

# Mp3 Catfish Keith - Cherry Ball



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"Keith's raging slide guitar, intricate fingerpicking and infectious vocals tab him as one of the idiom's top acoustic revivalists" -Living Blues 14 MP3 Songs BLUES: Acoustic Blues, FOLK: Folk Blues Details: "Cherry Ball" CD (FTRCD003) 1993 Recorded in one night after an inspiring 7-Nation World Tour, this album includes five originals and a couple of island pieces as well. A fan favorite. "Cherry Ball will give you goose bumps and leave you howling for more!" -Dirty Linen This album features Catfish Keith all solo and live in the studio on National and acoustic guitars, vocal, and feet. QUOTES AND REVIEWS: "Catfish Keith is one of the best blues entertainers in the USA." -Dave Van Ronk "Catfish Keith is the new slide king of the National steel guitar." -Blueprint (British Blues Connection) "Catfish Keith is a young, astoundingly accomplished steel guitar player originally from East Chicago, Indiana...an individual style...Keith's vocals are impressive; he's not just a guitar player but puts everything into his performance. If you like powerful well-played country blues, this is for you!" -Norman Darwen, Blues Life (Austria) "Blues Wizard." -The Boston Globe "Keith's raging slide guitar, intricate fingerpicking and infectious vocals tab him as one of the idiom's top acoustic revivalists." -Bill Dahl, Living Blues "Breaking new ground for blues, Catfish Keith is a solo revelation. He makes each song sound new...See him if you can...Catfish was the star of the (Edinburgh Jazz Blues) festival." -Bob Flynn, The Guardian (UK) "Catfish sings and plays with grit and a growl, and he obviously has a blast...So do we." -Jeffrey Pepper Rodgers, Acoustic Guitar "Catfish Keith is one of the most exciting and skilled bluesmen of his generation. A man with drive and real swing." -Robert Tilling, Blues Rhythm (UK) "There is an excitement that jumps out of the speakers. His slide work is a joy to hear. The tension of the strings with the pleading wail is eerie and touching at the same time -- highly recommended." -Richard B. Kamans, Cadence "The dynamics and intensity of this new release had me jumpin' . . . a new atmosphere in the blues." -Bob

Vorel, Blues Revue Quarterly "Catfish Keith is a personality kid who takes charge right off...dazzling acoustic guitar work. Growls and falsettos alternate in the same number, as if he's doing duets with himself. Catfish is fearless...he reshapes and recycles the gems he's plucked from the past." -John Douglas, Blues Access "Catfish Keith is one extremely dynamic, energetic blues performer . . . uncanny blues ability. MY HIGHEST RATING. LOADS OF FUN." -Victory Review "He's our era's premier exponent of the classic delta blues. Those who saw him were universally overwhelmed with his veritable one-man show on the National Steel Guitar and fingerlickin' cool country blues. -Catalyst "Keith's brand of delta blues radiates an infectious, life-affirming buoyancy. He tells stories and plays roles through his songs, and his picking displays a rhythmic and harmonic richness not always associated with the blues." -Daily Iowan "Catfish Keith satisfied a standing-room-only crowd of blues hungry souls. It was DYN-O-MYTE!!" -Louisville Music News ----- CATFISH KEITH "Spreading the Country Blues Word All Over the World" Feature article from Blueprint Magazine (UK), Issue 55, September 1993 (Catfish Keith Cover Issue) by Trevor Hodgett "I was trying to play that old Memphis Minnie song 'I'm So Glad I Don't Know What To Do' and I started singing, 'All you men, why don't you take Catfish's advice, treat that woman like she was a paradise.' The modern message in that being, 'Treat everybody right,' and not like the old time message, 'I'm gonna shoot my baby just to see her die.' In the Nineties I want a positive message to go out. There's no room left in the world for destructive things. We need more love and good things." Acoustic bluesman CATFISH KEITH explained his philosophy to Trevor Hodgett shortly after his performance at the Guinness Jazz Blues Festival. Seems like only yesterday that a generation of young, fresh faced, white kids like John Hammond and Stefan Grossman began earnestly attempting to emulate the magnificent music of certified geniuses like Son House and Robert Johnson. Mention yer Hammonds and Grossmans to acoustic guitar maestro Catfish Keith and the reaction is somewhat disconcerting. "Those guys are all my father's age," he patiently points out. While your alarmed scribe ponders time's hurtling progress and wonders where his golden youth went, Keith describes his conversion to the blues, which began, as perhaps all conversions should, with a Son House record. "When I was fifteen years old I started to pick up guitar and I found this Son House record, so I said, 'I'll try a little of that!' I put it on and, man, the emotional impact of the way he was singing and playing those blues really knocked me out. It really transformed my idea about what I wanted to do with my life." So how is the guitar playing of a country blues player in the Nineties, like Keith, different from the playing of a country blues player in the

