A JOURNAL OF THE SOCIETY FOR MUSIC THEORY

Beyond Strophic: Prolonged Refrains, Choruses, and Bridges in the Blues, 1923–1966

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KEYWORDS: blues, form, hybridity, verse-chorus, refrain, AABA, Great Migration

ABSTRACT: The blues is usually associated with strophic form. Yet some of the genre's most famous recordings, like Bessie Smith's "St. Louis Blues" and Muddy Waters's "(I'm Your) Hoochie Coochie Man," venture beyond a strophic approach and contain contrasting sections—bridges or choruses. In this study I examine 113 blues songs that feature prolonged refrains, choruses, or bridges, identifying five primary models, each of which can be heard as a hybridization of originally rural strophic blues: 1) the 4+8 model, with its prolonged refrain; 2) the 8+8 model, where the first four bars of the 4+8 pattern are extended to eight bars, resulting in a clearer sense of verse-chorus form; 3) the verse/bridge blend model, in which there is a contrasting section that has characteristics of both a verse and bridge; 4) the solo-bridge model, in which an AABA form is used but is interrupted by an instrumental solo before the bridge; and 5) the two-bridge model, following an overall AABA-solo-BA structure with two iterations of a "classic" bridge.

The 4+8 and 8+8 models particularly reflect the adoption of a gradually more teleological approach to form in the blues that aligns with the rise of verse-chorus form in mainstream popular music. Additionally, each of the five models exemplifies the merging of rural and urban identities of Black American migrants from the rural South to cities in the North and West. The songs contain degrees of chorus or bridge quality that mirror the ambiguous and complex social position of migrants.

DOI: 10.30535/mto.31.1.1

Received September 2023

Volume 31, Number 1, March 2025

Introduction: Contrasting Sections in Blues Songs

[0.1] The blues as a genre is associated primarily with strophic form: a series of verses, with a 12-bar blues progression underlying an $aab^{(1)}$ melodic and lyrical structure within each strophe (Titon 1977b, 142; Taft 1983, xiii; von Appen and Frei-Hauenschild 2015, 48–49). Newman White claimed in 1929 that in the blues "the stanza, and not the song, is the only true unit" (207). Yet urban blues songwriters like W.C. Handy and Willie Dixon frequently included contrasting sections—bridges or choruses—in their songs, achieving greater commercial appeal (see Gordon 2002, 122–23; Inaba

2011, 95 and 276–77). Some of the most popular and enduring examples of the genre make use of these formal roles, such as Bessie Smith's "St. Louis Blues" (1925) and the Muddy Waters recordings "(I'm Your) Hoochie Coochie Man" (1954) and "Just Make Love to Me" (1954). Artists created records that combined rural, down-home blues elements such as a hoarse, throaty singing style, the use of slide guitar, and blues lyric formulas with more commercial features like electric guitars, bridges or choruses, and greater textual density, connecting with urban Black listeners who in many cases had immigrated from the rural south as part of the Great Migration.(2) This article will focus on the most common formal approaches in blues songs with a contrasting section, investigating how the use of such hybrid approaches reflected the hybrid nature of Black performers' and listeners' identities between 1923 and 1966.

[0.2] While this rural-urban hybridization has been discussed by numerous writers addressing the urban "classic" (vaudeville) blues of the 1920s and the Chicago electric blues of the 1950s (see, e.g., Jimoh 2024, Titon 1977b, 25; Spencer 1992, 34), the ways in which it was exemplified formally are not often examined.(3) Additionally, while much has been written about the influence of blues on pop and rock music (see, e.g., Britt 2024, 15; Palmer 1995, 114–26; Headlam 1997; Middleton 1972), there has been relatively little examination of the ways in which mainstream popular song influenced the blues. Study of blues songs with contrasting sections is important because it undermines the stereotypical image of the blues as a "pure," "authentic" music uncontaminated by "corrupting" commercial aspirations and other genres.(4) By bringing urban forms of the blues further attention and showing the variety and quality that characterize it, this study continues the work of Wald 2004, Titon 1993, Schwartz 2018, and others.

[0.3] This variety is reflected by the number of blues songs that are not strophic. While the majority of songs in, for instance, Muddy Waters's 72-track Chess Box collection are in strophic 12-bar blues form, many blues songs in this time period by Waters or other artists have a chorus or bridge, or at least the suggestion of one. In certain blues subgenres, such as the vaudeville blues of the 1920s, popular song forms such as AABA and ABAC are common. For instance, of the 16 songs on Bessie Smith's career-spanning *Collection* album, only six are strophic *aab* songs (each of them with "blues" in the title), with the other 10 in AABA or ABAC form or some other popular song variant (**Example 1**). Ma Rainey's recorded output contains more strophic 12-bar blues than that of most other vaudeville blues singers, but still includes a substantial number of songs that do not use that model (Lieb 1981, 50–51, 60–61). Outside of the vaudeville blues singers, there are numerous hokum, Piedmont, and electric blues songs that similarly incorporate prolonged refrains, choruses, or bridges. Despite the presence of a contrasting section, these songs are still known as "blues." While the "classic" *aab* 12-bar blues approach (de Clercq 2012, 124) remained the dominant one between 1925 and 1966, a substantial minority of blues songs in this period have an extended refrain, chorus, proto-bridge, or bridge.

[0.4] The use of a contrasting section like a chorus or bridge in a blues song reflects larger-scale musical trends, which themselves connect with broader cultural changes such as urbanization. Richard Middleton divides forms into *additive* and *sectional* approaches, with additive forms like strophic repeating the same musical unit over and over and sectional works having at least one contrasting unit that creates an overall arc to the song or piece (2003c, 513). Middleton discusses how a historical shift within popular song from additive forms to sectional occurred in many cultures, with the shift in the U.S. taking place between the mid-nineteenth century and the early twentieth century. This change was associated with both urbanization and modernization (2003c, 513–14). The inclusion of a contrasting section in a blues song is a shift from an additive (strophic) model to a sectional model. In the case of choruses, von Appen and Frei-Hauenschild have traced how distinct chorus sections evolved from refrains within strophic songs (2015, 48–55). Similarly, with bridges, the contrasting B portions of early twentieth-century songs expanded from four to eight bars, in the process sounding more like a distinct section (Middleton 2003b, 505–6; 2003c, 514–15). As the twentieth century progressed, choruses and bridges tended towards greater lengths and differentiation, with AABA increasingly giving way to "compound AABA" (verse-chorus-bridge) and bridges at times expanding beyond the typical eight-bar length of the Tin Pan Alley era(5) and having increased independence from the rest of the song (Covach 2005, 70–71 and 74–75; de Clercq 2012, 81–83; Stephenson 2002, 140–41).(6)

[0.5] Given that these developments occurred over long spans of time, it is not surprising that there are many borderline cases along the way, where opinions might reasonably differ as to whether a portion of a song is a subsection, such as a refrain, or a section unto itself, like a chorus (see, for instance, de Clercq 2012, 135–46, discussing instances of refrain/chorus ambiguity in 12-bar blues progressions; von Appen and Frei-Hauenschild 2015, 49-51). And just as many Black blues listeners and performers(7) embodied a mix of cultural identities, both rural Southern and urban Northern, the formal classifications of the songs can exhibit differences of degree rather than always being easily categorizable as verse-chorus, strophic, or AABA. These songs thus exemplify Trevor de Clercq's observation that chorus or bridge *quality* can exist even outside of sections conventionally labeled "chorus" or "bridge" (2017, 4; 2017, [4.7]). For example, a section can have chorus quality if it has internal text repetition, lesser textual density, uses the title of the song, or has a relatively high vocal register (Temperley 2018, 159–61). Determining the role of a given section is not a binary distinction in which the section fully belongs to the category or not; instead, a continuum of chorus quality exists, with both refrains and choruses part of this continuum, and a host of musical and textual factors can push a given section one way or the other along this continuum (**Example 2**; de Clercq 2012, 4, 58–59, 142). The continuums of chorus and bridge quality can be heard as reflecting the varying degrees of engagement by Black Americans with the dominant culture of the time: Black Americans sought to retain their own cultural identity even while interacting with the predominantly white mainstream culture.

This Study: Overview

[1.1] In order to identify the ways in which musical and cultural hybridity manifest in this repertoire, I have identified and analyzed 113 songs released between 1923 and 1966, each of which is typically categorized as a "blues" song(8) but has at least one contrasting section other than an instrumental solo. These 113 songs can be seen in **Example 3**. Songs were included if they had a strong suggestion of chorus or bridge quality, even if the relevant portion might not readily be identified as a "chorus" or "bridge" per se. This study follows similar attempts to identify formal tendencies in other repertoires, as identifying the most common formal characteristics within a corpus of songs provides a backdrop for examining individual recordings (Summach 2011, [4]) and gives insight into the ways that the music reflected social and economic shifts.(9) As Ohriner has discussed in the context of his computational analysis of hip-hop (2019, xxvi), large-scale corpus analysis can provide valuable insights to repertoire that is often more analyzed in terms of its cultural and social aspects. Examining form with a corpus study and looking at how particular songs represent or buck larger trends need not marginalize larger cultural and social issues, but instead can illuminate the ways in which musical form reflects these larger forces (Hepokoski 1989, 252–53).(10)

[1.2] I analyzed each song in the corpus with respect to 22 parameters, including verse length, starting bridge harmony, and instrumentation (**Example 4**). Analysis of these 113 songs showed that five formal approaches were particularly common (**Example 5**): first, the 4+8 model (also known as the "Tight Like That" model because of the hugely successful 1928 song that employed it(11)) with the use of a prolonged refrain that is the last eight bars of a 12-bar blues progression; second, the 8+8 model, an expansion of the 4+8 model with a verse (eight bars) and chorus (also eight bars) combining to form a 16-bar blues progression; third, the *verse/bridge blend* model, which incorporates an altered verse that has bridge-like qualities; fourth, the *solo-bridge* model, which includes an eight-bar "classic" bridge after an instrumental solo ("classic" in Trevor de Clercq's usage [2012, 74]); and finally, the *two-bridge* model, a blues where the "classic" bridge is repeated and an instrumental solo does not occur until after completion of the initial AABA cycle. Each of these models was represented by at least five songs in the corpus. Thirteen songs had a chorus or the suggestion of a chorus but did not fit either of the two primary chorus categories and were designated as "Other-Chorus." Twenty-two songs had a bridge or a section with significant bridge quality but did not fit in any of the three primary bridge categories; these were designated as "Other-Bridge." General characteristics of the corpus can be seen in **Examples 6**, **7**, **8**, and **9**.

