo person " .

= = Composition and recording = =

Not long after the success of " Mad Love " in November 1953 , Dixon approached Leonard Chess with " Hoochie Coochie Man " , a new song he felt was right for Waters . Chess responded , " if Muddy likes it , give it to him " . At the time , Waters was performing at the Club Zanzibar in Chicago . During an intermission , Dixon showed him the song . According to Dixon , Waters took to the tune immediately because it had so many familiar elements and he was able to learn enough to perform it that night . Jimmy Rogers , who was Waters ' second guitarist , remembered that it took a little longer :

Dixon came to the club and he would hum it to Muddy and write the lyrics out . Muddy would work them around for a while until he got it down where he could understand it and fool around with it . He would be onstage and try it out , do a few licks of it . We were building the arrangement , that 's what we were really doing .

On January 7 , 1954 , Waters entered the recording studio with his band to record the song . Considered the classic Chicago blues band , music critic Bill Janovitz described Waters ' group as " a who 's who of bluesmen " . Waters sings and plays electric guitar along with Rogers , blues harmonica virtuoso Little Walter , and drummer Elgin Evans , all of whom had been performing with Waters since 1951 . ( Fred Below , who replaced Evans during 1954 , is sometimes listed as the drummer . ) Pianist Otis Spann , who joined in 1953 , and Dixon , in his debut on double bass for Waters ' recording session , round out the group . Two takes of the song were recorded . Although there are some moments in the alternate take when a player 's timing rushes or drags perceptibly , because the band is so tight , the difference with the master is only six seconds ( for a nearly three @-@ minute song ) .

" Hoochie Coochie Man " follows a sixteen @-@ bar blues progression , which is an expansion of the well @-@ known twelve @-@ bar blues pattern . The first four bars are doubled in length so the harmony remains on the tonic for eight bars or one @-@ half of the sixteen bar progression . Dixon explained that expanding twelve @-@ bar blues was in response to amplification , which gave instruments more sustain . The extra bars also increase the contrasting effect of the repeating stop @-@ time musical figure or riff . For the second eight bars , the song reverts to the last eight of the twelve @-@ bar progression , which functions as a refrain or hook . The different textures provides the tune with a strong contrast , which helps underscore the lyrics . The song is performed at a moderate blues tempo ( 72 beats per minute ) in the key of A. It is notated in 128 time and contains three sixteen @-@ bar sections .

A key feature of the song is the use of stop time , or pauses in the music , during the first half of the progression . This musical device is commonly heard in New Orleans jazz , when the instrumentation briefly stops , allowing for a short instrumental solo before resuming . However , Waters ' and Dixon 's use of stop time serves to heighten the tension through repetition , followed by a vocal rather than an instrument fill . The accompanying riff , which Dixon described as a five @-@ note figure , is similar to that of " Mad Love " . He attributed it to the band and using such a phrase for eight bars was a new approach . Although Palmer comments that the entire group phrases the riff in unison , Boone describes it as a " heavy , unhurried counterpoint by all the instruments together " . Campbell identifies the opening as actually having " two competing riffs " or contrapuntal motion , with one played by Little Walter on an amplified harmonica and another by Waters on electric guitar .

For the second eight @-@ bars of the progression , the song follows the standard I ? IV ? V7 structure , which maintains its connection to traditional blues . The whole band plays it as a shuffle with a triplet rhythm , which Campbell describes as a " free @-@ for @-@ all [ with ] harmonica trills , guitar riffs , piano chords , thumping bass , [ and ] shuffle pattern on the drums " . He adds that this

type of heavy sound was rarely heard in small music combos before rock . However , unlike the polyphony of New Orleans jazz , the instrumentation parallels Waters ' aggressive vocal approach and reinforces the lyrics . The players use of amplification , pushed to the point of distortion , is a key feature of Chicago blues and another rock precedent . In particular , Little Walters ' overdriven saxophone @-@ like harmonica playing weaves in and out of the vocal lines , which heightens the drama .

