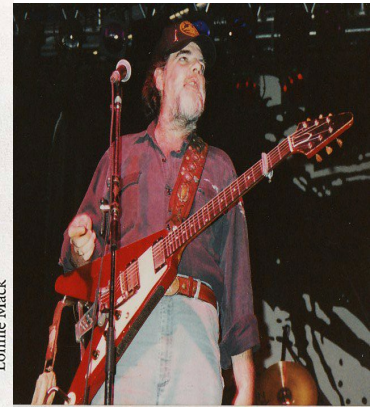


Lonnie Mack Bio



Lonnie Mack's Band with Flying V and Explorer Bass (1963)



Video: Lonnie Mack, Albert Collins, Rtoy Buchanon
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yIeZSUevSuc>

Lonnie McIntosh (July 18, 1941 – April 21, 2016), known by his stage name, Lonnie Mack, was an American rock, blues, and country singer-guitarist. As a featured artist, his recording career spanned the period from 1963 to 1990. He remained active as a performer into the early 2000s. Mack played a major role in transforming the electric guitar into a lead voice in rock music. Best known for his 1963 instrumentals, "Memphis" and "Wham!", he has been called a rock-guitar "pioneer" and a "ground-breaker" in lead guitar soloing. In these, and several other early guitar instrumentals, "he attacked the strings with fast, aggressive single-string phrasing and a seamless rhythm style". These tunes are said to have formed the leading edge of the virtuoso "blues rock" lead guitar genre.

His guitar recordings were a significant influence on many prominent rock guitarists, including Stevie Ray Vaughan, Jeff Beck, Duane Allman, Dickie Betts and Ted Nugent. According to Guitar World magazine, Mack's early solos influenced every major rock-guitar soloist from the 1960s through the 1980s, from "Clapton to Allman to Vaughan" and "from Nugent to Bloomfield". Mack is also considered one of the finer "blue-eyed soul" singers of his era

Lonnie Mack was a roadhouse blues-rock legend – modern rock's first true guitar hero. His playing has influenced the course of rock and roll and had an impact on many of modern rock's current guitar heroes, including Eric Clapton, Keith Richards, Jimmy Page and especially Stevie Ray Vaughan. His early music bridged the gap between '50s rockabilly and the psychedelic blues-rock of the following decade, and, like the best rock and roll, his work continues to embody a mixture of white and black roots music. Rock, blues, soul and country – Lonnie brings them all together for a sound that has been all his own for nearly forty years.

Lonnie was born in Harrison, Indiana – some forty miles west of Cincinnati. Learning his first chords from his Mother at the ages of 5, Lonnie grew up playing bluegrass, country and gospel with his family and friends and listening to old radio stations which were playing black

blues, jazz and gospel. Taking from all these influences he created his own personal style and when Rockabilly emerged to the music scene, Lonnie was already playing it!

He began playing professionally in his early teens when he quit school after a disagreement with his 7th grade teacher. He worked clubs and roadhouses around the tri-state border area of Indiana, Kentucky and Ohio. In 1958, he bought the guitar he still plays today – Gibson Flying V old number 7. In addition to his live gigs, Lonnie began playing sessions for the King and Fraternity labels in Cincinnati. He recorded with blues and r&b greats like Hank Ballard, Freddie King and James Brown.

In 1963, at the end of another artist's session, Lonnie cut an instrumental version of Chuck Berry's "Memphis." He didn't even know that Fraternity had issued the single until a friend came to where he was performing at the Peppermint Lounge in Florida and said he'd been listening to it on the car radio all the way down! He contacted Fraternity and had them ship him out a box of the 45's. "Memphis" had hit the national Top 5 and Lonnie Mack went from being a talented regional roadhouse player to a national star virtually overnight.

Suddenly, he was booked for hundreds of gigs a year, criss-crossing the country in his Cadillac and rushing back to Cincinnati or Nashville to cut new singles. "Wham! " "Where There's A Will There's A Way", "Chicken Pickin'" and many many more records followed "Memphis". "Where There's A Will" earned extensive black radio airplay before the DJ's found out Lonnie was white, but there was enough reaction to keep him on the road for another five years of grueling one - nighters.

Fraternity Records died, but Lonnie kept on gigging, and in 1968 a Rolling Stone article stimulated new interest in his music. He signed with Elektra Records and cut three albums. He began playing all the major rock venues, from Fillmore East to Fillmore West. Lonnie also made a guest appearance on the Doors' Morrison Hotel album where you can hear Jim Morrison's urging "Do it, Lonnie! Do It!" He even worked in Elektra's A&R department. When the label merged (and his motorcycle was stolen) Lonnie had had enough of the new bureaucracy bullshit and walked out of his prestigious job.