[1.3] In this article, I discuss the two primary chorus models in order of increasingly clear sectional divisions, discussing first the 4+8 approach with its prolonged refrain and then the 8+8 model, where the final eight bars more clearly comprise a chorus. This organization also reflects the chronology of these models' use and of the gradual urbanization of the Black American population, with the 4+8 model being chronologically earlier than the 8+8. The three primary bridge models are addressed in order of increasingly clear sectional division, with verse/bridge blend songs being a relatively ambiguous case, the solo-bridge model juxtaposing an instrumental solo with a bridge, and the two-bridge approach including a clear-cut "classic" bridge as well as a later repetition of it. The chorus models co-existed chronologically with the bridge models, with, for instance, the 4+8 model and the verse/bridge blend model both used in the 1930s and later.

Prolonged Refrains: The 4+8 Model

[2.1] I will begin with the chorus-quality models, which reveal an arc of increasing chorus quality over the time period of the study. The chronologically earlier of the two chorus-quality models and the most commonly found approach in the corpus is the 4+8 model, Titon's "quatrain-refrain" form (Titon 1977a, 326 n. 46), which was already common in the late 1920s and the 1930s in the recordings of urban blues artists such as Ma Rainey, Tampa Red and Georgia Tom, and Barbecue Bob (**Example 10**; **Example 11**). As seen in **Example 12**, showing 1951's "She Moves Me," the model represents a "chorusification" of a 12-bar blues scheme,(12) in which the "verse" is the first four bars of the standard 12-bar blues progression and the last eight bars are a prolonged refrain that is the same in each stanza.(13) Deciding whether to label a lyric-invariant passage like that in the last eight bars of "She Moves Me" as a "refrain" or a "chorus" is not an entirely straightforward matter, as it involves "[p]erhaps the most commonly encountered type of ambiguity in pop/rock form" (de Clercq 2017, [3.4]; see also Summach 2011, [7–8] and [13]; Endrinal 2011, [22–23]). The same can be said of blues form. Various musical aspects in a given song, such as the change in texture from stop time (a series of attacks in the accompaniment followed by silence) to continuous in "She Moves Me," the addition of backing vocals, and internal text repetition, can push towards verse-chorus differentiation rather than verse-refrain (see also Example 2 above). The closing eight bars of 4+8 strophes straddle the line between refrain and chorus; these final eight bars have traditionally been referred to as a "refrain" rather than a "chorus," but the significant length of this material in comparison with the typical refrain nudges the material in the direction of "chorus" (de Clercq 2012, 137). On the other hand, if the last eight bars of the cycle are a separate chorus, then the first four bars are a very short verse, so short that they should perhaps not be considered a separate section unto themselves. The final eight bars also complete a 12-bar blues progression, which makes them seem more like a part of a larger whole rather than a complete section unto themselves (see Summach 2011, [8]). The refrain/chorus ambiguity of the 4+8 model reflects the cultural hybridity of the blues songs that use it, connecting both with a strophic approach associated with the country blues and the greater sectionalization of urban forms. Regardless of whether we call these eight bars a "refrain" or "chorus" (I use the label "prolonged refrain" in this article), the 12-bar stanzas are closely tied together by the recurring text. In opposition to Newman White's formulation ([0.1], above), we thereby get more of a sense of the song as the unit rather than the stanza, which is fitting for songs memorialized on shellac records with a finite length.

[2.2] A sense of chorus quality in the 4+8 model arises in large part from a contrast in textual density and phrase rhythm between different parts of the stanza. While both the "classic" *aab* approach and the 4+8 model share a gradual acceleration of harmonic rhythm over the course of the strophe, the approaches to textual density and phrase rhythm in the two models differ. In the "classic" *aab* approach, used, for example, in Bessie Smith's 1923 "Downhearted Blues" (**Example 13**), the textual density and phrase rhythm remain static across the stanza, with a 2+2 call-and-response pattern in each line of the *aab* and each vocal phrase typically ending in a relatively strong hypermetric position on the third downbeat of the four-bar unit.(14)

[2.3] With 4+8 examples like "She Moves Me" and Jimmy Witherspoon's "Live So Easy," however, there is a dynamic approach to both textual density and phrase rhythm. This dynamism contributes to the sense of chorus quality in the strophes, in part by creating greater differentiation

between the first four bars and the final eight. Strophes using the 4+8 model have greater verbal density in their first four bars than do those using the "classic" *aab* model. In the wordy first four bars of "She Moves Me," for example (Example 12), Waters sings a rhyming quatrain(15) and each line of the quatrain occurs in one bar, so that we effectively get a series of four very short phrases (or subphrases) with short instrumental breaks in between. By analogy to Stephenson's "2+2" and "1+1" phrase rhythm categories, we can call the approach in the first four bars here a *half + half* technique, where the calls and responses are alternating every half bar.(16)

[2.4] After these initial four bars, the textually sparser eight-bar refrains in 4+8 songs typically adopt one of two approaches, with each having historical and lyrical associations: they either 1) have a rhyming quatrain in the last eight bars (the *closing-quatrain* songs), as in "She Moves Me," an approach that resembles the last two phrases of the "classic" *aab* model; or 2) repeat the title of the song three times in the last eight bars in a sentential *aaba* (*srdc*) or *aaab* pattern, in either case making a melodic sentence, as in "Live So Easy" (the *three-title* songs; **Example 14**). In closing-quatrain songs like "She Moves Me," each of the last two phrases employs a 2+2 phrase rhythm, with two measure-long vocal subphrases concluding on or around the third downbeat followed by two bars of melodic rest and instrumental response. The decreased textual density in the final eight bars of the song, along with the slowing of the phrase rhythm, the use of the title of the song ("She moves me") in the lyrics, and the higher vocal register, contribute to the chorus quality of these measures. There is a greater sense of teleology to the stanzas than there is in the classic *aab* approach, with the listener's focus directed towards a catchy eight-bar refrain designed to appeal to a modern, urban audience. The closing-quatrain 4+8 songs tend to be chronologically later, have significantly slower tempos, and contain lyrics describing mistreatment by a lover (**Example 15**).

[2.5] In three-title songs like "Live So Easy" (Example 14), however, there is a staged deceleration of phrase rhythm over the course of the 12 bars of the strophe, with the melodic segments doubling in length at each stage. As in the closing-quatrain songs, the first four bars use a half + half phrase rhythm, but in bars 5–8 of the three-title songs the phrase rhythm slows to a moderate pace with the 1+1 approach (where one bar of singing alternates with one bar of instrumental response), then slows even further in the last four bars to the 2+2 approach. This staged deceleration of phrase rhythm is the reverse of the progress of the harmonic rhythm, which accelerates in three stages over the 12 bars. In "Live So Easy" the leisurely phrase rhythm and decrease in textual density of the last eight bars reflects the "easy living" depicted in the lyrics. Not all three-title 4+8 songs have a clear call-and-response at all three speeds in the manner of "Live So Easy," though the overall arc is usually present to a greater or lesser degree.(17) Three-title songs tend to be chronologically earlier and have significantly faster tempos than closing-quatrain 4+8 songs. They also tend to contain bawdy and/or humorous lyrics, such as the comic depictions of animal procreation in "Live So Easy." The three-fold repetition of the title in these refrains in an *aaba* or *aaab* pattern contributes to even greater chorus quality than is present in the closing-quatrain songs.

[2.6] Considering both the closing-quatrain and three-title approaches, there are far more examples of the 4+8 model in blues songs in the corpus's time span than there are of any of the other four primary models, so the 32% prevalence figure in the corpus is actually an underrepresentation of its frequency in recorded blues between 1923 and 1966.(18) This approach acted as a more urban, catchy alternative to the "classic" *aab* model, which continued to be used frequently during this period. The first known recording using the 4+8 model is Papa Charlie Jackson's "Shake That Thing" from 1925 (Schwartz 2018, 370–72), and the model has the earliest median date of release (1948) of the five primary models identified in the study (see Example 5). In the late 1920s and '30s it was associated with upbeat and bawdy hokum or Piedmont blues styles, and it is used frequently by Piedmont artists such as Barbecue Bob and Blind Boy Fuller. Tampa Red and Georgia Tom used the model in Chicago recordings in the late '20s, and Tampa Red and Chicago-based Memphis Minnie continued to employ it through 1940 and beyond, with younger Chicago blues artists like Muddy Waters taking after them. This model represents one of the respects that the upbeat hokum blues style of the late 1920s and '30s influenced the electric blues and R&B of the 1940s and 1950s (as well as early rock 'n' roll), though the musical associations of the model changed over time. In the urban, electric, Delta-inspired Chicago blues of artists like Waters and Arthur Crudup, the model often appeared with slower tempos and with slide guitar (See **Example**

16 and **Example 17**). It was very common in electric blues songs through 1954, but with the rise of rock 'n' roll seems to have become more associated with that genre than with the blues, as blues records from 1955 on tended more towards other approaches, especially the 8+8 and two-bridge models. Early rock 'n' roll songs to use it include Bill Haley's "Rock Around the Clock" (1954) and Little Richard's "Lucille" (1957).

