

Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events
Lori E. Lightfoot - Mayor of Chicago

36th Annual

Chicago

Blues

Festival

2019

OFFICIAL
PROGRAM
BOOK

June 7-9, 2019
11am-9pm
Millennium Park

FREE ADMISSION

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#ChicagoBluesFestival



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Welcome to the 36th Annual Chicago Blues Festival

On behalf of Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot, welcome to the 36th Annual Chicago Blues Festival!

Chicago is the birthplace of the urban blues, gospel music, house music, jazz and more. Over three weeks we are celebrating Chicago's Music Legacy in the city's stunning cultural home – Millennium Park. Chicago is an arts powerhouse and because of our rich musical heritage, a global cultural destination for music lovers.

In 2019, the festival is celebrating the influence of the blues with tributes and performances by the genre's leading artists that include traditional blues, soul, R&B, hip hop and more on six stages featuring local and national blues artists in the park and in music venues and clubs throughout the city.

Festival headliners performing on the main stage, the Jay Pritzker Pavilion, include: Bobby Rush, Jimmy Johnson Blues Band, Charlie Musselwhite

with Billy Boy Arnold, Bettye LaVette, Don Bryant, Latimore, Ruthie Foster, The CONNECTION: Mike Welch & Friends and Larkin Poe. With six stages of music, Millennium Park will pulsate with the power of the blues.

Best of all, it's free—made possible by our many partners and the hardworking team at the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events. I'm grateful for their support. I encourage our guests to attend the after-sets and musical happenings taking place in our great music clubs and venues throughout the city. Attending Blues Fest also means going out to our neighborhoods and enjoying our vibrant music scene.

Welcome, and enjoy!

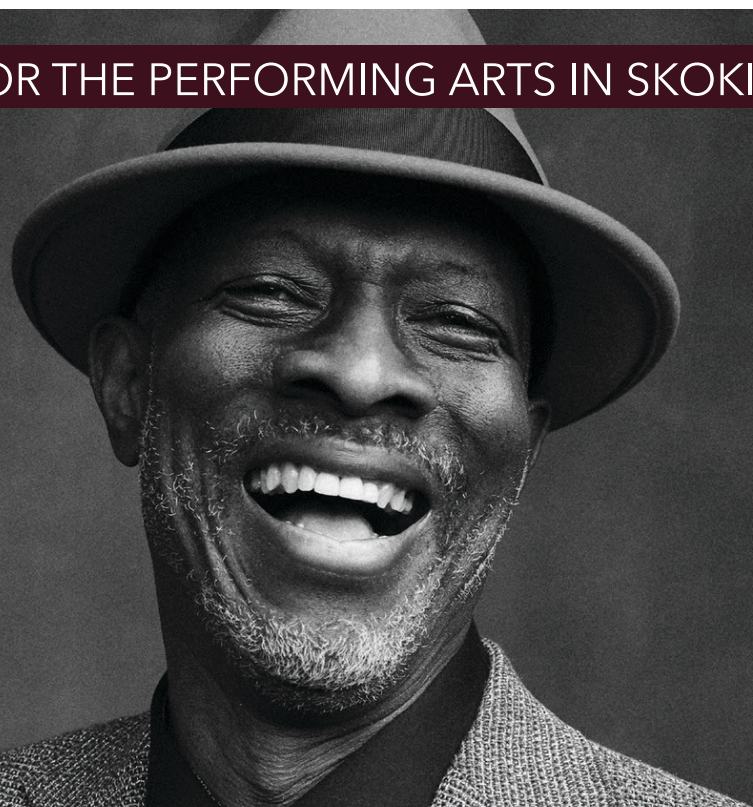
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36th Annual CHICAGO BLUES FESTIVAL SCHEDULE

FRIDAY, JUNE 7

JAY PRITZKER PAVILION

7:45-9pm Bobby Rush
6:30-7:30pm Jimmy Johnson Blues Band
5-6:15pm Charlie Musselwhite with special guest
Billy Boy Arnold