= = Lyrics and interpretation = =

" Hoochie Coochie Man " is characterized as a " self @-@ mythologizing testament " by Janovitz . The narrator boasts of his good fortune and his effect on women as aided by hoodoo . Waters explored similar themes in earlier songs , but his approach was more subtle . According to Palmer , Dixon upped the ante with more " flamboyance , macho posturing , and extra @-@ generous helping of hoodoo sensationalism " . Dixon claimed that the idea of a seer was inspired by history and the Bible . The verses in the song 's three sixteen @-@ bar sections proceed chronologically . The opening verse starts before the narrator is born and references Waters ' 1947 song " Gypsy Woman " :

As a boy in the South , Dixon recalled gypsies in covered wagons plying their trade from town to town . The fortune tellers would emphasize auspicious circumstances to enhance their earnings , especially when doing readings for pregnant women . In the second section , the narrative is in the present and several references are made to charms used by hoodoo conjurers . These include a black cat bone , a John the conqueror root , and a mojo , the last of which figured in " Louisiana Blues " . Their magical powers assure that the gypsy 's prophecy will be borne out : women and the rest of world will take notice . The song concludes with a final section which projects the good fortune into the future . The number seven is prominent : on the seventh hour , on the seventh day , etc . The stringing together of sevens is another good omen and is analogous to the seventh son of a seventh son of folklore . Dixon later expanded the theme in his 1955 song " The Seventh Son " .

Each section is linked by a refrain or recurring chorus . It functions as a hook and it differs from the usual " free @-@ associative aspect " of traditional blues . Writer Benjamin Filene sees this and Dixon 's desire to tell complete stories , with the verses building on each other , as sharing elements of pop music . The chorus , " But you know I 'm here , everybody knows I 'm here , Well you know I 'm the hoochie coochie man , everybody knows I 'm here " , confirms the narrator 's identity as both the subject of the gypsy 's prophecy as well as an omnipotent seer himself . Dixon felt that the lyrics expressed part of the audience 's unfulfilled desire to brag , while Waters later admitted that they were supposed to have a comic effect . Music historian Ted Gioia points to the underlying theme of sexuality and virility as sociologically significant . He sees it as challenge to the fear of miscegenation in the dying days of racial segregation in the United States . Record producer Marshall Chess took a simpler view : " It was sex . If you have ever seen Muddy then , the effect he had on women [ was clear ] . Because the blues , you know , has always been a women 's market " .

= = Releases and charts = =

In early 1954 , Chess Records issued " I 'm Your Hoochie Cooche Man " backed with " She 's So Pretty " on both the standard ten @-@ inch 78 rpm and the newer seven @-@ inch 45 rpm record single formats . It soon became the biggest hit of Waters ' career . The single entered Billboard magazine 's Rhythm & Blues Records charts on March 13 , 1954 , and reached number three on the Juke Box chart and number eight on the Best Seller chart . It remained on the charts for 13 weeks , making it Waters ' longest charting record up to that time ( two more Waters @-@ Dixon songs , " Just Make Love to Me ( I Just Want to Make Love to You " ) and " Close to You " , both later also lasted 13 weeks ) .

Chess included the song on Waters ' first album , the 1958 compilation The Best of Muddy Waters , but retitled it " Hoochie Coochie " . Numerous later Waters ' official compilations contain it , such as

Sail On ; McKinley Morganfield a.k.a. Muddy Waters ; The Chess Box ; His Best : 1947 to 1955 ; The Best of Muddy Waters ? The Millennium Collection ; The Anthology ( 1947 ? 1972 ) ; Hoochie Coochie Man : The Complete Chess Masters , Vol . 2 : 1952 ? 1958 ; and The Definitive Collection . Marshall Chess arranged for Waters to remake the song using psychedelic rock @-@ style instrumentation for the 1968 album Electric Mud , which was an attempt to reach a new audience . In 1972 , Waters recorded an " unplugged " rendition of the song , with Louis Myers on acoustic guitar and George " Mojo " Buford on unamplified harmonica . Chess released it in 1994 on the Waters rarities collection One More Mile . He revisited the song with original guitarist Jimmy Rogers in 1977 . They re @-@ recorded it for I 'm Ready , the Grammy Award @-@ winning album produced by Johnny Winter .

