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**New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival**

PLUS

**Ponderosa Stomp**

**R E V I E W E D**



# jazz & blues report

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## On the Cover

The Black Seminoles Mardi Gras Indians at the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival. Photo by Ron Weinstock



### "Buffalonus"

Our original mascot from the very early Buffalo Jazz Report days – mid '70s. He is older now, but global & still very cool!

# New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival

## PLUS Ponderosa Stomp

## REVIEWED

By Ron Weinstock

The New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival has evolved over the decades into one of the major popular music events. Increasingly over the past decade or so, tensions have risen over the Festival as a celebration of the music and culture of Louisiana and its increasing status as a major music festival. And ticket prices continue to increase so that it now costs \$50 a day to attend, and purchasing advance tickets does not save money when one adds in TicketMaster's ridiculously high fees.

Every day the festival brings in major pop icons and headliners whose connection to Jazz & Heritage increasingly seems remote. My frustration is while they spend the money to book a Billy Joel, they do not spend the money to bring in say Sonny Rollins, who last appeared at JazzFest in 1995 (the first year I went to JazzFest). They did bring in the Bad Plus, Lizz Wright, the Count Basie Orchestra, and Cassandra Wilson, along with Terence Blanchard, performed with the Louisiana Philharmonic in the Jazz Tent, but I was told that at least one prominent New Orleans trumpeter (not Wynton Marsalis) turned down the Festival's offer as too low. Ellis and Jason Marsalis both appeared, but neither Bradford nor Wynton were performers this year.

Prior to Katrina I saw a marvelous Coltrane Tribute band anchored by McCoy Tyner, and while this year's festival sported a tribute to Max Roach with Jason Marsalis and others, they could have booked the amazingly still youthful Roy Haynes, or Chico Hamilton. For a jazz Festival, they could do better.

This year, I attended the Festival's first weekend and, for the first time since Katrina, the second weekend expanded to four days. The weather was not cooperative this weekend, affecting the Saturday and Sunday of the first weekend. I understand that the weather was better the second weekend. For the first time since the nineties, my wife was with me for the Festival, exploring different performers than I do, such as spending a bit more time at the Fais Do Do stage than I did. I did try to catch and shoot as many different performers, although the weather and other circumstances limited my ability to see some of them.

Arriving at the New Orleans Fairgrounds, Friday April 25, after getting a spicy sausage poorboy, I went to the Economy Hall Tent for a group led by June Gardner, a drummer who once anchored the bands of Sam Cooke, Lou Rawls and Lionel Hampton as well as having spent five years on the road with Roy 'Good Rockin' Tonite' Brown. They played some nice, traditionally styled New Orleans Jazz. After enjoying several numbers, I stopped by the always-full gospel tent for the Voices of Distinction, one of the many groups, famous and not famous, that stir the soul over the two weekends. Then to the Blues Tent where I got to see Rufus 'Rip' Wimberly and the Dreamers playing some nice low-down blues. After a few numbers I went to the Acura Stage where Sheryl Crow would close that day for Susan Cowsill. A surviving member of the band the Cowsills, she has emerged as a well-regarded singer-songwriter. Before and after her I caught some



Lizz Wright

performances from the local Delgado Community College Jazz Ensemble, a big band that sported crisp, energetic musicianship and had a pretty darn good singer as well.

They were followed by a solid modern jazz band from Holland led by pianist and composer, Amina Figarova, whose interesting compositions were matched by the fine ensemble work. After several numbers I wandered to the blues tent to see the fine Baton Rouge harp player and vocalist, J'Monque'D who certainly delivers his blues with wit backed by an excellent band supporting him, and it was real treat to hear him again in his annual JazzFest performance.

A bit of brass band music from the Real Untouchables was up on the Jazz & Heritage Stage followed by a visit to the jazz Tent to catch the mix of modern and contemporary jazz from The James Rivers Movement, one of the Crescent City's most visible saxophonists, before I transversed across the Fairgrounds to hear the cross between New Orleans R&B and Tex-Mex Conjunto music that characterizes The Iguanas on the Gentilly Stage. From there it was Congo Square Stage for Big Sam's Funky Nation, one of the highlights this day for me with their mix of Brass band horns with a deep funk groove mixed in with some blues seasoning that was exuberantly received.

I missed Dwayne Dopsie on the Fais Do Do Stage, but did see Jamil Sharif's New Orleans Jazz Professors in Economy Hall mixing in the older New Orleans



Allison Krauss & Robert Plant

repertoire with some swing before seeing a wonderful singer, Leah Chase singing some Dinah Washington and other classic songs in the Jazz Tent.

One of the few headline acts that interested me were the pairing of Allison Krauss (who as a young prodigy toured with the likes of Claude 'The Fiddler' Williams and others) with rock legend Robert Plant who really exhibited their considerable empathy and unique musical gumbo. I would have loved to see Leo Nocentelli and His Rare Funk gathering with folks from Living Colour and P-Funk, but the opportunity to see Ellis Marsalis took precedence and his marvelous quartet (vibes, piano, bass and drums) allowed him to explore some of his own underrated compositions as well as that of Monk (his most recent recording is centered on Monk's music) as well as Tab Benoit, whose thoughtful, muscular guitar is matched by a rare expressiveness as a vocalist. My Monday ended split between some marvelous singing from Lizz Wright in the Jazz Tent and Buckwheat Zydeco's strong set in the Blues Tent. The big stages closed that day with Sheryl Crow, Ozomatti and Burning Spear, the latter group being one aggregation I would have liked to see, but circumstances did not permit.

That night after the Festival, we visited Club 300, a jazz bistro where we had dinner and enjoyed some nice jazz from saxophonist Tony Dagradi, whose band backed up the vocalist Mary Jane Ewing, a vivacious ebullient vocalist. Weekdays the Club hosts the likes of Delfeayo Marsalis and Marlon Jordan, Jason Marsalis, and Steve Masakowski. It was an enjoyable dinner and music but the room was not full.

Saturday, April 26, the weather forecast was for showers midday and while the rains came midway and





Carol Fran



Big Jay McNeely

shortened the performances that day, some of the best performances I saw were before the showers. My day began in Economy Hall where I saw several numbers by a fine traditional cornet player, Connie Jones, who has a marvelous new CD on Arbors with pianist Tom McDermott. On the way to the Blues and Jazz tents I stopped for a bit of The Black Seminoles Mardi Gras Indians with their chants, songs and dancing. Rockie Charles, a fine singer with a touch of Al Green in his delivery impressed me with his soulful blues style. He had an excellent album on Orleans Records a decade ago that is worth searching out. I had not seen the exuberant contemporary Cajun sounds of Wayne Toups and the Zydecajun who rocked the Acura Stage with their strong music.

Then I had a chance to see Carol Fran, whose recording career stretches back to the sixties and who made two really memorable recordings for Black Top with her late husband Clarence Holliman. She suffered a stroke a few years ago, but that did not stop her from sitting at the piano and weaving her spell on the audience. She remains a marvelous singer, although one limitation is that a good portion of her set was standards. Still it was wonderful to see her sound so vibrant. From her set I drifted to the jazz Tent to finally see Germaine Bazzle, one of New Orleans' most beloved jazz singers – and she did not disappoint me with her song selection and her marvelous singing. The charm and joy of

Economy Hall beckoned for Greg Stafford's Young Tuxedo Brass Band, which had the crowd, including a sizable contingent from Lillestrom, Norway, to second line in the tent.

Legendary honker Big Jay McNeely celebrated his 80th Birthday a bit over a year ago, but his performance in the Blues Tent showed the tenor saxophonist with the vitality of someone much younger as he wailed on sax and sang fairly strongly. After several excellent numbers by Big Jay, I headed to Congo Square where Walter 'Wolfman' Washington and the Roadmasters were holding forth with his solid funky blues, including a couple numbers from his new Zoho release "Doin' the Funky Thing." With long-time bassist Jack Cruz and saxophonist Jimmy Carpenter, the Wolfman has one of the tightest bands that can really kick the groove around. After several numbers I headed to the Fais Do Do stage to catch Eddie Bo, New Orleans' legendary pianist and songwriter (His 'I'm Wise' was a hit for Little Richard as "Slippin' and Slidin'). In exuberant form, he led his band through some solid performances. As he was performing, the rain started getting heavier and I returned to the Blues Tent to meet my wife. I had been hoping to catch Astral Project in the Jazz tent and Dr. John on the Acura stage, but with the rain I settled in for the entire set by James Cotton and his excellent band marked by the terrific guitarists Tom Holland and Slam Allen, with his longtime bassist Noel Neal anchoring things. Allen





James Cotton



Tim Laughlin

warmed the tent audience up with several strong vocals and both guitarists are marvelous players. Cotton finally came up, and while he doesn't sing anymore, Mr. Superharp was wailing on the Mississippi saxophone. He does not fail to satisfy. With the heavy rain, we caught a bus back to the hotel. Billy Joel cut his two-hour set early at 6:15 I understand, but I would have passed on him anyway. I caught a broadcast of the Ponderosa Stomp Revue on WWOZ and the Count Basie Band was in the jazz Tent, but weather shortened all the closing sets. While the weather limited who I had the opportunity to watch, it was an exhilarating afternoon.

That night, my wife and I went to the Palm Court to have dinner and hopefully see 95-odd year old cornet player Lionel Ferbos and the Palm Court Jazz Band. We trekked in the very rainy streets until we reached our destination and stayed to hear the band even though Mr. Ferbos was unable to get out of his home because of flooded streets. The Palm Court has marvelous food and offers terrific traditional jazz nightly and the band, most of who would play with Ferbos at the Festival on Sunday, were excellent. After dinner and the music we headed back to our hotel, although stopping at Margaritaville to catch some lively blues & R&B by veteran new Orleans guitarist Irving Bannister, who have a regular no cover gig at Jimmy Buffett's New Orleans establishment.

The weather forecast Sunday was even less promising than Saturday, but the morning was sunny, so I

ventured back to the Fairgrounds where my first stop was Lionel Ferbos, who did make it and led his band through several vintage numbers including the old classic ballad 'Try a Little Tenderness,' that was refreshing to hear in its pre-Otis Redding form. On the way to the Blues Tent, the Paulin Brothers Brass band kept alive the legacy of their day, Doc Paulin, who died relatively recently. Next we went into the Blues Tent to catch Little Freddie King, who was getting down with his boogie and then a bit of hot zydeco from Willis Prudhomme on the Fais do Do stage before catching pianist and songwriter David Egan (he has written for so many, and has a gritty vocal style).

I stopped in Economy Hall to hear the excellent group led by clarinetist Tim Laughlin that included Tom McDermott (a marvelous ragtime rooted pianist who is a superb Jelly Roll Morton interpreter) and cornetist Connie Jones for some first class music, and with the clouds gathering, I headed to the blues tent to catch Larry Garner with special guest Henry Gray. Garner's music, full of wit and irony was delivered in his convincing, understated style before he brought on the former Howlin' Wolf pianist Gray, who perhaps carries on the legacy of Big Maceo better than anyone still alive. One last musical stop for me was to catch Leroy Jones, trumpeter with Harry Connick and others with an entertaining set. With the crowds getting ominous, I left. Regretfully, I missed Tab Benoit and the Voices of the Wetlands All Stars with Dr. John and Cyril Neville amongst



Ellis Marsalis



Rip Wimberly

others as well as Davell Crawford's New Orleans Rhythm and Blues Orchestra, perhaps the two acts I would have wanted to see the most. The rains likely dampened some enthusiasm, but after I headed back to my hotel the music continued with such names as Irma Thomas, Nicholas Payton and Pete Fountain holding forth, and the closing acts that day (for those hardier than I) included Tim McGraw, Elvis Costello & Allen Toussaint, Al Green and Beausoleil. Even this shortened day did not prevent me from getting a good sampling of music.

I have been told that the weather was better the second weekend and among the performers for those four days included Bonerama, Widespread Panic, Randy Newman, Deacon John, Donald Harrison, Mem Shannon, Bettye LaVette, Steve Riley, C.J. Chenier, Papa Grows Funk, Art Neville, Stevie Wonder, John Prine, Trombone Shorty, John Boutté, The Lee Boys, John Hammond, Belton Richard, D. L. Menard, Terence Blanchard, The Subdudes, Jimmy Buffett, Diana Krall, Steel Pulse, The Bad Plus, John Mooney, Pinstripe Brass Band, Geno Delafosse, Ivan Neville's Dumpstafunk, Santana, Maze Featuring Frankie Beverly, Galactic, The Radiators, Dianne Reeves, Jonathan Bliste, Snooks Eaglin, Derek Trucks, and The Neville Brothers. My protestations of the booking major pop acts does not change the fact that there is still so much to

enjoy of the culture and food of New Orleans and Louisiana.

