

= Baby , Please Don 't Go =

" Baby , Please Don 't Go " is a blues song which has been called " one of the most played , arranged , and rearranged pieces in blues history " by music historian Gerard Herzhaft . It was likely an adaptation of " Long John " , an old folk theme dating back to slavery in the United States . Delta blues musician Big Joe Williams popularized it with several versions beginning in 1935 . The song 's roots have been traced back to nineteenth @-@ century American songs which deal with themes of bondage and imprisonment . " Baby , Please Don 't Go " became an early blues standard with recordings by several blues musicians , such as Papa Charlie McCoy , Leonard " Baby Doo " Caston , Lightnin ' Hopkins , John Lee Hooker and Big Bill Broonzy .

After World War II , Chicago blues and rhythm and blues artists adapted the song to newer music styles . In 1952 , a doo @-@ wop version by the Orioles reached the top ten on the race records chart . In 1953 , Muddy Waters recorded the song as an electric Chicago @-@ ensemble blues piece , which influenced many subsequent renditions .

In the 1960s , " Baby , Please Don 't Go " became a popular rock song after the Northern Irish group Them recorded it in 1964 . Several music writers have identified Jimmy Page , a studio guitarist at the time , as participating in the recording , although his exact contributions are unclear . Subsequently , Them 's uptempo rock arrangement has become a rock standard . " Baby , Please Don 't Go " has been inducted into both the Blues and Rock and Roll Halls of Fame .

= = Background = =

" Baby , Please Don 't Go " is likely an adaptation of " Long John " , an old folk theme which dates back to the time of slavery in the United States . It is also related to a group of early twentieth @-@ century blues songs that include " I 'm Alabama Bound " , " Elder Green Blues " , " Another Man Done Gone " , " Don 't Leave Me Here " and " Turn Your Lamp Down Low " . These songs have been traced back to late nineteenth @-@ century work songs . Author Linda Dahl suggests a connection to a song with the same title by Mary Williams Johnson in the late 1920s and early 1930s . However , Johnson , who was married to jazz @-@ influenced blues guitarist Lonnie Johnson , never recorded it and her song is not discussed as influencing later performers . Blues researcher Jim O 'Neal notes that Williams " sometimes said that the song was written by his wife , singer Bessie Mae Smith (aka Blue Belle and St. Louis Bessie) [not the same as the popular Bessie Smith of the 1920s and 1930s] " .

= = Original song = =

Big Joe Williams used the theme for his October 31 , 1935 , recording of " Baby , Please Don 't Go " during his first session for Lester Melrose and Bluebird Records in Chicago . It is an ensemble piece with Williams on vocal and guitar accompanied by Dad Tracy on one @-@ string fiddle and Chasey " Kokomo " Collins on washboard , who are listed as " Joe Williams ' Washboard Blues Singers " on the single . Musical notation for the song indicates a moderate @-@ tempo fifteen @-@ bar blues in 44 or common time in the key of B ? . As with many Delta blues songs of the era , it remains on the tonic chord (I) throughout without the progression to the subdominant (IV) or dominant (V) chords . The lyrics express a prisoner 's anxiety about his lover leaving before he returns home :

The song became a hit and established Williams ' recording career . On December 12 , 1941 , he recorded a second version titled " Please Don 't Go " in Chicago for Bluebird , with a more modern arrangement and lyrics . Blues historian Gerard Herzhaft calls it " the most exciting version " , which Williams recorded using his trademark nine @-@ string guitar . Accompanying him are Sonny Boy Williamson I on harmonica and Alfred Elkins on imitation bass (possibly a washtub bass) . Since both songs appeared before recording industry publications began tracking such releases , it is unknown which version was more popular . In 1947 , he recorded it for Columbia Records with Williamson and Ransom Knowling on bass and Judge Riley on drums . This version did not reach the Billboard Race Records chart , but represents a move toward a more urban blues treatment of

the song .

