The king of blues

Expect a thrill as B.B. plays the Peace

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Mississippi-born Riley B. King, known to most as B.B. King, has come to define the blues for audiences around the world for more than half a century.

The entertainer and musician has released 50 albums and averaged 250 concerts a year since his 1940s beginnings.

King will land at the Peace Concert Hall for a one-night-only musical feast on Saturday in the company of Lucille.

How his guitar got named is worth repeating.

As it's told on bbking-.com:

In the mid-1950s, while King was performing at a dance in Twist, Ark., a few fans became unruly. Two men got into a fight and knocked over a kerosene stove, setting fire to the hall. King raced outdoors to safety with everyone else, and then realized he'd left his beloved $30 acoustic guitar inside. So he rushed into the burning building to retrieve it, narrowly escaping death.

When he later learned the fight had been over a woman named Lucille, he gave the name to his guitar as a reminder to never fight over a woman. Ever since, each one of King's trademark Gibson guitars has been called Lucille.

He and Lucille are responsible for classics such as "Payin' the Cost to Be the Boss," "How Blue Can You Get," "Everyday I Have the Blues" and "Why I Sing the Blues." All are concert (and fan) staples, including his 1970s mega hit, "The Thrill Is Gone."

King's style has become one of the world's most identifiable. He borrowed from Blind Lemon Jefferson, T-Bone Walker and others to create a style that blends vocal-like string bends with his left-hand vibrato. He has mixed traditional blues, jazz, swing, mainstream pop and jump into a unique sound.

His guitar style has been a model for many younger players, from Eric Clapton and George Harrison to Jeff Beck.

"When I sing, I play in my mind," King says on bbking.com. "The minute I stop singing orally, I start to sing by playing Lucille."

YOU CAN GO

- What: B.B. King.
- When: 8 p.m. Saturday.
- Where: Peace Concert Hall.
- Tickets: $40-$60.
- Information: 467-3000.



AP / File

B.B. King's guitar licks are recognized around the world. Here he plays with Lucille, his Gibson guitar.