

O's Place Jazz Newsletter

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**Django Reinhardt** - *King of Jazz Guitar* 4/3

O's Notes: King of jazz Guitar is a documentary focused on the entire life of the legendary Django Reinhardt. They start with his birth as a gypsy in Belgium the performing on banjo and then guitar. He had a natural musical ability but could not read a musical score. He was severely burned in a fire midway through his career losing control of two fingers on his left hand. This forced him to develop a new way to play and his signature sound was born. He was exposed to American jazz and fell in love with it. He collaborated with Stephane Grappelli (v) in the Hot Club of France in the mid to late 1930s. They would perform together creating an unmistakable Dixie music based in France but with popularity around the world. He split with Grappelli at the dawn of WWII. Django picked up the electric guitar in the 1940s and reunited with Grappelli in London and expanded their sound to heightened levels. Reinhardt was also a great composer. "Nuages" is perhaps his most famous piece. He played with Ellington's Orchestra in New York in 1946 improvising on top of Duke's swinging big band. He painted late in his career and embraced bebop in the early 1950s before dying at 43 in 1953. His influence is jazz is large and his story remarkable.

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D. Oscar Groomes