

Name _____



B.B. King: The King of Blues

B.B. King, whose full name was Riley B. King, was a legendary blues guitarist, singer, and songwriter who left an indelible mark on the world of music. His soulful voice and expressive guitar playing earned him the title "The King of Blues." Born on September 16, 1925, on a cotton plantation in Itta Bena, Mississippi, B.B. King grew up in the heart of the American South. He faced the challenges of a segregated society and poverty, but he found solace in music. At the age of 12, he received his first guitar and began performing gospel songs in church.

The Road to Stardom

B.B. King's journey to stardom started in the 1940s when he moved to Memphis, Tennessee. He began performing on street corners and in local clubs, honing his craft and developing his distinctive guitar style. His guitar, famously named "Lucille," became an extension of his soulful voice.

The Lucille Incident

The story behind the name "Lucille" is a testament to B.B. King's dedication to his craft. One night, while performing at a club, a fight broke out, and a fire started. B.B. King risked his life to save his beloved guitar. He later learned that the fight had been over a woman named Lucille, and he decided to name his guitar after her as a reminder to never again risk his life for an object.

Hits and Innovations

B.B. King's career took off in the 1950s and 1960s with hits like "The Thrill Is Gone," which became his signature song. He was known for his ability to convey deep emotions through his guitar solos, using bending notes and vibrato techniques that left audiences in awe.

A Global Ambassador of Blues

B.B. King's influence extended beyond the United States. He toured internationally, introducing blues music to new audiences around the world. His heartfelt performances resonated with people from all walks of life, making him a global ambassador of the blues genre.

Honors and Legacy

Throughout his career, B.B. King received numerous awards and honors, including multiple Grammy Awards. He was inducted into the Blues Hall of Fame and the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. His music has inspired countless musicians and continues to be celebrated by blues enthusiasts worldwide.

