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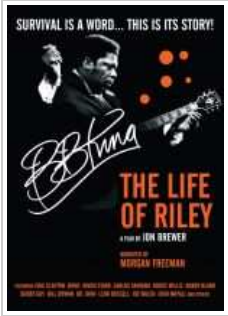
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Published: 2014/07/14

by Larson Sutton

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B.B. King The Life of Riley

The A-list notables that populate *B.B. King The Life of Riley* have one thing in common; a deep respect and appreciation for the music and the man that is B.B. King. From Ringo Starr, Eric Clapton, and Bono to Bill Cosby, Morgan Freeman, (who narrates the two-hour DVD), and President Obama, there is no shortage of those lined up to sing the praises of the King of the Blues. It's an endless parade of star power that marks also a sharp contrast between King's impoverished Southern upbringing in the 1920s, one riddled with racial discrimination and oppression when a future of success as an international star seemed impossible, and his modern-day universal appeal.

King's life as a child toiling in cotton fields was of sheer survival, yet his dedication to his guitar, to expressing his struggle through song lifted him out of desolation as well as, in effect, providing him with the pain and experience he would draw upon in delivering his majestic brand of blues. His tone, his sorrow wasn't affectation or invention. King lived it. Directed by Jon Brewer, the film is detailed and rich with illuminating stories and affectionate testimonials, and King, himself, is a candid and humble subject whose openness elevates what could have easily devolved into a mutual admiration society. Extras include a trove of performance footage, particularly from a 2011 Royal Albert Hall appearance featuring guests such as Ronnie Wood, Derek Trucks, and Susan Tedeschi, plus a slew of bonus interviews.

A tribute to an incredible life and talent, to be sure, the film pays its debt without omitting what makes B.B. King so treasured- the honesty in sharing the hurt of the journey he's made, much of it a reminder of a disgraceful, embarrassing time in the nation's history. In all, *B.B. King The Life of Riley* is definitive, encompassing, and as valuable as a portrait of American life in the 20th century as it is a portrayal of a renowned musician. This is the film B.B. King deserves.

Comments

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Billie Dennis

July 30, 2014, 08:38:05

Can't to see it it wasn't close to us.Wish it would come to Rogers or Fayetteville. Ar.Love Ya B.B.



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Smith's tix

Shirly Piitman

July 30, 2014, 10:19:48

Love this man and the Billues. I had the opportunity to meet BB many years ago when he played in North Vancouver BC. Gave him a piece of art work and talked for a hour was a great experience. Looking forward to see the documentary.

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