

Johnny B. Goode

(Chuck Berry)

[Verse 1]

Deep down Louisiana close to New Orleans
Way back up in the woods among the
evergreens
There stood a log cabin made of earth and
wood
Where lived a country boy named Johnny B.
Goode
Who never ever learned to read or write so
well
But he could play the guitar just like a
ringing a bell

[Chorus]

Go, go
Go Johnny go, go
Go Johnny go, go
Go Johnny go, go
Go Johnny go, go
Johnny B. Goode

[Verse 2]

He used to carry his guitar in a gunny sack
Go sit beneath the tree by the railroad track
Oh, the engineers would see him sitting in
the shade
Strumming with the rhythm that the drivers
made
People passing by they would stop and say

Oh my that little country boy could play

[Chorus]

Go, go
Go Johnny go, go
Go Johnny go, go
Go Johnny go, go
Go Johnny go, go
Johnny B. Goode

[Verse 3]

His mother told him "Someday you will be a
man
And you will be the leader of a big old band
Many people coming from miles around
To hear you play your music when the sun
go down
Maybe someday your name will be in lights
Saying 'Johnny B. Goode Tonight'"

[Chorus]

Go, go
Go Johnny go
Go go go, Johnny go
Oh go go, Johnny go
Oh go go, Johnny go
Go, Johnny B. Goode

"Johnny B. Goode" is a 1958 rock-and-roll song written and first recorded by Chuck Berry. The song was a major hit among both black and white audiences, peaking at number two on Billboard magazine's Hot R&B Sides chart and number eight on its Hot 100 chart.

"Johnny B. Goode" is considered one of the most recognizable songs in the history of popular music. Credited as "the first rock & roll hit about rock & roll stardom", it has been recorded by many other artists and has received several honors and accolades. The song is also ranked seventh on Rolling Stone's list of the "500 Greatest Songs of All Time".

Written by Berry in 1955, the song is about an illiterate "country boy" from the New Orleans area, who plays a guitar "just like ringing a bell," and who might one day have his "name in lights." Berry acknowledged that the song is partly autobiographical and that the original lyrics referred to Johnny as a "colored boy", but he changed it to "country boy" to ensure radio play. As well as suggesting that the guitar player is good, the title hints at autobiographic elements, because Berry was born at 2520 Goode Avenue, in St. Louis. The song was initially inspired by Johnnie Johnson, the regular piano player in Berry's band, but developed into a song mainly about Berry himself. Johnson played on many other recordings by Berry, but Lafayette Leake played the piano on this song.

The opening guitar riff of "Johnny B. Goode" is essentially a note-for-note copy of the opening single-note solo on Louis Jordan's "Ain't That Just Like a Woman" (1946), played by guitarist Carl Hogan. Neither the guitar intro nor the solo are played at once. Berry played the introductory parts together with the rhythm guitar and later overdubbed the solo runs.

Berry wrote four more songs involving the character Johnny B. Goode, "Bye Bye Johnny", "Go Go Go", "Johnny B. Blues" and "Lady B. Goode"; and titled an album, and the nearly 19-minute instrumental title track from it, as "Concerto in B. Goode".

In The Guardian, Joe Queenan wrote that "Johnny B. Goode" is "probably the first song ever written about how much money a musician could make by playing the guitar," and argued that "no song in the history of rock'n'roll more jubilantly celebrates the downmarket socioeconomic roots of the genre." In Billboard, Jason Upshutz stated that the song was "the first rock-star origin story", and that it featured "a swagger and showmanship that had not yet invaded radio."

When Chuck Berry was inducted into the first Rock and Roll Hall of Fame on January 23, 1986, he performed "Johnny B. Goode" and "Rock and Roll Music", backed by Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band. The Hall of Fame included these songs and "Maybellene" in their list of the 500 songs that shaped Rock and Roll. It was inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame in 1999, for its influence as a rock and roll single.

The use of Johnny B. Goode in the 1973 coming-of-age comedy-drama American Graffiti resurrected the song's popularity, as it was used in one of the main scenes of the film.