Thirties, like Son House? "In many ways it's very much the same. It's still rooted in the real down-home blues tradition, but I'm also a modern guitar player in that I've heard all the things that have come along since and I also incorporate early jazz elements and island music in my guitar playing, so there's a lot of different elements than just pure Delta blues. "When I was a kid in Davenport, Iowa -- this is the home of Bix Beiderbecke and they have a Bix Beiderbecke Jazz Festival -- I heard more traditional jazz live than I heard blues, because, heck, there wasn't anyone around Iowa playing country blues. So I kinda developed my own style, cos I was all by myself and I wanted to create a style of music that would stand up all on its own and could be a whole band by itself. "I still got my same two raggedy guitars that I always had: the 1930 National steel-bodied guitar and that old Nick Lucas Special -- it's an old Gibson from the early Twenties. Those two old guitars kinda helped me develop my style, just by the guitars themselves. "I have an electric guitar and occasionally I'll sit in with a band for fun, but my commitment is really to acoustic blues and to bringing as much power to solo performing as possible. I want to keep on with the acoustic style because that's where all the warmth and intimacy and dynamics and expressiveness are." Keith of course was too young to ever hear the Son House generation of country bluesers live. "Well, I did get to hang out with Johnny Shines. He was a great, great inspiration. I'd always been a fan of his and I'd played his songs, and then one time I had the opportunity to sit next to him and feel the power in his voice. Words can't express how it hit me. Man, it was just something that can't be duplicated by listening to records and studying that way. Just by sitting there and hearing his stories and his philosophy on life and the way he lived life was a very big inspiration for me, for he was a very great and proud man and he kept his integrity through all those years. He quit the music business for a while because he wanted to keep his own integrity, but he came back for the same reasons. Same as Son House." The Sixties' revivalists also inspired Keith. "Paul Geremia, John Hammond, Dave Van Ronk -- they've all been very encouraging. It's inspiring to meet these players and to have them share their music and encourage me to keep on going and to take it to the next generation." Keith recorded his first album, Catfish Blues, for Kicking Mule in 1985. "At the time I was very happy with it, but it's just a document for me of when I was 22 years old. I think a lot of it's good, but it was just the first stage in the development of what became finally my style. "Once I met my wife Penny Cahill we formed Fish Tail Records, because we wanted to do it all on our own." In 1990 Fish Tail Records released Keith's second album, Pepper in My Shoe! which contains a mixture of original compositions and covers. "Well, I just pick things that I like,

and often they'll come from a left turn, round about sort of way. Pepper in My Shoe! was from an old zydeco song, Paper in My Shoe. I'd heard it from Clifton Chenier and I made my own little Deltafied version of it." Keith's third album, Jitterbug Swing, was released by Fish Tail in 1992. As on his other records, Keith frequently amends lyrics on his cover versions, as on his interpretation of Bukka White's title song. "I try to take those old songs and make them up again as I go along. I listen to a lot of music and I'll try to play a song, but I won't sit down with a record and copy each lick. I'll just have it in my mind and then just kinda make my own version. Pretty much all the country blues that you hear me play are certainly inspired by people like Charley Patton and Bukka White, but I'm not copying everything note-for-note. I'm just taking that as a source of improvisational inspiration. "I was really inspired by the improvising musicians and I'm just improvising myself and what makes the solo style of country blues so exciting for me is that you can pretty much do anything you want. "When I'm writing my own blues songs I never consciously sit down and say, 'I'm gonna write a song.' I'll just be sitting around, often trying to figure out some old song . . . like, that song Mr. Catfish's Advice that I played tonight [during his superb appearance at the Guinness Jazz Blues Festival, Holywood, Co. Down]: I was trying to play that old Memphis Minnie song I'm So Glad I Don't Know What To Do and I started singing, 'All you men, why don't you take Catfish's advice, treat that woman like she was a paradise,' the modern message in that being, 'Treat everybody right,' and not like the old-time message, 'I'm gonna shoot my baby just to see her die.' In the Nineties I want a positive message to go out. There's no room left in the world for destructive things. We need more love and good things." The album features a version of Gonna Live That Life, by the wondrous Bahamian singer/guitarist/songwriter/genius Joseph Spence. "He's one of the great solo improving musicians, with that stomping foot and that growling thing. Man, I just feel like cracking up and throwing a party every time I hear Joseph Spence, so that spirit in his music really inspired me to entertain people and really explore the rhythms and all the nuances of guitar." One of the album tracks, Fistful of Riffs, was inspired by Lonnie Johnson, whom Keith describes in the CD booklet as "the greatest of all the blues legends." "Because of the deep feeling in his music," he explains. "The virtuosity, the expressive tone he has, all the beautiful blues songs that he wrote and the total expanse of his career. From 1917 when he played fiddle on one of those disc cylinder things, all the way till he passed in the early Sixties, his music just continued to grow and expand. He had a fabulous career and, man, I just really am knocked out by his music. He played with all these jazz greats as well as different blues singers.

He played with Louis Armstrong and his duets with Eddie Lang are some of the greatest guitar pieces of all time." Keith has already recorded his fourth album. "It's gonna be called Cherry Ball. It's an all solo record, recorded live in the studio direct to two-track tape and no overdubs or any real big studio tricks. There's a little bit of island music on it -- those influences are pervasive in my music and all my albums have a little bit of island flavor to them." Keith is sanguine about the sales potential of country blues. "In the last five or ten years the blues has just gone up and up in popularity, with artists like John Lee Hooker and Robert Cray and B. B. King, and if you continue with that with the acoustic blues I think it's just unlimited how far it can go. "If it was promoted in a mass way -- like Eric Clapton and Unplugged, and Robert Johnson becoming a million seller fifty years after he was gone -- if big record companies get behind it, which they're starting to do, I think it's altogether possible to take it as far as you can and spread the word all over the world." A BRIEF CATFISH KEITH BIOGRAPHY: Blues singer, songwriter and bottleneck slide guitarist Catfish Keith has established himself as one of the most exciting country blues performers of our time. Catfish's innovative style of foot-stomping, deep delta blues and American roots music has spellbound audiences the world over. A two-time W. C. Handy Award nominee for BEST ACOUSTIC BLUES ALBUM, Catfish has ten NUMBER ONE independent radio chart-topping albums to his credit, and packs houses from coast-to-coast with his dynamic stage show. The 25-year veteran has toured the U.K. and Europe dozens of times to wide acclaim, headlining major music festivals, and appearing with legends John Lee Hooker, Ray Charles, Robert Cray, Koko Taylor, Taj Mahal, Leo Kottke, Jessie Mae Hemphill, Johnny Shines and many, many others.

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