BUDWEISER CROSSROADS STAGE

4:15-5:30pm Bombino
2:45-4pm Guy King with special guest Chris Cain
1:30-2:30pm Thornetta Davis
12:15-1:15pm Benny Turner and Real Blues
11am-Noon Joanna Connor

VISIT MISSISSIPPI JUKE JOINT STAGE

4:15-5:30pm Jam Session with Kenny "Beedy Eyes" Smith
3-4pm Grady Champion
1:45-2:45pm Karen Wolfe
12:30-1:30pm Keith Johnson "Prince of the Delta Blues" &
The Big Muddy Blues Band
11:15am-12:15pm Jimmy Burns Band

FRONT PORCH STAGE - WRIGLEY SQUARE

8-9pm Vance "Guitar" Kelly & The Backstreet
Blues Band
6:30-7:30pm Breezy Rodio
5-6pm Mzz Reese
3:30-4:30pm Mojo Morganfield & The Mannish Boyz
2-3pm Kenny Smith & The House Bumpers
12:30-1:30pm Bob Stroger
11am-Noon Blues in the Schools with Katherine Davis,
Mahmoud Khan, Tino Cortes, Alan Burroughs and
Stone Academy

PARK GRILL STAGE

4-4:45pm Jimmy Nick & Don't Tell Mama
3-3:45pm Eric Noden
2-2:45pm Gerry Hundt's Legendary One-Man Band

ROSA'S LOUNGE

11am-9pm Daily showcase of Chicago Blues legends and
emerging artists that have called Rosa's Lounge
home over the last 35 years

SATURDAY, JUNE 8

JAY PRITZKER PAVILION

7:45-9pm Bettye LaVette
6:30-7:30pm Don Bryant
5:15-6:15pm Latimore

BUDWEISER CROSSROADS STAGE

4:15-5:30pm Dave Alvin & Jimmie Dale Gilmore with
The Guilty Ones
3-4pm Billy Boy Arnold
1:30-2:45pm Rico McFarland, Carl Weathersby and
Wayne Baker Brooks
12:15-1:15pm Marquise Knox
11am-Noon Melody Angel

VISIT MISSISSIPPI JUKE JOINT STAGE

4:15-5:30pm Jam Session with Kenny "Beedy Eyes" Smith
3-4pm O.B. Buchana
1:45-2:45pm John Primer & The Real Deal Blues Band
12:30-1:30pm Super Chikan
11:15am-12:15pm Jesse "Guitar" Robinson

FRONT PORCH STAGE - WRIGLEY SQUARE

8-9pm Lurrie Bell
6:30-7:30pm Morry Sochat & The Special 20s
5-6pm Bridges to the Blues
3:30-4:30pm Dom Flemons
2-3pm Chicago Blues Piano Master—A Tribute To Otis Spann with
Oscar Wilson, Johnny Iguana, Sumito Ariyoshi, Rie Kanehira,
Roosevelt Purifoy, Harlan Terson, Frank Krakowski and
Kenny "Beedy Eyes" Smith
12:30-1:30pm The Joel Paterson Organ Trio featuring Chris Foreman
11am-Noon Mary Lane

PARK GRILL STAGE

4-4:45pm Doktu Rhute Muuzic
3-3:45pm Harmonica Hinds
2-2:45pm Dom Flemons

ROSA'S LOUNGE

11am-9pm Daily showcase of Chicago Blues legends and emerging
artists that have called Rosa's Lounge home over the last 35 years

SUNDAY, JUNE 9

JAY PRITZKER PAVILION

7:45-9pm Ruthie Foster
6:30-7:30pm The CONNECTION: Mike Welch & Friends
5:15-6:15pm Larkin Poe

BUDWEISER CROSSROADS STAGE

4:15-5:30pm Roomful of Blues with special appearance by
guest vocalist, Lynne Jordan
2:45-4pm Toronzo Cannon
1:30-2:30pm The Kinsey Report
12:15-1:15pm Melvin Taylor & The Slack Band
11am-Noon Omar Coleman

