

Amongst the many iconic blues masters that I met and learned from directly was KC Douglas - b. 11/21/13, Sharon, MS - d. 10/18/75, Berkeley, CA - Douglas moved to Vallejo, California in 1945 to work in the naval shipyards, and by 1947 was playing on the San Francisco/Oakland blues scene. Douglas was influenced by Tommy Johnson, whom he had worked with in the Jackson, Mississippi area in the early 1940s. I met KC in 1969 in Berkeley, CA. He worked for the City of Berkeley Streets Dept. driving a truck, and he played music in local clubs and at music festivals. KC, as a result of his working with Tommy Johnson in the Jackson, MS area in the early 1940s, could play/duplicate most all of Tommy Johnson's music better than anyone I've heard. I 'dogged'/followed him around at his gigs and visited him at his home. He was kind enough to show how to play a number of Tommy Johnson's tunes. One of the most popular and most accessible of those tunes is the great country blues classic "Big Road Blues."

Here's my transcription of "Big Road Blues," as played by KC Douglas, which he learned directly from Tommy Johnson:

<http://www.hawkeyeherman.com/.../.../T-Johnson-BigRoadBlues.pdf>

"Big Road Blues" - Tommy Johnson - transcription:

In the Style Of Tommy Johnson
"Big Road Blues"

Key of D
dropped D tuning
(low E string tuned to D)

The musical score is presented in three systems. Each system includes a treble clef staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature. Below the treble staff are three guitar strings: Treble (T), Middle (A), and Bass (B). The first system shows a melodic line in the treble staff and a bass line in the B string. The second system continues the melody and bass line. The third system features a more complex bass line with triplets and a G7 chord indicated above the treble staff. Chord diagrams for D and G7 are provided for reference.

Key of D
dropped D tuning
(low E string tuned to D)

In the Style Of Tommy Johnson "Big Road Blues" (continued)

The first system of music features a treble clef staff with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The melody consists of eighth-note chords and single notes. Below the staff are guitar chord diagrams for D, G7, D, G7, and D. The bass staff shows the fretboard with strings E, B, A, T, and G (labeled on the left). The fret numbers for the strings are: E (2, 3, 2, 2, 2), B (1, 1, 1), A (2, 1, 2, 2, 2), T (0, 0, 0, 0, 0), and G (0, 0, 0, 0, 0).

The second system continues the melody. It includes a treble clef staff and guitar chord diagrams for A7 and G7. The bass staff shows fret numbers: E (3, 3, 3, 3, 3), B (2, 2, 2, 2, 2), A (2, 2, 2, 2, 2), T (0, 0, 0, 0, 0), and G (2, 0, 1, 2, 0).

The third system continues the melody. It includes a treble clef staff and guitar chord diagrams for D, G7, D, G7, and D. The bass staff shows fret numbers: E (2, 2, 1, 1, 1), B (3, 3, 0, 0, 0), A (2, 2, 0, 0, 0), T (2, 1, 2, 2, 2), and G (0, 0, 0, 0, 0).

This block shows the bass staff for the second system, with fret numbers: E (3, 3, 3, 3, 3), B (2, 2, 2, 2, 2), A (2, 2, 2, 2, 2), T (0, 0, 0, 0, 0), and G (2, 0, 1, 2, 0).

The fourth system continues the melody. It includes a treble clef staff and guitar chord diagrams for D, G7, D, G7, and D. The bass staff shows fret numbers: E (2, 2, 1, 1, 1), B (3, 3, 0, 0, 0), A (2, 2, 0, 0, 0), T (2, 1, 2, 2, 2), and G (0, 0, 0, 0, 0).

**K.C.
DOUGLAS**
The Country Boy



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