

Deep River Blues

Words & Music:
Alton & Rabon Delmore

Great tune. Two versions of Doc Watson's fingerpicking arrangement are below.

CHORUS:

E7 Edim E7 A7
Let it rain, let it pour, let it rain a whole lot more,

E B7 B7#5
'Cause I got them deep river blues.

E Edim E A7
Let the waves drive right on, let that wind sweep along,

E B7 E E6 E
'Cause I got them deep river blues.

My old gal, she's a good old pal, looks like a water fowl.

When I get them deep river blues.

Ain't no one to cry for me and the fish'll go out on a spree

When I get them deep river blues.

CHORUS:

I'm gonna take my old boat, I'm gonna sail if she'll float,

'Cause I got them deep river blues,

I'm goin' back to mussel shores, times are better there I'm told,

'Cause I got them deep river blues.

CHORUS:

If my boat sinks with me, I'll go down, don't you see?

'Cause I got them deep river blues.

Now I'm gonna say goodbye, and if I sink, just let me die

'Cause I got them deep river blues.

CHORUS:

1. Short Watson tab from Cowboy Lyrics:

I love this tune too Bill and have been working on it for a while. I start it with these chords E7 and E flat7 and back to E7, up the neck:

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-----7---          and the Eb6          -----6--
-----5---          -----5--
-----7---          -----6--
-----6---          -----5--
xxxxxxxxxxxx          xxxxxxxxxxxx
-----0---          -----0--
  
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The progression then goes:

(E7) Give me back (E flat 6) my old boat (E7) I'm gonna sail boys (A) if she'll float (E, played at 1st fret) I've got them deep river (B7)blues

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|-----3bend---3b---0-----|
|-----3-----0-----|
|-----|
|-----1-----1-----|
|-2-----|
|-----2-----|
  
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(E7) If my boat (Efl6) sinks with me (E7) I'm going down boys (A)don't you see (E)I've got them (B7)deep river (E) blues

2. Craig Ostrom's full Watson tab:

Position your fingers like so:

- 1-Ring
- 2-Middle
- 3-Index
- 4-Thumb
- 5-Thumb
- 6-Thumb

This is the chord shape you want to start with (E7). Just bounce between the 6th and 4th strings with your thumb for now:

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-7-
-5-
-7-
-6-
-0-
-0-
  
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Then move the same chord shape down one fret for 4 notes, and back up again for 4, keep bouncing till you're ready to start.

It looks like this tabbed out. Mute strings 4,5,and 6 with the heel of your palm against the bridge. This stays fairly constant throughout the song and gives the effect of two different guitars playing.

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-----6-----6-----5-----5-----
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--0-----0-----0-----0-----
  
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--7-----7-----7---6-----6-----6--
-----5-----5-----5-----5-----
-----7-----7-----6-----6-----5-----
-----6-----6-----5-----5-----

-0-----0-----0-----0-----
(E7) Let it rain------(E flat 6) let ...

-7p0---3/4---0-----0---3p2-----0-----0-----
-----0h2-----0h2-----
-----3/4---0-----
-----2-----2-----2-----

-0-----0-----0-----0-----
(E7) Let it rain------(A) a ...

-----0-----3b---0-2-----3-3b-0-----0-
---0---2-----0---2-----0---3-----0h2---
-----2-----
-2-----2-----2-----2-----1-----

-0-----0-----0-----0-----0-----
(E) I've got them deep----- river ---- (B7) blues

--7-----7-----7---6-----6-----6--
-----5-----5-----5-----5-----
-----7-----7-----6-----6-----5-----
-----6-----6-----5-----5-----

-0-----0-----0-----0-----
(E7) Let that rain------(E flat 6) drive ...

-7p0---3/4---0-----0---3p2-----0-----0-----3b-0---
-----0h2-----0h2-----0-2-0-----
-----3/4---0-----
-----2-----2-----2-----
-----1-----
-0-----0-----0-----0-4-----
(E7) Let that river just (A) sweep me along--(E) I've got them (B7) deep

-----0-----0-----0-----0-----0---
-0h2p0-----
-----0h1-----0h1-----0h1-----
-----2-----2-----2-----

-0-----0-----0-----0-----0---
-river (E) blues

That's it for the verses, here's a nice way to finish it:

-0-----4-----3-----2-----0-----
-----0-----
-----3/4-----4---3---3---2---2---1-----
-----1-2-----2-----
-0-1-2-4-----2-----
-0-4-----0 (let ring)-----0-----