

The Language of the Blues: From Alcorub to Zuzu

By Debra Devi

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Winner ASCAP Deems Taylor Award for Outstanding Book on Music - a must for music fans and language nuts!

"What a great resource, as fascinating as it is informative. Debra's passion for the blues shines through." **Bonnie Raitt**

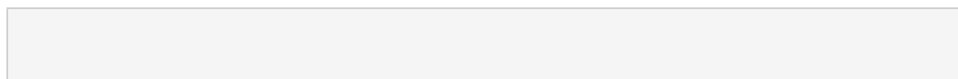
"Debra's book will teach you what you really need to know about blues history and where the blues are coming from." **Joe Bonamassa**

Packed with wild and insightful stories from blues artists, *Reuters* calls *The Language of the Blues* "one of the wittiest, bawdiest, most fascinating dictionaries ever." *Wall Street Journal* critic **Nat Hentoff** says it's "invaluable," and producer **Hal Willner** agrees: "It's an invaluable reference book. And it's also great fun to read."

The Language of the Blues explores over 150 terms like buffet flat, killing floor, and mojo with fresh insights from *Huffington Post* blogger Debra Devi's interviews with blues legends like **Hubert Sumlin, Robert Jr. Lockwood, Henry Gray, Bob Margolin, Robben Ford, Jimmie Vaughan** and more. "As a musician myself, not a scholar," Devi explains, "I thought I could best make a contribution by talking directly to blues artists about what the words in blues songs mean to them."

The result is a lively read *Blues Revue* deems "an essential purchase for scholars and fans." *New York Times* columnist Shelton Ivany adds, "If you have any questions about songs, lyrics, musicians or events, chances are you will find your answers in this unparalleled publication."

The Language of the Blues opens with a remarkable foreword by **Dr. John**. It includes 40+ stunning photos of blues legends (17 in color).



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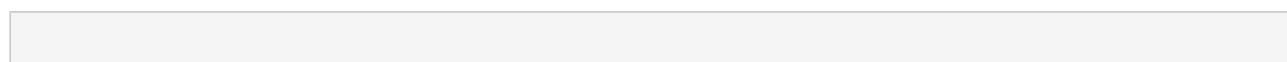
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The Language of the Blues: From Alcorub to Zuzu By Debra Devi Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Review

"Invaluable" - Nat Hentoff, *The Wall Street Journal*

"An unparalleled publication. If you have any questions about songs, lyrics, musicians or events, chances are that you will find your answers in *The Language of the Blues*." - Sheldon Ivany, *New York Times*

"*The Language of the Blues* is not a dour dictionary. Rather it is a vibrant work of social commentary that you may well find yourself reading through in one sitting." - *The Frustrated Writer*

"An important addition to the study of blues...an essential purchase for scholars and fans." - *Blues Revue*

"At first glance one would believe this to be a dictionary of blues lyrics, but it reaches beyond that. More like an encyclopedia of blues slang, it delves beyond the simple explanation of lyrics and offers the reader in-depth definitions and anecdotes on the origins and usage of many of the terms we are familiar with in blues music and our lives today." - *Elmore*

Folks are always trying to demystify the Blues and the words used in the songs and conversations. Well with *The Language Of The Blues: From Alcorub to Zuzu* by Debra Devi, we have actually found one that makes sense and can be actually used for reference or just pure enjoyment. Blues lyrics are often mysterious and unapproachable to the fair weather fan and more so to the general public. The music is comprised of words/lyrics from another culture, from the inner city side streets and rural jook joints where the music took root. So often the language of these songs are misinterpreted or sanitized into something less than real. Real is what makes the Blues so alluring and forceful. While not an incunabulum of out-dated, seldom used terms it is a book that can serve as a reference and jolly point of learning more in the form of a slightly bawdy, racy yet witty dictionaries around. We all know that when Bobby Blue Bland sang that the eagle flies on Friday he is referencing the money one gets on pay day (usually Friday), yet do we know that when one dusts his broom that it could mean several things? It could be as simple as just leaving, or does it involve more complex processes as cleansing the house of evil spirits by dusting the broom with powder to force them out? This is just one of the many things that we find inside the book that I devoured with a smile plastered on my face. Ms. Devi has scrupulously researched the subject matter and created a comprehensive accompaniment to the culture of the Blues which includes excerpts from interviews with such luminaries as Bonnie Raitt, Dr. John, Hubert Sumlin, Buddy Guy and many others. With a line up like we would be first in line to see the show, so using that logic why would we not avail ourselves of this compendium of Blues lexicon. A must for every Blues, Music, language fan out there, so you have to fit into one of these categories so get on it now! --Blues 411

