Honky Tonk

Words and music by Buddy Flett, from the Kenny Wayne Shepherd album *Ten Days Out*

Buddy Flett and his band The Bluebirds (www.thebluebirds. net) have been rocking the honky tonks in Louisiana and East Texas for over 20 years. Flett met Kenny Wayne Shepherd when Shepherd was a teenager, allowed him to use the band for a gig at age 15, and helped him out with the *Ledbetter Heights* album, cut when Shepherd was only 17. In the *Ten Days Out* DVD the pair reminisce while visiting Huddie (Leadbelly) Ledbetter's grave in Mooringsport, Louisiana, and pounding out this slice of Southern soul. Shepherd says of the song, "It reminds me of growing up in Louisiana—real *swampy*…"

Shepherd's Gibson guitar is tuned down a whole step. He plays E chord shapes, but they sound in the actual key of D. Flett has his Martin guitar tuned to open D and plays slide as well as some fingered 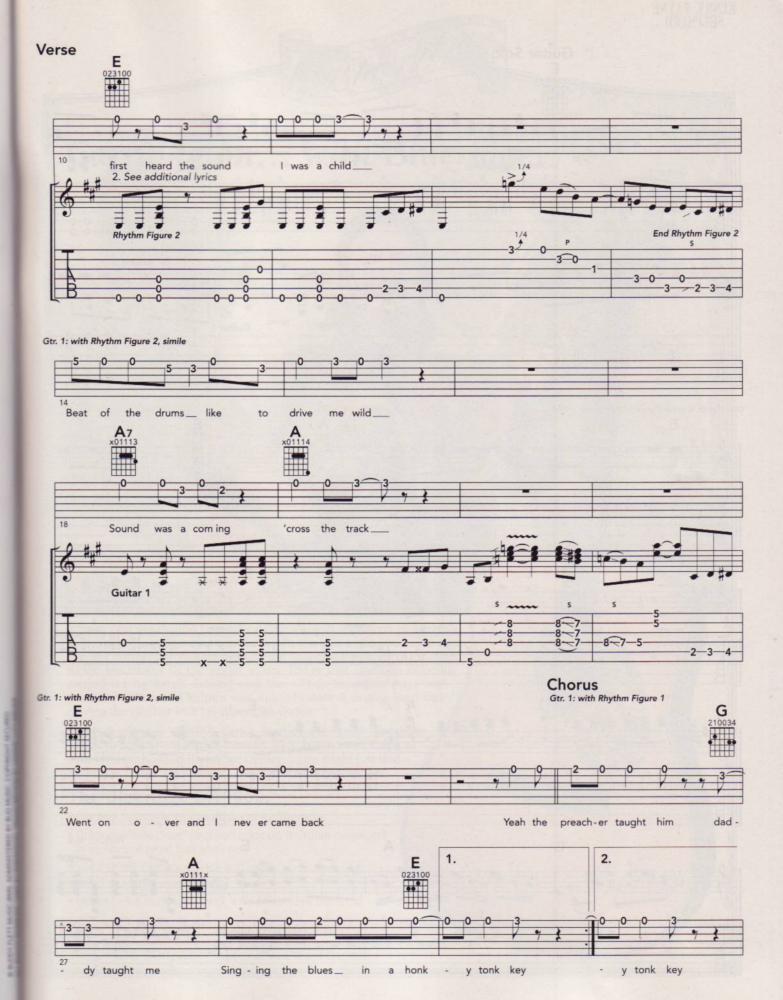riffs. Shepherd plays a sludgy rhythm that is tough as alligator hide, summoning up shades of Creedence Clearwater Revival's "SuzieQ" and "Born on the Bayou." It's heavy on the backbeat but often adds an upstoke that cranks up the swamp factor by several degrees. They both play the chromatic riff that leads into the I chord every time it comes around, and Shepherd switchs to a straight eighth-note rhythm to accent the refrain as it winds through the E-G-A progression.

—ORVILLE JOHNSON

Verse

first   heard the sound   I was a child___
2. See additional lyrics

Rhythm Figure 2

End Rhythm Figure 2

Gtr. 1: with Rhythm Figure 2, simile

Beat of the drums___ like   to   drive me wild___

Gtr. 1: with Rhythm Figure 2, simile

Sound   was a com ing   'cross the track___

Guitar 1

Chorus
Gtr. 1: with Rhythm Figure 1

Went on   o - ver and I   nev er came back   Yeah the preach-er taught him   dad-

- dy taught me   Sing - ing the blues___ in a honk - y tonk key   - y tonk key

Guitar Solo

Chorus

Gtr. 1: with Rhythm Figure 1

Guitar 2

G	A	E
210034	x0111x	023100

56   preach-er taught him___ dad - dy taught me   Sing-ing the blues___ in a honk - y tonk key

Guitar 2

E
023100

Guitar 1

w/slide

Freely

Guitar 2

w/slide   poco rit.

E

1. Well I first heard the sound I was a child

   Beat of the drums like to drive me wild

   A7
   Sound was a coming 'cross the track

   E
   Went on over and I never came back

   Chorus

         E   **G**
   Yeah, the preacher taught him, daddy taught me

   A   **E**
   Singing the blues in a honky tonk key.

E

2. Well, turn up the singer on the sad songs

   Guitar man's got a Beale Street tone

   A7
   Girls up front make an old man moan

   E
   Oh, what a night to go home alone

   Repeat Chorus
   Guitar Solo
   Repeat Chorus, two times