In between the two weekends of JazzFest there are so many things going on for music lovers. The Louisiana Music Factory hosts free instore performances where you can catch Big Sam's Funky Nation, Ingrid Lucia, Coco Robichaux or the Treme Brass Band and get a coupon for a discount Abita draft beer at a bar across the street.

The Monday after the first weekend, radio station WWOZ holds its annual Piano Night Fundraiser while the Tipitina's Foundation held the annual "Instruments A Comin' 2008 Benefit Concert," at Tipitina's. We attended Piano Night which was held at the House of Blues. Using both the House of Blues' main stage for keyboard masters like Eddie Bo, John Gros, Joe Krown, Carol Fran, Henry Gray, Marcia Ball and Jon Cleary backed by the likes of Herb Hardesty, James Andrews, Charlie Miller and Shannon Powell with legendary drummer and WWOZ announcer Bob French hosting, while the more intimate The Parish stage presented mostly solo performances by Marco Benevento, Ronald Markham, Adam Matasar, Tom McDermott, and Reeka in a more intimate setting. There was plenty to enjoy whether Carol Fran sounding marvelous again and then calling up Henry Gray for a moving piano duet, or young



Jonathan Batiste (a marvelous modern jazz pianist) ripping off a hot New Orleans post professor Longhair rocker. In the Parish stage, there was Matasar, who plays the keyboards with Big Sam's Funky Nation; Reeka did a marvelous set of classic tunes from Longhair and others aided by her husband Steve Masakowski; Ronald Markham channeled James



Lionel Ferbos

Booker in his set, and Marco Benevento blew my mind during his set that ranged from recasting Carly Simon's 'Nobody Does it Better,' and Monk's 'Bye-Ya,' leading me to purchase his "Live at Tonic." Tom McDermott channeled Jelly Roll Morton with Evan Christopher adding his marvelous clarinet as we left for the night having heard some marvelous music.

*Review and all photos by Ron Weinstock.*

## Ponderosa Stomp

The Ponderosa Stomp was back to two full nights as well as holding free panels on roots music during Tuesday and Wednesday. Especially having a chance to listen to Joe Bihari who recorded Ike Turner (who was also his talent scout), B.B. King, Elmore James, Rosco Gordon and so many others, discuss his life on the road along with a panel on Swamp Pop, that uniquely Louisiana blend of swamp blues, Cajun and New Orleans R&B. I only attended one of the two nights of the Stomp, arriving in time to catch Roy Head telling us to "Treat Her Right," as Little Buck and the Gold Tops, with Stanley 'Buckwheat' Dural on organ, rocked the groove. After his energetic and soulful set, the great Barbara Lynn came on and gave us more of her soulful blues followed by Lazy Lester sounding great on the instrumental 'Pondarosa Stomp, as well as such classics as 'Sugar Coated Love,' that he recorded fifty years ago. After his strong twenty odd minutes, they brought up the great Wardell Querzergue leading a big band Rhythm & Blues Revue opening with the Smokey Johnson classic "It Ain't my Fault." This was followed by Tony Owens launching into King Floyd's 'Groove Me,' along with his own soul recordings followed by Jean Knight with her hits including a rocking "Don't Mess With My Tu Tu." Then with Zigaboo Modeliste taking over the drums, Mac Rebennack came up with vocalist Tami Lynn to do some of his pre-Dr. John recordings. Stepping up from the piano he took up the guitar for the instrumental 'Storm Warning,' after which Michael Hurtt took over the vocals from some of the recordings he did with Ronnie

Barron and others like "Lights Out." It was a terrific set and much love was showered on Querzergue, the Creole Beethoven, as he is oft referred to. Next up was Earl Stanley and the Stereos with pianist Skip Easterling doing some solid blue-eyed New Orleans R&B, followed by the Bo-Keys from Memphis with classic Memphis soul led by guitarist Skip Pitts, who is also Issac Hayes' bandleader.

Trumpeter Ben Cauley, the lone surviving original member of The Bar-Kays (he survived the crash that killed the others and Otis Redding) did a nice rendition of one of Otis Redding's classics. Then came the terrific Bettye Harris, a veteran soul singer who reprised her marvelous version of 'Cry To Me,' and other songs, showing just how wonderful a singer she is. I left before William Bell's performance, and did not go to the Parish Stage where such acts like Travis Wammack and Dale Hawkins were rocking. On the patio, I saw Louisiana Red before walking back to my hotel.

The nest night, I was frankly too tired to go out. They had another great line-up, perhaps with a bit more of garage band feel with ? and the Mysterians and Rory Erickson. I head that Davell Crawford, whose grandfather Sugarboy Crawford joined on stage was a highpoint. I have no doubt I would have had a blast if I had the energy for it. It should be noted that some folks fly in for the Stomp and skip JazzFest. That is how regarded this event has become. In any event, during the JazzFest period there is so much more to catch whether the nightly shows at the Rock'n'Bowl or at other venues. You can almost overdose on music.

**Ron Weinstock**

### LIKE JAZZ & BLUES PHOTOS?



**This photo of Deitra Farr captured by Ron Weinstock at the 2007 Pocono Blues Festival is just one of hundreds of Ron's photos you can view online at [www.flickr.com/photos/novaron](http://www.flickr.com/photos/novaron)**

# 17th Annual Pocono Blues Festival Presents a Weekend of Real Deal Blues

By Ron Weinstock

Big Boulder Mountain in Lake Harmony will host the 17th Annual Pocono Blues Festival the weekend of July 25 through July 27. Regarded as one of the best blues festivals in the world, this year's festival will include as headline acts, Sugar Pie DeSanto with special guest Jimmy McCracklin; Bobby Rush (who will do a solo set as well as bring his full review; Kenny Neal; Ronnie Baker Brooks; Trudy Lynn and Nappy Brown. The Festival is held at the foot of the ski slopes of the Big Boulder Mountain on three stages. Two stages alternate performances while a third tent stage presents performers in a more intimate setting.

Friday night the Festival opens with a juke joint dinner and performance that will feature the Root Doctor, the marvelous singer from mid-Ohio, Teeny Tucker (daughter of Tommy Tucker) and Mississippi bluesman Lil Dave Thompson. Saturday the two main stages will have performances by Joey Gilmore (IBC winner a few years ago); The Kinsey Report; Sharrie Williams; Michael Burks, Kenny Neal and Sugar Pie DeSanto with Jimmy McCracklin. Gilmore and Williams will also perform sets in the tent stage along with two sets each from Michael Roach & Johnny Mars and Byther Smith.

Sugar Pie DeSanto may be best known for her duets with Etta James for Chess ('In the Basement') but has made numerous classic sides over the years including 'Hello San Francisco' that Buddy Guy later recorded. Jimmy McCracklin's music has influenced numerous folks over the years and he has written and/or performed such well known songs as 'The Thrill is Gone' (with Roy Hawkins), 'The Walk', 'Georgia Slop,' 'My Days are Limited.' His band 'The Blues Blasters' featured the great Lafayette Thomas on so many terrific recordings and his songs were literate treatments of human relationships as well as some rather humorous songs as well. This is a rare East Coast appearance by the Blues Hall of Famer. It's also good to see Kenny Neal back performing after he had recent health issues, and it is also good to see veteran West Side Chicago singer-guitarist Byther Smith. I am particularly excited to see my friend Michael Roach performing. Mike, a D.C. native was mentored by, among others, Cephas & Wiggins, John Jackson and Jerry Ricks prior to moving to England over a decade ago where he has become heavily involved as a performer and educator and will be with the remarkable expatriate harmonica player-singer, Johnny Mars.

Sunday's performances open with The Holmes Brothers, Lurrie Bell, Trudy Lynn, Ronnie Baker Brooks and Bobby Rush on the main stage, with Eric Bibb and zydeco star Geno Delafosse will perform in the tent along with an acoustic set from Bobby Rush and a set by The Holmes Brothers.

Especially noteworthy, in addition to recent Blues Music Award Winners the Holmes Brothers and Bobby

Rush are Lurrie Bell and Trudy Lynn. Bell, son of the late Carey Bell, has matured into one of the blues more singular guitarists as well as an expressive soulful vocalist while Lynn possesses not simply one of the biggest voices in blues, but is a singer of considerable expressive capability.

For more information about the festival, check their website <http://www.jfbb.com/summer-blues-festival.asp>.

## First annual International Jazz Awards set for June 29 in Beverly Hills

BEVERLY HILLS, CA - The first annual International Jazz Awards, a global television special, celebrating over 100 years of jazz music, will take place in Beverly Hills, California at the International Ballroom of the Beverly Hilton Hotel on Sunday, June 29.

Tamar Scarlet Entertainment, in association with Tall Pony Productions, Inc., presents the International Jazz Awards, which is scheduled to be an annual event. Tamar's Kitty Sears is creator and executive producer and Tall Pony's Tony Eaton is co-executive producer for the International Jazz Awards, which will be directed by Louis Horvitz (Academy Awards, Country Music Awards, etc.) and produced by Igo Kantor and co-produced by Annice Parker. Actor, comedian and writer D.L. Hughley will be host of the show which will be taped for broadcast.

"It has been my goal for over ten years to create a show that salutes jazz in its many forms, its influence on all types of music, and honor some of its legendary artists," stated creator and executive producer Kitty Sears.

"Jazz has influenced recording artists from all musical disciplines, and this year we are pleased to have musical tributes to Lena Horne, Count Basie, Clint Eastwood, George and Ira Gershwin and Antonio Carlos Jobim, to be performed by a live orchestra, to be conducted by musical director H.B. Barnum," Sears said.

The nominees were based on Soundscan's top jazz sellers, and will honor jazz in categories which include Contemporary/Smooth, Traditional, Swing, Latin, Brazilian /Afro-Cuban, Fusion and Dixieland. The goal of the International Jazz Awards is to inform millions of viewers across all age groups about the history and influence of jazz, and a major promotional tie-in has been structured with the Los Angeles based jazz station KTWV, 94.7FM, "THE WAVE."

The new award that will be called "The Louie" (not named after Louis Armstrong, but rather the 16<sup>th</sup> note turned upside down) will be presented to the honorees, including performers, writers and producers.

More than 1500 star-studded guests are expected to attend the broadcast in the International Ballroom of the Beverly Hilton, which will be set up in a theater style at this formal black-tie event. For ticket information, call (310) 201-9111.

For a complete listing of the nominees and more information on the International Jazz Awards, visit [www.internationaljazzawards.com/jazz](http://www.internationaljazzawards.com/jazz).



# BLUES WATCH

BY MARK SMITH

**New Release blues....** Wow, a bumper crop of new blues discs is on the way. With everything from cutting edge new blues to releases by standard bearers of the genre, if you can't find

something to like on this list, you need to pick another musical style. Help keep retail record outlets alive by picking up a few of these discs: **Black Keys-** *Attack and Release*; **Tab Benoit with Louisiana's Leroux-** *Night Train to Nashville*; **The Wood Brothers-** *Loaded*; **Marcia Ball-** *Peace, Love & BBQ*; **Sonny Landreth-** *From the Reach*; **Michael Burks-** *Iron Man*; **Eric Gales-** *Story of My Life*; **Kenny Neal-** *Let Life Flow*; **Barry Adamson-** *Back to the Cat*; **Henry Butler-** *PiNOLA Live*; **Eden Brent-** *Mississippi Number One*; **Albert Castiglia-** *These Are the Days*; **Dr. John-** *City that Care Forgot*; **Daddy Gave Me the Blues-** *Elmore James Jr.*; **Buddy Guy-** *Breaking Out*; **B.B. and The Blues Shacks-** *Unique Taste*; **George Thorogood-** *Platinum*; **Joe Cocker-** *Hymn for My Soul*; **Amos Garrett-** *Get Way Back: A Tribute to Percy Mayfield*; **Pinetop Perkins (with special guests B.B. King, Eric Clapton, Eric Sardinas, Jimmie Vaughan, Nora Jean Brusco and others)-** *Pinetop Perkins & Friends*; **Pete Molinari-** *A Virtual Landslide*; **Mark Selby-** *Nine Pound Hammer*; **Robert Cray-** *Live at the BBC*; **Dave Spector-** *Live in Chicago*; **Chris Rea-** *The Return of the Fabulous Hofner Blue Notes*; **Duke Robillard-** *A Swingin' Session with Duke Robillard*; **Jon Cleary & the Absolute Monster Gentlemen-** *Live- Mo Hippa*; **Mitch Woods-** *Jukebox Drive*; **Jackie Payne/Steve Edmonson Band-** *Overnight Sensation*; **The Mannish Boys-** *Lowdown Feelin'*; **Watermelon Slim-** *No Paid Holidays*; **JW Jones-** *Bluelisted*; **Hollywood Fats with the Paladins-** *Live-1985 Dallas, Texas*; **Big Walter Horton, Johnny Nicholas, Ted Harvey, Sugar Ray & the Bluetones-** *Bocce Boogie-Live 1978*; **Dennis Gruenling-** *I Just Keep Lovin' Him*; **Mike Zito-** *Today*; **Diamond Jim Greene-** *Holdin' On*; **Liz Mandville-** *Red Top*; **Tomcat Courtney-** *Downsville Blues*; **Billy Boy Arnold-** *Billy Boy Sings Sonny Boy*; **Kenny "Blues Boss" Wayne-** *Can't Stop Now*; **Sharrie Williams-** *I'm Here to Stay*; **Rocky Zharph and the Blues Crackers-** *Still Crackin'*; **Dave Gross-** *Take the Gamble*; **Boogaloo Ames-** *Boogaloo's Boogie*; **Bonnie Bramlett-** *Beautiful*; **Marcus James-** *Snakeskin Violin*; **Doug MacLeod-** *The Utrecht Sessions*; **Big George Brock-** *Live at Seventy Five*; **Wanda Johnson-** *Hold What You Got*; **David Pinsky and this Rhythm Kings-** *Jump Everybody*; **Walter Trout-** *The Outsider*; **Kelly Richey-** *Carry the Light*; **Billy Gibson-** *The Prince of Beale Street-Live at the North Atlantic Blues Festival*; **Mac Arnold & Plate Full O' Blues-** *Backbone & Gristle*; **Rick Fowler-** *Back On My Good Foot*; **Paula & The Pontiacs-** *Louisiana Bride....* **Award time blues...** On May 8<sup>th</sup>, the Blues Foundation announced the

