

### Michael Packer - I Am The Blues: My Story (2013)



1) Mr.Packer – Narration & Vocal (5:26) 2) My Family – Narration (1:43) 3) Uncle Al – Vocal (2:50) 4) Early Years (Papa Nebo) – Narration (1:43) 5) Bad Time Jackson – Vocal (3:42) 6) San Francisco Blues – Narration (:33) 7) I Can't Keep From Crying – (3:27) 8) Free Beer – Narration (:52) 9) I'm In Love (3:19) 10) Bob Dylan and Me – Narration (1:56) 11) River of Wine – (2:38) 12) The Love of My Life – Narration (3:59) 13) Love Of A Woman – (3:46) 14) Christmas On The Bowery – Narration (2:42) 15) Christmas Time on the Bowery – (5:06) 16) Doing Time at Rikers Island – Narration (8:18) 17) This Train –( 3:49) 18) See That My Grave is Kept Clean – Vocal (4:39) Michael Packer - vocals, guitar, keyboards Ed Jackson - percussion & vocals King Bear - bass Bad Eddie Suozzo - drums

He just seemed to appear out of the night crowd on 42nd Street in front of B.B.Kings. A man of slight stature... black trench coat ... guitar on his back ....hat that looked too big for his head... his deeply etched face and half smile... I knew within the first seconds after meeting Bluesman Michael Packer that I'd come across the real deal. We were there for a CD release party; Michael had been instrumental in the recording both as a musician and mentor. Throughout the evening, when he wasn't on stage with the band, Packer shared bits and pieces of his incredible life. His story about stealing an occupied taxi cab in Lake Placid, NY and leading the police on a chase around Mirror Lake had me almost rolling on the floor in laughter. It was obvious from our conversation that he was a man who lived all the pitfalls and tragedies of a rock and roll musician. His blunt, brutal honesty, delivered in a voice cultured on the streets of New York City , was a entertaining as it was deeply insightful. When we parted at the end of the night , Mr. Packer handed me a copy of his then latest CD. Fascinated by both the music and the man, I made it my business over the next few years to become acquainted with his lifelong body of work. The story is one of life well worth listening to.

Michael Packer- "I AM THE BLUES"- My Story released in 2013 by Iris Music Group is the soundtrack to Michael's fifty plus years as a performing musician. It's a "no holds barred" tale, narrated by Packer himself, with remembrances interwoven with music that spans his whole up

and down career. A child prodigy, performing at the Bitter End in Greenwich Village at the age of fifteen, Mr. Packer's talent and lust for life took him out to the San Francisco hippie scene. His bands included Papa Nebo, and later folk rock band Free Beer, and he recorded for Atlantic Records, Buddha Records, and for RCA. His friends included George Thorogood, Tom Waits, and Paul Butterfield; he got into a bar room scuffle with Bob Dylan. But the excesses of alcohol and drugs derailed his career. Packer takes us down the spiral staircase of heroin addiction, homelessness, and finally jail. A wild life brought him lower than his songwriting and musical genius could lift him. The double loss of the love of his life will bring you to tears. He relates the tale of his uncle, Al Packer, a murderer, cannibal, and thief in the old west. Listening to the accompanying songs, Packer's great talent as a writer and guitar player are self-evident. Had it not been for all the wrong turns and vices, no doubt Michael Packer would be a household name today. This is the blues.

But this is also a great story of redemption and comeback. Drug free and devoted to plying his craft, today Mr. Packer walks the straight and narrow, at least his version of it, and continues to write and perform his songs around the country. He is a tireless ambassador for the Blues Hall of Fame, of which he rightfully is a member. His style incorporates his varied influences of Blues, Folk, and Jazz. His voice now may be raspier and slightly more worn than it was back when Free Beer sounded a lot like Poco, but it is the perfect vehicle to deliver his current brand of the Blues. I won't spoil the story by looking at the songs under a microscope. Particularly moving is "Christmas On The Bowery". Packer bids us goodbye with "This Train is Bound For Glory" and "See That My Grave is Kept Clean". You buy the CD and learn the story for yourself. You'll be asking yourself "why have I never heard of this guy before." If you are already familiar with Michael Packer's music, you'll enjoy the heartfelt stories behind the songs, delivered in a way that only Packer can do. ---Keith Gorgas, nodepression.com

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