VISIT MISSISSIPPI JUKE JOINT STAGE

4:15-5:30pm Jam Session with Kenny "Beedy Eyes" Smith
3-4pm Zac Harmon
1:45-2:45pm Jarekus Singleton
12:30-1:30pm RL Boyce
11:15am-12:15pm The Fred T and Chris Gill Band

FRONT PORCH STAGE - WRIGLEY SQUARE

6:30-7:30pm Mike Wheeler Band
5-6pm Russ Green
3:30-4:30pm Ivy Ford
2-3pm Cash Box Kings
12:30-1:30pm Erwin Helfer
11am-Noon Willie Buck

PARK GRILL STAGE

4-4:45pm Tom Holland & The Shuffle Kings
3-3:45pm Rick King's Royal Hustle
2-2:45pm Chicago Bound Blues Band

ROSA'S LOUNGE

11am-9pm Daily showcase of Chicago Blues legends and emerging
artists that have called Rosa's Lounge home over the last 35 years

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#ChicagoBluesFestival

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36TH ANNUAL CHICAGO BLUES FESTIVAL

by Justin O'Brien

FRIDAY, JUNE 7 BUDWEISER CROSSROADS STAGE (Chase Promenade South) Emcee: WDCB

11am–Noon Joanna Connor

Joanna Connor has gained a formidable reputation as a Chicago-based, Texas-style, guitar-slinging blues singer and slide player (who hails from Brooklyn, New York, by way of Worcester, Massachusetts). Connor found a spot in slide guitarist Johnny Littlejohn's band after making her 1984 pilgrimage to the Windy City, and in 1985 took up Dion Payton's invitation to join his 43rd Street Blues Band. She toured as a guitarist with sax-man A.C. Reed's band before committing full-time to her own band in 1987. She recorded four well-received albums on the Blind Pig label, toured nationally and internationally, and even appeared in a scene on the Fox TV show *The Exorcist* in 2016. With the heart of a road warrior, she had to juggle the demands of gigging and being a mother, all while the blues club and recording scene was changing. In 2016, with her two kids grown, she recorded ***Six String Stories***, her first studio album in a while (and her third for M.C. Records), heralding a blistering return to the charts.

12:15–1:15pm Benny Turner and Real Blues

Playing bass and guitar, **Benny Turner** served with Dee Clark, the Soul Stirrers and Mighty Joe Young in Chicago, and then became Marva Wright's bandleader for two decades in New Orleans. But early on Turner

toured and recorded as bassist for his brother, the late guitar wizard Freddie King, who took him to the biggest arenas and largest festivals before King's early death in 1976. Turner's autobiography, ***Survivor: The Benny Turner Story*** (2017), details his incredible life in music. Since 2010 he has released a string of his own recordings, including the all-original ***Journey*** (2014) and ***My Brother's Blues***, a tribute to the music of his brother Freddie King. His very latest, ***Going Back Home***, just released on Nola Blue, pairs him with his old friend Cash McCall from their gospel-singing youth in Chicago. The set is a return to the traditional Chicago blues they each knew and performed (though separately) early in their careers, and includes cameos from Turner's lovely-voiced daughters. Sadly, Cash McCall passed away in April of this year.



THORNETTA DAVIS

1:30–2:30 pm Thornetta Davis

Born in Detroit in 1963, **Thornetta Davis** sang R&B as a young woman in vocal groups and as a backup singer until scoring a solo recording contract with Seattle's Sub

Pop label. With them she released ***Shout out to the Dusthuffer*** (1995) followed by ***Sunday Morning Music*** (1996). Her song *Cry* was picked up for the premiere season of HBO's *The Sopranos*. Beginning in the late 1990s, Davis sang backup for Detroit's Kid Rock on two of his CDs and a single, and she appeared with him on "Jimmie Kimmel Live" and at the 2000 VH1 Vogue Fashion Awards at New York's Madison Square Gardens. During her seven-year residency at Detroit's Music Menu club she recorded ***Thornetta Davis Covered Live at the Music Menu***, which won Best R&B/Blues Recording at the Detroit Music Awards in 2002. Thus far she has won over 30 Detroit Music Awards, and in 2001 Davis was inducted into the Detroit Music Hall of Fame. Her 2016 CD ***Honest Woman*** garnered more accolades. Davis has done considerable recording for commercials, and her voice was used on the television program *Xena Warrior Princess*. She can also be heard on the soundtrack for the 2001 film *Osmosis Jones*.

