

Mp3 Willie King - Jukin' At Betties



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Dancing blues recorded live at one of Mississippi's best juke joints by one of today's greatest blues musicians 8 MP3 Songs BLUES: Electric Blues, BLUES: Guitar Blues Details: Although Willie King mostly plays in and around his home in Pickens County, Alabama, he is gaining an international reputation for his vibrant boogie juke joint blues and the power of his message. He has twice been awarded the prestigious Living Blues Magazine "Blues Artist of the Year" in 2001 and 2003. Willie King was born in Prairie Point, MS, in 1943. After his father left, Willie and his siblings were raised by his grandparents, local sharecroppers. Music was important to the King family - Willie's grandfather was a gospel singer, and his absent father was an amateur blues musician. Young Willie made a diddley bo by nailing a baling wire to a tree in the yard. By age 9 he had a one-string guitar that he could bring indoors to play at night. In 1967, Willie King moved to Chicago in an attempt to make more money than he could down South. After a year spent on the West and South Side, he returned to Old Memphis, Alabama, just across the border from the Mississippi Prairie. A salesman - of shoes, cologne, and other frivolities - Willie traveled the rural roads hawking goods and talking politics. Choosing not to work under the "old system" of unequal treatment, King joined the civil rights movement near the end of the decade, eventually associating with the left-wing Highlander Center. By the late 1970s, King was writing what he calls "struggling songs" - political blues tunes that he used to educate his audiences. As King explains "through the music I could reach more people, get 'em to listen." Yet as his rollicking blues style attests, King still knows how to have a good time. He played the juke circuit and bootlegged whiskey on the side, resorting to popular blues covers when the "struggling songs" upset a close-minded audience. In 1987, a chance meeting at a festival in Eutaw, Alabama, blew Rooster Blues founder Jim O'Neal away: According to O'Neal, King's "juke-joint musical style and political lyrics knocked me down." The two kept in touch for

the next 13 years, during which O'Neal relocated his label, and King concentrated on his own community, forging relationships with local youth through a blues education program, through his organization The Rural Members Association. The Rural Members Association has sponsored classes in music, woodworking, food preservation, and other African-American traditions, and has provided transportation, legal assistance, and other services for the needy over the past two decades. In recent years he's been sponsoring a festival on the creek, which is as The Freedom Creek Festival. Willie explains, "We was targetin' at tryin' to get all walks of life, different people to come down and kinda be with us in reality down there, you know. Let's get back to reality, in the woods . . . mix and mingle . . . get to know each other. Get up to have a workin' relationship, try to bring peace . . ." "Freedom Creek," Willie King's debut album on Rooster Blues Records, soon followed. Not only was the album acclaimed by critics worldwide, but received awards from Living Blues Magazine for Best Male Blues Artist (2001), Best Blues Album (2000) and Best Contemporary Blues Album (2000). King's follow up, Living In a New World, is nothing short of spectacular. Produced by Jim O'Neal and recorded at Easley studio in Memphis, the album is a hybrid of pure blues, rock, funk and soul. The album reminds the listener of Curtis Mayfield while allowing RL Burnside fans to rejoice as well. Blues scholar, political activist and DJ John Sinclair, who shares Willie's worldview of politics and its effect on everyday life, penned the liner notes.

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