

B.B. King: The Life of Riley: More music, less talk would be better

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- Directed by John Brewer
- Country USA
- Language English

An inspiring showman and hugely influential electric guitarist, 87-year-old bluesman Riley “B.B.” King gets a deeply reverent treatment in this British documentary, narrated by his fellow Mississippian, Morgan Freeman.

The film’s first half following King’s early hardships and rise to fame including visits with his hometown relatives and friends, and archival clips of television appearances over the years.

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The importance of the British blues revival is highlighted in promoting King’s career in the sixties, with such musicians as Eric Clapton, Mick Taylor, John Mayall and Peter Green praising King’s emotional power and economy.

Unfortunately, the film’s last half bogs down in an interminable list of talking heads (Bonnie Raitt, Keith Richards, Bono, Slash, Carlos Santana, Ring Starr, Bruce Willis, John Mayer and on and on) singing the elder bluesman’s praises without saying much that’s new.

King himself, seen in clips from across the decades, is unfailingly articulate, gentlemanly and modest but this is a movie where more music, less talk would definitely have been an improvement.

At the Kingsway Theatre, 3030 Bloor St. West

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