winners of this year's Blues Music Awards. Artists winning multiple awards included Bobby Rush and Koko Taylor with three awards and Tommy Castro and Watermelon Slim & the Workers with two each. Congratulations to all the winners..... **Festival Blues-** When you're not spinning your new discs, make sure to reserve **June 5-8** for the 25<sup>th</sup> annual **Chicago Blues Festival** ([www.chicagobluesfestival.us](http://www.chicagobluesfestival.us)), **July 10-12** for the Annual **Kalamazoo Valley Blues Festival**. ([www.kvba.org](http://www.kvba.org)) and **August 8-9** for the **Cowpie Blues Festival**, Alaska, MI ([www.cowpiebluesfestival.com](http://www.cowpiebluesfestival.com)).

## 2008 Blues Music Award Winners Announced

As mentioned, The 2008 Blues Music Awards were announced in the Mississippi Delta on Thursday, May 8. The winners selected by the vote of the Blues Foundation's members are.

1. DVD - Kenny Wayne Shepherd – 10 Days Out: Blues from the Backroads
2. Traditional Blues Male Artist - Hubert Sumlin
3. Traditional Blues Female Artist - Koko Taylor
4. Acoustic Artist - Bobby Rush
5. Acoustic Album Bobby Rush - Raw
6. Pinetop Perkins Piano Player - Honey Piazza
7. Instrumentalist-Guitar - Bob Margolin
8. Soul Blues Male Artist - Bobby Rush
9. Soul Blues Female Artist - Irma Thomas
10. Soul Blues Album - The Holmes Brothers – State of Grace
11. Historical Album - Epic/Legacy – Breakin' It UP, Breakin' it DOWN

## MARCIA BALL PEACE, LOVE & BBQ

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—Blues Revue



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12. Contemporary Blues Album - Tommy Castro - Pain killer
13. Contemporary Blues Female Artist - Bettye LaVette
14. Contemporary Blues Male Artist - Tab Benoit
15. Instrumentalist-Harmonica - Kim Wilson
16. Instrumentalist-Bass - Bob Stroger
17. Instrumentalist-Drums - Sam Lay
18. Instrumentalist-Horn - Deanna Bogart
19. Instrumentalist-Pedal Steel- Robert Randolph
20. Best New Artist Debut - Diunna Greenleaf & Blue Mercy – Cotton Field to Coffee House
21. Song - “Gonna Buy Me a Mule” – Koko Taylor
22. Traditional Blues Album - Koko Taylor – Old School
23. Album - Watermelon Slim & the Workers – The Wheel Man
24. Band - Watermelon Slim & the Workers
25. B.B. King Entertainer - Tommy Castro

That's it for this month. See ya! - Mark

## Charlie Parker Jazz Festival in NYC August 23, 24

NEW YORK CITY – The Charlie Parker Jazz Festival annually assembles some of the finest musicians in the world who reflect Parker's musical individuality and genius, to promote appreciation for this highly influential and world-renowned artist.

The two days of free concerts take place in neighborhoods where Charlie Parker lived and worked, in Historic Harlem's Marcus Garvey Park and in Tompkins Square Park within Manhattan's Lower East Side.

The festival is produced by the City Parks Foundation.

All programs throughout the festival begin at 3:00 p.m. and admission is free.

### Marcus Garvey Park 124<sup>th</sup> St. & Mt. Morris Park Saturday, August 23rd

**Hank Jones** - Henry “Hank” Jones believes that when you listen to a pianist, each note “should have a soul of its own.” Jones’ precise interpretations have been called “Eloquent, lyrical, and impeccable.” The highest accolades possible have been given to this legendary musician, including the “NEA Jazz Masters” award from the *National Endowment for the Arts*, and a “Jazz Living Legend” award from *The American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers*. Mr. Jones has over sixty albums to his credit and countless others on which he has appeared, including collaborations with legends Ella Fitzgerald, Frank Sinatra, and Charlie Parker.

**Vanessa Rubin** - Jazz musicians are talking about Vanessa Rubin. They want her unique phrasing and velvety smooth tone to make their compositions come alive. After leaving Cleveland and moving to New York, she almost immediately began gigging with greats like the *Pharaoh Sanders Quartet*. She has eight albums to her credit, and has amassed a list of outstanding collaborations, partnering with Lionel Hampton, the *Mercer Ellington Orchestra* and Grover Washington, Jr. Ms. Rubin recently completed international tours with Herbie

Hancock, the *Woody Herman Orchestra*, and the *Jazz Crusaders*.

**Rashied Ali** - Rashied Ali is referred to as the father of “free jazz” drumming and one of the most harmonic and innovative drummers to ever grace the world of jazz. He has sat in and collaborated with many R&B and jazz experimenters, most famously with the great John Coltrane. As the leader of the Rashied Ali Quintet, he continues to refine his art while discovering and nurturing new talent.

**Robert Glasper** - Pianist Robert Glasper is a perfect example of how old and new school can create the future. Classically trained, but moved by his own muse, Glasper has commanded the stage of jazz festivals throughout the world. The profundity of Glasper's talent is no longer a secret, making him an in-demand musician for numerous hip hop and R&B greats including Mos Def, Common, Jay Z, Erykah Badu and Me'Shell Ndegeocello. Robert Glasper's three albums have been met with widespread acclaim and his most recent, *In My Element*, has been called “ravishing.”

### Tompkins Square Park - E. 8<sup>th</sup> St. Between Aves. A & B Sunday, August 24th

**Randy Weston** - Inspired by Jamaican roots and global travels, Randy Weston's jazz is like none other. Although Weston cites Duke Ellington and Thelonious Monk as inspirations, what makes him unique is his unusually percussive and highly rhythmic piano compositions. In 2002, Weston performed with bassist James Lewis for the inauguration of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina in Alexandria, Egypt. In June 2006, he was awarded the honorary degree of Doctor of Music by Brooklyn College, CUNY. His great compositions include “Hi-Fly,” “Little Niles,” “Berkshire Blues,” “African Sunrise,” “The Healers,” “Blue Moses,” and “African Cookbook.”

**Jerry Gonzales and Fort Apache** - “I am bilingual...I can play blues and I can play Rumba,” says Jerry Gonzales of his multi-cultural sound. After several attempts at finding a musical home, Gonzalez finally found his voice in his own band. Their 1989 release, *Rumba Para Monk*, received critical acclaim and was honored by *The Academie Du Jazz*, naming it “Jazz Album of the Year.” They have also been nominated for two Latin Jazz Grammy's for *Rumba Para Monk* and *Y Los Pyratas de Flamenco*.

**Eric Lewis** - With profound intensity, Eric Lewis is already a prodigious jazz pianist. A musical contortionist, Lewis' compositions twist, turn, and careen between styles, sounds, and emotions, resulting in a stunning aural experience. At the age of 22, Lewis began touring with legends Wynton Marsalis and Cassandra Wilson. At the age of 26 he won the *Thelonious Monk International Piano Competition* and became a member of the *Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra*. Mr. Lewis will perform a work specially commissioned by City Parks Foundation to premier at the 2008 Charlie Parker Jazz Festival.

**Gretchen Parlato** - Herbie Hancock says of Gretchen Parlato's voice that it is “a deep, almost magical connection to the music.” She combines classic



Sinatra-esque vocals with insightful forays into melody, unexpected scatting and Afro-Latin rhythms. In 2004 she walked away with first place at the *Thelonious Monk Jazz Vocal Competition* and has teamed up with Diane Reeves, Roy Hargrove's Big Band and Terence Blanchard. *All About Jazz* magazine has called Gretchen Parlato's vocal musings "delicious."

## Koko Taylor Headlines 2008 IH Mississippi Valley Blues Festival Lineup

DAVENPORT, Iowa—Grammy Award winner Koko Taylor, dubbed "The Queen of Blues" for having won more Blues Awards than any other blues artist—male or female, returns to the 2008 IH Mississippi Valley Blues Festival.

The Mississippi Valley Blues Society (MVBS) has announced the festival lineup of 28 acts performing on two stages, July 3 – 5, in Davenport, Iowa. Produced by MVBS and presented by IH Mississippi Valley Credit Union, the event draws nearly 15,000 to LeClaire Park—a blues-inspiring outdoor venue located at the crossroads of U.S. Route 61, known as the Blues Highway, and the Mississippi River—for three days of music, food, fun and friends.

"People loved having blues legend Koko Taylor play our festival in 2001, and we're certain this firecracker of a performer will light up the bandshell stage again this Fourth of July," said Karen McFarland, co-chair of the MVBS Entertainment Committee, which books the acts for the Festival. "And no matter what day, time or stage you find yourself at during our three-day fest, you will be entertained by very talented musicians—from Grammy-award-winning headliners like Koko to opening acts like Kilborn Alley Blues Band, who was nominated for their first Blues Award this year."

In addition to Taylor, other headliners include Elvin Bishop, Otis Taylor and the Black Banjo Project, Billy Boy Arnold with Jody Williams, The Holmes Brothers and Denise LaSalle.

Former Iowa farm boy Elvin Bishop, known to the mainstream for his one-hit wonder, "Fooled Around and Fell in Love," is known to blues fans as a founding member of the legendary Paul Butterfield Blues Band and his "Booty Bumpin" resurgence in the blues scene after his daughter's murder.

"Bishop always seems to engage the audience with his performance, and he's not the only crossover artist playing our festival this year," continues McFarland. "Donald Kinsey has crossed over from blues to heavy metal to reggae and back to blues again."

Donald Kinsey, the front man for The Kinsey Report, started his blues career with Big Daddy Kinsey and Albert King. In the '70s he formed the heavy metal band White Lighting before switching genres again to tour and record with reggae legends Bob Marley and Peter Tosh, and then returning to the blues in 1984 to form the Kinsey Report.

"We're really excited about our daylong focus on

'Roots of the Blues' on Thursday's tent stage," said McFarland. "The use of blue notes, call-and-response format and primitive instruments—such as the banjo and diddley-bow—will be featured in performances by artists specializing in the origin of blues music and its subgenres."

Ben Prestage opens this special daylong tribute to the "Roots of the Blues" performing on the diddley-bow. Steve James and Del Rey will play a hillbilly, smarty-pants style of old country blues, and the Carolina Chocolate Drops, an African-American string band, will play the rich tradition of fiddle and banjo music from Carolinas' Piedmont. Otis Taylor and the Black Banjo Project, featuring Guy Davis, close the day by tracing the banjo's history back four centuries to the African xalam.

Other artists playing at this year's festival include: Kal David; Little Bobby and the Storm; Phil Guy; Teresa James; Jimmy Thackery and the Drivers; Kent Burnside and New Generation; Paul Geremia; Big Pete Pearson and the Rhythm Room Allstars; Great Black Music Ensemble; Alexis P. Suter; John Nemeth with Junior Watson; Tinsley Ellis; Boo Hanks; Doug MacLeod; Marie Knight; and Big George Brock.

"Kids will have a special treat at this year's BlueSKool," says McFarland. "Kids who received lessons and tips at the River Music Experience's Winter Blues Academy will assist blues artists Hal Reed and Ellis Kell teach other kids the blues at this year's festival, and then they're going to jam together."