[2.7] Another way the 4+8 model changed over time was in the increasing use over the decades of a classic *aab* 12-bar blues progression repeating the song's title as a kind of chorus at the start of the song. In these instances the final two rhyming lines from this initial *aab* stanza would become the eight-bar prolonged refrain for the rest of the recording. This technique can be heard in Waters's "She Moves Me" (1951; **Example 18**) and in 14 other 4+8 songs in the corpus. Having such an expanded version of the refrain at the start of the recording would nudge the 4+8 model further in the direction of verse-chorus form and away from the strophic blues, as it makes the refrain seem more of an independent section rather than merely an appendage to the verse (von Appen and Frei-Hauenschild 2015, 51). The high degree of repetition in the classic *aab* form helps it to function well as an attention-getting opening chorus, as the formulaic repetition of the first line results in the high degree of textual repetition we normally associate with a chorus. The listener's perception of the role of the initial 12 bars changes over the course of hearing the recording: the *aab* structure of the first 12-bar blues cycle gives the initial impression that these 12 bars constitute the first verse in a series of verses in a classic *aab* strophic form, but the use of the lyrics of these first 12 bars as the refrain in the rest of the song cause the listener to in retrospect perceive the first 12 bars as a "chorus" rather than a "verse."(19)

[2.8] **Example 19** reveals how over time an increasing number of 4+8 songs started with an extended version of the refrain in this manner, representing a further step in the "chorusification" of the blues. The earliest song in the corpus to use a version of this strategy is Barbecue Bob's 1930 "She Moves It Just Right," a song in the upbeat Piedmont blues tradition (**Example 20**). After the initial 9.5-bar "chorus,"(20) the song settles into a mostly regular pattern of four bars of verse followed by approximately 10 bars of the prolonged refrain. Bill Broonzy's 1941 "Rockin' Chair Blues" is the earliest song in the corpus to adhere relatively closely to the prototypical dimensions of "She Moves Me," with its initial 12-bar chorus followed by a series of 4+8 12-bar blues verses, though each 12-bar progression in "Rockin' Chair Blues" has an extra bar of tonic harmony at the end of the second line, making for 13-bar progressions. The opening-chorus approach became common in the 1940s and then was used in the majority of the corpus 4+8 model songs from the 1950s and '60s, including "She Moves Me." Its use in three of the four 4+8 corpus songs from the 1960s reflects a changed popular music world in which verse-chorus form was ascendant; blues composers like Willie Dixon continued to adapt to changing times.

The 8+8 Model

[3.1] The 8+8 model is closely related to the 4+8 model, but the expansion of the initial four bars to eight gives a much stronger sense of a verse followed by a chorus, in most cases spanning a 16-bar blues progression (**Example 21**). This model, used in the Willie Dixon-composed Muddy Waters hit "(I'm Your) Hoochie Coochie Man" (1954; **Example 22**) as well as several other electric blues songs from the 1950s, can be thought of as a chronologically later, more urban update to the 4+8 model, with the associated musical characteristics of the 8+8 model further distancing these songs from the country blues tradition.(21) The prolongation of tonic harmony in the first eight bars of the 8+8 model stretches the blues scheme more thinly and makes it more subject to division across two formal roles. What was an extended tail refrain in the 4+8 model now seems more like a true chorus, in large part because the material that comes immediately before is now long enough to be its own section (de Clercq 2012, 142, referring to the model as "hybrid 16-bar blues"; von Appen and Frei-Hauenschild 2015, 50).(22) In the 8+8 model, the temporal ratio between the two sections—now verse and chorus—becomes 1:1, which is consistent with Allan Moore's description of the usual ratio of length between verses and choruses to be either 1:1 or 2:1 (2012, 83), and both sections are now eight bars long, which meets Summach's minimum for a distinct section (Summach 2012, 16–17). In "(I'm Your) Hoochie Coochie Man," the sense of division between an

eight-bar verse and an eight-bar chorus is reinforced by a textural differentiation, with stop time used for only the verse and the chorus featuring a continuous instrumental texture. As seen in Example 22, the division is also reinforced by a shift in phrase rhythm, with vocal phrases and subphrases starting *after* the downbeat in the first eight bars but anacrustically beginning well *before* the hypermetric downbeats of bars 9 and 13. The model is thus a further step in the direction of a more teleological approach to blues form, one that connects even more closely with an urban, modern aesthetic.

[3.2] As with "(I'm Your) Hoochie Coochie Man," 8+8 songs generally maintain the harmonic and melodic structure of the 4+8 model, but with an initial segment that is twice as long. In the 8+8 model, bars 5–8 usually continue to stay on tonic, as the first four bars in both the 4+8 and 8+8 model normally do. From a melodic perspective, bars five through eight can repeat the melody of the first four bars but with different text, or they can make more or less subtle changes to that melody. Nobile (2020) points out how the 8+8 model thus results in a version of *srdc*, statement-restatement-departure-conclusion (58), with the first four bars the "statement" and bars 5–8 the "restatement." It is common in these songs for there to be a significant change to the melody in bar 8 (or in bars 7 and 8) in order to prepare for the chorus, and this can be seen with the rhythmic shift in the melody in bar 8 in "(I'm Your) Hoochie Coochie Man." After every previous vocal subphrase had started *after* the downbeat on a pitch other than $\flat\hat{3}$, Waters forcefully attacks the downbeat at the start of bar 8 *on* $\flat\hat{3}$. This prepares the way for the prominent vocal anacrusis at the start of the chorus, with the vocal phrasing suddenly acutely out of phase with the hypermeter (Lerdahl and Jackendoff 1983, 30). The vocal melody, which lagged slightly behind the accompaniment in the first eight bars, consistently anticipates it in the final eight bars. The combination of the downbeat attack at the start of bar 8 with the pronounced vocal anacrusis immediately following calls attention to this transition to the chorus and creates greater differentiation from the preceding verse.

[3.3] Like the first four bars in 4+8 songs, verses in 8+8 songs usually exhibit a more fragmented phrase rhythm, followed by longer melodic segments as well as more melodic rest in the eight-bar chorus. The verse typically uses either a half + half or 1+1 phrase rhythm, with "(I'm Your) Hoochie Coochie Man" using a half + half approach. As with the 4+8 songs, 8+8 songs can be divided according to whether they have three repetitions of the title (or possibly a repeating non-title text) and no rhyme in the last eight bars (*three-title* songs, like "(I'm Your) Hoochie Coochie Man"), or a rhyming quatrain in the chorus (*closing-quatrain* songs, like Sonny Boy Williamson II's "Don't Start Me Talkin'"). While most three-title 8+8 songs, like three-title 4+8 recordings, use a 1+1 phrase rhythm in the phrase beginning with subdominant harmony, "(I'm Your) Hoochie Coochie Man" uses a 2+2 phrase rhythm for this phrase. The phrase in this case is approached with a prominent anacrusis that makes the first subphrase "But you know I'm here" end-accented (Temperley 2003, 126) and creates a one-measure pause between subphrases. Most other three-title 8+8 songs in the corpus, such as Little Walter's 1955 "Crazy for My Baby," have the staged slowing of phrase rhythm discussed above in [2.5]. Three-title 8+8 songs, which were slightly less common in the corpus (**Example 23**), create a greater sense of chorus quality because of the degree of textual repetition. Closing-quatrain 8+8 songs like "Don't Start Me Talkin'," on the other hand, typically feature a 2+2 phrase rhythm in both bars 9–12 and 13–16, and thus connect more closely with the structure of "classic" *aab* blues strophes.

[3.4] "Don't Start Me Talkin'" is also an example of how the 8+8 model can be used in a song employing other models as well, as the 4+8 model is used for the first vocal strophe in the song before the 8+8 approach is adopted in the second and third cycles. As seen in **Example 24**, this switch from 4+8 to 8+8 occurs in several other songs in the corpus, including "She Moves Me" (see [2.1–2.4] above). In J. B. Lenoir's "Eisenhower Blues" (1954; **Example 25**), the shift from 4+8 to 8+8 can be heard as a development of an idea that was previously introduced, allowing the narrator to detail his frustrations with the then-current presidential regime. Sonny Boy Williamson II's "Your Funeral and My Trial" also moves from a 4+8 model in the first two cycles to an 8+8 in the third, though in this case the third cycle provides more of a sense of a bridge because of the use of stop time for the first time in the song (**Example 26**; see also n. 28 below).

[3.5] Another way that the 8+8 model was combined with a second model was with the placement of an *aab* chorus at the start of the song, a practice we saw with 4+8 songs (see [2.7], above). As when it is used in a 4+8 song, this opening chorus becomes the basis for the final eight bars in the remaining cycles in the song. This combination appeared frequently in 8+8 blues songs of the 1950s and 1960s, such as in the Willie Dixon compositions "29 Ways" (1956), "Back Door Man" (1961), and "Tail Dragger" (1964), as well as in Little Walter's "Dead Presidents" (1964). The Big Three Trio's "Money Tree Blues" (1947), also composed by Dixon, uses three different models, with the song's shift from classic *aab* to 4+8 to 8+16 manifesting progressively greater differentiation between verse and chorus. Dixon later replicated this progression through three different 12-bar blues variants in both "She Moves Me" (1951) and "29 Ways" (1956),[(23)] with this strategy creating a larger formal arc over the course of a recording. This progression within the song can be heard as a microcosm of the historical trajectory in blues repertoire from a static, additive *aab* approach to the more teleological and sectional 4+8 and 8+8 models.

[3.6] 8+8 songs occupied a relatively late position in this trajectory, as recordings using the model date almost entirely from the heyday of Chicago electric blues, from the mid-1950s to the mid-'60s (Examples 7 and 8). The expansion of the 4+8 model into the clearer verse-chorus structure of 8+8 thus aligned with the embrace of electric guitars and amplified harmonica, as shown in **Example 27** and prominently heard in "(I'm Your) Hoochie Coochie Man." In stark contrast with the 4+8 model, none of the 14 8+8 recordings in the corpus include the Delta blues mainstay slide guitar (Example 17), and all 14 include a drum kit, with both of these characteristics pushing away from the country blues and towards a more contemporary urban approach. The 8+8 model songs also tend towards faster tempos, as they have as a group the highest median tempo of any of the five primary models identified in this study (**Example 28**).

