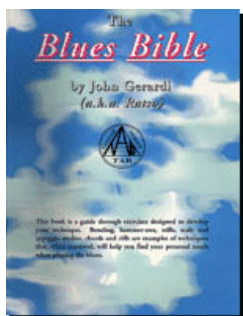


"The Art of the Blues" back cover copy:

RATSO



The red guitar in Woolworth's window. Greenwich, Connecticut, 1959.

To earn the \$45 to get his first guitar, 7-year-old Ratso was prepared to do "whatever it takes." So he took his father's first offer--\$1 a day to work for him--and the very next day began accompanying his father to work. Day after day that summer, they woke at 4.30 a.m.; made it to the construction site by daybreak. Home wasn't till 6 p.m. Birth of the blues, you figure? Birth of the disciplined student, is more like it.

For, on the 45th day, Ratso collected the pivotal buck, retired from construction work, bought the guitar and headed home to start "the real work." That evening, he sat down on the couch in the living room of his parents' house and started teaching himself the guitar. Next thing Ratso knew it was morning and he was in his bed. His parents had found him asleep, guitar on chest, on the couch. Many people believe Ratso hasn't slept since. He certainly hasn't stopped practicing.

By the age of 9, he'd put together his first band. At 11, played his first professional gig. At 14, made his New York club debut. Self taught the first 15 years, in 1974 Ratso began studying with Jazz great Sal Salvador, "once a week for the first decade, for openers," said Ratso of his 20-year apprenticeship.

In a life carved from a framework of discipline and filled with music: songwriting, singing, performing, producing, session work--even playing Gospel in church--razor-sharp Ratso, dedicated student of the guitar for almost 35 years, has also been teaching the guitar for the last 20. Said one student's father, "Ratso's guitar lessons are *life* lessons."

"Places Ratso squarely in the tradition of Albert King and Stevie Ray Vaughan," is what one music critic said of Ratso's latest blues CD, "*Whatever It Takes*" (Riff Rat Music), produced by Ratso and Bob Greenlee of Kingsnake Records. The searing blues comes from a hand-crafted, custom-designed, "Ratso model" Tempest Chapparelle guitar with special pickup configurations, capable of 36 tones, and made by master luthier T.W. Doyle, of Washington Township, NJ.

"What my father taught me," Ratso says, looking up from the mixing console at Riff Rat Records, his state-of-the-art, sound and recording production studio in Stamford, "is that you only get what you earn. He also--*God Bless him*--taught me the inner discipline that builds the self esteem it takes to get it." Which is? Says Ratso--"Whatever it takes!"