

= Who Do You Love ? (Bo Diddley song) =

" Who Do You Love ? " is a song written by American rock and roll pioneer Bo Diddley . Recorded in 1956 , it is one of his most popular and enduring works . The song represents one of Bo Diddley 's strongest lyrical efforts and uses a combination of hoodoo @-@ type imagery and boasting . It is an upbeat rocker , but the original did not use the signature Bo Diddley beat rhythm .

" Who Do You Love ? " was part of Bo Diddley 's repertoire throughout his career , but none of his various recordings reached the record charts . The song has been interpreted and recorded by numerous musicians in different styles , often adding a Bo Diddley beat . Popular renditions include those by Ronnie Hawkins and George Thorogood , with charting singles by the Woolies , Tom Rush , Quicksilver Messenger Service , and Juicy Lucy .

Guitarists ' contributions to the various renditions of the song have been noted by music critics and writers . Beginning with blues guitarist Jody Williams ' prominent fills and solo on Bo Diddley 's original recording , the guitar work by Robbie Robertson (Hawkins) , John Cipollina (Quicksilver) , Glenn Ross Campbell (Juicy Lucy) , and Thorogood on later adaptations has been also acknowledged .

= = Background and lyrics = =

Bo Diddley wrote " Who Do You Love " in 1956 . The idea came to him in Kansas City , where he heard a group of children trying to out @-@ brag one another using a particular rhythm . " It was like an African chant , and I wanted words that would suit it " , Bo Diddley recalled . Inspired by Muddy Waters 1954 hit " I 'm Your Hoochie Coochie Man " , he wanted to outdo songwriter Willie Dixon 's lyrical swagger :

I 'm telling this chick ... how bad I am , so she can go tell the cat she 's hanging with , " this dude is something else . " That 's what it kinda meant , cat ridin ' rattlesnakes and kissin ' boa constrictors and stuff .

He also sings about a skull , a tombstone , a graveyard , and a scream in the night to convey a sense of forboding . The use of the homonym " who do " is an allusion to " hoodoo " , a Louisiana / Mississippi folk magic belief that events can be influenced by its use . However , Bo Diddley uses imagery more common to the American Southwest , combined with exaggerated bravado . He explained that the first line , " I got forty @-@ seven miles of barbed wire " , came to him quickly , " but I couldn 't get a rhyme for it . I thought of car tires and mule trains , and I couldn 't get anything to fit . Then one day I said ' use a cobra snake , ' and my drummer , Clifton James , added ' for a necktie ' " . These are directed at a female he is trying to woo ? " who do you love , me or him " . The lyrics confirm the effect : " Arlene took me by my hand , she said ' oo @-@ ee daddy I understand ' , who do you love ? " .

= = Composition and recording = =

Musically , " Who Do You Love ? " is an uptempo song centered on one chord (A ?) with guitar flourishes that complement the vocals . It has a strong rhythm , but unlike later interpretations , it does not use the typical Bo Diddley beat . Instead , the song uses a " modified cut shuffle beat " or 2 / 4 time , giving it an almost rockabilly feel , similar to Chuck Berry 's " Maybellene " .

" Who Do You Love ? " was recorded in Chicago on March 24 , 1956 , one year after recording the self @-@ titled " Bo Diddley " , his debut single . Bo Diddley uses his characteristic sound processing effects , including echoey vocal and tremolo @-@ laden rhythm electric guitar . Jody Williams answers the vocal lines with prominent , distinctive overdriven guitar fills and a solo . Biographer George R. White calls his playing " revolutionary " . In naming Williams to its list of " 35 Blues Guitarists Who Definitely Started It All " , Spin magazine adds , " His solo on Diddley 's ' Who Do You Love ? ' is a lesson in evil " . Clifton James plays the drums and percussionist Jerome Green adds maracas .

= = Release and reception = =

In 1956 , the song was released as a single by Checker Records , a Chess Records subsidiary , but did not reach the record charts . It reached a bigger audience when it was included on his first compilation album , Bo Diddley , released in 1958 . " Who Do You Love ? " appears on numerous later compilations , including His Best . Music critic Cub Koda calls " Who Do You Love ? " one of Bo Diddley 's strongest lyrical efforts . Writer Don Snowden notes that it is " an enduring lyric archetype on the order of ' Johnny B. Goode ' and ' Hoochie Coochie Man ' " . White describes it as " a stunning display of voodooesque braggadocio " . He adds that the song is " spine @-@ chilling ... [with] murky vocals , eerie ? almost surreal ? lyrics " .

