

Bland, Bobby Blue (1930-) Encyclopedia Article

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Bobby Blue Bland played a significant role in the development of the blues ballad. Generally ranked by blues fans in the highest echelon of the genre, he specializes in slower, prettier tunes, while remaining within the blues tradition. Bland, along with B. B. King, emerged from the Memphis blues scene. Born in Rosemark, Tennessee, he moved to Memphis at seventeen, and began recording shortly thereafter. During the 1950s, he developed his unique blues ballad sound: in his performances, he walks a thin line between self-control and ecstasy. In the 1960s, he had twelve major hits, including "I Pity the Fool," and the now standard "Turn on Your Love Light." Overall, he has had 51 top ten singles. Bland has never become a major crossover star, but still draws solid audiences on the blues concert circuit.