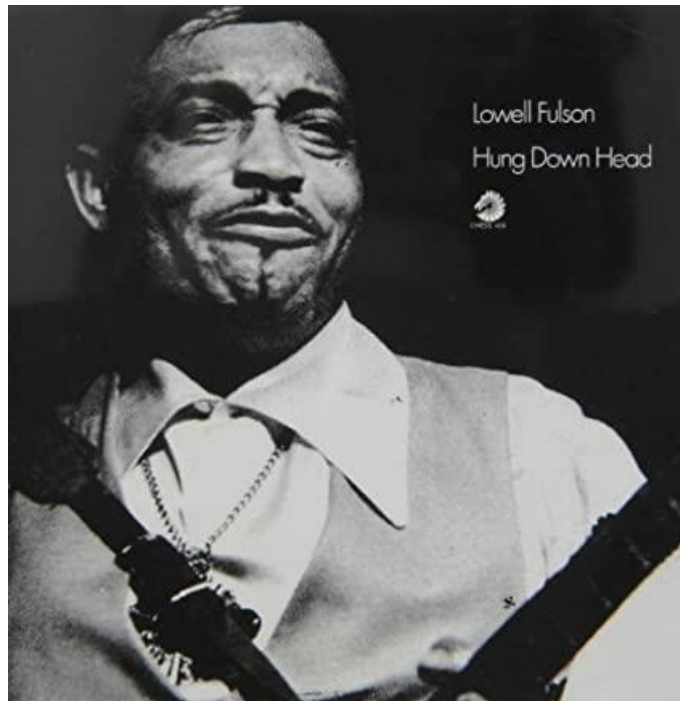


OKLAHOMA BLUES LEGEND – Lowell Fulson



Lowell Fulson (March 31, 1921 – March 7, 1999) was an American blues guitarist and songwriter, in the West Coast blues tradition. He also recorded for contractual reasons as Lowell Fulsom. After T-Bone Walker, he was the most important figure in West Coast blues in the 1940s and 1950s. Fulson was born on a Choctaw reservation in Atoka, Oklahoma, the son of Mamie and Martin Fulson. He stated that he was of Cherokee ancestry through his father, but he also claimed Choctaw ancestry. His father was killed when Lowell was a child, and a few years later he moved with his mother and brothers to live in Clarita and attended school at Coalgate. At the age of eighteen, he moved to Ada, Oklahoma, and joined Alger "Texas" Alexander for a few months in 1940, but later moved to California, where he formed a band which soon included a young Ray Charles and the tenor saxophone player Stanley Turrentine. Fulson was drafted in 1943 and served in the U.S. Navy until 1945. Fulson's recording career started in 1946 and lasted well into the 1990s. His best known songs are Three O'Clock Blues (1948), Reconsider Baby (1954), and Tramp. His most memorable and influential recordings include "3 O'Clock Blues" (now a blues standard); "Every Day I Have the Blues", written by Memphis Slim; "Lonesome Christmas"; "Reconsider Baby", recorded by Elvis Presley in 1960, by Eric Clapton in 1994 for his album From the

Cradle, and by Joe Bonamassa; and “Tramp”, co-written with Jimmy McCracklin and later covered by Otis Redding with Carla Thomas, ZZ Top (for the 2003 album Mescalero), Alex Chilton, and Tav Falco. Jackie Brenston played in Fulson’s band between 1952 and 1954. His 1965 song “Black Nights” was his first hit in a decade, and “Tramp” did even better, restoring him to R&B stardom. A show entitled “California Blues: Swingtime Tribute” opened in 1993 at the Paramount Theatre in Oakland, California, with Fulson, Johnny Otis, Charles Brown, Jay McShann, Jimmy Witherspoon, Jimmy McCracklin and Earl Brown. Fulson’s last recording was a duet of “Every Day I Have the Blues” with Jimmy Rogers. A resident of Los Angeles, Fulson died in Long Beach, California, in March 1999, at the age of 77. On June 25, 2019, The New York Times Magazine listed Lowell Fulson among hundreds of artists whose material was reportedly destroyed in the 2008 Universal fire. In the 2004 film Ray, a biopic of Ray Charles, Fulson was portrayed by the blues musician Chris Thomas King. ZZ Top included a version of “Tramp” on their 2003 album Mescalero, citing Fulson’s guitar prowess as an inspiration to recreate the song. The Beatles song “Why Don’t We Do It in the Road?” as performed by Fulson was used on the soundtrack of the 2007 crime film American Gangster; he had covered the song on his 1970 album, In a Heavy Bag. Salt-N-Pepa recorded a contemporary version of “Tramp” in 1987, on their album Hot, Cool & Vicious. A cover of Fulson’s song “Sinner’s Prayer” appeared on Eric Clapton’s album From the Cradle (1994) and on Ray Charles’s first album, Ray Charles (1957), and (with B.B. King and Billy Preston) on his final album, Genius Loves Company (2004). Harry Belafonte also recorded “Sinner’s Prayer” on his Belafonte Sings the Blues album. Awards: 1993: Inducted into the Blues Foundation Hall of Fame 1993: Blues Foundation Hall of Fame, Classics of Blues Recording – Singles or Album Tracks, for “Reconsider Baby” 1993: Blues Foundation Blues Music Award, Traditional Album of the Year, for Hold On 1993: Rhythm and Blues Foundation, Pioneer Award 1995: Grammy Awards, Best Traditional Blues Album of the Year, for Them Update Blues 1995: Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, “Reconsider Baby” included in the “500 Songs That Shaped Rock and Roll” 2010: Blues Foundation Hall of Fame, Classics of Blues Recording – Albums, for Hung Down Head. A true Oklahoma Blues Treasure! –

Larry Watt

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