The mission of the Mississippi Valley Blues Society is to educate the public about the native art form of blues-related music and to keep the blues alive. The IH Mississippi Valley Blues Festival offers adults free workshops and children BlueSKool to get hands-on instruction from blues artists. The festival also includes a free photo exhibit of blues artists and past festivals at Union Station across the street from the festival.

RiverRoad Lifetime Achievement Awards will be presented this year to soul blues artist and businesswoman Denise LaSalle and Chicago harp-master Billy Boy Arnold. The Mississippi Valley Blues Society annually presents this award to recognize artists who have devoted their lives to bringing river blues, music that runs deep with soul, to anyone they meet on life's highway. The artists may not have been as recognized as the 'stars,' but they are the true legends of the blues and the art form's living history.

Now in its 24th year, this blues festival is one of the longest-running in the country and is operated by an all-volunteer nonprofit group dedicated to providing top-notch entertainment at a reasonable price. According to the Quad Cities Convention and Visitors Bureau, the festival's economic benefit to the area is \$2.5 million.

Sponsors for this year's festival include presenting sponsor IH Mississippi Valley Credit Union, and blues supporters *River Cities' Reader*, the Illinois Arts Council, Scott County Regional Authority, Sam's Club, National Reso-Phonic Guitars, The City of Davenport, KALA 88.5 & 105.5, The Lodge Hotel & Conference Center, AAA Rents and ME&V Advertising & Consulting.

"For the fourth straight year, we are proud to partner with the Mississippi Valley Blues Society as the

festival's presenting sponsor," says Dennis Hall, president, IH Mississippi Valley Credit Union. "We believe in supporting organizations and events that make the Quad Cities a great place to live and work. This family event over the fourth of July is a great addition to our community."

Advance three-day passes are available for \$40 and must be purchased before June 30. Advance one-day passes are \$15 per day for MVBS and IH Mississippi Valley Credit Union members. Children ages 14 and under will be admitted free if accompanied by an adult with a ticket. Advance tickets may be purchased at all IH Mississippi Valley Credit Union branches, at the River Center/Adler Theatre box office in Davenport, or through Ticketmaster. One-day tickets will be sold at the gate for \$18.

For 24 years, the IH Mississippi Blues Festival has attracted local, regional and national legendary blues acts, making it one of the most highly regarded blues festivals in the nation. Musicians performing at past festivals include Buddy Guy, Dr. John, James Cotton, Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown and John Lee Hooker. For more information about the festival, artists and lodging, please visit [www.mvbs.org](http://www.mvbs.org) or call 563-32-BLUES.

## **13th Annual Russian River Blues Festival June 14 & 15 at Johnson's Beach, California**

GUERNEVILLE, California – The Russian River Blues Festival is back. Join in on Father's Day Weekend for two days of blues music, great food and wine tasting in Northern California.

Over the two days, there will be 16 performances on two stages; a mix of traditional blues, rock, R&B and soul music.

The confirmed lineup will include:

Los Lonely Boys  
Jonny Lang  
The Fabulous Thunderbirds  
Shemekia Copeland  
Robben Ford  
Coco Montoya  
Dan Hicks & The Hot Licks  
Earl Thomas... and many others

Prepare to spend a great weekend on the banks of the Russian River groovin' to outstanding music, tasting California's famous wines and enjoying the breathtaking scenery at the 2008 Russian River Blues Festival on Saturday, June 14 and Sunday, June 15, at Johnson's Beach in Guerneville, California.

Set in the heart of the beautiful California wine country, the Russian River Blues Festival is a one-of-a-kind event. Festival-goers can enjoy world-class blues from the comfort of their beach chairs or floating in innertubes, kayaks, and rafts on the cool Russian River.

The Russian River Festivals will feature wine tasting from several of Sonoma County's world famous wineries, including Sonoma Vineyards, Rodney Strong Vineyards, Kenwood Winery and Korbel, among others.

Festival attendees 21 years and older will be able

to taste premium wines from these featured wineries. 3 wine tastings are only \$10, and there will be a hand-picked selection of Sonoma Valley wineries on hand in the Wine Garden area.

Proceeds from the wine tasting will benefit the Sonoma County charity Food for Thought. So help us support this worthy local cause and enjoy premium wines at the same time.

### **Daily Lineup**

#### **Saturday, June 14**

**Gates open at 10am**

#### **Performances from 11am -6pm on 2 stages**

Jonny Lang  
The Fabulous Thunderbirds  
Shemekia Copeland  
Dan Hicks & The Hot Licks

#### **Sunday, June 15**

**Gates open at 10am**

#### **Performances from 11am - 6pm on 2 stages**

Los Lonely Boys  
Robben Ford  
Coco Montoya  
Earl Thomas

... and other special surprises to be announced soon!

Johnson's Beach & Resort is located in the casual, little Northern California town of Guerneville on the Russian River. The resort is downtown within walking distance of shopping and restaurants. A few miles away are hiking trails, redwoods and wine tasting. The Pacific Ocean is 14 miles to the west.

Johnson's Beach is open from 10 am to 6 pm, seven days a week, mid May to early October, weather permitting. The Beach has canoes, kayaks and paddleboats for rent plus umbrellas, inner tubes, and beach chairs. Visit Clare and Carla in the snack bar, or let's the kids play in the roped-off kiddies' pool area.

Directions from San Jose and the South Bay: Take I-880 North, this turns into I-580 West, stay straight onto US-101 North. Exit: River Road. Follow River Road going west for 17 miles, enjoy the scenery, and you'll be in Guerneville and the Russian River Resort Area in no time.

From the East Bay: Take I-680 North, merge onto CA-24 West, merge onto I-580 West toward the Richmond/San Rafael Bridge, take the US-101 North ramp. Exit: River Road. Follow River Road going west for 17 miles, enjoy the scenery, and you'll be in Guerneville before you know it. 2008 Russian River Blues Festival tickets can be purchased in advance for the best savings.

Ticket prices are \$45 per day or \$80 for both days through June 13. Tickets purchased at the gate are \$50 per day. Children 10 and under are free.

Tickets are available by calling the Omega Events Box Office at (707) 869-1595 or visiting [www.russianriverfestivals.com](http://www.russianriverfestivals.com); or in person at The Russian River Chamber of Commerce, 16209 First Street (at the Historical Bridge), Guerneville, CA 95446, (707) 869-9000. For additional information, call (707) 869-1595 or visit [www.russianriverfestivals.com](http://www.russianriverfestivals.com).

No glass, cans, alcohol or high-back beach chairs will be permitted. Low-back chairs only.



# Why Some People Think Duke Ellington Is a Member of the Royal Family.

## KIDS DON'T GET ENOUGH

**ART THESE DAYS.** So you can see why some of them might accidentally confuse a jazz legend named Duke with royalty named duke. But it's finally time to set the record straight.

Edward Kennedy "Duke" Ellington didn't rule over a small English estate. Instead he reigned supreme over jazz institutions like The Cotton Club. He riffed



*A piano player. A composer. An orchestra leader.  
Duke Ellington reigned over a land called Jazz.*

Sentimental Mood," and "Take the 'A' Train." His historical concert in 1953 at the Newport Jazz Festival has entered the lexicon of legendary live performances. There is no doubt about it, Ellington's brand of jazz has contributed significantly to the American songbook and to the lives of anyone who has ever tapped their foot to a beat.

Jazz is art, you dig? Art can

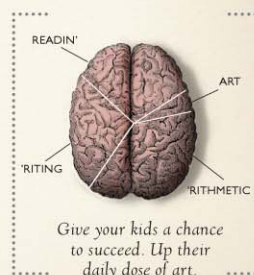
powerfully on the piano, but it was the full orchestra that he considered his most compelling instrument. He introduced improvisation to his compositions — a process unheard of using a 15-piece orchestra. The result was a different approach to jazz that sparked a revolution and an evolution. His music spread across the world with songs like "Sophisticated Lady," "In a

really transform lives.

In fact, the more art kids get, the smarter they become in subjects like math and science. And the more likely they'll become well-rounded, cool members of society. For *Ten Simple Ways* to get more art in kids' lives, visit [AmericansForTheArts.org](http://AmericansForTheArts.org).



*Royal dukes are squaresville.  
They have no rhythm.  
And they wear crowns.*

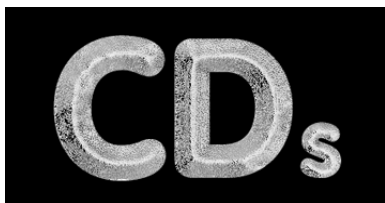


**Art. Ask for More.**

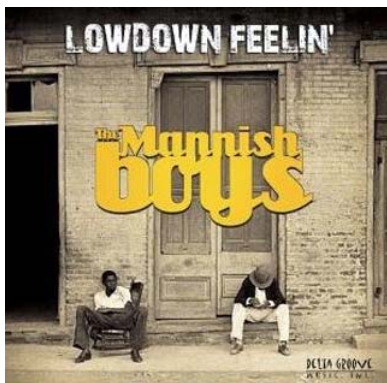
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Foundation



We only bring you  
the Cream of the Crop!



### THE MANNISH BOYS Lowdown Feelin' DELTA GROOVE

Some have called the Mannish Boys an All Star supergroup, a bit of hyperbole for a mix of seasoned journeymen and solid blues players that might be more accurately described as a first-rate band of blues traditionalists that vigorously keep alive real blues.

Their latest Delta Groove release, "Lowdown Feelin'" has the core of vocalists Bobby Jones, Johnny Dyer and Finis Tasby joined by regulars Randy Chortkoff, guitarists Kirk Fletcher, Paris Slim and Kid Ramos with Little Sammy Davis appearing on two tracks along with guitarist Junior Watson and harpist Lynwood Slim on a few tracks.

Bobby Jones, who joined on the last disc, takes the lion's share of vocals, reprising Junior Parker's 'These Kind of Blues' (with nice harp from Chortkoff) along with a cover of an early Howlin' Wolf track 'Chocolate Drop,' and Walter Horton's 'Need My Baby' (with Lynwood Slim wailing on the Mississippi sax), while Tasby handles a choice piece of vintage West Coast blues, the T-Bone Walker flavored title track with striking Walker-ish guitar by Kid Ramos, and Dyer ably tackles a cover of the Muddy Waters recording 'The Same Thing' with Paris Slim providing the slide guitar.

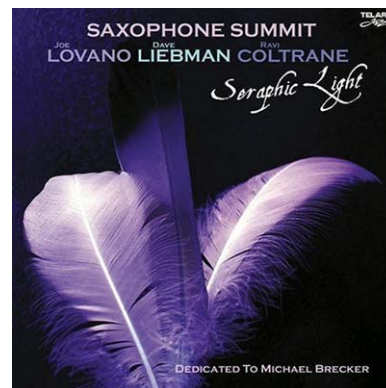
Paris Slim takes the lead behind Jones' vocal on Billy 'The Kid' Emerson's novelty number 'The Woodchuck,' Little Sammy Davis along with slide guitarist Fred Schribner, are heard on the lively 'Fine Lookin' Woman,' with Fred Kaplan adding strong piano in the backing, while the instrumental remake of Willie Cobbs 'You Don't Love Me,' is a feature for Kirk Fletcher's sizzling guitar that evokes the legendary Otis Rush to these ears.

The strength of the Mannish Boys is the wide repertoire which includes remakes of lesser known, but certainly very worthy material such as Billy 'The Kid' Emerson's 'Figure Head,' which the late Mighty Joe Young

once waxed and which Jones ably revives with an effective moody vocal and Kid Ramos adding some more mood with his playing. Chortkoff's 'Rude Groove' is built upon the 'Green Onions'/'Help Me' melody and his harp is in the Sonny Boy II manner, although a bit lengthy.

Perhaps a few minor miscues among the generous 17 tracks, and over 70 minutes of music, but most of this is first-rate and outstanding, and certainly will be amongst the best remembered discs of this year among blues lovers.

*Ron Weinstock*



### SAXOPHONE SUMMIT Seraphic Light TELARC

Dedicated to the late group member Michael Brecker, this 10-tune album features replacement Ravi Coltrane performing with saxophonists Joe Lovano and Dave Liebman in the follow up recording to their 2004 debut album, *Gathering of Spirits*. The intent of the new project was to pick up where the previous album left off and to capture the essence of John Coltrane's later period, the investigation of spiritual ballads.

Pianist Phil Markowitz, bassist Cecil McBee and drummer Billy Hart provide rhythm team support for the saxophonists as they explore and extend the music of the legendary saxophonist John Coltrane (four tunes) and six accessible originals by group members. Trumpeter Randy Brecker performs on two tracks, the chattering, light-hearted "Message to Mike" and the finale, John Coltrane's "Expression." Highlights abound and include Lovano's melodic "Our Daily Bread" and McBee's romantic ballad "All About You."