2:45–4pm Guy King with special guest Chris Cain

As stylish and regal as his name, **Guy King's** refined guitar playing retains the essence of the rowdy history of blues. The Israel-born King spent time in Memphis and New Orleans before making his presence known in Chicago as guitarist for the late, west side legend Willie Kent, whom he worked with for many years and recorded with on ***Comin' Alive*** (Blue Chicago). His debut CD, ***Livin' It***, released in 2008, was a hit with the media and fans alike. His 2016 follow-



LEGEND

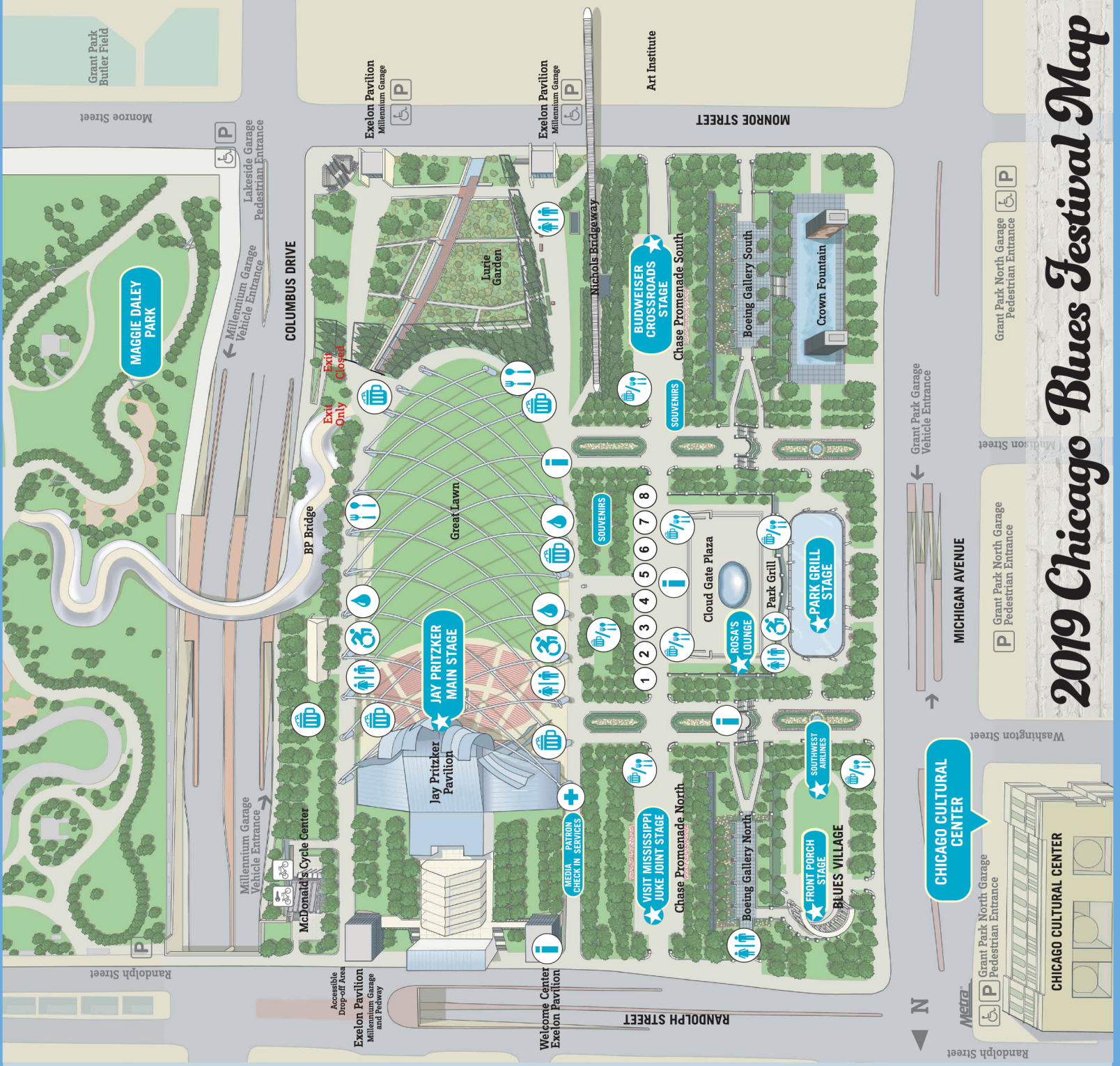
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- Southwest Airlines
- The Eddie Taylor Blues Foundation
- Windy City Blues Society



