Written by bluesever Tuesday, 04 September 2018 13:47 -

Blind Lemon Jefferson I – The Rough Guide To Blues Legends: Blind Lemon Jefferson (2013)



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Dubbed the 'Father of the Texas Blues', Blind Lemon Jefferson had a mesmerizing guitar-picking style and an impressive vocal range. A true blues legend, his approach influenced the likes of Charley Patton, Robert Johnson and Son House. This Rough Guide presents a lovingly remastered selection of his varied repertoire, from deepest blues to raucous ragtime and God-fearing gospel.

Blind Lemon Jefferson sang his own epitaph throughout this life, a grizzly anecdote that forms the refrain of his most well-known and most-covered song, 'See That My Grave Is Kept Clean'. Characteristic of his style, the lyrics to the song are laced through with sour notes of irony that are underpinned by his brooding bluesy guitar.

Blind Lemon Jefferson's life is a riddle of ironies and inconsistencies to the modern-day investigator. Even the extent of his sight impairment is contestable. What can be known for certain is the far-reaching arm of his lasting influence. His style formed the basis of the blues paradigm echoed by the likes of Charley Patton, Furry Lewis and Barbecue Bob. His classic recordings also influenced such legends as Robert Johnson, Son House, B.B. King and Lightnin' Hopkins. Stretching even further, folk and rock musicians such as Bob Dylan and Carl Perkins later reflected his influence, too.

Jefferson's songs have varying inspirations: 'Jack O'Diamonds' is a Texan folk ballad sung by railroad men gambling in hot and dusty bars, while 'Corinna Blues' was inspired by the popular American song 'See See Rider Blues', first recorded by Gertrude 'Ma' Rainey in 1924. His songs also give differing impressions of the man: 'Black Snake Moan' paints him out as a womanizer, while 'All I Want Is Pure Religion' regarded in connection with stories of his refusal to play on a Sunday for any amount, suggests an altogether different image. Marvel at the mystery and drown in Jefferson's heady bluesy brew on this lovingly remastered Rough Guide.

The bumper bonus album explores the artists that Jefferson inspired. His sound resonated with the likes of Skip James, Leadbelly, Blind Willie McTell and Memphis Minnie, all heard here. ---worldmusic.net

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