



The Memphis Blues Again: Six Decades of Memphis Music Photographs

Ernest C. Withers, Daniel Wolff

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Memphis, the legendary birthplace of the blues, has throbbled with the sounds of some of the greatest American popular music in the twentieth century: from ragtime and jazz, through the blues, r&b, and rock and roll, to gospel, soul, and funk. And for over fifty years Ernest Withers has documented the Memphis music scene in and around Beale Street. So many of the great musicians and performers are included: W. C. Handy, Muddy Waters, B.B. King, Elvis Presley, Sam Cooke, Otis Redding, Aretha Franklin, Ike and Tina Turner, Al Green, Isaac Hayes, and many more. And Withers photographed them in situ: in the dancehalls, recording studios, auditoriums, churches, and streets of Memphis. These photographs are a fundamental visual archive of the musical legacy of Memphis—and one powerful aspect of the photographic legacy of Ernest Withers.

The photographs are reproduced in stunning duotone plates and were selected by award-winning author Daniel Wolff who also wrote the introduction and the extended captions. See Ray Charles playing piano at the WDIA Goodwill Revue, Elvis Presley bumping and grinding at the Club Paradise in 1960, Aretha Franklin and Coretta Scott King at the SCLC Convention in 1968, and Count Basie jamming with Billy Eckstine at the Hippodrome in 1953, and many more. No serious fan of blues, rock and roll, or soul can afford to be without this handsome photographic portrait of a whole world of American music.

Text by Daniel Wolff.

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