[3.7] Lyrically, these songs tend towards a demonstration of aggression that complements the upbeat tempos, the distorted electric guitars and amplified harmonica, the use of a drum kit, and a strained, raw vocal approach. Willie Dixon, a migrant from Mississippi who was a driving force behind the rise of electric blues in 1950s Chicago, composed seven of the 14 songs in the corpus that use the 8+8 model, and his songs using this approach mostly have bragging, at times menacing lyrics, as well as melodic emphasis on $\flat\hat{3}$. Dixon favored the 8+8 model over the 4+8, with 26 percent of the Dixon-composed songs in the corpus using the 8+8 approach, including "(I'm Your) Hoochie Coochie Man," "I'm Ready," and "Back Door Man" (**Example 29**).[(24)] The Dixon 8+8 examples have the vocalist variously describe himself as having occult powers (deriving in "(I'm Your) Hoochie Coochie Man" from a "black cat bone" and "mojo"), sexual potency ("It takes a whole lotta lovin' to make me feel good"), or deadly weapons like a "pistol" and "dynamite" that allow him to dispatch male competitors. The extension of the verse from four to eight bars allows for longer lists of such attributes in the manner of Tin Pan Alley "list" songs. The 8+8 verse-chorus model works with the bragging lyrics and emphasis on $\flat\hat{3}$ in songs like "(I'm Your) Hoochie Coochie Man" and Howlin' Wolf's "Tail Dragger" because the eight bars (often in stop time) of the verses create a sense of barely maintained restraint, teleologically building to an eight-bar chorus that is a release of energy and a display of the full power of the singer and his band. The combination of ancient occult wisdom with contemporary technology and dramatic choruses resonated with Black listeners who had recently migrated from the rural South to large metropolises like Memphis, Chicago, and Los Angeles (Inaba 2011, 86; Titon 1977b, 3–4; see also [9.3], below).

Other Blues with Chorus Models

[4.1] Blues songs also used choruses in formats other than the 4+8 and 8+8 models, in each case also creating a differentiation between verse and chorus (**Example 30**). The 12+12 model, where both the verses and choruses use a 12-bar blues pattern and an *aab* lyric pattern in a "simple" verse-chorus arrangement,[(25)] reflects a clear demarcation between verse and chorus. As heard in Elmore James's 1961 "Shake Your Moneymaker" (**Example 31**), with this model the 12-bar blues scheme is not split between roles as in 4+8 songs, but the same scheme is used for multiple different roles—verse and chorus. Though the 12+12 model is today perhaps most associated with early rock 'n' roll

(see, for example, "Hound Dog" [1953/1956] and "Shake, Rattle and Roll" [1954/1955]; Covach 2005, 67), Leroy Carr's "That's All Right for You" shows that it dates back to at least 1929 in the blues. While the use of the same harmonic pattern for verse and chorus can lessen the sense of distinction between these sections, elements like the addition of call-and-response with an electric guitar (as in "Let Me Love You Baby") or greater internal text repetition and less textual density (as in "Shake Your Moneymaker") can increase the degree of chorus quality in the chorus (Temperley 2018, 159–61; de Clercq 2017, [2.3]; de Clercq 2012, 48).

[4.2] In another approach, verse and chorus form an 8+8 arrangement but do not constitute a 16-bar blues pattern in the manner of the 8+8 model described above. "Papa's on the House Top" (1931), "Trouble in Mind" (1957, first released in 1924[(26)]), "Too Many Cooks" (1963), and Koko Taylor's "Wang Dang Doodle" (1966) all use a simple verse-chorus approach in employing this model, with the same eight-bar chord progression used in both verses and choruses. In three other songs in the corpus, there is an even more distinct sense of a chorus than in the 8+8 model because the chorus is extended to 16 bars, twice as long as the eight-bar verse. This 8+16 model is heard in "Rag, Mama, Rag" (1936), "Manish Boy" (1955), and "Little Baby" (1961). "Rag, Mama, Rag" and "Manish Boy" are simple verse-chorus examples, with the same chord progression used in both verse and chorus (or the same repeating riff, in the case of "Manish Boy"), while "Little Baby" is a contrasting verse-chorus. The 8+16 songs notably replicate the 1:2 measure ratio of the 4+8 model, but the double-length sections in these songs create a much more definite sense of a verse followed by a chorus, with both the verse and chorus long enough to constitute a distinct section. In each of these additional instances of the incorporation of a chorus, the strophic 12-bar blues *aab* approach is left far behind.

Bridge Quality and Bridges: The Verse/Bridge Blend Model

[5.1] I will now turn from models using a prolonged refrain or chorus to those using a bridge. Bridges were present in many of the earliest examples of recorded blues. The presence of a bridge, or even the suggestion of one, represented an alternative form of formal hybridity, one which also reflected the rural-urban hybridity of a Black population that was increasingly urban. Bridges, particularly because they often occur only once in a song, increase the sense that a song is a finite composition memorialized by music notation or a fixed recording. This differs from the strophic tradition, in which the number of strophes is potentially infinite, the strophes need not be connected with one another, and a live performer can keep adding them as desired.

[5.2] As with choruses, whether a portion of a song constitutes a "bridge" per se is not always a straightforward determination. Bridge *quality* can be created by having a degree of contrast in the middle of a song, even if there is not a sufficiently distinct section that we would label a "bridge" (de Clercq 2017, [5.7]; de Clercq 2012, 71). Bridge quality comes from a section occurring in the middle of a song, from transitional function, and from contrast with the rest of the song, among other factors (Everett 2009, 147; Osborn 2013, 25). Thus we can imagine a continuum of bridge quality (**Example 32**), with at one extreme "no sense of bridge function" (a verse musically identical to the previous verses) to at the other extreme a bridge that strongly contrasts with the verses musically and lyrically. Instrumental solos, though usually not designated as "bridges," serve a bridge function in many cases by providing contrast after two sung verses (de Clercq 2012, 83–84; Johansson 1999, 2–3). Sections that are bridge-like but not necessarily bridges per se may be *blends* of multiple section roles—bridge and chorus, for example, or bridge and verse (de Clercq 2017, [5.3]; de de Clercq 2012, 221).

[5.3] The earliest bridges in blues recordings were not blends but had limited bridge quality because they were brief excursions incorporated within a relatively indivisible 16- or 32-bar AABA sectional chorus (Covach 2009, 26; Covach 2005, 70).[(27)] There is variety in the overall formal approaches used in this era, so these songs are categorized as "Bridge-Other" in this study (see section 8, below). Even as we saw a gradual historical shift from strophic to 4+8 to 8+8 models with the development of a clearer chorus, there is a historical progression from blues bridges being inseparable components within a 16-bar or 32-bar AABA sectional chorus to being more self-sufficient sections, with the AABA scheme in later decades being broken up by either an

instrumental solo or an abbreviated reprise of BA. I discuss the primary models in order from least-clear bridge to clearest bridge quality, beginning with the **verse/bridge blend** and then proceeding to the solo-bridge and two-bridge models.

[5.4] In the **verse/bridge blend** model, also the earliest chronologically of the three primary bridge models, bridge quality is present in the middle of the song but the designation of a true "bridge" is uncertain (**Example 33**). As heard in Muddy Waters's rendition of Willie Dixon's "Stuff You Gotta Watch" (recorded in 1951; **Example 34**), in most cases a 12-bar blues pattern with an *aab* lyrical structure is followed for the first two verses, but what would be the third verse retains the 12-bar blues structure but has a distinct change in melody and use of stop time that creates a bridge-like contrast.(28) The "bridge" in these songs, with a quatrain spread over four bars of stop time followed by eight bars of refrain-like repeating lyrics that complete the 12-bar blues scheme, often matches the verse-prolonged refrain pattern of the 4+8 model. Songs using the verse/bridge blend model then either return to the *aab* strophic approach from earlier in the song or close with an eight-bar prolonged refrain using the lyrics from the first verse.(29) In either case there is the effect of the rounding out of the form, providing closure.

[5.5] The "bridge" in these songs lacks the kind of clear harmonic contrast with the verses that we normally associate with bridges in AABA forms, as the 12-bar blues harmonic pattern from the verses is maintained. Contrast in these recordings is achieved not through harmony but through textural and melodic change. The combination of the harmonic pattern and other aspects of previous verses in the song with new, contrasting elements of texture and melody results in a "blend" of section roles in Trevor de Clercq's sense (verse and bridge; 2012, 221; 2017, [3.8]). The bridge-like character of the third section is sometimes accentuated by the presence of an instrumental solo immediately after the "bridge," as with the amplified harmonica solo in "Stuff You Gotta Watch," or possibly immediately before it. Both the altered "verse" with stop time and the instrumental solo immediately succeeding it have bridge quality, because both are providing a contrasting section in the middle of the song (the "contrast" and "location" prongs that de Clercq relies on [2012, 222]). The two sections combine to create a bridge complex, a larger-scale bridge role operating at a higher grouping level than the individual stop time "bridge" and solo sections (225). Having the "bridge" and instrumental solo together increases the sense of bridge quality in the song and thus pushes further away from the strophic blues.

[5.6] A closer look at particular examples of the verse/bridge blend model reveals deeper connections with the 4+8 model as well as a variety of strategies for achieving formal closure. The final eight bars of the 4+8 "bridge" in these songs generally use either the three-title or closing-quatrain approach, just as the songs that use the 4+8 model throughout the song do (see [2.4], above). In "Stuff You Gotta Watch," after four bars of stop time, a continuous instrumental texture resumes in the final eight bars, accompanying the three-title approach in an *aaab* pattern in the vocal (Example 34). After a solo and another verse, the 4+8 "bridge" occurs a second time, and the repetition of the title in the closing eight bars makes a return to an *aab* verse after that unnecessary, with the song proceeding directly to an instrumental outro. In contrast, in Sonny Boy Williamson's 1951 "Eyesight to the Blind" (**Example 35**), the first four bars of the "bridge" do not use stop time, which both lessens the sense of bridge quality and reduces textural contrast between the first four bars and the last eight. But the switch from the *aab* pattern previously used in the verses to the much more textually dense 4+8 model with a new melody still creates bridge quality in this third vocal cycle. The closing-quatrain rather than the three-title approach is used in the last eight bars of this "bridge," but a single iteration of the title lyric, previously heard at the end of the first verse, suffices to provide closure because the degree of contrast in the "bridge" was less than in the Waters song. In Robert Johnson's 1937 "Kind Hearted Woman Blues" (**Example 36**), the earliest recording in the corpus employing the verse/bridge blend model, stop time is used in the first four bars of the "bridge" and the closing-quatrain approach appears in the last eight bars, but the text there is completely new and does not include the title of the song. Because these closing eight bars lack both the title and the return of lyrics from the start of the song, formal closure can only be achieved via a return to the *aab* verse structure for a final verse. This last verse makes repeated use of the title text "kind hearted woman" that was last heard in the first 12-bar cycle of the recording.

