

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Rock was birthed from the blues

◆ From A16

Backing up the show is the website, atcblues.ca, with its links that will take a person to virtually any blues website that exists, song lists from each show going back a couple of years and plenty of photos — Zwicker hits as many blues festivals as he can.

The website, mastered by engineer and co-producer Mike Braniff, is also where the ATC-carrying stations go to download the weekly shows.

The show is as personal for him as the blues is for its millions of fans worldwide.

“It was kind of an awakening,” he says of the decision to start it.

“I thought, ‘I’ll prove my love for this music by doing the show.’”

He’s not alone in the love.

So many musicians — an eclectic group that might surprise many — have pointed to the music as what motivated them, inspired them and from which they derive their own creative muse.

James Brown and Little Richard started their careers deep into the blues. Elvis had his roots there too, as did the Rolling Stones, the Yardbirds, the Animals, Cream, the Who and Led Zeppelin.

Add to the list Stevie Ray Vaughan, John Mayall, Canned Heat, Johnny Winter, Eric Clapton — even the Beatles mined the blues treasure trove.

Zwicker points out there are musicologists who have said



Did Robert Johnson sell his soul just to get the blues? It's the stuff of musical legend.

every single piece of Western music written from the early 1900s on is based in the blues, from the lyrics right down to basic chord progressions.

Don't believe it?

Take a listen to *Crossroads*, first released by Clapton on Cream's *Wheels of Fire* album.

It's a memorable adaptation of *Cross Road Blues* and *Travelling Riverside Blues*, both first performed by the man many say sold his soul to play the blues — Robert Johnson.

Even Zwicker's taken something from Johnson — and here is where legendary and legend meet.

The story goes that Johnson, a young black man living deep in the heart of Mississippi, wanted to become a great blues musician.

One night, still despondent over the death of his wife and driven to play slide guitar as well as his friends Willie Brown and Sonny Boy Williamson, Johnson took a walk to where Highways 61 and 49 intersected in Clarksdale, Miss.

He called upon Scratch — the devil himself — to come up and then let him tune Johnson's guitar.

The devil, it's said, did so, played a few licks and handed the

instrument back — sealing the deal to take Johnson's soul in exchange for the gift of the blues.

At the crossroads is where the blues is found, Zwicker said. “You get your blues at the crossroads.”

The show is heard in Kamloops on Sunday nights at 7 p.m. on 98.3 *CIFM*, which carries it at the same time on its affiliated stations.

For more information, go online at atcblues.ca.