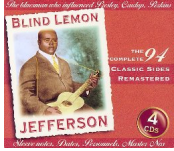


Blind Lemon Jefferson - Classic Sides - JSP Box Set (2003)

Written by bluesever

Friday, 01 October 2010 12:10 - Last Updated Saturday, 05 September 2020 14:54

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Disc: 1 1. *I Want To Be Like Jesus In My Heart* 2. *All I Want Is That Pure Religion* 3. *Got The Blues* 4. *Long Lonesome Blues* 5. *Booster Blues* 6. *Dry Southern Blues* 7. *Black Horse Blues* 8. *Corinna Blues* 9. *Got The Blues* 10. *Long Lonesome Blues* 11. *Jack O' Diamond Blues*
[play](#) 12. *Jack O' Diamond Blues* 13. *Chock House Blues* 14. *Beggin Back* 15. *Old Rounders Blues* 16. *Stocking Feet Blues* 17. *That Black Snake Moan* 18. *Wartime Blues* 19. *Broke And Hungry* 20. *Shuckin' Sugar Blues* 21. *Booger Rooger Blues* [pl](#)
[ay](#)

22. *Rabbit Foot Blues* 23. *Bad Luck Blues*

Disc: 2

1. *Black Snake Moan* 2. *Match Box Blues* 3. *Easy Rider Blues* 4. *Match Box Blues* 5. *Match Box Blues* 6. *Rising High Water Blues*

[play](#)

7. *Weary Dogs Blues* 8. *Right Of Way Blues* 9. *Teddy Bear Blues* 10. *Teddy Bear Blues* 11. *Black Snake Dream Blues*

[play](#)

12. *Hot Dogs* 13. *He Arose From The Dead* 14. *Struck Sorrow Blues* 15. *Rambler Blues* 16. *Chinch Bug Blues* 17. *Deceitful Brownskin Blues* 18. *Sunshine Special* 19. *Gone Dead On You Blues* 20. *Where Shall I Be?* 21. *See That My Grave's Kept Clean* 22. *One Dime Blues* 23. *Lonesome House Blues*

Disc: 3

1. *Blind Lemon's Penitentiary Blues* 2. *'Lectric Chair Blues* 3. *See That My Grave Is Kept Clean* 4. *Lemon's Worried Blues* 5. *Mean Jumper Blues* 6. *Balky Mule Blues* 7. *Change My Luck Blues* 8. *Prison Cell Blues* 9. *Lemon's Cannon Ball Moan* 10. *Long Lastin' Love* 11. *Piney Wood's Money Mama* 12. *Low Down Mojo Blues* 13. *Competition Bed Blues* 14. *Lock Step Blues* 15. *Hangman's Blues* 16. *Sad News Blues* 17. *How Long How Long* 18. *Lockstep Blues* 19. *Hangman's Blues* 20. *Christmas Eve Blues* 21. *Happy New Year Blues* 22. *Maltese Cat Blues* 23. *D B Blues*

Disc: 4

1. *Eagle Eyed Mama* 2. *Dynamite Blues* 3. *Disgusted Blues* 4. *Competition Bed Blues*

[play](#)

5. *Sad News Blues*

[play](#)

6. *Oil Well Blues* 7. *Tin Cup Blues* 8. *Big Night Blues* 9. *Bed Spring Blues* 10. *Saturday Night Spendor Blues* 11. *That Black Snake Moan No. 2* 12. *Peach Orchard Mama* 13. *Big*

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Night Blues 14. Bed Spring Blues 15. Yo Yo Blues

[play](#)

*16. Mosquito Man 17. Southern Woman Blues 18. Bakershop Blues 19. Pneumonia Blues
20. Long Distance Moan 21. That Crawlin' Baby Blues*

[play](#)

*22. Fence Breakin' Yellin' Blues 23. Cat Man Blues 24. The Cheaters Spell 25. Bootin' Me
'Bout*

This is an awe-inspiring four-CD set in a world that has no shortage of brilliant artists represented in their entirety. Listeners wishing to appreciate the spellbinding, primal sound of Blind Lemon Jefferson can start here, except they may never want to finish; 70-some years since his death, and nearly 80 years since his first record, Jefferson's voice and guitar effortlessly cut through the decades. Starting with his earliest sides (from December 1925 -- the same year that electrical recording debuted), "I Want to Be Like Jesus in My Heart" and "All I Want Is That Pure Religion," a pair of gospel songs originally credited to "Deacon L.J. Bates," the combination of the powerful, achingly expressive singing and playing makes them a dazzling listening experience -- and this isn't even the kind of music for which Jefferson was known.

Even with the surface noise typical of pre-World War II 78s, the delicacy and intricacy of the playing comes through. On the next tracks, however, when he shifts gears to the blues, that's when his fingers and his voice take flight from one song to another. On "Got the Blues," "Long Lonesome Blues," "Booster Blues," "Dry Southern Blues," "Black Horse Blues," and others, he lofts himself like an eagle soaring across a landscape (and that was exactly how this came off in a recording world populated by distinctly lesser men). By the time of his fourth group of sessions, Jefferson's records had acquired all of the attributes that made him a legend; even on a track like "Old Rounders Blues," which is very nearly more surface noise than music, the sudden yet graceful trills and arpeggios in Jefferson's playing come through, and when coupled with the voice -- which is seldom muted by the surface imperfections in the sources -- the results are spellbinding; later on, he does even more with less overt virtuosity and surprises listeners even more. Toward the end of his life (in 1929), he was pioneering what could be called the Count Basie approach to virtuosity, reducing his flourishes to figures of just two or three notes.

And his voice comes through well enough to make it live up to its title, even on tracks such as the first version of "That Black Snake Moan," despite some considerable surface noise in the source. Because of its inclusiveness, there's no chance that this set can match the sonic

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workmanship on, say, Yazoo Records' The Best of Blind Lemon Jefferson, which is generally able to achieve a uniformly high standard. Still, modern remastering has allowed the producers to salvage some useful sound even on some of the roughest-condition masters, such as the 1928 vintage "'lectric Chair Blues" from 1928, which is as much hiss and surface noise as it is music but still reveals an amazing amount of the performance. Each of the four discs covers a year's worth of recorded output in Jefferson's life, from 1925/1926 to 1929; there's no rhyme or reason to the quality of each cut, the producers limited by the condition of the few surviving 78s so that the dazzlingly clear "That Crawling Baby Blues" is followed by "Fence Breakin' Yellin' Blues," the latter filled with surface noise but easily salvaged.>

These are all several cuts above the quality of work Document Records released in the late '80s and early '90s, and comes at a much lower price, as well. It's not for the casual fan -- though it could be absorbed, say, 12 songs or so at a time each week (which would make this a month's listening). The annotation, such as it is -- little hard information could be found on Jefferson in the 1950s and 1960s, when people who worked with him were still in abundance to be interviewed -- is extensive. ---*Bruce Eder, allmusic.com*

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