This structural rounding is of the sort we associate with AABA form and gives the recording a distinct sense of beginning, middle, and end different from the typical strophic approach.

[5.7] The greater formal sophistication in the verse/bridge blend songs in comparison with the usual strophic model is aligned with their vocal approach. The verse/bridge blend songs typically connect more with the smooth, crooning vocal style of 1930s Leroy Carr or 1940s Nat King Cole rather than with the loud, intense sound of a Charley Patton or the strained near-shouting of Muddy Waters's typical vocal style. Sippie Wallace's 1945 "Buzz Me" features the 1920s star briefly coming out of retirement, accompanied by a New Orleans-style $\frac{12}{8}$ piano groove and a saxophone. Two other songs using this model are covers of much earlier originals, with Muddy Waters's 1959 "Mean Mistreater" being a cover of Leroy Carr's 1934 "Mean Mistreater Mama" and "Stuff You Gotta Watch" a Muddy Waters cover of a 1944 original for Buddy Johnson's big band. Even Waters's version of "Stuff You Gotta Watch," which features Waters's typical rough vocal approach, very unusually for his records features backing vocals, thereby suggesting a connection with the harmony singing of the Willie Dixon-led Big Three Trio's "Cool Kind Woman," another song using this model. The tempos of these songs also tend to be slower than those of the other songs in the corpus, with the lowest average tempo of the five primary models (**Example 37**). The smoother vocal approaches, jazz-influenced instrumentation, backing vocals, and slower tempos of many of the verse/bridge blend songs align them with the more refined urban blues ballad tradition of the 1930s and '40s (see Wald 2004, 36–37), the sophistication of that approach complementing the elegance of the formal arcs.

The Solo-Bridge Model

[6.1] A chronologically later model in which the presence of a bridge is much less ambiguous is the solo-bridge model (**Example 38**), which combines strong blues markers and electrification with a "classic" eight-bar bridge employing a predominant-to-dominant trajectory.(30) This model was used by songwriter Willie Dixon in mid- and late-1950s Chicago electric blues songs like "Just Make Love to Me" (Muddy Waters, 1954; **Example 39**), and it brought elements of the Mississippi Delta blues together with modern technology and a formal approach consistent with mainstream pop. This model consisted of eight-bar verses and a solo-bridge complex containing a 12-bar blues-based solo preceding a classic bridge. The use of eight bars for the verses aligns with the standard for Tin Pan Alley, as was also true of the eight-bar verses of the 8+8 verse-chorus model. Solo-bridge songs connect also to Tin Pan Alley tradition in their phrase rhythm. They lack the 2+2 phrase rhythm that is the norm in all three phrases of the "classic" *aab* 12-bar blues as well as in the cadential phrase of the 4+8 and 8+8 models, and instead maintain a 3:1 ratio of melodic motion to melodic rest. This can be heard in both the verses and the bridge of "Just Make Love to Me," in which the vocal melody cadences on or immediately before beat three of the second bar of each two-bar phrase, leaving half a bar of vocal rest. This 3:1 ratio, with phrases ending in relatively weak hypermetric positions, is more associated with mainstream early twentieth-century popular song than with the blues or its successor, rock (Stephenson 2002, 3–4).

[6.2] While the form and phrase rhythm of songs using this model connect with the mainstream pop of the first half of the twentieth century, other elements push them in the direction of Delta blues or otherwise separate them from the Tin Pan Alley tradition. Elements that connect this model with the blues genre include sitting on tonic in the verses,(31) the use of a 12-bar blues progression for an instrumental solo, a raw, rough vocal timbre voicing forthrightly sexual lyrics, and the inclusion of slide guitar or amplified harmonica. Four of the five songs in the group stay on a tonic harmony in the verses, with three of these four ("Just Make Love to Me" [1954], "I Love the Life I Live (I Live the Life I Love)" [1958], and "Youth to You" [1959]) relying on a repeating riff. As such, they connect back with the early country blues tradition of one-chord blues and in some respects have a rough, downhome feel. Having a 12-bar blues-based instrumental solo immediately adjacent to the bridge breaks up the classic AABA formation and separates these songs from the early Tin Pan Alley tradition, in which the AABA scheme was treated as an inseparable 16- or 32-bar unit.(32) Amplified harmonica, raucously played in most cases by Chess Records virtuoso Little

Walter, is another prominent element in these songs (see Example 27). This model thus draws on the raw power of Delta blues and distills it into a tidy and highly marketable form.

[6.3] The best-known example of this model is Muddy Waters's 1954 recording of Dixon's "Just Make Love to Me" (Example 39). The song's prolongation of tonic harmony, the emotive, rough singing style of Waters, and the variable blue thirds suggest Delta blues. And as in the similarly structured "Just Your Fool" and "I Love the Life I Live (And I Live the Life I Love)," the instrumental solo that precedes the bridge is a 12-bar blues.(33) But other aspects push the song generically towards mainstream pop or jazz. These include the use of a modified AABA form, the use of a D-Dorian melody whose repeated B♮s overshadow the pentatonic passages, the use of brushes on the snare drum in the verses, and the prominent, melodic use of a sliding upright bass. The eight-bar verses stay on tonic, just as the first four bars of a 12-bar blues progression usually do. But the dominant-to-subdominant motion that usually characterizes the cadential phrase of a 12-bar blues progression is absent, replaced by a subdominant-to-dominant trajectory in the bridge consistent with mainstream pop approaches.

[6.4] "Just Make Love to Me" is the earliest song in the corpus using the solo-bridge model, as this model has the latest median date of song release (1959) of the five principal corpus models (Example 5). Four of the five songs—"Just Make Love to Me," "I Love the Life I Live (I Live the Life I Love)," "Youth to You," and the frenetic "Tiger in Your Tank" (1960)—were written by Willie Dixon, and the fifth (Little Walter's "Just Your Fool" [1962]) was likely arranged by Dixon, though originally written and recorded by Buddy Johnson in 1953. Dixon played bass on Little Walter's version and quite possibly was responsible for changing the arrangement of Buddy and Ella Johnson's 1953 original, which did *not* include an instrumental section in between the second verse and the bridge, in order that it match the solo-bridge approach of "Just Make Love to Me" and his other songs in this mold.(34) That model was in many respects the perfect melding of rural Delta rawness and big-city sophistication.

The Two-Bridge Model

[7.1] I turn now to the fifth and final principal model found in the corpus, the two-bridge model. This model incorporates the most conventional use of a bridge among the bridge models. This approach pushes generic associations furthest from the strophic blues and towards the commercial mainstream of mid-1950s pop, as it follows an initial 32-bar AABA with a solo and then an abbreviated reprise (BA) (**Example 40**). This model (AABA–Solo–BA) is "quite common" in songs from the 1950s and '60s (de Clercq 2012, 88). In two-bridge model recordings, such as Jimmy Witherspoon's 1954 "When the Lights Go Out" (**Example 41**), the instrumental solos usually take place over one or more eight-bar patterns using the harmonic progressions of the A sections rather than the 12-bar blues cycles used for soloing in the solo-bridge songs. There are fewer 12-bar (triple-hypermeter) sections in these songs generally—the divisions are mostly powers of two: four, eight, or 16 bars.(35) And, as with the solo-bridge model, the phrase rhythm in two-bridge songs typically maintains a 3:1 melodic motion to melodic rest ratio, which is more typical of early twentieth-century mainstream popular song than the blues.

[7.2] The approach to harmony and harmonic rhythm in the verses of the two-bridge songs also connects them to contemporaneous pop and R&B styles. While the vast majority of the other songs in the corpus use a harmonic "scheme" in the verses (in von Appen and Frei-Hauenschild's sense of a progression with a relatively slow harmonic rhythm that follows a conventional pattern; 2015, 22–23), usually the 12-bar blues or a variant, the only category of songs that features a significant percentage of songs that do not use schemes is the two-bridge model (**Example 42**).(36) A quarter of the two-bridge songs use a loop progression (as in "When the Lights Go Out"), and a quarter use von Appen and Frei-Hauenschild's "R&B line," an eight-bar progression that in the fifth or sixth bar turns to the mediant or submediant to start a descending-fifths turnaround (**Example 43**). The two-bridge model songs also use 12-bar blues progressions in the verses less often than the other models (excepting the solo-bridge songs, which mostly stay on tonic in the verses) (**Example 44**). The descending-fifth root motion and greater harmonic variety in two-bridge songs connect with

1950s and ’60s R&B, which inherited them from gospel (Ripani 2006, 41–42).(37) Mode mixture also can appear, as with the use of both the major and minor subdominant in the verses of Big Joe Turner’s “Cherry Red” (1956). The two-bridge model thus diverges from the blues genre both from a formal and harmonic perspective.