The music called the blues can express emotions with unmistakable clarity, but some of the words, whether sung by 1930s Mississippi Delta sharecroppers or big-city electric-guitar heroes, can be pretty obscure. Hunting down the origins and meanings of those words was the mission of New Jersey rock musician and journalist Debra Devi. The result, *"The Language of the Blues,"* is a witty, bawdy and fascinating dictionary. In an interview, Devi said the idea for the book came when she was an associate editor at *Blues Revue* magazine. "Talking to a lot of artists, I realized there were a lot of words that I thought I knew what they meant," she said. "You sort of assume you know what mojo means, or voodoo -- and you really don't." She added, "I thought it would be really cool to investigate this and, more importantly, ask the artists directly what these words mean." Amply footnoted, *"The Language of the Blues"* draws on many scholarly and not-

so-scholarly sources including interviews with musicians, among them Dr. John (Mac Rebennack, who also contributed the foreword), B.B. King, Hubert Sumlin, Bonnie Raitt and Robert Lockwood Jr. All the entries, from "alcorub" to "zuzu," cite musicians and songs that used the words. The book also includes many photographs of blues musicians past and present. --Reuters

From the Back Cover

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"One of the wittiest, bawdiest, most fascinating dictionaries ever." *Reuters*

"What a great resource...as fascinating as it is informative. Debra's passion for the blues shines through."

Bonnie Raitt

"Finally one can understand the mechanics behind the overwhelming viscera of the Blues. Debra Devi's work is a true guide book to the soul." **Al Jourgensen**

"This book is fascinating! Take it to the bathroom and don't come out until you're done reading it." **Jimmy Vivino**

"Debra's book will teach you what you really need to know about blues history and where the blues are coming from." **Joe Bonamassa**

"This is a beautiful book. After hearing 'Hellhound on My Trail' in high school I bought every vintage blues record available. Upon receiving *The Language of the Blues* I discovered my knowledge only scratched the surface." **Hal Willner**

"Don't think *The Language of the Blues* might read like a dictionary. There's no plot, but you can open it up at random, fall into the world of your favorite Blues songs, and find out more about the lyrics than you would by guessing from context. I learned a lot more about the Blues music I already love." **Bob Margolin**

"This is a book that lovers of music and just plain old lovers will love to have in their collections. Its candor and witty honesty bring us into the world Debra describes so well with beautiful strength." **Ed Sanders**

To explore the origins and meanings of blues terms like "mojo," and "killing floor," Debra Devi pored over academic sources, and interviewed such blues legends as **Little Milton Campbell, Robben Ford, Henry Gray, Dr. John, Robert Jr. Lockwood, Bob Margolin, Bonnie Raitt, Hubert Sumlin and Jimmie Vaughan**. *The Language of the Blues* includes 30+ photos (17 color) of blues artists and a remarkable foreword by **Dr. John**.

Debra Devi is the singer/guitarist for the rock band DEVI and a Fender Girl Rock Nation artist. She's a *Huffington Post* blogger and former associate editor of *Blues Revue* who has also written for *The Village Voice*, *Guitar World*, and *Rolling Stone.com*.

About the Author

Writer and rock musician Debra Devi fell in love with the blues as a Milwaukee teen sneaking out to live shows by Chicago legends like Son Seals and Koko Taylor. Today, she is a contributing editor at *American Blues Scene* and a *Huffington Post* blogger on the blues and related topics. Devi has written for *The Village Voice*, *Rolling Stone.com*, *Vintage Guitar* and *Guitar* and is a former associate editor of *Blues Revue*. She is the lead guitarist/singer for the rock band DEVI and a Fender Girl Rock Nation artist.

Users Review

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Christina Love:

The book *The Language of the Blues: From Alcorub to Zuzu* can give more knowledge and information about everything you want. Exactly why must we leave the best thing like a book *The Language of the Blues: From Alcorub to Zuzu*? Some of you have a different opinion about reserve. But one aim this book can give many information for us. It is absolutely right. Right now, try to closer together with your book. Knowledge or info that you take for that, you can give for each other; it is possible to share all of these. Book *The Language of the Blues: From Alcorub to Zuzu* has simple shape but you know: it has great and big function for you. You can search the enormous world by start and read a reserve. So it is very wonderful.

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