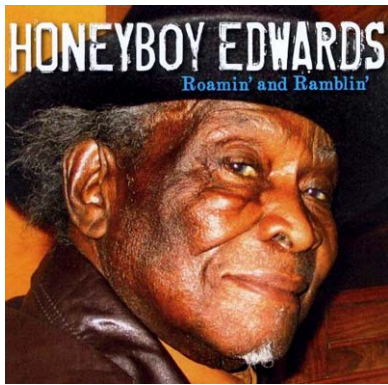
Lovano and Liebman have been collaborating as Saxophone Summit for a decade with Michael Brecker until his death. Ravi Coltrane admirably fills Brecker's spot in the team, keeping this group impressively vibrant. This is a spectacular listen, full of energy and ideas.

*Nancy Ann Lee*

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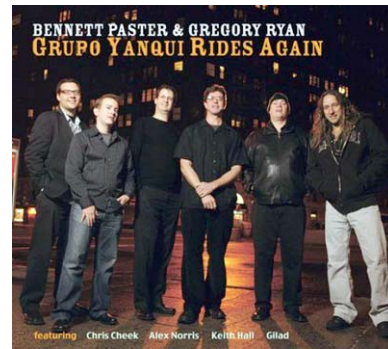
**HONEYBOY EDWARDS**  
**Roamin' and Ramblin'**  
**EARWIG MUSIC**

On the eve of his 93<sup>rd</sup> birthday and with a disc chock full of "A" list guests like Bobby Rush, Billy Branch, Sugar Blue and Walter Horton providing cover, it would be easy for Honeyboy Edwards to slide through this disc with a few lazy strums on his guitar and to take advantage of the "boy, how does he still do it?" accolades that usually follow projects like this. But Edwards will have none of that.

As befitting a hard scrabble bluesman who literally followed the blues from the Mississippi Delta to Chicago, jumping rails and walking trails with the likes of Robert Johnson and Little Walter, Edwards doesn't hide behind either his guests or his age. Instead, he goes head to head with his guests with slinky interplay between his well honed guitar chops and their traditional sounding harmonica licks. Aiming to duplicate the blues as it sounded between the 30's and 60's before it went through a shot gun wedding with rock and roll, this disc is rough, raw and brimming with Edwards' undiminished talent as a first rate guitarist. Proof of Edwards' long run and his immunity to the ravages of age comes from the wide span of time represented by the 19 tracks included on this release. Edwards' 1942 track, "The Army Blues", doesn't sound dated and, remarkably, doesn't cast a youthful shadow over the mid-'70s tracks recorded with Walter Horton, "Smoky Mountains" and "Jump Out," or the balance of the tracks recorded in 2007.

Adding to the sense of living history that permeates this disc is the inclusion of three spoken blues tales including one with blues historian Alan Lomax, "Freight Train Tale".

*Mark Smith*



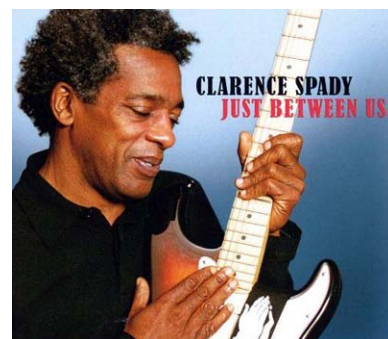
**BENNETT PASTER & GREGORY RYAN**  
**Grupo Yanqui Rides Again**  
**MILES HIGH RECORDS**

On their second CD, the NYC-based band Grupo Yanqui delivers a jazz-driven mix of Afro-Cuban, Brazilian and Latin music mostly composed by the leaders, pianist Bennett Paster and bassist Gregory Ryan, whose combined sense of humor comes out in tune titles and the playfulness in some of their originals. The pair met in 1993 while teaching at the Stanford Jazz Workshop and later came together after developing their own styles and performing with various top-name jazz and Latin-jazz artists.

Joining the leaders in the seven vigorous originals and refreshed interpretations of Chick Corea's "Tones for Joan's Bones" and Billy Strayhorn's "Chelsea Bridge," are Chris Cheek (tenor, alto saxophones), Alex Norris (trumpet, flugelhorn), Keith Hall (drums) and Gilead (percussion). Among the highlights are Paster's "The Unabonger," a hip pulsating number that conveys a sense of urgency and Ryan's uptempo descarga "If Woody Had Gone Right to the Police..." which features some fine front-line solos and cohesive teamwork.

This outing is appealing for the polished musicianship as well as brilliantly crafted, lively compositions and robust arrangements.

*Nancy Ann Lee*



**CLARENCE SPADY**  
**Just Between Us**  
**SEVERN RECORDS**

It has been several years since Clarence Spady last was represented with a new recording. Spady's music brought swinging hard organ jazz and funk elements to his blues core and his too few recordings have built him a strong following. It is hard to think it has been over a decade since I saw him at Fleetwood's in Alexandria, Virginia. Severn Records has just issued this new recording,

**LIVE BLUES ON THE HIGH SEAS**



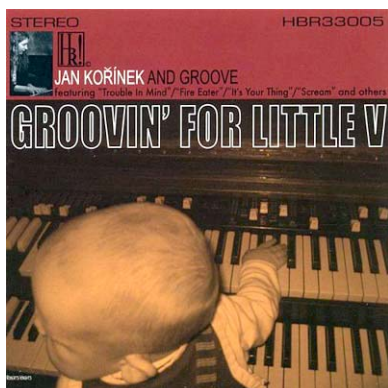
**Read The Review**  
[www.jazz-blues.com](http://www.jazz-blues.com)  
 click the 'Notable' button

which will probably receive mixed reactions from blues fans because of the diversity of grooves found here.

The opening 'I'll Never Sell you Out,' has a pop R&B flavor with a dance groove that owes more to say George Benson as B.B. King. It is followed by a bit harder funk "Enough of You," on which his vocal comes across as a more acerbic Robert Cray, with some nicely played guitar. Then the title track is a lovely, soulful ballad that, like the entire recording, is a Spady original, showing how accomplished a writer is as well as a storyteller and a performer. Also listening to his restraint on his performance here, as elsewhere, is a refreshing change from much of what passes as blues today, and the spare accompaniment contributes to the overall sound here with Bob O'Connell and Benji Porecki sharing keyboards throughout. It also allows his guitar solo on the funky 'Won't Be This Way Always,' to stand out. 'Cut Them Loose,' opens with a nice strident sax solo from Jacques Johnson before Spady launches into his lyric and takes a well-paced solo break. 'Be Your Enough,' finds Spady really pouring his heart in his vocal into this soulful blues, while 'E-Mail,' is a low-key meditative instrumental followed by the closing 'Candy,' a nice funky original with some strong sax in the backing.

In his return to disc, Clarence Spady displays a maturity reflected in his thoughtful performances here, both vocally and instrumentally with solid support throughout. Congratulations to David Earl and Mr. Spady himself for this gem of a recording.

**Ron Weinstock**



## JAN KORINEK AND GROOVE

### Groovin' For Little V

HARD BOP RECORDS

The influence of the acid jazz movement can be heard in Czech Hammond player Jan Korinek and Groove, whose latest recording in this greasy organ school is "Groovin' For Little V" on Hard Bop Records. Guitarist Jiri Hokes and either drummer Martin Novak or Martin Kopriva form Groove with Korinek who are joined by saxophonist Rostislav Fras on the opening track, an saxophonist Bedrich Smarda and trumpeter Miroslav Hloucal on the last four of the twelve tracks.

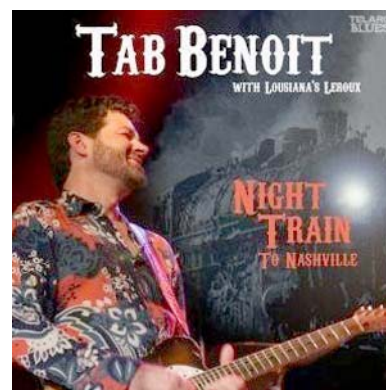
The program is mixed with renditions off some covers of blues and soul classics such as Ray Charles 'A Fool For You,' 'Trouble in Mind' and The Isley Brothers 'It's Your Thing,' along with the Rusty Bryant smoker 'Fire Eater' plus originals that are in the same vein such as the

opening rocker 'One For Groove,' the church feel of 'Gospel Feelin',' and the easy drive groove of the title track.

Nothing fancy about the performances here, as the focus is on groove and feel like the down-in-the-alley take on 'A Fool For You,' or the punchy horns added to 'Fire Eater.' The album closes with nice renditions of tunes from Brother Jack McDuff and Jimmy Smith, which celebrate the masters by Korinek and Groove lending their own voices to the performances.

A most enjoyable slice of organ jazz from an unexpected source. Available from Amazon, or visit the label's website at [www.hardboprecords.com](http://www.hardboprecords.com).

**Ron Weinstock**



## TAB BENOIT WITH LOUISIANA'S LEROUX

### Night Train To Nashville

TELARC

Like his *Whisky Store Live* release with Jimmy Thackery, this disc, recorded live at the Place on Second Street, Nashville, TN, brings out the best in guitarist Tab Benoit. While his studio efforts are solid and workman-like, they are sterile and stiff compared to the emotion laden performances Benoit brings to the stage.

Backed by his long time touring outfit, Louisiana's Leroux, and a host of guests including Kim Wilson (Fabulous Thunderbirds), Jimmy Hall (Wet Willie), Johnny Sansone, Jim Lauderdale and Waylon Thibodeaux, Benoit takes a musical tour through the blues, soul and the rich heritage of Louisiana with a taste of down home Cajun music and New Orleans second line grooves.

Benoit's guitar chops are on bright display despite the big guest list, most notably on the slow, sizzling, blues of *Darkness* where Benoit channels Buddy Guy and *Muddy Bottom Blues* where Clapton and Cream come to mind. *Too Sweet for Me* features Kim Wilson and Benoit trading harmonica and guitar solos that blister the stage one moment and then take things down to a mere whisper the next.

*Lost In Your Lovin'* drips with soul but is merely an appetizer for *Rendezvous with the Blues* where Jimmy Hall channels Bill Withers on vocals on top of Benoit's steamy guitar grooves which segue from soul to stone cold blues. *Fever for the Bayou* is a loose, celebratory romp through swampland blues with Sansone's harmonica providing a prickly counterpoint to Benoit's guitar.

Slowing things down a bit, the band does a cheek to cheek version of Louisiana Leroux's hit, *New Orleans La-*



dies.

Wrapping things up is *Stackolina* where the stripped down combo of Benoit, Kim Wilson and Waylon Thibodeaux generate more heat than three men should with amazing instrumental interplay that is the highlight of this set.

**Mark Smith**

## **DIANE SCHUUR**

### **Some Other Time**

#### **CONCORD JAZZ**

Singer Diane Schuur returns to her jazz roots for this nostalgic 13-tune venture with backing from pianist/arranger Randy Porter, guitarist Dan Balmer, bassist Scott Steed and drummer Reggie Jackson.

Dipping into the American Songbook of her parent's generation, Schuur skillfully sings tunes by George and Ira Gershwin, Irving Berlin, Sammy Cahn-Jule Styne, Vernon Duke, Rodgers-Hammerstein, and others. With passion and expression, Schuur brilliantly interprets swingers and ballads such as "Nice Work If You Can Get It," "They Say It's Wonderful," "Blue Skies," "Without A Song," "Taking A Chance On Love," "My Favorite Things," and more.

Born in December 1953 in Tacoma, Washington, Schuur was blind from birth. Her early jazz influences came from her father, a piano player, and her mother, whose record collection included Duke Ellington and Dinah Washington. Before taking formal piano lessons, Schuur (nicknamed "Deedles") taught herself piano by ear and made her first public singing appearance at age 10. After recording her first single in 1971, Schuur went on to record 11 albums on GRP. Her inaugural Concord release (*Friends for Schuur*) in 2000 marked the start of a series of collaborative projects with other musicians.

On this outing, Schuur does what she's always done best, singing and swinging with magnificent jazz feeling. She's in peak form throughout, and her sidemen are with her every moment.

**Nancy Ann Lee**

## **BILLY BOY ARNOLD**

### **Billy Boy Sings Sonny Boy**

#### **ELECTRO-FI RECORDS**

It's been sixty years ago that John Lee Williamson, best known as the original Sonny Boy Williamson, was murdered. His death left a major impression on his fellow Chicago musicians and was a topic many volunteered to Paul Oliver when he visited the United States in the early 1960s and interviewed many blues musicians.

One of those affected by Sonny Boy's death was William 'Billy Boy' Arnold, who as a youngster, met and was given a lesson by his idol. Now Arnold pays tribute to the blues pioneer on his new Electro-Fi recording, "Billy Boy Sings Sonny Boy," performing 14 songs of Williamson and three originals that are very much in the same style.

