

Blue Suede Shoes

Written by bluesever

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Thirty-odd years ago, an English reporter asked **Carl Perkins**, who was then in London promoting his new album

Old

Blue Suede's Back,

how many times he had performed his signature tune

"Blue Suede Shoes."

He didn't rightly know, Perkins replied, with a hint of a grimace crossing his face. He'd lost count, he continued, after the first couple of thousand.

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"Blue Suede Shoes" has been called the first true rock 'n' roll hit, in the sense that it was an "all market" hit. Some R&B hits had sold well in the pop market (most notably Chuck Berry's *"Maybellene,"* which had even outsold the white cover versions); likewise, some country records had crossed over into the pop market, and Bill Haley had defined his own pop/R&B hybrid. But there had never been a record that had sold well in all three markets.



Carl Perkins with blue suede shoe

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Carl Perkins is regarded by many as one of the founding fathers of rock-and-roll. Although he placed only one record in the pop top forty "**Blue Suede Shoes**," it became a legendary one in the annals of rock-and-roll and propelled Perkins, one of the original rockabilly singers, into his legendary status.

Born **Carl Lee Perkins** near Tiptonville, Tennessee in 1932, the son of the only white sharecropper (Fonie "Buck" Perkings) on a cotton plantation and Louise Brantley. He kicked off his musical career in the mid 1940s, performing at local dances with his brothers Jay and Clayton as the 'Perkins Brothers Band'. In 1953 drummer W.S. 'Fluke' Holland joined.



The Perkins Brothers Band

His first release was *Movie Magg*, written when he was fourteen, that sold slowly. However, it allowed him to get bookings where he opened for Elvis. According to Perkins, after a show in Jackson, Tennessee when he was touring with Elvis Presley and Johnny Cash, he wrote down the words of someone on the dance floor.

Johnny Cash was the first to give Perkins the idea for this song. He told Perkins about soldiers in the US army who wore their combat boots in the mess hall and would warn their fellow soldiers not to "*step on my blue suede shoes*." Perkins was watching a dancer at a high school sorority dance - he didn't pay too much attention to his date, but he kept everybody else away from his new shoes.

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