

Jesse Fuller - Move On Down The Line (1965/2009)

Wpisany przez bluesever

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1 *Move On Down The Line* 2 *Stealing* 3 *Ninety-Nine Years And One Dark Day* 4 *Animal Fair* 5 *Sleeping In The Midnight Cold* 6 *Stackolee* 7 *John Henry* 8 *Railroad Worksong* 9 *Lining Up The Track* 10 *Hanging 'Round A Skin Game* 11 *Railroad Blues* 12 *San Francisco Bay Blues* Jesse Fuller - Twelve-String Guitar, Kazoo, Cymbal, Harmonica, Vocals

Jesse Fuller called himself a folk songster. That's at least a start toward describing a wide-ranging, mostly sunny disposition blues that took in elements of jug band, ragtime, vaudeville, minstrel and Tin Pan Alley. Indeed, Fuller was a true American maverick, augmenting strong, plain-spoken vocals and driving acoustic 12-string guitar work with a one-man band approach that incorporated kazoo, harmonica, sock cymbal, and fofdella the latter a device of Fuller's own design and construction that allowed him to play a sawed-off upright bass with his feet.

Fuller is most well-known for writing the ragtimey 'San Francisco Bay Blues' (an ocean liner came and took her away.), a song that was ubiquitously covered during the 1960s folk boom and achieved status as a folk standard within Fuller's own lifetime. Of course, it's on this CD reissue featuring Fuller's earliest sessions in 1954, along with tracks he cut for the legendary British label Topic in 1965.

But as wonderful as the hit tune might be, it is far from the best thing to be found on the disc: Fuller's voice and guitar are supple and unerring on material that covers and conjures the likes of the Memphis Jug Band and Blind Willie McTell, reinventing them in Fuller's own idiom; a children's zoo song (*Animal Fair*) lilts and syncopates with Caribbean and New Orleans cadences. At its best, Fuller's one-man band thing is transfixing and hypnotic. On *Railroad Worksong* for instance, a powerhouse medley of traditional train songs chugs along on the

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almost-unbelievable rhythmic energy generated by the interlocking elements of Fuller's rig, one man rocking like a killer juke joint band firing on all cylinders.

Writer and photographer Val Wilmer's liner notes are valuable here, combining personal remembrances of Fuller with an engaging biography of the artist. Fuller's life story is compelling, from his childhood of abuse and privation in the south, to his railroad-riding wanderings into the midwest and west; from his time operating a hot dog stand outside a Santa Monica movie studio lot to his eventual arrival at status as a San Francisco folk and blues icon. One hopes that this release will bring about a new appreciation for Jesse "The Lone Cat" Fuller's still-refreshing originality and highly-developed musical command. ---Kevin Macneil Brown, dustedmagazine.com

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