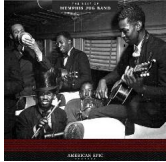


Memphis Jug Band - American Epic: The Best Of Memphis Jug Band (2017)

Written by bluesever

Monday, 19 March 2018 15:08 -

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1 *Stealin', Stealin'* (2:58) 2 *On The Road Again* (2:51) 3 *Cocaine Habit Blues* (2:51) 4 *Lindberg Hop* (2:50) 5 *Newport News Blues* (3:09) 6 *K.C. Moan* (2:36) 7 *He's In The Jailhouse Now* (3:14) 8 *Sometimes I Think I Love You* (3:08) 9 *Fourth Street Mess Around* (3:19) 10 *You May Leave, But This Will Bring You Back* (3:05) 11 *What's The Matter?* (2:55) 12 *Aunt Caroline Dyer Blues* (3:07) 13 *Memphis Shakedown* (3:04) 14 *Whitewash Station Blues* (2:46) 15 *Insane Crazy Blues* (3:10) Banjo – Vol Stevens Drums – Robert Burse Guitar, Vocals – Charlie Burse, Vol Stevens, Tewee Blackman Guitar – Will Weldon Harmonica – Will Shade Jug, Vocals – Jab Jones Jug – Hambone Lewis Kazoo, Vocals – Ben Ramey Mandolin, Vocals – Charlie Burse Percussion – Robert Burse Violin – Charlie Pierce Vocals – Charlie Nickerson Vocals – Hattie Hart

A rollicking collection of street musicians led by the irrepressible Will Shade, the Memphis Jug Band dominated the town's blues culture in the 1930s with their jazzed-up version of country standards. Some of Memphis' most creative blues players shuffled in and out of Shade's group, among them harmonica maestro Walter Horton, mandolinist Charley Burse, slide guitar ace Will Weldon, jug popper and comic Charlie Polk and vocalist Hattie Hart. And always close at hand was kazoo man Ben Ramey, whose nattering instrument at times leavened--and other times marred--the group's fluid picking and singing. The group's almost-instant success among blues buyers in 1927 paved the way for similar jug groups led by Gus Cannon and Jack Kelly. The rolling "Memphis Jug-Blues" and "Sometimes I Think I Love You" set the pattern for the band's easy-paced, humorous efforts. Sweet-natured, romantic rags alternated with tough-minded tracks that played off the violent, comic nature of Memphis life. The most sardonic titles included "I Whipped My Woman with a Single-Tree" and "I Can Beat You Plenty"; their most enduring recording is "Stealing, Stealing," decades later a favorite in the jug band revival that swept through the folk community in the 1960s. The prolific band recorded nearly 70 songs for Victor and OKeh between 1927 and 1934, dropped only after their quaint country stylings fell out of favor with record buyers who preferred more urbane musicians such as Leroy Carr and Walter Davis. Undaunted, Will Shade kept putting together new versions of the Jug Band as late as the 1960s. Only his death in 1966 ended the long-running group. ---jugstore.com

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There is an interesting story behind the jug band. Jug bands had existed since at least 1905 in Louisville, Kentucky. Sides from an assortment of jug bands are included on CD B of Richer Tradition Country Blues & String Band. Will Shade, a native of Memphis (1898 - ?) teamed up with "Lionhouse, a man who played an empty whiskey bottle, and found they could draw an audience (and money) street busking. He got Lionhouse an empty gallon jug, and gathered together some other musicians, and the Memphis Jug Band was born. They typically played with a two guitar lead (but not always), and besides the jug usually had a harmonica and kazoo. Occasionally there was a banjo, or mandolin, and rarely a fiddle or drums. The composition of the band varied over time. They recorded sides on the old 78 rpm vinyl records, and the 23 sides remastered by Yazoo for this CD were recorded from 1927 to 1934 (they are not in chronological order on the CD). ---Fred Camfield, amazon.com

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