

Abstract for a small fee in street



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Abstract

Riley B. King was born in Mississippi Delta to parents whose only profession was sharecropping. While at a tender age of five years, his parents were divorced and he ended up living with his mother in downtown Mississippi. By the time he was celebrating his seventh birthday, the young boy was performing chores that were befitting an adult. When he turned nine years, he had to live on his own after his mother and grandmother passed away.

With his mother who was his sole source of inspiration gone, King turned to the church for solace. While attending church, King got inspiration from the music presented during worship. This inspiration gave him the desire to become a gospel musician when he grew up. His preacher taught him how to play the guitar and through his employer, he acquired his first guitar at the age of 12. Life presented many challenges for him and he had to sing for a small fee in street corners for survival. This humble beginning later on became a stepping-stone for a great musical career spanning many years. This research paper talks about the musical background and musical career of B. B.

King. The paper also examines his achievements and awards.

Introduction

Riley B. King was born in Mississippi Delta to parents whose only profession was sharecropping. While at a tender age of five years, his parents were divorced and he ended up living with his mother in downtown Mississippi. By the time he was celebrating his seventh birthday, the young boy was performing chores that were befitting an adult. When he turned nine years,

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(Academy of Achievement) Historians agree that B. B. King has made much contribution in making blues gain acceptance and reverence across nations. King has combined his tenacity, character, and style to bridge the great differences created by political opinions, economics, race and cultural differences. All throughout the globe, King is hailed as an idol and representative of American customs. Historians agree that King is a musician of his own class. The rising disintegration of music, coupled with King's gift, character and ability to endure for long all indicate that it will be hard to get another blues icon that is immediately identifiable in popular culture. King's real journey toward stardom can be traced back to 1946 when he was only 20 years old.

Armed with only \$2. 50, he set out on a journey from his hometown for Memphis in search of a better life. This turned out to be a journey that would transform his life and music career.

By the time King began performing blues it was confined to its origins, jukebox joints. King helped change this trend and took blues to the deluxe concert halls across the globe. This is seen as the first and the most important of King's achievements. (Cooksey) King is believed to be farsighted when it came to blues. He is credited for having been the first to experiment the connection between widespread tours and music sales. While King was working hard to make money through music sales, he was also inventing ways to make blues more acceptable to the world. He did this by fusing many genres in his music.

His style of music became a great inspiration to various musicians in the blues industry. Even in old age, this trend has not stopped and he is still bringing new creations in the music. He is credited with fusing elements of waltz, funk, pop, and soul to blues. Another achievement and one that is often overlooked in King's life is his ability to deal with adversity. Although he has chosen to travel a forlorn journey for both himself and his career, he has lost many fellow musicians, acquaintances and even lovers. In his life, King has never been known to have much luck with wives and even children. Despite these personal and tragic misfortunes, he has not lost hope in life.

King has been termed as one of the people with the greatest desires to learn and accomplish the goals they have set out for themselves. Even in old age, King has sworn not to change his lifestyle or to scale down his schedule of performances. This is despite the fact that the aging musician is struggling with diabetes. This can only be termed as a great achievement and motivation not only for other musicians but for the public as well.

(King & Ritz 12) Despite taking blues to a higher level and his unmatched ability to deal with personal issues, King has other numerous accomplishments and awards. Towards the 1970's, almost all the new generation of musicians claimed that they were inspired to enter in to music by B. B. King. His 1965 albums Live at the Regal and the 1966 Don't Answer the Door Part 1 remained on top of the Rhythm and Charts for the longest period than any other music in history. In 1969, he opened a record 18 concerts for a single group, the Rolling Stones. In the 70's and throughout the 80's, King was making an average of 300 appearances per year.

This translated to almost one appearance per day, a record for any living musician. These dates were scattered all around the globe. In 1984, he was included into the Blues Foundation Hall of Fame (BFHF), which is the highest honor for Rhythm and Blues musicians. Three years later, he was incorporated in to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame (RRHF), which is also a highest honor. (Universal Music Group) In 1987 the same year that he was inducted into the RRHF, he also earned his music achievements also earned him a Grammy Award for Lifetime Achievement. This Grammy Award was a great boost for his career. In recognition of his achievements, great music schools like the University of Mississippi, Yale, and Berklee College of Music have all awarded him honorary doctorates for his immense contribution to the music industry.

In total, the King of Blues has received close to 18 Grammy Awards and the coveted Presidential Medal of the Arts. On top of this, he has also been awarded the Kennedy Center Honors. He has also opened clubs bearing his B.

B. King Trademark in every major American city. He has also published an autobiography, *Blues All Around Me*, which remains a bestseller around the world. Due to old age, he has scaled down his performances from an estimated 300 to 250. This is still a high number for a musician who is well into his eighties. (Sharp)

Conclusion

B. B.

King's influence into the world of blues is unquestionable. The musician boasts of 75 albums to his feather. However, lovers of blues music have questioned his character in the recent past. Some critics claim that King does everything including compromising his art just to arouse public interest. On top of this, some blues musicians claim that King has left his traditional role of mentoring them since attaining the celebrity status. This is not strange considering that King has his whole life lived a secluded life. Whether the skeptics and critics claims hold any truth is still a debatable subject.

However, one undisputable thing is that King's every move opens further doors for the advancement of blues music. This is in keeping with his traditional role of opening more doors for blues musicians to sell their music. This therefore makes it hard to claim that B. B. King has abandoned his role and fellow musicians.

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