

The album completely misses the mark if you're expecting the urban atmospheric of '50s era Chicago. It excels as an inspired hodgepodge of gritty blues and rock influences pulled from Texas, the Delta, ZZ Top, and Pinnick's own gospel soul-rock extrapolations. Jabo rumbles and rocks with a gritty virtuosity as he shifts from sweaty single-note lines, crashing chord work, wah, and badass slide guitar.

There's powerful blues-rock guitar action from top to bottom, coupled with plenty of swampy detuned mayhem to boot. His low-down duet with Pinnick on "Worried Mind" is the real deal, while "It Ain't Easy" is pure southern blues-rock with a smidgeon of the Black Crowes.

This is a highly enjoyable blues-rock record with a plethora of grooves, down-and-dirty feel, filthy guitar, and soul-stirring vocals. — **OJ**

DVD



Fernando Perez Six Strings Around The World

How many guitarists can masterfully play flamenco and then bottleneck Delta blues just as convincingly? There are eclectic, versatile guitarists, and then there is Fernando Perez. Usually if someone can play bebop with a plectrum and bossa nova fingerstyle, that's considered versatile — or in Chet Atkins' case, bouncing from country music to classical technique and repertoire.

What Perez accomplishes is as though Michael Jordan *had* succeeded at baseball — and then tennis and ice hockey. To do this, he didn't just travel the world, he lived for years in Greece, Hawaii, Egypt, India, Turkey, China, Sudan, America, and his native Spain. Wherever he went, he absorbed the indigenous music and the culture behind it. This two-hour DVD includes 18 pieces for solo guitar (classical, steel-string, fretless gut-string, and a customized lap-style Hawaiian guitar, but with sympathetic strings used for Indian music), with Perez explaining their origins.

If you're not in the mood for history lessons, you can just play the songs, although you'll probably eventually want to learn more about the styles, be they familiar or foreign. — **DF**

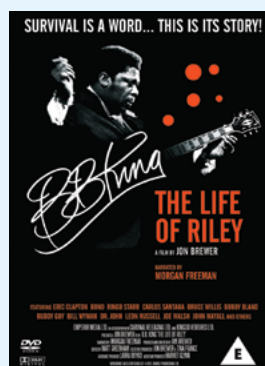


B.B. King, 1971.

BLUES' GRAND MASTER

If you're going to take on the life story of B.B. King, you'd better do it right. Not only is it one of the most remarkable rags-to-riches stories in show business (or any walk of life), but King's stature truly transcends music. He's not just blues ambassador to the rest of the world, in many ways Riley King, better known as "B.B.," is America's ambassador, period. Thankfully, director Jon Brewer made a film befitting the man.

Clocking in at two hours, the DVD goes beyond King's music and his incalculable influence on other musicians. Brewer takes his subject (pushing 90 as of this writing) all the way back to Itta Bena, Mississippi, the place of his birth, near Indianola. King not only grew up there, he was plowing the cotton field, working alongside grown men, from the age of seven. The product of a broken home, he was living alone in his own shack, sometimes driving a tractor, working his own share on the plantation for \$15 a month when he was only 14. Walking 30 miles a day, King estimates that in 18 years he did the equivalent of walking around the world, but the



B.B. King The Life Of Riley

math actually adds up to more like three and a half roundtrips. He talks about those days with nary a hint of bitterness.

Interviews with cousins, neighbors, classmates, the brother of civil rights activist Medgar Evers, and his second wife, along with current and archival interviews with B.B. himself are far more illuminating than rock stars singing King's praises — although plenty of them (Bonnie Raitt, Leon Russell, the Rolling Stones, Ringo Starr, Dr. John, U2) weigh in, with Eric Clapton declaring King "the Grand Master."

As the timeline progresses, we also hear from producers and managers, and King graduates from the chitlin circuit to the world stage. If there are

criticisms to be made, songs are never shown in their entirety and so-so albums like *In London* and *Riding With The King* are treated like milestones.

King demonstrates his "trilling" finger vibrato and retells the story of running into a burning club to rescue his guitar (named Lucille ever after), and classics like *Live At The Regal* and "Thrill Is Gone" get their due.

In his inimitable way, Carlos Santana defines the blues, and, in doing so, B.B. "Sincere, honest, truthful, real, and genuine," he states. "If you have those five things, then you can play the blues. Otherwise, you sound like a parakeet repeating something that you don't understand."

Best quote honors, though, go to Bono, describing performing "When Love Comes To Town" with the man for whom he wrote it. "I gave it my absolute, everything I had in that howl at the start of the song, and then B.B. King opened up this mouth and I felt like a girl."

It's called mileage and seasoning. And not to worry, Bono; in another 20 years, you'll have it too. — **Dan Forte**