2019 Chicago Blues Festival Map

up on Delmark, *Truth*, reached the top spot on the Roots Music Report for contemporary blues and garnered a Blues Foundation nomination for Best Emerging Artist Album. His all-original followup will appear on Delmark later this year. For this appearance, King will be joined by **Chris Cain**, known for his Memphis-style guitar playing and strong, soulful vocals. This will be an interesting pairing since King and

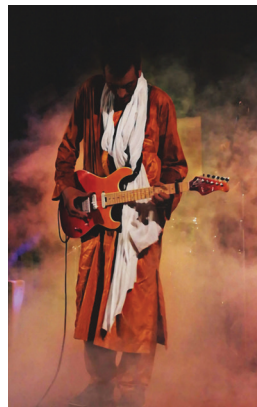


GUY KING

Cain have both built on the bedrock of blues guitar stylists B.B. King and Albert King and found ample room for riffing. Cain, who was raised in a home that treasured the Memphis blues traditions, went to his first B.B. King concert at the age of three. He began learning guitar at eight years of age and was out gigging in local clubs around San Jose, California, by the time he was eighteen. He studied (and taught) jazz and became a multi-instrumentalist, and in 1987 released his first album, *Late Night Blues City Blues*, which earned four W.C. Handy nominations (forerunner to the Blues Music Awards). He has recorded three albums for the Blind Pig label and five for Blue Rock-It and has self-produced a few others.

4:15-5:30pm Bombino

Born Goumour Almoctar to a nomadic tribe of Tuareg in Niger, Omara "**Bombino**" Moctar fuses



BOMBINO

traditional and modern worlds. Mostly self-taught on the guitar, he practiced while herding the tribe's livestock and later studied with renowned Tuareg guitarist Haja Bebe. He traveled to Libya and Algeria where he met with other musicians and learned from Western videos of guitar players. He quickly became an accomplished player and accompanied the band Tidawt to California where, in addition,

traditional Berber rhythms of the Sahara with an energy borrowed from Western rock music to make haunting, hypnotic, blues-like songs and hard-driving, danceable grooves that bridge the

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he recorded on **Stone's World—The Rolling Stones Project Volume 2**, with Keith Richards and Charlie Watts. Back in Niger, he fled to Burkina Faso after two of his band members were killed in a Tuareg rebellion. Filmmaker Ron Wyman featured Bombino in a documentary about the Tuareg and helped him record **Agadez** on Cumbancha Records in 2011. Bombino is the innovator of 'Tuareggae,' a combination of Tuareg blues/rock with reggae.

**VISIT MISSISSIPPI
JUKE JOINT STAGE
(Chase Promenade North)
Emcee: Kamel King**

11:15am–12:15pm Jimmy Burns Band

Jimmy Burns was born in the Delta town of Dublin, Mississippi, in 1943 and came to Chicago at 12 years of age. As a teen he was a street-corner doo-wopper, like his friends Curtis Mayfield, Major Lance, Jerry Butler and Gene Chandler. He joined The Medallionaires and recorded on a couple of doo-wop sides. Burns issued a handful of soul 45s and toured with the Fantastic Epics. After a hiatus from music he returned in the 1990s singing blues and playing guitar on his own Delmark recording **Leaving Here Walking** which made a big splash on the scene, won the coveted Blues Album of the Year award from the National Association of Independent Record Distributors and led to steady gigs, touring and further recording. Thus far he has released four CDs and a live DVD on Delmark, and he played guitar on his late brother Eddie's 2002 album, **Snake Eyes**. He detoured to the Velrone label in 2011 to record **Stuck in the Middle** before returning to Delmark in 2015 to record **It Ain't Right**, yet another great set of blues, soul and gospel which showcases his silvery and authoritative voice.