In 1967 , Bo Diddley recorded an updated version of the song with Muddy Waters and Little Walter for the Super Blues collaboration album . He recorded it again in 1987 for the La Bamba film soundtrack . Willie Dixon produced the song and Los Lobos provided the ensemble backing .

= = Renditions = =

= = = Ronnie Hawkins and the Hawks = = =

Rockabilly singer Ronnie Hawkins performed " Who Do You Love ? " during live engagements as early as the late 1950s . After several singles , Hawkins recorded the song in February 1963 for Roulette Records in New York City . He was backed by the Hawks , who later toured with Bob Dylan and became the Band . Music historian Charlie Gillett describes Hawkins ' vocal as " low and hard , achieving all that rock ' n ' roll could do " .

The Hawks ' Robbie Robertson 's guitar playing is prominent in the recording and has been noted by several music writers . Critic Richie Unterberger described it as " a good few years ahead of its time in its manic distorted intensity " . Robertson 's style has been compared to that of blues guitarist Willie Johnson , who was a key contributor to Howlin ' Wolf 's early 1950s sound . Longtime Howlin ' Wolf guitarist Hubert Sumlin 's 1961 solo on " Wang Dang Doodle " has been suggested as inspiring Robertson . However , Gillett notes , " Robertson 's guitar style did not imitate any particular previous guitarist " and added " five years later , many guitarists were trying in vain for comparable effects " .

Hawkins ' single was a hit in Canada , according to writer Oliver Trager , but its release predated Canadian record chart compiler , RPM magazine . Except near the border in the Great Lakes area , the record was largely unnoticed and did not appear on the Billboard charts . In 1964 , they performed an eight @-@ minute version in a jam style later associated with the Grateful Dead . Robertson , along with Levon Helm and Garth Hudson , backed John P. Hammond for a recording of " Who Do You Love " for the latter 's So Many Roads album . Released in 1965 , the song uses a Bo Diddley beat with a blues rock arrangement . In 1976 , Hawkins performed the song with the Band for The Last Waltz concert film and album . Band biographer Neil Minturn describes it as " demanding an ebullient , loose , insistent , repetitive groove , with roots in Southern , rural culture . Hawkins continued to perform " Who Do You Love ? " as a solo artist .

= = = Quicksilver Messenger Service = = =

San Francisco psychedelic rock band Quicksilver Messenger Service made " Who Do You Love " a feature of their live performances . During the group 's early days in 1966 and 1967 with singer and harmonica player Jim Murray , the song was performed with a relatively concise blues rock arrangement featuring a Bo Diddley @-@ style beat and harmonica and guitar solos . They attempted at least one studio recording in 1967 during the sessions that led to their first album , Quicksilver Messenger Service . The demo was officially released on the 1999 album Unreleased Quicksilver Messenger Service ? Lost Gold and Silver . At just less than six minutes , it is fairly representative of their early performances .

However , by mid @-@ 1968 " Who Do You Love " took on a different arrangement . Unterberger calls it a " template upon which to hang long instrumental guitar improvisations , [with] the tempo and the melody of the original tune all but disappearing " . A 25 @-@ minute live adaptation was included on Quicksilver 's second album , Happy Trails , that was edited from 1968 recordings at the Fillmore East and / or Fillmore West . The group performs it as a six @-@ part suite that " weave [s] into and back out of the main theme " , with sections allow for instrumental exploration by the individual band members .

The first and last sections , titled " Who Do You Love Parts 1 and 2 " , are the most Bo Diddley @-@ anchored sections of the song with vocals and a his well @-@ known beat . The non @-@ vocal sections have titles that play on the original , but beginning with different interrogatives : when , where , how , and which . The second section features a jazz @-@ influenced guitar solo by Gary Duncan and interplay with guitarist John Cipollina , while the third deconstructs into guitar effects and ambient audience sounds . The fourth section returns to the Bo Diddley theme with a guitar solo by Cipollina , described in a Mojo magazine album review as " distinctive , quivering , vibrato @-@ heavy playing " , with the band delivering a solid backing . The fifth section highlights David Freiberg 's bass lines and the sixth section is the coda with vocal and harmonies .