Backed by a band that includes Billy Flynn on guitar and mandolin, Bob Stroger on bass and Willie Smith on drums, with Mel Brown guesting on both piano and guitar, Arnold revives such well known blues that Sonny Boy made popular like 'Half-a-Pint' ('Sloppy Drunk Blues'),

'Good Morning Little School Girl,' 'Cut That Out,' and 'Sugar Mama,' along with such choice numbers as 'Mellow Chick Swing,' 'Polly Put That Kettle On,' 'Black Gal Blues,' 'Tell Me Baby,' and Billy Boy's own 'Squeeze Me Tight,' which sounds based on Sonny Boy's 'Rooted Groundhog Blues'.

Arnold brings a relaxed vocal style and his harp playing still shows his indebtedness to Sonny Boy's choked, crying style. Listen to his direct delivery of the ironic 'Decoration Day Blues,' on which Sonny Boy lamented the death of a girl friend. The irony was he was murdered on Decoration Day.

Then there is the lively 'Polly Put the Kettle On,' with its easy swing and a swinging solo by Flynn that evokes Willie James Lacey, who played on many of Sonny Boy's latter recordings.

Stroger and Smith keep the backing simple and Brown's guitar and piano fills out on several tracks the understated, but most effective backing throughout.

Arnold's heartfelt love of Sonny Boy is evident throughout and the backing complements his own delivery resulting in this very charming and moving musical remembrance.

**Ron Weinstock**

## **FRANK SINATRA**

### **Nothing But the Best**

#### **REPRISE RECORDS/RHINO**

The late Frank Sinatra's legacy as probably the best American popular singer continues with this single-disc compilation of 22 classic Sinatra tracks remixed and remastered from original Reprise master tapes.

Included are Sinatra gems such as "Come Fly With Me," "The Best Is Yet To Come," "The Way You Look Tonight," "Luck Be A Lady," "Bewitched," "Fly Me to the Moon (In Other Words)," "Strangers In the Night," "It Was A Very Good Year," "My Kind of Town," and "My Way." Orchestral arrangements are by Billy May, Quincy Jones, Nelson Riddle, Claus Ogerman, Ernie Freeman, Gordon Jenkins and others. Each song is a treasure. The bluesy, swinging Freeman arrangement of "That's Life," highlighted by organ riffs and backup singers, captures Sinatra in a powerful performance. Nancy Sinatra joins her father in harmonized vocals for the Billy Strange arrangement of "Somethin' Stupid."

Sinatra (b. 1915, d. 1998) got his big break in 1939 as band vocalist with Harry James. He performed with the Tommy Dorsey Orchestra and later struck out on his own. Sinatra made his Hollywood film debut in 1943 and went on to star in over 50 films. After recording 17 albums for Capitol Records from 1953-1961, he decided not to re-sign with that label. He formed his own label, Reprise, for which he would record many of his signature hits.

Sinatra's voice is in perfect form, arrangements are sublime, strings are sweet, and some tunes swing like mad. Accompanying this impressive disc is a 16-page, four-color liner booklet with photos, notes by compilation producer Charles Pignone and details for each tune. For more info, go to [www.franksinatra.com](http://www.franksinatra.com).

**Nancy Ann Lee**

## JOHN-ALEX MASON

### Town and Country NAKED JAYBIRD MUSIC

Split between the acoustic National Steel guitar driven Country Tracks and the electrified Town tracks, this 15 cut release is a trip down blues memory lane. Not that you've heard all of this before. You haven't. Instead, it's a trip through the *sound* of the blues before it moved into the clubs and grew the branches that became rock and roll. By and large, (Elmore James' *Shake Your Money Maker* being a notable exception) this is music that is meant to be listened to, not to serve as the soundtrack of your next party.

The Country tracks are stark, dark night, odes to moving on, *Terraplane Blues*, staying put, *Bury My Boots*, and dealing with the wild cards thrown up by nature, *Boll Weevil*. The Town tracks are street corner stuff that grabs your attention with the slicing electric guitar, Lowebow 4-string guitar box and simple foot drums propelling tales about forging your own path, *Rabbit Song*, watching the ladies getting the groove on, *Jitterbug Swing*, and taking care of your needs, *What Are You Hungry For?* The intersection of Town and Country is Mason's prowess on the guitar.

He's clearly done his time in the woodshed with the likes of Robert Johnson, Skip James, Bukka White and Charley Patton, all of whom are covered here to good effect. With a gruff, yet fluid, howl well suited to the stark musical back drop, Mason pulls you into this slice of history with tunes that stick even as the disc finds its end.

*Mark Smith*

## SALONGO

### Salongo SELF-PRODUCED

Salongo, a seven-piece Afro-Cuban/Brazilian group led by trumpeter, composer-arranger Eddie Allen performs eight originals and a Charlie Parker tune, "My Little Suede Shoes."

The band featuring Allen (trumpet, flugelhorn, electric trumpet & vocals), Bruce Williams (alto sax, flute), Teodross Avery (tenor sax), Hector Martignon (piano), Mario Rodriguez (electric bass), Diego Lopez (drums), Renato Thoms (congas, percussion) and special guest Uli Geissendoerfer (keyboards) leans more toward a smoother blend of Latin jazz than authentic, brassy roots music. Yet, that's exactly what makes their modern interpretations palatable for the masses.

Tunes are well arranged and the approach is subtle with a focus on improvised solos and catchy beats. One of the best numbers is "Nymphs of the Sudan" which captures a fine solo from Allen and a relentless beat reminiscent of Mongo Santamaria. Given a novel Afro-Cuban beat, "My Little Suede Shoes" percolates, featuring solos from Williams and Martignon and fine section work. The finale, "Just So You Know," is a sassy number with a repeating riff.

New York-based Allen is a versatile musician who can play everything from R&B/Pop to Latin to symphonic and Broadway music. He studied at the Wisconsin Conservatory of Music in Milwaukee and the University of Wisconsin.

sin in Green Bay before relocating to the East Coast where he attended William Paterson University of New Jersey where he earned a Bachelor of Music degree. He has performed with an array of name musicians and currently leads a quartet, a quintet, a Latin/Brazilian project, a large ensemble and a big band.

Allen's talents abound. There's plenty to like about this CD: Allen's original material, his arrangements, the tight three-horn section, splendid solos, and top-level musicianship.

*Nancy Ann Lee*

## MISSISSIPPI HEAT

### Hattiesburg Blues DELMARK RECORDS

Delmark has just released the latest recording, "Hattiesburg Blues," by Mississippi Heat. This is the 8th album by the group led by Pierre Lacocque, a fine songwriter and increasingly impressive harmonica player. The group is fronted by Inetta Visor, whose unforced, soulful singing is becoming more accomplished.

Guitarist Giles Corey, keyboard whiz Chris Cameron, bassist Spurling Banks and drummer Kenny Smith are the band's core, with Stephen Howard and Dajuan Austin filling in for Banks and Smith for certain tracks. One cannot stress just how good the rhythm section is and they certainly come off as good as any rhythm section in the blues today. Lurrie Bell and Carl Weathersby both make guest appearances with the Chicago Horns led by Kenny Anderson also appearing on several tracks.

The strength of the Mississippi Heat has always been fine original material, strong ensemble playing and strong solo playing. The opening track, 'Tiger Man,' is not the same song as Rufus Thomas' Sun recording, but rather Inetta Visor's joyful celebration of her man's love-making prowess and Lacocque's marvelous harp featured throughout.

It is followed by Lurrie Bell's declaration of 'Chicago Is My Home,' delivered marvelously with typically fine guitar while his other vocal on the rocking 'Gone So Long,' sports a marvelous solo from Lacocque along with his fine rocking accompaniment of Bell's vocal while Cameron adds some rollicking piano. One of the few covers here is of Denise LaSalle's 'Soft-Hearted Woman,' with fine guitar from Weathersby, and Visor showing her interpretative skills.

The Chicago Horns along with percussionist Ruben Alvarez add an Afro-Cuban feel to 'How Much Worse Can It Be?' and the title track with its musical allusion to 'Hernando's Hideaway.'

It's really nice to hear how Lacocque blends in his harp seamlessly with the band and horn riffs. Weathersby is typically impressive on the slow blues "Light From Within," along with 'Hell and Back,' on which he handles the vocal 'Calypso in Blue,' is a lovely instrumental with Giles Corey ably handling the guitar solo here with impressive chromatic harp from the leader.

What else can one say. Mississippi Heat is rooted in the entire scope of the post-World War II Chicago blues tradition and the terrific "Hattiesburg Blues" is another addition to their marvelous body of recordings.

*Ron Weinstock*



## PEGGY LEE

### Collector's Choice Releases

COLLECTOR'S CHOICE/EMI

Four Peggy Lee titles have just been issued in EMI's Collector's Choice series.

When vocalist Peggy Lee recorded her trademark song, "Fever," in 1958 it was a seductive number for that time and 50 years later it still sizzles on this Collector's Choice compilation disc *All Aglow Again*. The CD features 18 songs originally recorded as singles during the 1950s and released on LP in 1960 for Capitol Records. Included are Lee's renditions of "My Man," "Sweetheart," "Hallelujah, I Love Him So," and other tunes. This disc is one of a series released in May 2008 by Collector's Choice, most for the first time on CD and with fresh liner notes.

The two-CD Set, *The Lost '40s and '50s Capitol Masters*, features 39 rare and unreleased sides and singles and features Lee in her early years. None of the songs (too numerous to list here) has been released on CD and 13 gems are unreleased tracks.

*Then was Then, Now Is Now/Bridge Over Trouble Water* combines on a single disc two albums recorded in 1965 and 1970, respectively, along with three bonus tracks. One of my favorites is Lee's raw bluesy uptempo rendition of "The Thrill Is Gone (From Yesterday's Kiss)," with backing from a brassy band and rock guitar riffs enhancing. Her tender ballad rendition of "(I'm Afraid) The Masquerade Is Over," in soft, almost whispered vocals, will give listeners goose bumps.

Finally, the single disc compilation of two previously recorded albums, *Make It With You/Where Did They Go*, features Lee on 38 songs she recorded in 1970 and 1971, plus bonus tracks. Lee sings various pop tunes, including the Beatles' "The Long and Winding Road" and "My Sweet Lord," the Gordon Jenkins gem "Good-Bye," a pretty version of Kristofferson's "Help Me Make It Through the Night," a bouncy rendition of the previously unreleased "You're Driving Me Crazy," and others.

Granted, some of the tunes on the latter three compilations may not be familiar, but the vast array of material surely demonstrates Lee's versatility. She could belt out smoky blues, sing a sultry ballad, cover top tunes of the day, elegantly front a big band or a studio strings orchestra and sound comfortable doing it all. **Nancy Ann Lee**

## SAM CARR'S DELTA JUKES

### Let The Good Times Roll

SPV BLUE

Son of the legendary Robert Nighthawk, Sam Carr is in his seventh decade as a musician. Drummer for the Jelly Roll Kings, Sam Carr's Delta Jukes is a continuation of the delta juke sound that he has always played. Fred James has just put together this disc comprised of outtakes from two prior albums and tracks from a sound check at the Lucerne Blues Festival.

Carr is joined here by James, Dave Riley (guitar and vocals), John Weston (harmonica and vocals) and Andrew 'Shine' Turner on some enjoyable performances. Riley (who has an excellent album with Bob Corritore) sounds fine with originals, a nice Jimmy Reed medley and an energetic take of Little Red Rooster. Weston sings and plays strongly on two originals and Turner gives a fresh take on *Crawling King Snake*. The weakest tracks are Carr's two vocals with *Big Boss Man* being quite forgettable. Not a bad disc overall although the sound could have been a bit brighter. **Ron Weinstock**

## ROGER DAVIDSON TRIO

### Bom Dia

SOUNDBRUSH RECORDS

Roger Davidson, a versatile acoustic pianist, delivers a delightful 11-tune set of lyrical Brazilian jazz originals with bassist David Finck, drummer Paulo Braga, and special guest Marivaldo Dos Santos on percussion. Together, these musicians work flawlessly.

Davidson's appealing original tunes (ranging from 2:15 to 6:03 minutes for a total of 46:58) transmit warm, cheerful melodies between samba and bossa nova, and show off his keyboard expertise. Braga and Finck are first-call musicians who have worked with top-name leaders and are adept at interpreting Davidson's Brazilian themes. One of the prettiest tunes is "Contemplacao (Contemplation)," which contains a lovely bowed bass solo by Finck. Finck shines again with his plucked solo on "Samba para Minhas Crianças (Samba for My Children)."

Davidson is a versatile composer whose works include symphony, chamber, jazz and world music. Born in Paris in 1952 to a French mother and American father, Davidson moved as an infant with his family to New York City and has lived most of his life in the northeastern USA. He earned a Master's degree in composition from Boston University in the 1970s and a Master's in choral conducting from Westminster Choir College in Princeton, NJ. After spending some time in Germany, he returned to Boston where he led a chamber orchestra, wrote sacred choral music and taught. The late Bill Evans and other jazz pianists who swing passionately with a strong lyrical sense inspired Davidson.