KEITH JOHNSON
PHOTO BY MARCUS MCCLAMROCK

12:30–1:30pm Keith Johnson “Prince of the Delta Blues” & The Big Muddy Blues Band
Keith Johnson “Prince of the Delta Blues” seems less audacious a title for an up-and-coming young guitarist when you consider that

he is a great nephew of a true king of the blues—Muddy Waters. Additionally, his grandfather Texcellar Fields was a Delta gospel singer and radio personality. The Glen Allan, Mississippi, native began singing gospel music after years of church exposure, performing with the Delta Sensations before picking up the guitar and branching out into the blues while a student at Delta State University. In addition to guitar, Johnson has experience playing keyboards and harmonica.

In 2016 Johnson graduated from Delta State with a degree in audio engineering. Keith Johnson and The Big Muddy Blues Band won the 2018 Vicksburg Blues Challenge and advanced to represent the Vicksburg Blues Society in the International Blues Challenge. Currently, Johnson and his Big Muddy Band are said to be working on a recording.

1:45–2:45pm Karen Wolfe

Originally from Pine Bluff, Arkansas, where she was born in 1959, **Karen Wolfe** is today one of the rising stars of southern soul blues. But she began her singing career in gospel, performing with Soul Unlimited and recording **Stop By Here** with The Harmonettes. After a move to Jackson, Tennessee, in 1997 she took up blues, singing back-up with the legendary soul blues singer Denise LaSalle, with whom she toured for several years before striking out on her own. In 2006 she recorded her debut album, **First Time Out**, on B&J Records and followed up in 2009 with **A Woman Needs a Strong Man**. In 2012 she released the full-length CD **Telling it Like it Is** on Coday, the successor to B&J Records. Then in quick succession, she followed in 2015 with **No Regrets** and again two years later with **That Bitch Ain't Me** (also retitled *That Chick Ain't Me*).

3–4pm Grady Champion

Singer, songwriter and harmonica player **Grady Champion** was born into a big farming family in Canton, Mississippi, in 1969 and as a youngster sang in the church choir. As a teen he was drawn to the rap music industry and went to work in Florida as a DJ, a promoter and later, as a performer, rapping under the name MC Gold. But he began experimenting with a hip hop infused blues, took up the harmonica and soon self-produced his first album, **Goin' Back Home**. He got the attention of Shanachie Records, and with them he released **Payin' for My Sins** (1999) and **2 Days Short of a Week** (2001), on which he wrote and performed songs that addressed gang violence and racial profiling. In 2003 Etta James recorded the song *Trust Yourself*, co-written by Champion with Kevin Bowe, for her **Let's Roll** album, which won a Grammy® Award for Best Contemporary Blues Album and a Blues Music Award for Soul/Blues Album of the Year. Having earned some valuable experience in the music business, Champion started up his own label, Grady Shady Music, in 2011 and released three albums including **Dreamin'** which was nominated for two 2012 Blues Music Awards for Best Soul Blues Album and Song of the Year (for "Thank You for Giving Me the Blues"). Jackson, Mississippi-based Malaco Records signed Champion the following year, recording his album **Bootleg Whiskey** a fine offering of southern soul blues. In 2016 he followed with **One of a Kind**.