Waters featured the song in his performances and several live recordings have been issued . His acclaimed At Newport 1960 , one of the first live blues albums , includes a rendition by his later band with Spann , Pat Hare , James Cotton , and Francis Clay . Other live albums have versions that span his career with different backup bands . These include Live in 1958 ( recorded in England in 1958 with Spann and Chris Barber 's trad jazz band , released in 1993 and re @-@ released as Collaboration in 1995 ) ; Authorized Bootleg : Live at the Fillmore Auditorium ? San Francisco Nov 04 ? 06 1966 ( released 2009 ) ; The Lost Tapes ( recorded 1971 , released 1999 ) ; Muddy " Mississippi " Waters ? Live ( recorded 1977 , released 1979 ) ; and Live at the Checkerboard Lounge , Chicago 1981 with members of the Rolling Stones ( released 2012 ) .

= = Influence and recognition = =

" Hoochie Coochie Man " represents Waters ' recording transition from an electrified , but more traditional Delta @-@ based blues of the late 1940s ? early 1950s to a newer Chicago blues ensemble sound . The song was important to Dixon 's career and signaled a change as well ? Chess became convinced of Dixon 's value as a songwriter and secured his relationship as such with the label . Waters soon followed up with several variations on the sixteen @-@ bar stop @-@ time arrangement written by Dixon . These include " I Just Want to Make Love to You " , " I 'm Ready " , and " I 'm a Natural Born Lover " . All of these songs follow a similar lyrical theme and " helped shape Muddy Waters ' image as the testosterone king of the blues " , according to Gioia .

Bo Diddley modified the song 's signature riff for his March 1955 song " I 'm a Man " . He reworked it as a four @-@ note figure , which is repeated for the entire song without a progression to other chords . Music critic and writer Cub Koda calls it " the most recognizable blues lick in the world " . Waters , not to be outdone , responded two months later with an answer song to " I 'm a Man " , titled " Mannish Boy " . " Bo Diddley , he was tracking me down with my beat when he made ' I 'm a Man ' . That 's from ' Hoochie Coochie Man . ' Then I got on it with ' Mannish Boy ' and just drove him out of my way " , Waters recalled . Emphasizing the origin of Bo Diddley 's song , Waters sticks to the original first eight @-@ bar phrase from " Hoochie Coochie Man " and includes some of the hoodoo references .

According to Palmer , songwriters adapted the phrase for other artists and it was " soon absorbed into the lingua franca of blues , jazz , and rock and roll " . In 1955 , songwriters Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller used the riff for " Riot in Cell Block Number 9 " ( later reworked by the Beach Boys as " Student Demonstration Time " ) and " Framed " for the R & B group the Robins . " Trouble " , another Leiber and Stoller composition that uses the riff , was sung by Elvis Presley in the 1958 musical drama film King Creole . American composer Elmer Bernstein quoted the figure in another film , The Man with the Golden Arm , which received a nomination for an Academy Award for Best Original Score in 1955 . Dixon remarked , " we felt like this was a great achievement for one of these blues phrases to be used in a movie " .

As numerous artists recorded it in a variety of styles , " Hoochie Coochie Man " became a blues standard . Janovitz describes the song as " a vital piece of Chicago @-@ style electric blues that links the Delta to rock & roll " . Rock musicians are among the many who have interpreted it . In 1984 , Waters ' original " I 'm Your Hoochie Coochie Man " was inducted into the Blues Foundation Hall of Fame . The Foundation noted that " In addition to countless versions by Chicago blues artists

, the song has been recorded by performers as diverse as Jimi Hendrix , Chuck Berry , and jazz organist Jimmy Smith " to which Grove adds B.B. King , Buddy Guy , John P. Hammond , the Allman Brothers Band , and Eric Clapton . A Grammy Hall of Fame Award followed in 1998 , which " honor [ s ] recordings of lasting qualitative or historical significance " . The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame 's list of the " 500 Songs That Shaped Rock and Roll " recognizes the song 's influence on rock . Representatives of the music industry and press voted it number 226 for Rolling Stone magazine 's list of the " 500 Greatest Songs of All Time " . In 2004 , the National Recording Preservation Board , advisors to the US Library of Congress , selected it for preservation in the National Recording Registry and noted the contributions of the band members .