

Meet The Famous Musicians From Memphis

When people talk about the famous musicians from Memphis, frequently the name of B.B. King comes up. However, contrary to popular belief, B.B. King is not one of the original musicians from Memphis. In fact, he came to Memphis from Bena, Mississippi after World War II in 1946. Although B.B. King is not technically one of the musicians from Memphis, he did play there for a significant amount of time. Most importantly, he made a huge contribution to the kind of music that came out of the area by bringing his electric guitar to accompany his song writing and singing talent. Musicians from Memphis stood up and took notice, adopting some of the electrical sounds that their music had previously lacked. Before the wave of African American migrants hit big urban areas like Memphis in search of jobs, musicians from Memphis did not have a very advanced sound, technologically speaking. Sure, there were plenty of instruments like regular guitars, banjos, mandolins and violins to accompany the sad voices of these musicians, but there were also unusual items that were utilized to make a new kind of music. Musicians from Memphis would frequently use household items like washboards to add a more unique, down home sound to the blues. Other items, like spoons, could make a noise that had not been heard by many people in America, especially in the WASPier crowds. Particularly interesting is how musicians from Memphis would use jugs. Instead of using the very basic and common bass guitar, which was often times too expensive to afford, musicians from Memphis would blow into various sized jugs to make a deep and hollow sound. Among the most popular bands and musicians from Memphis to use the jugs as instruments were the Memphis Jug Band and Gus Cannons Jug Stompers. This distinct style of music placed an emphasis on the danceable rhythms that were prominent and very much evident in archaic folk and early jazz. Musicians from Memphis were highly sought after by the executives at Sun Records. Today, musicians from Memphis still greatly influence almost all kinds of great songs that we all hear on the radio. Bruce Springsteen name checked W.C. Handy and Beale Street in his song Walking in Memphis, and just about all rock & roll singers have been heavily influenced by most musicians from Memphis. Moreover, musicians from Memphis are all over nearly each and every rhythm and blues album.

About the Author

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