

Memphis Jug Band - State of Tennessee Blues (1995)

Written by bluesever

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1. *Sun Brimmers Blues* [3:44]
2. *Stingy Woman Blues* [3:28]
3. *I Packed My Suitcase, Started to the Train* [3:31]
4. *State of Tennessee Blues* [3:50]
5. *Bob Lee Junior Blues* [3:27]
6. *Kansas City Blues* [3:09]
7. *I'll See You in the Spring, When the Birds Begin to Sing* [3:23]
8. *Snitchin' Gambler Blues* [3:39]
9. *Evergreen Money Blues* [3:40]
10. *Coal Oil Blues* [3:49]
11. *Papa Long Blues* [3:26]
12. *Peaches in the Springtime* [3:22]
13. *Sugar Pudding* [2:59]
14. *A Black Woman Is Like a Black Snake* [3:06]
15. *Feed Your Friend With a Long Handled Spoon* [3:09]
16. *I Can Beat You Plenty (That Hand You Tried to Deal Me)* [3:09]
17. *Tired of You Driving Me* [2:56]
18. *I Whipped My Woman With a Single-Tree* [3:17]

Personnel: Vol Stevens (vocals, guitar, banjo, mandolin); Will Shade (vocals, guitar, harmonica); Charlie Burse, Casey Bill Weldon (vocals, guitar); Ben Ramey (vocals, kazoo); Charlie Polk, Hattie Hart, Jab Jones (vocals); Charlie "Bozo" Nickerson (piano).

State of Tennessee Blues offers 18 tracks from the miraculous Memphis Jug Band, all recorded between 1927 and 1929, during the first three years of the group's collective career. Though the band recorded a number of exuberant, jazz-oriented breakdowns, particularly during its post-Depression resurgence, State of Tennessee Blues tends typically toward its more plaintive, slow-dragging moments -- dirge-like, whiskey-drenched, and gravelly, invested with the steady rocking rhythms of work and of sex, of the good-times dancing construed as a defense from the blues. The group's versatility remains evident throughout the collection, enhanced by the fine

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contributions of an ever-shifting membership of Memphis musicians. Perpetually at the helm is the arguably ingenious, multi-faceted Will Shade, joined at turns by Vol Stephens on mandolin, Charlie Burse or Will Weldon on guitar, and Jab Jones on jug; singer Jennie Clayton joins the number on the title track and on a couple of others, providing near-tortured vocals on "Bob Lee Junior Blues," which evolves in the end into a pounding instrumental take on "Careless Love." Though this collection lacks such "greatest hits" as "Stealin' Stealin'" or "K.C. Moan," Memphis Jug Band seems incapable of turning out a single dud, and the more obscure titles are richly entertaining and endlessly soulful. State of Tennessee Blues offers considerably good sound quality and no overlap with Yazoo's definitive Memphis Jug Band collection. Though the Yazoo album may provide the beginner's best introduction to the band, this compilation, released by the Memphis Archives label, is also a first-rate testament to one of the finest down-home outfits of its or any other era. ---Burgin Mathews, Rovi

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