[7.3] Other elements of these songs can also push towards the commercial mainstream of the time, such as the use of a horn section, a smoother, less strained style of singing, and a modal rather than pentatonic approach to melody. This model features the highest percentage of songs that use a wind or brass instrument *other* than a harmonica, such as a saxophone (Example 27). Horn sections can be heard, for instance, in Lil Green’s “I Want a Good Man Bad” (1947) and in T-Bone Walker’s “Why Not” (1955). A relatively clear, calm vocal approach is used in Lonnie Johnson’s “Nobody’s Loving Me” (1950) and Freddie King’s “Someday, After Awhile (You’ll Be Sorry)” (1963). In “When the Lights Go Out” (Example 41), the verses adhere primarily to a bluesy minor pentatonic scale, but the bridge’s melody suggests F Dorian, with prominent use of the second and sixth scale degrees in a manner at odds with a minor-pentatonic approach. Despite the respects in which the two-bridge songs connect with the popular mainstream of their time, these songs are still usually classified as “blues” because of their singing approach, the continued inclusion of electric guitar, the use in some cases of eight-bar blues progressions, and because of the genre associations of artists like Muddy Waters, Willie Dixon, Little Walter, and Howlin’ Wolf.(38) As Elijah Wald points out, Black audiences at the time did not restrict the blues genre to solitary, rural bluesmen in the same way that some later fans and musicologists (2004, 7). Blues that connected with the popular mainstream formally and otherwise did not cease to be blues; the genre adapted to changing times and conditions.

Other Blues with Bridge Models

[8.1] Twenty-two songs in the corpus, listed in **Example 45**, have a bridge or bridge quality but do not fit into one of the three primary categories. I will briefly discuss the most prominent approaches among these: the early Tin Pan Alley songs, the AABA–Solo–A songs, and the bridge + solo recordings. The seven early Tin Pan Alley songs include several with a 16-bar or 32-bar AABA sectional chorus, some of these preceded by a sectional verse in the early Tin Pan Alley style (Covach 2005, 70; Covach 2009, 26). These songs are connected even more closely with the mainstream Tin Pan Alley tradition of the time and include Bessie Smith’s “My Sweetie Went Away” (1923) and “You’ve Been a Good Ole Wagon” (1925), as well as Ida Cox’s “One Hour Mama” (1939) and Alberta Hunter’s “Take Your Big Hands Off” (1946). These songs tend to be sung by vaudeville blues artists and released either during the 1920s or in a subsequent decade in a throwback style. They have formal similarities but do not follow a single overall approach, as some are 16-bar AABA, some 32-bar AABA, and some have a sectional verse but others do not. The bridges in these examples are four- or eight-bar departures from A material but are inseparable from the larger sectional chorus structure in which they are found.

[8.2] A formula used by five songs in the corpus is AABA–Solo–A, with eight-bar verses and, usually, an eight-bar bridge. Outside of the blues genre, this formulation appears in Nat King Cole’s 1946 “Route 66” (which still uses a 12-bar blues progression) and becomes common in early- to mid-’60s pop songs with 16-bar A sections.(39) In this study’s corpus, it appears (with eight-bar verses) in Blue Lu Barker’s 1938 “Don’t You Make Me High,” in three lost-love blues ballads from the 1940s and ’50s, and in Jimmy Reed’s 1955 mid-tempo “I Ain’t Got You.” This formal model in some cases can be connected with the “club blues” style of the 1940s (Bowman 1996, 22, 24–26). The form contains the 32-bar AABA core and thereby adheres to Tin Pan Alley tradition, but contains an instrumental solo rather than a reprise of the bridge.

[8.3] Another approach that occurs in four songs in the corpus resembles the solo-bridge model (section 6, above) but reverses the order of these, resulting in a bridge-then-solo complex. The resultant form, bridge + solo, begins AAB–Solo–A, with three of the four songs (“Hidden Charms,” “The Same Thing,” and “Doncha Bother Me,” each released between 1964 and 1966) then returning to the B material for an outro. Muddy Waters’s 1958 recording of Willie Dixon’s “Close to You” is the earliest of the four. In these songs both the verses and the bridge are 12-bar blues-based, so the

bridge is not functioning as harmonic contrast. Yet the bridge in these songs is more clear-cut than in the verse/bridge blend model songs. As with the solo-bridge model, the presence of a kind of AABA form connects with Tin Pan Alley tradition even as the breaking up of the AABA core with an intervening solo creates distance from that tradition. The presence in the corpus of the bridge + solo songs, along with the early Tin Pan Alley and AABA–Solo–A songs, provides a hint of the variety of possibilities for formal hybridity during the time span under review, with additional individual recordings suggesting even more options.

Cultural Significance

[9.1] I turn now away from my survey of the most common approaches to formal contrast within blues songs and focus on the ways in which these formal models reflected cultural hybridity in Black artists and listeners between 1923 and 1966. Several analysts in recent decades have explored the ways in which musical forms have expressive implications: a form is not just an abstract, "objective" container, but rather a historically contingent aspect of music that changes over time and that has expressive and social meanings (see, for instance, Carter 2021, Rafferty 2017, von Appen and Frei-Hauenschild 2015, Wood 2000, and Hepokoski 1989). The use of contrasting sections in blues songs exemplifies this principle, reflecting social and cultural change. The inclusion of contrasting sections like choruses and bridges was particularly associated with *urbanity*, *commerciality*, and *professionalism*, each of which I will address in turn.

[9.2] First, the presence of choruses and bridges in blues songs is a result of an originally rural medium interacting with urban elements, mirroring the ways in which Black residents' motion from the rural South to the urban North in the Great Migration required a reimagining of old forms. Just as vaudeville blues singers and songwriters achieved popular success by melding a rural medium with elements of Tin Pan Alley songcraft, "city blues" performers like Leroy Carr and Tampa Red developed urban ballad and hokum styles in the 1930s (Schwartz 2018, 367–68, 382–83). Similarly, Chess records in the 1950s made commercial inroads with blues songs with an electric guitar, amplified harmonica, drum kit, and a chorus or bridge (Palmer 1981, 169). These features, some of them relatively new technologies, aligned with the urban lifestyle of Black city-dwellers of the time.(40) Urban blues, in many cases including a prolonged refrain, chorus, or bridge, allowed Black audiences to connect with selected southern rural traditions at the same time that they embraced urban mores and technology (Titon 1977b, 3–4). Some of the blues songs using a prolonged refrain, chorus, or bridge explicitly refer to "the South" as an other, a place that has been left behind (see, for example, Muddy Waters's "I Can't Be Satisfied" and Memphis Minnie's "Killer Diller," both of which use the 4+8 model). As Amiri Baraka has written, the blues and other Black music reflected the identity of Black Americans at a particular time, representing their perception of the "circumstances, prejudices, and delights" of the America they lived in (Baraka 1963, 137). There was a continuum among Black Americans between a close connection to folk traditions on the one hand and tight assimilation to mainstream society on the other (138), and urban blues including a chorus or bridge fell somewhere in the middle of this continuum, embracing aspects of both. While strophic form was linked with country blues and the rural south that many Black migrants sought to escape, components like choruses and bridges were more associated with the urban landscape that they moved to. The movement from rural to urban of the Black American population can particularly be heard in the shift from strophic forms to the prolonged refrains of the 4+8 model and then to the clearer choruses of the 8+8 model.

[9.3] The use of a prolonged refrain, chorus, or bridge in a blues song can also be heard as part of a strategy to achieve greater *commercial* success. The decade of the 1920s was the "blues decade"—the time when the blues perhaps drew the most attention (Harrison 1988, 220)—and this popular attention was in part due to blues songs' use of bridges in formal approaches deriving from Tin Pan Alley standards of the time. And while many of the songs composed decades later by Muddy Waters did not even have a refrain (Gordon 2002, 123), three of the songs authored by Willie Dixon for Waters with contrasting sections— "(I'm Your) Hoochie Coochie Man" (8+8 chorus), "I'm Ready" (8+8 chorus), and "Just Make Love to Me" (Solo-Bridge)—were Waters's three biggest R&B chart hits (Whitburn 1996, 471).(41) In all three of these songs, Dixon incorporated bluesy elements

(with the help of Muddy's expressive singing and playing, as well as Little Walter's emotive harmonica) while also using formal strategies that would help make these songs commercially viable. The blues as a genre did not have many chart hits either before or after these 1950s recordings, but with the use of these generically hybrid formal tactics a wider audience could be reached. The inclusion of formal elements like bridges and choruses, as well as relatively fresh technologies like electric guitar and amplified harmonica, caused Willie Dixon's electric blues songs to connect with 1950s urban Black listeners in a way that country blues did not (Ward 1998, 7; Stoia 2023, 286; Gordon 2002, 79 and 122-23; Inaba 2011, 276–77).

[9.4] The use of a contrasting section like a chorus or bridge in a blues song was also a mark of *professionalism*. Strophic blues songs were associated with country blues artists who often sang variants of songs of uncertain origin, with improvisation or mixing and matching of lyrics a common practice (Titon 1977b, 32). Classic blues artists like Bessie Smith, in contrast, typically performed songs with contrasting sections that were written by professional songwriters and distributed as sheet music. This division of labor echoed that in other industries. Classic blues singers and songwriters "brought a professionalism and theatrical polish to blues that it had never had before" (Baraka 1963, 89), and the use of bridges in AABA songs like "My Sweetie Went Away" and "Do Your Duty" was part of that professionalism. With the rise of independent record labels after World War II, Chess Records thrived in Chicago with R&B and electric blues, and Willie Dixon was the songwriter and arranger who worked often behind the scenes to help drive that success with 4+8, 8+8, two-bridge, and solo-bridge songs. As with most of the vaudeville blues records of the 1920s, a professional songwriter provided the material performed by a charismatic singer on many of Chess's biggest hits. Dixon had composed successfully in a variety of styles and had a good sense of how to craft songs formally to complement their content.

[9.5] In part because of their association with urbanity, commerciality, and professionalism, there is a history of commentators viewing the use of a chorus or bridge in a blues song as a marker of inauthenticity or indicator that a song is not "true blues." Richard Middleton wrote in 1972 that the blues "prefers repetition to development" and favors both "ever repeating variation form" and lack of resolution (Middleton 1972, 52–53). The basic strategy of AABA form is to use contrasting material to create formal tension that is then resolved by the return of the original material. Middleton viewed this kind of structural tension and resolution as inimical to the form of the blues, which is one reason he viewed W. C. Handy's AABA-form "St. Louis Blues" and his other songs in this vein as attempts to "civilise" the blues (53).

