

Owens, Overton "Dr. Drip Drop"



Guitarist and Blues Singer

(1924-1998)

Overton Owens started playing music in 1949 with his music teacher Professor Alcee Vaughn at Natchitoches Training School, although he began singing at eight years old. His musical influences were Clifford Blake, Alcee Vaughn, Willie Dixon, Chuck Ellis, Lowell Fulton, and Bobby "Blue" Bland. In a 1993 interview, Owens was quoted as saying, "The Blues is just a feeling in a person. It's usually about a woman, or hardships that everybody has. And you express it through your music."

After he completed school, Owens formed a band known as the Natchitoches Serenaders. He was also involved as a vocalist and guitarist in Dr. Drip-Drop and the Mustangs and the Roque's Blues Band. The Natchitoches Serenaders played all around North Louisiana in the 1950s and 1960s. They were regular performers at most Northwestern State University and Grambling University dances and at clubs from Shreveport and Monroe to Alexandria. Overton Owens got the name "Dr. Drip Drop" from the sweat that would drip from him during his blues performances. He usually only sang and played the guitar, but he could play the drums, trumpet, Jew's harp and French harp.

Owens helped many young musicians get started in the profession by including them in his band. B.B. Majors, O.C. Shields, Gainey "Pop" Hymes, James "Framework" Lee, and Hardrick Rivers are some of the men that Owens helped influence.

In 1997, Overton Owens' musical contribution to Louisiana was recognized, as he was inducted into the Hall of Master Folk Artists by the Louisiana Folklife Center, received the Louisiana Music Heritage Association Award, and was honored by the City of Natchitoches as the "Natchitoches Blues Man." Owens' recordings collected by the Folklife Center include songs such as "Next Time You See Me," "Christmastime," and "Live at Music on Main Street," which sadly turned out to be his last performance. Overton Owens died on November 20, 1998. As Owens said, "You see, the Blues tells a story. If you ever had trouble with you woman or somebody like that, you listen to the lyrics of these Blues and that will turn you on."

Researched and rewritten by Samantha Sullivan.