

I got the blues. Antonio Maggio.

People say, Haven't you got anything better to do? – The answer to that is well, yes, I have, but then as I wander through and research the history of the blues, yet another story pops up ...

I got the blues has the distinction, albeit, a somewhat dubious distinction of being the first blues song every published, its claim is in the sense that it has blues in the title and used a 12-bar pattern.

Antonio Maggio published this song, but he didn't write it - the man who did has never been identified. Antonio emigrated from Sicily to Louisiana in 1982. A violinist, he settled in New Orleans, where he heard this song in the Algiers district of the city.



Antonio tells us, I heard an elderly Negro with a guitar playing three notes over and over again. I didn't think anything with only three notes could have a title, so to satisfy my curiosity I asked him what was the name of the piece. He replied '*I got the blues*' which probably meant how he felt at

the time rather than the title of the song; such are the myths of the blues. Having this on my mind, (Antonio, not me) I wrote an arrangement by making the three notes dominating most of the time. That night, our five-piece orchestra played at the Fabaker Restaurant '*I got the blues*', the song was composed as a musical caricature, and to my astonishment became our most popular request number. The story of the blues never ends, so strange, so diverse, don't you agree?

David R Howard

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