[9.6] Middleton at this time was enforcing a notion of blues purity, in which strophic country blues (particularly unrecorded early country blues) was "true" blues and other music purporting to be blues was an amalgam, hybrid, or something else entirely. This was a commonly-held view of record collectors and commentators in the second half of the twentieth century.(42) This critique was applied not just to classic blues artists such as Bessie Smith and Ma Rainey, with whom the influence of mainstream vaudeville and Tin Pan Alley pop allegedly took the music out of "pure" blues territory, but also to city blues styles of the 1930s(43) and electric urban blues in the 1940s and 1950s.(44) The celebration of ostensibly rural bluesmen like Robert Johnson and Charley Patton and the denigration of urban blues can be traced in part to attempts to confine Black blues artists to a "primitive and exotic" stereotype (Davis 1998, 142). Black male blues musicians were seen by many white commentators as an "authentic" antidote to the commercialism of mainstream pop (Grier 2013, 19–21),(45) so Black music that embraced popular forms was critiqued as crass and inauthentic.

[9.7] But there are no "pure" examples of a genre, and blues musicians cannot be reduced to a rural caricature. Consistent with Wald (2004, xiii–xiv, 232), we might say that the blues is an inherently hybrid genre at its heart with a "wide, expressive range" that has encompassed a huge variety of moods and purposes (Floyd 1995, 78), and that the notion of culturally isolated, pure country blues is a phantom, or at least a rare exception excessively idealized by white blues enthusiasts. The wide and expressive range of the blues encompassed songs with bridges or choruses. As Peter Muir details, the hybridization of the blues began as early as the early 1910s, with country blues interacting with the commercial mainstream of Tin Pan Alley in the sheet music and recording

markets (2010, 30). Even when viewing the earliest sheet music blues issued in the 1910s, we see a continuum of approaches, with songs close to country blues on one end of the spectrum and songs much closer to Tin Pan Alley mainstream at the other (Muir 2010, 30–38). Songs using the 4+4, 8+8, verse/bridge blend, solo-bridge, and two-bridge models are later manifestations of a drive towards musical hybridity in an increasingly hybrid population.

Conclusion

[10.1] Just as Black Americans who moved to cities as part of the Great Migration were neither wholly rural Southern nor urban Northern, the blues was a genre that encompassed not only strophic forms but also contrasting sections more associated with Tin Pan Alley, folk, country, gospel, and rhythm and blues. Formal sectional hybridity in this repertoire is intertwined with generic ambiguity. Tellingly, Willie Dixon did not make strict divisions between the "blues" songs and "pop" songs that he wrote, with his daughter Shirli recalling that "'As far as he was concerned . . . it was all the blues'" (Inaba 2011, 50). This generic ambiguity is reflective of a complex reality, one that cannot be reduced to the genre categories created for record sales charts, radio station formats, and advertising. Brackett (2005) discusses how listeners use genre distinctions in popular music to engage with questions of social identity, and these distinctions are thus malleable and specific to particular places and times (75–76). Formal and generic hybridity in blues songs thus reflects the hybrid character of Black musicians' and listeners' lives as they migrated from the American south to urban centers such as Chicago, New York, and Los Angeles. Further research will continue to reveal how historical changes in formal approaches both participated in popular music's trajectory over the course of the twentieth century and reflected broader societal shifts.

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Footnotes

1. In this paper, representations of phrase structures are in lower case and italicized (e.g., *aab*), while representations of section roles are in upper case and not italicized (e.g., AABA).
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2. Writing that "[i]t is impossible for a people to leave a culture behind," Titon discusses how Black migrants from the South to northern cities remained drawn to certain cultural aspects of their previous lives in the South, even as they fled it in order to escape its racist institutions and find economic opportunities in cities (1977b, 3–4). Stoia (2020) discusses how the continued presence of rural blues lyric formulas in postwar R&B showed the influence of earlier styles of blues even though this later music contained greater textual density that reflected the increased pace of city life ([4.9], [4.13], [4.17–18]). Stoia (2023) builds on his previous article and discusses how the rise of R&B after World War II was accompanied by changes in poetic form and phrase rhythm in songs using what he calls the "Caldonia" or "Payday" types (what I refer to as 4+8 and 8+8; see [2.2], below). My argument in this paper has similarities with Stoia's articles in its contention that music reflected the social changes brought on by the Great Migration, but I focus on blues (including prewar blues) rather than R&B here and discuss the 4+8 and 8+8 models as part of a larger argument about formal hybridity (based on de Clercq 2012 and de Clercq 2017) that addresses blues with bridge quality in addition to the 4+8 and 8+8 models.
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3. Stoia does connect form in postwar R&B with urbanization (2023, 286); see note 2, above. Regarding rural and urban influences on the form of vaudeville blues, see Monod 2007, 187–88.
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4. As Muir points out, "blues has usually been seen by critics and historians as essentially folk music, inherently at odds with the allegedly corrupting forces of the popular music industry. The idea of popular blues is therefore seen as at best a debasement of a noble art form, and at worst as an oxymoron" (2010, 1–2).
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5. In the 32-bar Tin Pan Alley-norm AABA form that dominated American popular music between the 1920s and the 1940s, two musically similar eight-bar verses would be followed by an eight-bar bridge before returning to the original A. AABA form in the 1910s and early '20s was often associated closely with Black artists, but after that point "it stood quite exclusively for the Tin Pan Alley-repertoire, predominantly written by white Jewish songwriters" (von Appen and Frei-Hauenschild 2015, 14–16).
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6. It is important to note that many treatments of form in popular music, such as those by de Clercq (2012), Summach (2012), Temperley (2018), Nobile (2020), Covach (2005), and Stephenson (2002), are explicitly focused on "rock" music. As such, they are focused on writing about music primarily created by white artists and consumed by white listeners. Whiteness is often unmarked (Banerji 2021, 56) and when popular music is discussed the attributes of the rock genre are often assumed. Some of the issues raised by the elevation of rock above other genres and the problems incurred by

assuming its universality have been critically examined by Grier (2013), Coates (2003), and Keightley (2001). Therefore, we must exercise caution in applying the findings regarding rock to genres outside of rock, particularly those where the artists and (at least at the time of their release) audiences were primarily Black. Many of these scholars' findings and insights can be adapted to analysis of the repertoire analyzed in this paper, in large part because this blues repertoire was profoundly influential on the rock genre, though in some cases we need to adjust those findings or remain skeptical about their applicability to the blues repertoire. In this paper I will draw on some of these authors, but in some cases qualify their findings because of my focus on a different repertoire.
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7. The audience for blues songs prior to the folk and blues revivals of the 1960s, like the performers, consisted primarily of Black Americans (Adelt 2010, 3).
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8. While some of the songs are outside the bounds of what some *contemporary* listeners might hear as "blues," Wald has emphasized that Black performers and audiences from the time of release of the recordings had a broader understanding of "blues" than many of today's listeners, whose perception of the genre has been influenced by decades of writers lionizing Delta country blues (2004, 7–8). A number of the postwar songs also might reasonably be alternatively viewed as R&B songs. As Ripani has written, "Rhythm & blues also overlaps to a great extent with the blues genre, so much so that the border between the two seems impossible to define exactly" (2006, 7). Wald similarly states, "As various historians have defined their terms, many have drawn a dividing line between blues and R&B, but no two would be likely to agree on exactly which songs end up on which side" (2004, 204).
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9. In addition to Summach (2011), prior studies analyzing large numbers of songs to determine formal tendencies in other repertoires include Stroud (2022), Temperley (2018), von Appen and Frei-Hauenschild (2015), de Clercq (2012), and Stephenson (2002). Hepokoski and Darcy (2006) study a large corpus of musical works to determine common formal tendencies and connect these with social and ideological movements (see especially 603-10), though they do so with Classical-era notated compositions rather than popular song.
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10. This does not mean that a corpus study is the only or "most objective" way to analyze blues music. All approaches to analysis or engagement with a musical work, including the one in this article, are necessarily situated from a certain perspective; there is no such thing as a detached, objective viewpoint (Luong 2017, [2.12]); and a variety of perspectives are needed in order to understand a body of work.
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11. This model is called "Tight Like That" by Middleton (2003a, 504) and von Appen and Frei-Hauenschild (2015, 49), "Caldonia" by Stoia (2020, [4.9]), "hybrid 12-bar blues" by de Clercq (2012, 135), and "quatrain-refrain form" by Titon (1977a, 326 n. 46) and Inaba (2011, 38). I use "4+8" in this paper because it concisely describes the structure of this 12-bar blues configuration: four bars of verse followed by eight bars of prolonged refrain. The use of "4+8" is also consistent with my nomenclature for other models—the 8+8 and the 12+12—and in its label demonstrates its connection to the 8+8 model, with the four bars of tonic harmony in the 4+8 model expanded to eight bars in the 8+8 model.
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12. De Clercq (2012) differentiates between section *roles* and organizational *schemes*, with roles being section types like verse and chorus that are defined in relation to one another (34), and schemes being overall structures like the 12-bar blues, AABA, and SRDC with inherent structural properties that are not dependent on their relationship to other sections (117–18, 211).
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13. In some cases, the prolonged refrain is not exactly eight bars, but instead slightly more than eight (see, for example, Barbecue Bob's 1930 "She Moves It Just Right," where it varies in length between 9.5 and 10.25 bars, or Big Bill Broonzy's 1941 "Rockin' Chair Blues," where it is nine bars).
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14. Stephenson (2002) identifies five common phrase rhythm patterns in four-bar phrases in rock, of which 2+2 is the most common. The nomenclature "2+2" means that the melody cadences on beat one of the third bar, thereby splitting the four bars into two-plus bars of melody and nearly two bars of melodic rest (7). In addition to being found frequently in rock, 2+2 phrase rhythm is ubiquitous in the blues, its structure consistent with a call-and-response approach, where the singer's two bars are answered by nearly two bars of instrumental (usually guitar) response. When used in an *aab* 12-bar blues stanza, each vocal phrase is usually beginning-accented (with the strongest hypermetric beat at the start of the phrase) but divided, with varying degrees of clarity, into two subphrases, with the second subphrase end-accented (Temperley 2003, 126; Love 2012, 19). The relatively strong hypermetric position of the end of the phrase differs from the norm in early twentieth-century American popular music, where vocal phrases typically end on or near the downbeat of the fourth bar of the phrase (Stephenson 2002, 3–4).
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15. Titon (1977a, 326 n. 46) and Inaba (2011, 38) refer to the text over the first four bars of a 4+8 model as a "quatrain," while Stoia (2020, [4.9] and 2023, 291–92) refer to it as a "couplet." "Quatrain" better reflects how this text is usually divided into four separate statements, as it is in "She Moves Me." There are instances, though, where "couplet" seems more apt. Stoia argues that increased textual density, such as that in the first four bars of a 4+8 cycle, reflects urbanity (2020, [4.6], [4.9]; 2023, 306).
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16. Stoia writes of Ray Charles's 4+8 "Blackjack" that it has in the first four bars of its 12-bar blues progression "an alternation between instrument and voice that sounds like a play on the call-and-response pattern of the standard form" (2023, 299). A call-and-response approach frequently occurs in 4+8 songs in all three phrases—in half + half, 1+1, and 2+2 lines.
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17. In particular, the text in the first four bars can in some cases be so dense (as in "It's Tight Like That," for example) that there is little or no sense of call and response in these measures. This tends to be true especially of up-tempo songs. In some of these cases the phrase rhythm of the first four bars is more of a 1+1 approach, though with shorter instrumental breaks.
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18. Titon (1977a) writes that approximately 95% of postwar country (a.k.a. "downhome") blues songs use either the classic *aab* approach (what he calls "six half-line form") or the 4+8 model (what he calls the "quatrain-refrain form") (326 n. 46).
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19. Compare Janet Schmalfeldt's theory of becoming, where "the formal function initially suggested by a musical idea, phrase, or section, invites retrospective reinterpretation within the larger formal context" (2011, 9).
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20. "Bar" refers to a measure of 4/4 in this case. "9.5 bars" indicates nine full bars of 4/4 with a measure of 2/4 inserted within. The recording has the metric irregularities often seen in country blues songs from the period (Evans 1982, 53; Bowsher 2021). The initial "chorus" in this early case is approximately the same length as the succeeding prolonged refrains, making it different from later examples of the initial chorus approach.
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21. As Stoia notes, the 8+8 model (what he calls the "Payday" type) seems to be exceedingly rare (if found at all) prior to World War II (2023, 308n23). After listening to hundreds of blues recordings,