He headed back to rural Indiana, playing back-country bars, going fishing and laying low. After five years of relative obscurity, Lonnie signed with Capitol and cut two albums that featured his country influences. He played on the West Coast for a while and even flew to Japan for a Save The Whales benefit. Then he headed to New York to team up with an old friend named Ed Labunski. Labunski was a wealthy jingle writer that wrote "This Bud's For You" who was tired of commercials and wanted to write and play for pleasure. He and Lonnie built a studio in rural Pennsylvania and spent three years organizing and recording a country-rock band called South, which included Buffalo-based keyboardist Stan Szelest, who later played on Lonnie's Alligator debut. Ed and Lonnie had big plans for their partnership, including producing an album by a then-obscure Texas guitarist named Stevie Ray Vaughan. But the plans evaporated when Labunski died in an auto accident, and the South album wasn't released until Lonnie started his own publishing company (Mack's Flying V Music) in 1998.

Disheartened after the loss of his friend, Lonnie headed for Canada and joined the band of veteran rocker Ronnie Hawkins for a summer. He then returned to Indiana without a band and

played solo acoustic in his own home town. Lonnie's brother Billy and his good friend and old keyboard player Dumpy Rice started showing up at his gigs. Eventually he had a road worthy band again and started playing the same tri-state border area of Indiana, Kentucky and Ohio as they had back in the early days before Memphis.

Lonnie began his re-emergence on the national scene in November of 1983. At Stevie Ray Vaughan's urging, he relocated from southern Indiana to Austin, Texas. He began jamming with Stevie Ray in local clubs and flying to New York for gigs at the Lone Star and the Ritz. When Alligator Records approached him to do an album, Lonnie immediately called on Vaughan to help him out. The result was *Strike Like Lightning* (AL 4739), co-produced by Lonnie and Stevie Ray and featuring Stevie's guitar on several tracks. "We went for Lonnie's original sound here," Vaughan said. The joint effort was one of 1985's best selling independent records and topped many critics' "Best Of" list for that year.

Lonnie's re-emergence was a major music industry event. Keith Richards, Ron Wood, Ry Cooder and Stevie Ray Vaughan all joined Lonnie on stage during his '85/86' tour. Other celebrities – Bob Dylan, Mick Jagger, Paul Simon, Eddie Van Halen, Dwight Yoakum, actor Matt Dillon and comedienne Sandra Bernhard – attended shows during the *Strike Like Lightning* tour. The year was capped off with a stellar performance at New York's prestigious Carnegie Hall with label-mates Albert Collins and the late Roy Buchanan.

His Alligator follow-up, *Second Sight* (AL 4750), highlighted Lonnie's continuing evolution as a musician and singer/songwriter. He self-produced the album and wrote eight of the ten tunes. The album spotlighted his cured-in-the-wood vocals more than *Strike Like Lightning* but also included a healthy dose of Lonnie's burning Flying V. After *Second Sight*'s release Lonnie went on tour with Huey Lewis and the News.

Lonnie's re-found visibility earned him a contract with Epic Records, and in 1988 that label released Lonnie's *Roadhouses and Dancehalls* album. Critics applauded the recording, but CBS didn't know quite how to market it. They tried to force it into a country music niche, ignoring its roots-rock and r&b influences. Not able to push the album to its full sales potential, Epic let the project slide from the top of its priority list. Lonnie, again disenchanted with the major label scenario, began making plans for his return to Alligator.

Lonnie Mack's career traces the history of rock and roll. Drawing from influences as diverse as rhythm and blues, country, gospel and rockabilly, Lonnie has won the hearts of fans worldwide. He is revered by a new generation of rock performers. He has played everywhere from tiny roadhouse clubs to huge rock showcases and national television. He has recorded for major labels, indies and Lonnie now has his own label "Mack's Flying V Music".

In 2000, Mack appeared as a guest artist on the album *Franktown Blues*, by the sons of blues legend Arthur "Big Boy" Crudup. He provided guitar solos on two cuts, "She's Got The Key" and "Jammin' For James".

He continued to tour in both America and Europe until 2004, and, for the next few years, occasionally appeared at benefit concerts and special events. On November 15, 2008, he was a featured performer at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame's thirteenth annual Music Masters

Tribute Concert, soloing on "Wham!" in honor of electric-guitar pioneer Les Paul. On June 5–6, 2010, he appeared in an invitation-only reunion concert with the surviving members of his original band.

In 2011, he was working on a memoir and engaged in a songwriting collaboration with award-winning country and blues tunesmith Bobby Boyd. Also in 2011, he released some informally recorded compositions on his website, including the acoustic blues single "The Times Ain't Right".

Lonnie Mack died following an undisclosed illness on April 21, 2016. Although retired for several years before his death, he was known to "tear the roof off" his favorite Tennessee country roadhouse with a borrowed guitar.

Official Website: [Lonnie Mack](#)

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