*Bom Dia* (in Portuguese means "Good Day") is a unique piano trio album that follows Davidson's 2005 album, *Rodgers In Rio*, which adapted Richard Rodgers tunes in bossa nova settings with Finck and Braga. Updating the advent of small-group Brazilian jazz, this new project is a laid-back, enjoyable listen from start to finish.

**Nancy Ann Lee**

## LIVE BLUES ON THE HIGH SEAS



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**JIMMY HALL**  
**Rendezvous With The Blues**  
**ROCKIN' CAMEL MUSIC**

First released in 2001, and now supplemented with three bonus tracks, this disc features former Wet Willie vocalist Jimmy Hall applying his rough and ready vocals, harmonica and saxophone to the blues.

While more recent efforts including his 2003 release, *Triple Trouble*, with Tommy Castro and Lloyd Jones and this year's terrific *Build Your Own Fire*, find him in better form that isn't necessarily faint praise. With back up support by Jack Pearson on guitar, David Hood on bass, Bill Stewart on drums and Clayton Ivey on keys this stylistically diverse release covers lots of ground, much of it very well. The self-penned title track is an atmospheric, jazzy number that could easily fit in the catalogs of George Benson or Charles Brown.

Moving into the blues, Hall finds common ground with J.B. Hutto (*That's the Truth*), Muddy Water (*Long Distance Call*) and Willie Dixon (*Twenty-nine Ways to My Baby's Door*) where he lays down southern fried vocals over Pearson's tough slide guitar with a conviction that reveals some serious wood shedding with first generation electric blues. Perhaps forecasting the soul and R & B grooves of his more recent efforts, Hall also does passable takes on the Sam Cooke classic, *A Change is Gonna Come* and Nappy Brown's *Night Time is the Right Time*. *Weep and Moan* and *Hold What You Got*, both blues scorchers penned by Pearson and William Howe, allow Hall to cut loose with a bit more abandon as he isn't constrained by reverence for the original version of the well known classics. The biggest stylistic stretches occur on The Nighthawk's dance floor filling *Too Tall to Mambo* and on Booker T. and the MG's *The Hunter* which Hall redeems from the rock excess of the version done by Free way back when.

Throughout this release, Hall's expressive vocals prove to be a fine match for the material with just enough honey to sweeten up the rough edges as he explores both ends of his vocal range. While there is nothing essential here, this is nevertheless a fine re-introduction to those who lost track of Hall after his glory days with Wet Willie. **Mark Smith**

**RAVE TESAR TRIO**  
**You Decide**  
**TESAR MUSIC**

Performing with his acoustic trio, New York pianist-composer Rave Tesar delivers 10 straight-ahead originals with his brother, drummer Bill Tesar, and bassist Kermit Driscoll.

The title tune, at 8:18 minutes, is perhaps the album centerpiece. It begins with sparsely tapped-plucked bass riffs before Rave joins in with airy, flowery piano musings and Bill creates flashy pyrotechnics on traps and cymbals. "Everyone But Me" is a perky number that invites someone to compose lyrics.

Tesar, classically trained from the sounds of his playing, is the son of trumpeter/educator Charles Tesar and Lynn Tesar, a proficient pianist. He established himself on the New York jazz scene early in his career and has also performed with alternative and pop groups and written music for film, television, jingles, etc.

While these are skillful musicians, their overall fare is rather predictable. Rave doesn't seem to have a confident jazz style and, although the tunes are diverse (from the bluesy, swinging "Nobody's At Nobody's to the dreamy "Someone Else's Spell"), there's not much new being said here that hasn't been expressed by other piano trios.

**Nancy Ann Lee**

**AUSTIN "WALKIN' CANE"**  
**Murder Of A Blues Singer**  
**LAZY EYE**

The artist formerly known as Austin Charanghat is back for a fourth effort with a field full of blues direct from Mississippi delta region. A ten song retro project of mostly originals, co-written with fellow† singer/songwriter Chris Allen, Walkin Cane lets his slide do most of the bragging as shown in the opening cut "High Rent Lemon Girl, Aren't Ya?"

For the most part here, Walkin Cane is channeling Robert Johnson, not only on the title piece, but even takes a crack at Johnson's "Ramblin' On My Mind," with help from harpist Colin Dussault. The latter gent shows up on a handful of tracks here, including the boogie woogie "Georgia Moon," which has a Rolling Stones filter attached to it for good measure.

Backed up for the most part by the Bad Boys Of Blues (guitarist Michael Bay, bassist Mike Barrick and drummer Jim Wall), "Hold On The Night" is an all-out dance floor assault, while gospel act the Prayer Warriors show up for the reverent take of Blind Lemon Jefferson's "See That My Grave Is Kept Clean." Although the project is pretty much a team effort with Chris Allen, Walkin Cane takes a crack at Allen's best known tune "Late Great Singer" and adapts it well in a royal blue style.

There are many variations of the term blues music. If you are a fan of Robert Johnson, Bukka White or John Lee Hooker, you might want to track **Murder Of A Blues Singer** down so hear something similar but not identical. Available at [cdbaby.com](http://cdbaby.com) or at [walkincane.com](http://walkincane.com). **Peanuts**

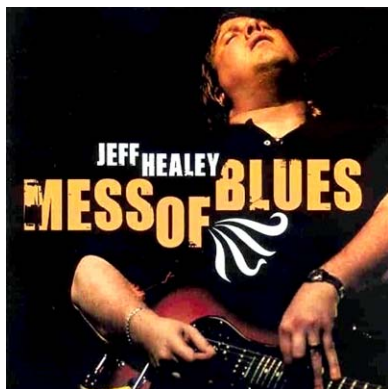
**CLARICE ASSAD**  
**Love, All That It Is**  
**NSS MUSIC**

Clarice Assad is a member of the well-known, well-respected Brazilian musical family which includes guitarists Jorge, Sergio and Odair and vocalists Angelina and Badi, who is also a guitarist. Clarice is a composer, pianist and vocalist who is very much at home in the classical and jazz worlds. And while her previous album was indeed a mix of classical and jazz, this new one is harder to categorize. Let's say it is a mix of those genres with a bit of pop.

On this outing Clarice uses her beautiful and expressive voice to take you on a journey about the phases of a relationship where all the songs tie together, with lyrics by Naomi Major – a Canadian born writer with movies and a book of essays to her credit. Clarice, of course, also plays piano and is accompanied by Ethan Startzman on bass, Julien Augier on drums and Kevin Callahan on guitars.

In short, this is a very listenable and well performed album which should please listeners in a number of genres. Visit [www.clariceassad](http://www.clariceassad) for more info. **Bill Wahl**





## JEFF HEALEY Mess Of Blues

RUF

The loss of the unique talent of Jeff Healey would be great under any circumstance but is more tragic coming at so early an age. While *Mess Of Blues* certainly wasn't meant as a posthumous release, its uncomplicated nature

makes for as nice a sendoff as one could ask for.

Healey's own liner notes trace his post-"superstar" years, when he eschewed the limelight as the blind blues/rock lap-guitar phenom to pursue his varied musical interests- music venue owner, traditional jazz trumpeter-without the attendant obligations of celebrity. The band on *Mess* is the four-piece he assembled for blues dates at his Toronto club and select road gigs and the fare here is, with a few exceptions, a straightforward blues set.

On well-traveled tunes including "Tore Down," "How Blue Can You Get" and "Sugar Sweet" and rock classics such as "The Weight," Healey delivers one last taste of his exquisite playing and unpretentious vocals. (Like Clapton, Healey proved that a white dude could deal with the blues vocally without mere imitation.) He'll be missed.

*Duane Verh*

## GREG GINN AND THE TEXAS CORRUGATORS

Goof Off Experts

JAMBANG

Connecting

SST

Punk pioneer and impresario and gonzo guitarist Ginn has returned from the ether in dual, overlapping identities on this twin release.

On *Goof Off Experts* one beholds a free form ensemble located on the musical spectrum somewhere between classic ESP-Disk fare and the jazz-rock-funk-and-beyond line-ups found these days on the Hyena label. The no-holds-barred atmosphere here allows for repeated figures to co-exist with loosely bound improv segments in a back-and-forth banter. The interplay one hears is made more interesting when it's realized that, other than drummer Joe Berardi, all the players here are Ginn himself. The quasi-combo environment succeeds to a great degree and the results challenge the ear while celebrating the whole-some fun of improvisation.

The tracks are more structured on Jambang's set but the polytonality and fearless spirit found on the Corrugators' disc remain. Here Ginn works with a full four-piece, highlighted by mandolinist Bobby Bancalari. The jam-band aesthetic replaces free jazz on *Connecting* with Ginn (on guitar and synth) and Bancalari laying out multi-textural turf adorned with angular harmonics reminiscent of Zappa. Jam fans be advised this is fare at the extreme left end of the dial, but, like its afore-mentioned sibling,

it's both seriously creative and a good time. Check out gregginn.com and sstsuperstore.com for more info.

*Duane Verh*

GIG ALERT- Remaining current June dates include Philadelphia - The Khyber 6/10; Cleveland - Wilbert's 6/13; Detroit - The Lager House 6/14 and Chicago- The Beat Kitchen 6/18

## DVDs

### LOUIS ARMSTRONG

The Portrait Collection

UNIVERSAL MUSIC DVD

This DVD collects performances from 1933 to 1965 by jazz great Louis Armstrong (Aug. 4, 1901—Jul. 6, 1971) and also features a television interview, an interactive timeline containing rare and classic images, film and interview clips, audio tracks, and nine photo galleries featuring Armstrong on tour and at home.

In a number of settings, from Hollywood films to television shows, Armstrong sings and plays gems such as "Mack the Knife," "Confessin'," "Basin Street Blues," "I Cover the Waterfront," "Dinah," and more. One minor annoyance is that the film clips are not organized in chronological order from the earliest date to more recent as they are listed in the 12-page liner booklet.

The 1961 television interview (apparently edited for brevity) covers Armstrong's boyhood, reform school experiences, and mentors. Even more interesting is the interactive timeline containing historic still photos, video interview clips, film clips and more, which can be viewed on a computer or television.

This DVD, produced by Toby Bryan and co-produced and written by Dan Morgenstern, is probably one of the most comprehensive collections about a jazz musician that I've come across. It's filled with information that can keep a jazz fan engaged for more than a couple of hours. Those involved in the making of this DVD deserve accolades for the fine job of assembling the material, especially the informative timeline. The glossy four-color liner booklet features Morgenstern's biographical sketch and historic photos (mostly black and white). That such a project should be undertaken some four decades after Armstrong's death is testament to the musician's importance in the development of jazz.

*Nancy Ann Lee*

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## DAVE SPECTER

Live In Chicago  
DELMARK DVD OR CD

Guitarist Dave Specter has built up quite a performing and recording resume over the past two decades. His crisp, inventive blues guitar has added elements of organ funk and jazz to his swinging guitar playing. Delmark has just issued the latest in their live CD/DVDs of blues performers, "Live in Chicago" by Specter. Recorded and Videographed at Buddy Guy's Legends, and Rosa's Lounge, we are treated to some of his taut instrumentals along with performances by guests Tad Robinson, Jimmy Johnson and Sharrie Williams. The DVD (which my review is based on) runs close to 90 minutes while this writer estimates that the CD has approximately 70 minutes of music.

The DVD opens at Legends with pictures of great blues legends on the wall with Specter and his band of Brother John Kattle on keyboards, Harlan Terson on bass and Marty Binder tearing into a medley of 'Boss Funk/Riverside Ride,' some choice soul-jazz blues funk that displayed not only Specter's hot guitar playing, but the terrific interplay between the band members. This is one fine rhythm section that swings and keeps the groove rocking in the pocket. Keying on the music and the musicians, the camera work was first rate and focused where it belonged the most. After the instrumentals, Tad Robinson is brought up and handles three vocals, 'What Love Did to me,' 'How I got to Memphis,' and 'What's Your Angle.' Robinson is amongst the most soulful of the blue-eyed blues vocalists working today and he also adds some choice harmonica to the first and third number. His soulful reworking of Tom T. Hall's 'When I Get to Memphis,' may be his most impressive vocal here, and the band does a great job of supporting him, with Specter adding some nice solos.

After another driving original instrumental, 'Texas Top,' Jimmy Johnson is brought up and turns in what are even for him exceptional performances. He opens up with an extended take on Jimmy Rogers' 'Out on the Road,' with some brilliant guitar and an even more compelling vocal. Listen to him phrase "Take me back, take me back, take me back, baby, darling try me one more time," to see how he takes this tune and makes it his own. It is nothing against David Specter, who has a really fine solo on this number after Johnson's, to say that the 79 year old Johnson steals the show on his three numbers that also include a strong 'Feel So Bad' and the Willie Cobbs' standard 'You Don't Love Me,' which is not included on the CD. Based on his stint here, Johnson certainly merits his own live CD/DVD.