the earliest 8+8 example that I could find is Washboard Sam's "Soap and Water Blues" from 1947. Stoia mentions Sleepy John Estes's 1930 "Milk Cow Blues" as an early example, but Estes uses a version of this model only for the first verse, and it is an upbeat 16+16 approach rather than 8+8.
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22. See also Everett 2009, who describes the typical structure of a 16-bar blues in early rock as an eight-bar "verse" followed by an eight-bar "chorus" (139).
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23. Stoia discusses "29 Ways" and its progression through different models in detail (2023, 321–23).
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24. Dixon generally tended to avoid the most straightforward typical 12-bar blues strophic form, and frequently provided some kind of formal twist or variation (Inaba 2011, 145). Dixon's *aab* strophic blues often had a refrain. By contrast, when we look at the songs credited to Muddy Waters or Howlin' Wolf as songwriters, they tend to use the classic 12-bar blues progression in a strophic form and lack a refrain (see Gordon 2002, 123, contrasting Waters's songwriting with Dixon's). Waters, however, composed five songs in the corpus that use the 4+8 model.
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25. Meaning that the verse and chorus use the same harmonic progression (Covach 2005, 73).
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26. The 1957 version in the corpus was recorded by Big Bill Broonzy. The 1920s recordings of "Trouble in Mind," such as that by Bertha "Chippie" Hill, do not keep returning to the first stanza as a chorus as Broonzy's version does and are instead strophic. The changed approach in the Broonzy version is further evidence of the rise of verse-chorus approaches in the middle of the century.
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27. Covach originally called the repeating section the "sectional refrain" (2005, 70), but later used the term "sectional chorus" instead (2009, 26; 2010, 16).
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28. While most of the songs in the verse/bridge blend category use the classic *aab* approach in the first two verses, two start with the 4+8 model and use it in these initial cycles. In these songs—Sonny Boy Williamson's "Your Funeral and My Trial" (1958) and Junior Wells's "Little by Little" (1960)—there is still bridge quality with the third vocal 12-bar blues cycle, in large part because of the use of stop time there. In Robert Johnson's "Come On in My Kitchen," the structure of the verses resembles that of the 4+8 model, but the refrain is only five bars long and the harmony stays on tonic throughout. The bridge quality in the third verse comes from the use of speech rather than singing.
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29. The overall structure of these recordings resembles the Tin Pan Alley standard AABA. But because they use 12-bar verses rather than eight bars, the verse/bridge blend songs differ hypermetrically from songs in standard 32-bar AABA form and from the 8+8 verse-chorus songs (see Nobile 2020, 57 regarding this binary principal). This creates a more underlying, below-the-surface element that involves true hybridity: the AABA form is preserved, but the triple hypermeter belongs more to the strophic 12-bar blues tradition.
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30. de Clercq 2012, 74. De Clercq discusses "classic" bridges in the context of early rock 'n' roll, but this approach was also common in late 1950s and 1960s pop and R&B.
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31. See Van der Merwe's discussion of "the one-chord blues" (1989, 154). Evans points out that staying on tonic is particularly characteristic of early folk blues (1982, 54–55).
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32. AABA songs from the first half of the twentieth century and beyond would typically place instrumental breaks or solos outside the core AABA module, most commonly immediately after the first core vocal AABA or (in the 1920s) after two iterations of the AABA sectional chorus.
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33. Note, though, that "I Love the Life I Live (And I Live the Life I Love)" unusually presents three vocal verses, rather than the normal two, prior to the solo-bridge complex.
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34. Inaba lists Dixon as playing bass on the December 1960 "Just Your Fool" session (2011, 351). Dixon's playing bass on the track, the idiosyncratic solo-bridge arrangement, and Dixon's general role as in-house arranger for Chess sessions suggest that he was responsible for the solo-bridge ordering in this recording. The Johnsons' 1953 version also has a descending fifths sequence at the conclusion of the verses (I–vi–ii–V–I), which in the Little Walter arrangement has been changed to the simpler I–V–I. The harmonic change, the use of an amplified harmonica in place of a brass section, and the insertion of the solo before the bridge all push the song away from the big band/swing original and towards the blues, specifically Chicago electric blues.
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35. The only song in this category to have 12-bar verses is Little Walter's 1955 recording of Willie Dixon's "Too Late," which sits on tonic in the A sections. This recording otherwise matches the characteristics of the two-bridge model and so is classified as such. The only other triple-hypermeter (12-bar blues-based) sections in the two-bridge category are the 12-bar blues-based solos in "Too Late," "I Want to Be Loved" (1955), "Walking by Myself" (1956), and "You'll Be Mine" (1962).
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36. To label the harmonic approaches in the verses in this study, I relied on the classifications used by von Appen and Frei-Hauenschild: 1) wandering, 2) loop, 3) scheme, 4) R&B line, 5) zero level (2015, 20–23, 30–36, 56–57).
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37. Descending-fifth root motion is commonly associated with eighteenth- and nineteenth-century common practice tonality and with Tin Pan Alley songwriting, but as Ripani discusses, it is prevalent in gospel and barbershop styles and thus seems to have come into 1950s R&B more out of Black music than white common-practice tonality or Tin Pan Alley. Abbott (1992) argues that barbershop harmony came from African-American traditions.
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38. See, for example, Weissman 2006, 223 (referring to Big Joe Turner's "Cherry Red" as a "blues classic").
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39. Examples include "Will You Love Me Tomorrow?" (1960) and "The Wanderer" (1961).
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40. "But for blues to have survived in the city for the long run, to have kept up with the changing tastes of the city citizenry pushing urbanity, it had to merge with other urban musical styles" to appeal to members of the Black urban middle class (Spencer 1992, 33).
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41. "Living in the city, Muddy adapted to survive. He sang Willie Dixon's songs, which gave him a repertoire loaded with crowd-pleasers and transformed his personal magnetism (which he'd projected in a more understated manner in songs like 'Gypsy Woman' and 'Louisiana Blues') into a marketable image" (Palmer 1981, 169).
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42. See Muir 2010, 29 ("the commercialization of blues during the 1910s—what one might term its Tin-Pan-Alley-fication—resulting in the genre I call popular blues, has traditionally been regarded

with deep suspicion. This stems from a deep-rooted attitude on the part of folklorists and blues commentators, who viewed commercialism as 'a cheapening and deteriorative force,' to quote the jazz historian Rudi Blesh"). Guthrie P. Ramsey Jr. argues that Amiri Baraka in his *Blues People* (1963) showed similar disdain for commercialism in Black music (2001, 16), and Ramsey offers as a contrast Albert Murray's writing on the blues (18).
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43. See, for instance, Lomax 1993, 447 (arguing commercially recorded race record catalogs in the 1930s "filled up with miles of trash, routinely performed"); Barlow 1989, 142 (describing "It's Tight Like That" as "far removed from the realism of the blues" and an example of how the race recording industry would "titillate prospective record buyers").
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44. See, for instance, Adelt 2008, 435 (recounting how Muddy Waters and Otis Spann were booed at the 1958 Leeds Folk Festival by trad jazz enthusiasts who considered their use of electric guitars inauthentic).
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45. The association of whiteness and femininity with commercialism and inauthenticity continued through the hip-hop era (McLeod 1999, 140–42).
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