= = Later blues and R & B recordings = =

Due to the popularity of the 1935 release of Big Joe Williams " Baby , Please Don 't Go " , other blues musicians began recording their interpretations of the song and it soon became a blues standard . Early examples include Papa Charlie McCoy as " Tampa Kid " (1936) , Leonard " Baby Doo " Caston (1939) , Lightnin ' Hopkins (1947) , John Lee Hooker (1949) and Big Bill Broonzy (1952) . By the early 1950s , the song was reworked in contemporary musical styles , with an early rhythm and blues / jump blues version by Billy Wright (1951) , a harmonized doo @-@ wop version by the Orioles (a number eight R & B hit in 1952) , and a Afro @-@ Cuban @-@ influenced rendition by Rose Mitchell (1954) .

In 1953 , Muddy Waters recast the song as a Chicago @-@ blues ensemble piece with Little Walter and Jimmy Rogers . Waters regularly performed " Baby , Please Don 't Go " and made several live recordings . Live versions appear on Muddy Waters at Newport 1960 and on Live at the Checkerboard Lounge , Chicago 1981 with members of the Rolling Stones . AllMusic critic Bill Janovitz cites the influence of Waters ' adaptation :

The most likely link between the Williams recordings and all the rock covers that came in the 1960s and 1970s would be the Muddy Waters 1953 Chess side , which retains the same swinging phrasing as the Williams takes , but the session musicians beef it up with a steady driving rhythm section , electrified instruments and Little Walter Jacobs wailing on blues harp .

= = Van Morrison and Them rendition = =

= = = Background = = =

" Baby Please Don 't Go " was one of the earliest songs recorded by the Northern Irish band Them , fronted by a 19 @-@ year @-@ old Van Morrison . Their rendition of the song was derived from a John Lee Hooker version he recorded in 1949 as " Don 't Go Baby " using the pseudonym " Texas Slim " (King 4334) . Hooker 's song appeared on a 1959 album titled Highway of Blues (using the correct names) , which Van Morrison had acquired . Morrison later explained

'Baby Please Don 't Go ' was on it and several other songs like ' Devil 's Stomp ' and all this slow stuff . ' Baby Please Don 't Go ' was the only fast number on it . It struck me as being something really unique and different , with a lot of soul . More soul than I 'd heard from any previous records .

= = = Recording and composition = = =

Them recorded " Baby , Please Don 't Go " for Decca Records in October 1964 . Besides Morrison , there is conflicting information about who participated in the session . In addition to the group 's original members (guitarist Billy Harrison , bassist Alan Henderson , drummer Ronnie Millings , and keyboard player Eric Wrixon) , others have been suggested : Pat McAuley on keyboards , Bobby Graham on a second drum kit , Jimmy Page on second guitar , and Peter Bardens on keyboards . As Page biographer George Case notes , " There is a dispute over whether it is Page 's piercing blues line that defines the song , if he only played a run Harrison had already devised , or if Page only backed up Harrison himself " .

Morrison has acknowledged Page 's participation in the early sessions : " He played rhythm guitar on one thing and doubled a bass riff on the other " and Morrison biographer Johnny Rogan notes that Page " doubled the distinctive riff already worked out by Billy Harrison " . Music critic Greil Marcus comments that during the song 's quieter middle passage " the guitarist , session player Jimmy Page or not , seems to be feeling his way into another song , flipping half @-@ riffs , high , random , distracted metal shavings " . Them 's blues @-@ rock arrangement is " now regarded justly as definitive " , with " much of its appeal emanat [ing] from the tingling lead guitar section " ,

according to music writer Adam Clayton .

= = = Releases and charts = = =

" Baby , Please Don 't Go " was released as Them 's second single on November 6 , 1964 . With the B @-@ side , " Gloria " , it became their first hit , reaching number ten on the UK Singles Chart . The single was released in the U.S. in 1965 , but only " Gloria " became a hit the following year . The song was not included on Them 's original British or American albums (The Angry Young Them and Them Again) , however , it has appeared on several compilation albums , such as The Story of Them Featuring Van Morrison and The Best of Van Morrison . When it was reissued in 1991 as a single in the UK (London LON 292) , it reached number 65 in the chart . Van Morrison also accompanied John Lee Hooker during a 1992 performance , where Hooker sings and plays " Baby , Please Don 't Go " on guitar while sitting on a dock , with harmonica backing by Morrison ; it was released on the 2004 Come See About Me Hooker DVD .