Rock music critic Greil Marcus calls " Who Do You Love " " one of the best rock 'n'roll recordings to emerge from San Francisco [and] some of the finest hard rock ever recorded " . In the description of the song , Legends of Rock Guitar : The Essential Reference of Rock 's Greatest Guitarists includes :

[Cipollina] whips out nearly every technique and effect known to rock guitarists at the time , including heavy distortion , feedback , tremelo , echo , and silde effects , as well as his novel jazz influences , whammy vibrato , and string bending techniques .

At over twenty @-@ five minutes , the song was too long for commercial radio airplay . Capitol Records prepared an edited 3 : 35 version for release as a single . It became Quicksilver 's first appearance on Billboard 's Hot 100 singles chart , where it reached number 91 in 1969 . The Happy Trails record album , with the song taking up the entire first side , became a best seller at number 27 in the album chart , also in 1969 . Rolling Stone included the album at number 189 on its list of the " 500 Greatest Albums of all Time "

= = = George Thorogood and the Destroyers = = =

American blues rock singer and guitarist George Thorogood and the Destroyers recorded " Who Do You Love ? " for their second album , Move It on Over (1978) . In contrast to Quicksilver Messenger Service , Thorogood 's punchy 4 : 21 rendition is more suited to a dive bar than a psychedelic ballroom . AllMusic writer Tim Sendra notes the song 's " pounding " Bo Diddley @-@ beat , with Thorogood 's " nasty slide [guitar] playing and barstool blues vocals " . In addition to Bo Diddley 's lyrics , he included : " Snakeskin shoes baby put ' em on your feet , got the good time music with a Bo Diddley beat " .

The song became an FM rock radio staple and one of Thorogood 's most identifiable and popular songs . In 1985 , he performed it with Bo Diddley at Live Aid benefit concert in Philadelphia . " Who Do You Love ? " continues to be a part of Thorogood 's repertoire , with several live recordings , including for his 30th Anniversary Tour : Live album and video .

= = Recognition and legacy = =

In 2004 , Rolling Stone magazine ranked Bo Diddley 's original song at number 133 on their list of the " 500 Greatest Songs of All Time " . In 2010 , the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences acknowledged it with a Grammy Hall of Fame Award , which " honor [s] recordings of lasting qualitative or historical significance " .

" Who Do You Love ? " has been interpreted and recorded by numerous musicians . Folk singer Tom Rush recorded the song for his 1966 album Take a Little Walk with Me . Unterberger describes it as " electric rock ... Tom adapted an uncharasteristically low and playful growl for Diddley 's ' Who

Do You Love , ' graced by early fuzz guitar distortion " with the same musicians who backed Dylan in 1965 . A single version was released by Rush the same year , which reached number 39 on Billboard magazine 's " Top Sellers in Top Markets " chart for Boston on May 14 , 1966 . A second " Who Do You Love " single by Rush was released in 1971 , which appeared at number 105 on Billboard 's " Bubbling Under Hot 100 Singles " chart . Rush performed the song at the Boston Symphony Hall in December 2012 , which is included on his 2013 Celebrates 50 Years of Music album and DVD .

A psychedelic rock version by the Misunderstood was recorded in 1966 and released as the B @-@ side to the " I Can Take You to the Sun " single on Fontana Records . Author Dave Thompson writes , " The Misunderstood pumped it up but kept it short , psychedelic sound effects , heart attack drums , [and] eerie harmonics " . Misunderstood guitarist Glenn Ross Campbell reworked " Who Do You Love " with his later band , Juicy Lucy , which reached number 14 in the UK Singles Chart in 1970 . The song features Campbell 's psychedlic steel guitar lines , which Thompson describes " as fast and mean and dirty as any record could have been , a breakneck tour through the bayou swamps and dirt @-@ track roads of the American South , powered by a guitar to make your fingers bleed " .

The Woolies recorded " Who Do You Love " in an early American garage band ? style that reached number 97 on Billboard Hot 100 in 1967 . Other renditions include those by the Blues Project , the Doors , Carlos Santana , and the Jesus and Mary Chain .