The DVD shifts gears and moves to Rosa's Lounge with a nice funky organ-guitar shuffle, 'The Hollywood Park Shuffle,' (not on the CD), followed by the funky 'Is What it Is,' with plenty of tasty guitar and organ. Then Sharon Lewis brings up her big voice to belt out a trio of songs, 'In Too Deep,' 'Every Goodbye Ain't Gone,' (not on the CD) and 'Angel.' 'In Too Deep,' is a driving shuffle that Sharon belts out about catching her man with another woman, with solid solo breaks from Specter and Kattle, while 'Every Goodbye Ain't Gone,' is a slower

number with a nice funk groove as she tells her cheating lover, that every goodbye she makes does not mean she's gone. The closing 'Angel,' suggesting to me a soulful southern rock groove which allows Specter and band to change gears and allows Lewis to show her vocal and musical versatility.

This is an impressive live recording/video. Specter is not simply a first-rate musician and leads a terrific band, but he is also willing to share the spotlight with others. With Jimmy Johnson's truly stunning performances and the other strong music here, it may be the best live blues DVD that Delmark has issued. Highly recommended.

*Ron Weinstock*

## jazz-blues.com

### JUST IN....MORE FESTIVAL NEWS

#### North Sea Jazz Festival is July 11, 12 & 13 in Rotterdam

ROTTERDAM, Netherlands – The North Sea Jazz Festival proudly presents the program of its 33rd edition at Ahoy in Rotterdam, Netherlands. The central theme is 'Vocals in Jazz'! This means a focus on jazz vocalists, voice artists and warm soul voices. Besides the attention for vocals, the organizers are also focusing on two other themes: UK Jazz and the fusion of jazz with pop.

Big names for the coming festival include: Alicia Keys, Pat Metheny, Grammy winner Herbie Hancock, Branford Marsalis, Paul Simon, Bootsy Collins, Sergio Mendes, Joe Jackson, Youssou N'Dour, Omara Portuondo, Buddy Guy and newcomers like Gnarls Barkley and Mark Ronson. And: jazz legends like Phil Woods, the vibraphonists Gary Burton and Bobby Hutcherson, bassist Ron Carter and pianist Hank Jones, who will celebrate his 90th birthday during the festival, on Friday 11 July.

Also present in Ahoy will be: Charlie Haden, Abdullah Ibrahim, Wayne Shorter, Charles Lloyd and of course promising new jazz groups like the Nasheet Waits' Equality, the Adam Rogers Group and the Rudresh Mahanthappa Quartet. Dutch legends appearing include tenor saxophonist Ferdinand Povel and Willem Breuker. Remarkable is the rise of Dutch acts like Room Eleven and Alain Clark; last year's new arrivals who became popular straight away. A household name for the Dutch audience – although not as a singer – is Hans Teeuwen with Hans Teeuwen Zingt!

#### VOCALS IN JAZZ

The vocal jazz tradition is really a contradiction: in mainstream jazz the voice isn't seen as a true instrument, and at the same time the use of vocals gives jazz such a popularity boost. This year, North Sea Jazz makes up the balance of the current status of the voice in jazz music. The organizers have asked voice artist



Bobby McFerrin to be Artist in Residence. He will kick off the festival on Friday with the NDR Big Band. On Saturday he will perform with virtuoso bass player Richard Bona. His Sunday performance will be a surprise.

Other major artists performing with this vocal theme in mind are: Diana Krall, Cassandra Wilson, Al Jarreau, Jill Scott, Angie Stone, Chaka Khan and Etta James. At the festival, Sheila Jordan and Cleo Laine will represent classical vocal jazz. The Jazz Orchestra of the Concertgebouw will perform with the First Ladies of Dutch Jazz: Rita Reys and Fay Claassen. Also present will be Freddy Cole; the master of the 'vocalese': Mark Murphy; and close harmony singers: New York Voices. Both vocal art and the limits of the voice are explored by Greetje Bijma, Sidsel Endresen and Michael Schiefel. Talked-about, up and coming talents are José James, Sachal Vasandani or Marc Broussard.

#### UK JAZZ

After last year's focus on European jazz, this year special attention is given to jazz from Great Britain. In recent years, an exciting young jazz scene has emerged there. Representatives of that scene, Led Bib, Finn Peters and Acoustic Ladyland, will introduce themselves at the festival. Fink and Matthew Herbert Big Band have a firm base in pop music but embrace many jazz influences. The band Empirical shows why they – deservedly – won the 2007 EBU European Jazz Competition. Renowned artist John Surman will perform too, with a concert for strings.

#### POP & JAZZ

Jazz has influenced pop music and vice versa since the '60s. Well-known style examples are soul jazz, fusion and jazz rock. A new generation of jazz acoustic playing musicians bridges the gap between the bebop tradition and present-day pop and rock music. Therefore, at North Sea Jazz: The Bad Plus, Soil & "PIMP" Sessions, Brad Mehldau and novice Christian Prommer's Drum Lesson. But also: Lou Donaldson, one of the founders of soul jazz, and George Benson. Masters of the fusion genre are Tom Scott & The L.A. Express, Deodato and Victor Wooten. Frank Zappa was one of those visionaries who used jazz to shift the horizons of rock. His son Dweezil Zappa keeps the tradition alive with the project Zappa plays Zappa. The Mars Volta demonstrates that the fusion between jazz and pop isn't exhausted yet by playing their extreme mix of hardcore, psychedelic rock, Latin and impro jazz.

#### CORPORATE EXPRESS MIDSUMMER JAZZ GALA

According to tradition the North Sea Jazz Festival will open with the Corporate Express Midsummer Jazz Gala with a performance of Angie Stone on Thursday 10 July.

#### NORTH SEA JAZZ FOR KIDS

After a successful first edition in 2007, it's time again for North Sea Jazz for Kids in the afternoon of Wednesday 9 July 2008. Especially for children there will be performances and workshops, but also the show 'Kikker Swingt' (Frog swings). The famous adventures of Frog, as written by Max Velthuijs, are told by Nico de Vries to the rhythm of the live music of the Tony Overwater Kwintet.

The complete program of the North Sea jazz festi-

val and updates, plus ticket information can be found at [www.northseajazz.com](http://www.northseajazz.com). Information on Ahoy can be found at [www.ahoy.nl](http://www.ahoy.nl).

## Reno-Tahoe Blues Fest set for August 16-17

RENO, Nevada – Named "Festival of the Year" by the Bay Area Blues Society in 2005, the Reno-Tahoe Blues Fest continues to earn the title by bringing in some of the biggest names in the business including 2008 headliners Gladys Knight, The Whispers and Jonny Lang to celebrate the history, culture and spirit of the blues. Tickets are available online at [www.RenoTahoeBluesFest.com](http://www.RenoTahoeBluesFest.com) for the 4<sup>th</sup> annual festival scheduled for Aug. 16-17 at Rancho San Rafael Park in Reno, Nev.

"Each year the Reno-Tahoe Blues Fest continues to grow, showcasing different artists, more amenities and exciting new opportunities for blues fans to really immerse themselves in music," said Charles McNeely, president of the Reno-Tahoe Blues Fest and Reno City Manager. "This year, as in years past, we're continuing to provide one of the best blues experiences on the West Coast bringing both veteran musicians as well as relative newcomers to entertain and delight Reno-Tahoe audiences."

The festival's closes on Sunday with headliner Gladys Knight who has more than four decades of chart-topping hits and is a six-time Grammy Award winner. Critics applaud Knight's smooth vocals and heartfelt emotion which lend to a variety of musical styles from rhythm and blues to

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soul, gospel to Motown and beyond. Originally singing with her brother and cousins as Gladys Knight and the Pips, Knight earned a level of superstardom with the smash hit "Midnight Train to Georgia." Recent album releases highlight her amazing diversity, with ballads, jazz standards and gospel songs all touched on in albums including "At Last" and "Before Me."

Veteran R&B group The Whispers co-headline Saturday's performances bringing more than four decades of hits to the stage including "Rock Steady," "Lady," "Let's Go All the Way" and their biggest hit "And The Beat Goes On." Jonny Lang also co-headlines the Saturday festival schedule. Releasing his solo debut "Lie to Me" at just 15, Jonny Lang shot into the limelight of blues music with what U.S. News and World Report calls "the voice of a grizzled blues veteran." The Grammy-nominated Lang has polished his skills alongside blues heavyweights B.B. King and Buddy Guy and continues to churn out searing blues and rock and roll including 2006's "Turn Around," his fifth album.

In addition to the daily headline performers, the 2008 Reno-Tahoe Blues Fest line-up features Delta-bluesman Bobby Rush, soul and gospel legend Mavis Staples and others including Mel Waiters, Latimore, E.C. Scott, Betty Wright, Ernie Johnson and more. Daily tickets include access to all performances and VIP packages are available to attend both days.

Annually the festival draws more than 10,000 attendees to Reno's Rancho San Rafael Park for two days of musical performances beginning at 12 p.m. and continu-


ing into the twilight. The ongoing entertainment is complemented by a variety of dining options including classic Southern specialties and ice-cold beverages that combine to provide a first-class blues experience.

Tickets for the Reno-Tahoe Blues Fest are on sale now, with one-day tickets starting at just \$58 and two-day value tickets from \$106. VIP passes, valid for both days of the Festival, are just \$210 and offer premium seating for the entire event. Tickets purchased prior to June 15 qualify for a 10 percent early bird discount. Group pricing and Platinum and Blues Cabana ticket packages are also available.


For more information, visit the Reno-Tahoe Blues Fest online at [www.RenoTahoeBluesFest.com](http://www.RenoTahoeBluesFest.com) or call 775-857-3378. Festival tickets are on sale now, online at [www.Ticketmaster.com](http://www.Ticketmaster.com), or by phone at 775-787-8497.

The Reno-Tahoe Blues Fest, founded in 2005, was created to bring world-class blues to the Reno-Tahoe region and to celebrate the history, culture and spirit of the blues. Staged annually at Reno's Rancho San Rafael Park, the two-day festival attracts audiences from around the country to hear some of the biggest names in blues including Etta James, Clarence Carter, Buddy Guy, Bobby Rush, Keb Mo and others. Established as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, the Reno-Tahoe Blues Fest supports music education for youth in the Reno-Tahoe area through a scholarship program and ongoing assistance for school music equipment purchases and jazz band programs. Funds for the festival are raised through corporate sponsorships and ticket sales.

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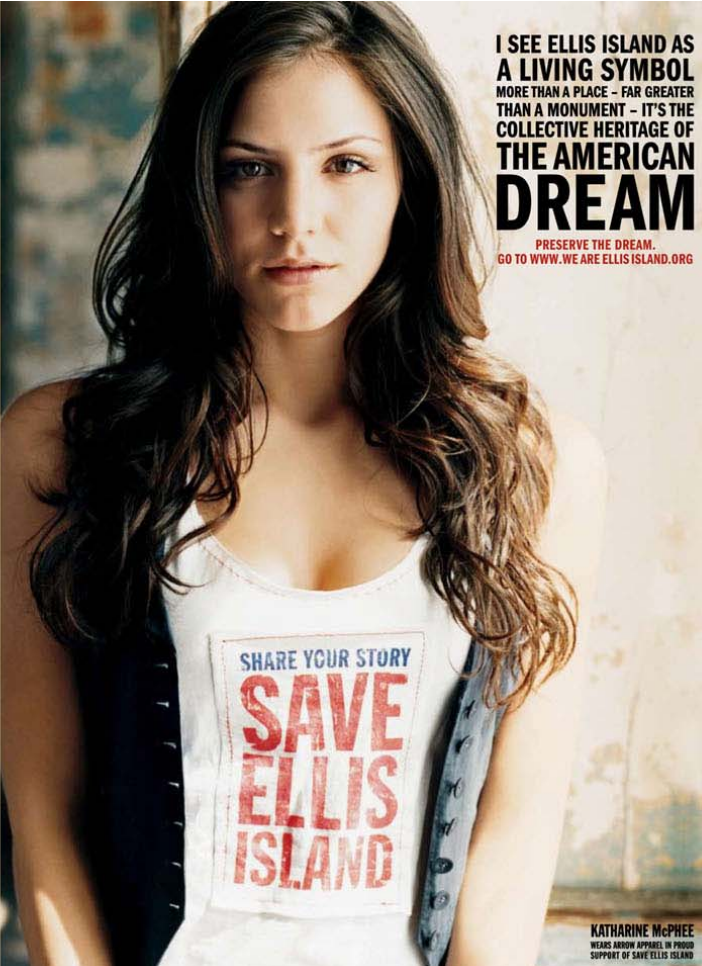


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