= = AC / DC version = =

" Baby , Please Don 't Go " was a feature of AC / DC 's live shows since their beginning . Although they have expressed their interest and inspiration in early blues songs , music writer Mick Wall identifies Them 's adaptation of the song as the likely source . In November 1974 , Angus Young , Malcolm Young , and Bon Scott recorded it for their 1975 Australian debut album , High Voltage . Tony Currenti is sometimes identified as the drummer for the song , although he suggests that it had been already recorded by Peter Clack . Wall notes that producer George Young played bass for most of the album , although Rob Bailey claims that many of the album 's tracks were recorded with him .

High Voltage and a single with " Baby , Please Don 't Go " were released simultaneously in Australia in February 1975 . AllMusic critic Eduardo Rivadavia called the song " positively explosive " . Albert Productions issued it the single 's B @-@ side , however , the A @-@ side was largely ignored and " Baby , Please Don 't Go " began receiving airplay . The single entered the chart at the end of March 1975 and peaked at number 10 in April . Also in April 1975 , one month after drummer Phil Rudd and bassist Mark Evans joined AC / DC , the group performed the song for the Australian music program Countdown . For their appearance , " Angus wore his trade mark schoolboy uniform while Scott took the stage wearing a wig of blonde braids , a dress , make @-@ up , and earrings " , according to author Heather Miller . Joe Bonomo describes Scott as " a demented Pippi Longstocking " and Perkins notes his " tattoos and a disturbingly short skirt . " Evans describes the reaction :

As soon as his vocals are about to begin he comes out from behind the drums dressed as a schoolgirl . And it was like a bomb went off in the joint ; it was pandemonium , everybody broke out in laughter . [Scott] had a wonderful sense of humor .

Scott mugs for the camera and , during the guitar solo / vocal improvization section , he lights a cigarette as he duels with Angus with a green mallet . Rudd laughs throughout the performance . Although " Baby , Please Don 't Go " was a popular part of AC / DC 's performances (often as the closing number) , the song was not released internationally until their 1984 compilation EP ' 74 Jailbreak . The video from the Countdown show is included on the Family Jewels DVD compilation in 2005 .

= = Recordings by other artists = =

Aerosmith recorded " Baby , Please Don 't Go " for their blues cover album , Honkin ' on Bobo , which was released on March 30 , 2004 . The album was produced by Jack Douglas , who had worked on the group 's earlier albums , and reflects a return to their hard rock roots . Billboard magazine describes the song as " the kind of straight @-@ ahead , hard @-@ driving track that always typified the band 's [1970s] records " . Edna Gundersen of USA Today called their version a

" terrific revival . " It was the first single to be released from the album and reached number seven on the Mainstream Rock Tracks chart . A music video , directed by Mark Haefeli , was produced to promote the single . Subsequently , the song has become a staple of the band 's concert repertoire .

Other recorded renditions include those by Mose Allison (Transfiguration of Hiram Brown , 1960) , Paul Revere & the Raiders (Just Like Us ! , 1966) , the Amboy Dukes (reached number 106 on the Billboard Bubbling Under Hot 100 Singles record chart in 1968) , and Budgie (Never Turn Your Back on a Friend , 1973) .

= = Recognition and legacy = =

Big Joe Williams ' " Baby , Please Don 't Go " is included in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame list of " 500 Songs That Shaped Rock and Roll " . In 1992 , it was inducted into the Blues Foundation Hall of Fame in the " Classics of Blues Recordings " category . The Foundation noted that , in addition to various blues recordings , " the song was revived in revamped @-@ up fashion by rock bands in the ' 60s such as Them , the Amboy Dukes , and Ten Years After " .