

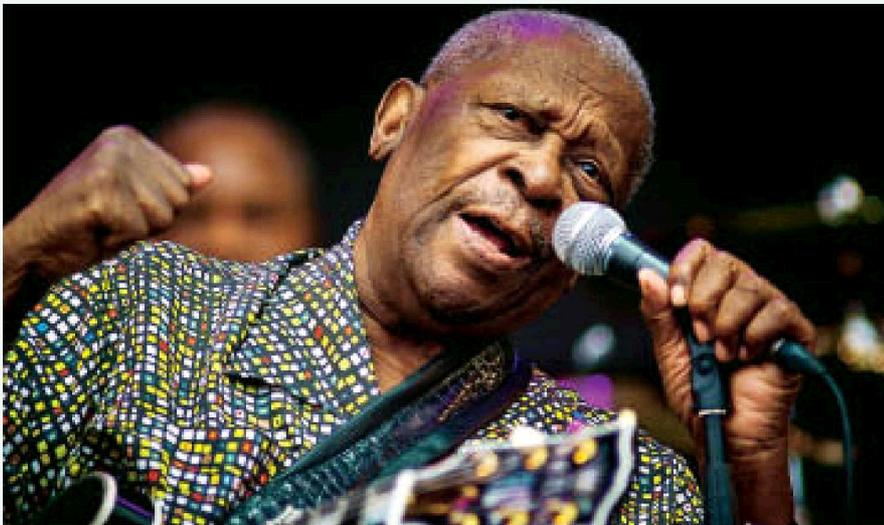
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Friday

21 February

Critics' choice



Pick of the day

BB King — The Life of Riley (BBC4, 9pm)

BBC4's smartly acquired reputation as the essential destination for Friday-night music is maintained with the broadcast of Jon Brewer's weighty documentary about 88-year-old blues hero BB King. His given name is Riley B King, hence the title, but, as the film shows, the singer and guitarist was not marked out for an easy life.

Narrated by Morgan Freeman, it tells the

story of King's route from his upbringing on a Mississippi cotton plantation to his ascension as bona-fide musical royalty, clocking up 42 albums since his 1956 debut *Singin' The Blues*. Made with the co-operation of the BB King Museum, the documentary features a wealth of archive footage as well as contributions from such King acolytes as Bono and Eric Clapton. King went on his "farewell" tour in 2006 — but has been playing ever since. As this film atmospherically suggests, the thrill isn't going anywhere just yet.

VICTORIA SEGAL