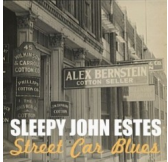


Sleepy John Estes - Street Car Blues (1999)

Written by bluesever

Sunday, 28 March 2010 20:56 - Last Updated Wednesday, 26 June 2013 12:00

Sleepy John Estes - Street Car Blues (1999)



1. *Drop Down Mama*
2. *Stop That Thing*
3. *Drop Down*
4. *Someday Baby Blues*
5. *Brownsville Blues*
6. *Milk Cow Blues*
7. *Easin' Back To Tennessee*
8. *Street Car Blues*
9. *Little Laura Blues*
10. *Poor Man's Friend*
11. *Railroad Police Blues*
12. *Working Man Blues*
13. *Jailhouse Blues*
14. *Lawyer Clark Blues*
15. *Mary Come Home*
16. *Airplane Blues*
17. *Fire Department Blues*
18. *Everybody Oughta Make A Change*
19. *Jack And Jill Blues*
20. *Liquor Store Blues*
21. *Floating Bridge*
22. *Mailman Blues*
23. *Mr. Tom's Blues*
24. *Need More Blues*
25. *Hobo Jungle Blues*
26. *Time Is Drawing Near*

Big Bill Broonzy called John Estes' style of singing "crying" the blues because of its overt

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emotional quality. Actually, his vocal style harks back to his tenure as a work-gang leader for a railroad maintenance crew, where his vocal improvisations and keen, cutting voice set the pace for work activities. Nicknamed "Sleepy" John Estes, supposedly because of his ability to sleep standing up, he teamed with mandolinist Yank Rachell and harmonica player Hammie Nixon to play the house party circuit in and around Brownsville in the early '20s. The same team reunited 40 years later to record for Delmark and play the festival circuit. Never an outstanding guitarist, Estes relied on his expressive voice to carry his music, and the recordings he made from 1929 on have enormous appeal and remain remarkably accessible today. Despite the fact that he performed for mixed black and white audiences in string band, jug band, and medicine show formats, his music retains a distinct ethnicity and has a particularly plaintive sound.

Astonishingly, he recorded during six decades for Victor, Decca, Bluebird, Ora Nelle, Sun, Delmark, and others. Over the course of his career, his music remained simple yet powerful, and despite his sojourns to Memphis and Chicago he retained a traditional down-home sound. Some of his songs are deeply personal statements about his community and life, such as "Lawyer Clark" and "Floating Bridge." Other compositions have universal appeal ("Drop Down Mama" and "Someday Baby") and went on to become mainstays in the repertoires of countless musicians. One of the true masters of his idiom, he lived in poverty, yet was somehow capable of turning his experiences and the conditions of his life into compelling art. ---Barry Lee Pearson, ampya.com

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