

“How Long Blues” Notes

By Leroy Carr / Ethan Leinwand

Transcribed and Arranged by Kristian Olsen

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The purpose of this document is to help distribute this wonderful piece to the world. But if you find this of use and would like to buy me a coffee (or chip in for boring website hosting fees), you can do so at buymeacoffee.com/kolsen.

General Notes

The “How Long Blues” was originally recorded (and written?) by Ida Cox with Papa Charlie Jackson in 1925. It soon became a popular blues standard with many artists recording their own versions of the piece, including, notably, [Jimmy Yancey](#).

What follows is a solo piano arrangement of Leroy Carr’s version of the piece from 1928-1929. Several recordings of the piece appear on [Leroy Carr Vol. 1 \(1928-1929\)](#) on Document Records. You can hear a [representative recording on YouTube](#).

Carr mostly plays the same eight bars over and over, roughly as follows:

$\text{♪} = \text{♩}^3$
♩ = 85

The musical score is written for piano in 4/4 time, key of B-flat major. It consists of three systems of music, each with a right-hand melody and a left-hand bass line. The first system (bars 1-4) includes a triplet in the right hand. The second system (bars 5-8) continues the melody and bass line. The third system (bars 9-12) concludes the piece with a final triplet in the right hand. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 85.

Out of this raw material, modern player Ethan Leinwand has brilliantly crafted [an entire stand-alone piece](#), slowing down Carr's tempo and giving the piece a more minor feel. The arrangement found below borrows heavily from Leinwand. The piece is as much Leinwand's as Carr's at this point.

You can find a recording of this sheet music on my [YouTube channel](#).

I have left out articulation and pedaling in this score. Listen to the recording and copy, or use whatever sounds good to you.

As always, this sheet music is meant only as a guide to your own exploration of the piece. Make changes freely, and do whatever sounds good to you.

How Long Blues

Leroy Carr / Ethan Leinwand

Arranged by Krisitan Olsen

Slow
Swing

Measures 1-4 of the piece. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). The time signature is 4/4. The melody in the right hand features eighth-note triplets and quarter notes. The bass line in the left hand consists of quarter notes and eighth notes.

Measures 5-7. The melody continues with eighth-note triplets and quarter notes. The bass line remains consistent with the previous measures.

Measures 8-10. Measure 8 features a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand. Measure 9 includes a trill ornament. Measure 10 has a triplet of eighth notes. The bass line continues with quarter and eighth notes.

Measures 11-13. The melody features eighth-note triplets and quarter notes. The bass line continues with quarter and eighth notes.

Measures 14-16. The melody continues with eighth-note triplets and quarter notes. The bass line continues with quarter and eighth notes.

16

3 *tr* 3

19

tr 3 5 5

22

3 3 3 3

24

3 *tr* 3 3 3

26

3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

29

3

3

3

3

3

32

3

tr

3

3

34

3

3

3

3

3

3

38

3

3

3

40

3

tr

3

3

3

43

46

49