4:15–5:30pm Jam Session with Kenny "Beedy Eyes" Smith

A perennial favorite of the Chicago Blues Fest is the **jam session with Kenny Smith**, one of the premier drummers on today's blues scene. Smith was taught by one of the very best—his father, Willie "Big Eyes" Smith, who for years kept the beat for the great Muddy Waters. He had a

unique vantage point on the blues, as he grew up in a house—on the same block as Muddy Waters—where some of the greatest Chicago blues musicians constantly dropped by. Kenny's career reached a pinnacle when he won a Grammy® Award in 2011 for **Joined at the Hip**, backing up his father (who was then playing harp, his original instrument) as well as Waters' former piano player and bandmate Pinetop Perkins. Yet Kenny has never rested on his laurels. He finds time to play in several bands contemporaneously, is a go-to guy for session drumming and continues to perfect his craft and learn new styles, instruments and techniques. He's a family man who teaches workshops and participates in the Blues in the Schools program and has recorded developmental music for children. In 2009 he was nominated for a Grammy® Award for his contributions to **Chicago Blues: A Living History**. Smith is a five time nominee for the annual Blues Music Award for Best Drummer by the Blues Foundation. On his own Big Eye label he has released **Keepin It Together** in 2014 with preeminent Chicago bassist Bob Stroger and has just issued **Drop the Hammer**.



KENNY "BEEDY EYES" SMITH

FRONT PORCH STAGE (Wrigley Square) Emcee: Mike Jeffers Chicago Jazz Magazine

11am–Noon Blues in the Schools with Katherine Davis, Mahmoud Khan, Tino Cortes, Alan Burroughs

and Stone Academy

Blues in the Schools has become a venerable institution that provides in-class and after-school arts education for all grades, employing blues music and history to teach not only music, but also self-esteem, cultural diversity and self-expression. The Chicago Blues Festival continues its long-standing tradition of opening the festival with a performance by Chicago students from the Blues in the Schools program, and this year's group once again hails from the **Stone Scholastic Academy**, one of the many schools benefiting from this wonderful program.

Katherine Davis has been involved with Blues in the Schools since 1992, contributing her talents for both singing and for working with children to build their self-esteem through music expression. Davis has additionally worked to bring art to inner city children through her role as a docent at Chicago's Smart Museum of Art. She has deservedly earned a place among the highest ranks of traditional blues and jazz vocalists on the Chicago scene. Her latest recording is **Rock This House—Live!** on Sirens Records.

Mahmoud Khan is a Chicago keyboard player and composer who is currently working with the 12-piece funk ensemble Souled Out, as well as with the Mike Dangeroux Orchestra and The Tropics Reggae Band. He has many credits for theatrical productions and won the 2010 Black Theatre Alliance Award for Sound Design for the ETA Creative Arts Foundation production of *A Fool Such as I*.

Longtime Chicago drummer **Tino Cortes** has a resume that extends back several decades to performing with rent-party pianist Jimmy Walker. He has accompanied Katherine Davis for several years of Chicago Blues Festival appearances. Cortes is also the drummer for Tom Holland & The Shuffle Kings, who are also on the Chicago Blues Fest this year.

Chicago jazz guitarist **Alan**

Burroughs has performed and/or recorded with such musical dignitaries as Martha Redbone, Art Porter, Philip Bailey, Adam Holzman, Charles Earland, and Miles Davis. Burroughs and Tim Gant both participated in producer Larry Skoller's Ladysmith Chicago Gospel Experience, with the Ladysmith Red Lions of South Africa.

12:30–1:30pm Bob Stroger

Bob Stroger, who turns eighty this year, is thoroughly enjoying a late-in-life celebrityhood that is rare for a bass player. Born in 1939 in Hayti, Missouri, Stroger came to Chicago in 1955. He anchored the bands of Eddie King in the '60s, Otis Rush in the '70s and '80s, Sunnyland Slim in the '80s and '90s, and more recently, Mississippi Heat, before teaming up with Pinetop Perkins, Willie "Big Eyes" Smith, Kenny Smith and Frank Krakowski, recording with them on the Grammy® Award-winning Telarc CD, **Joined at the Hip**, in 2010. In 2006 he and his old friend and Sunnyland Slim bandmate, saxophonist Sam Burckhardt, produced **Bob Is Back in Town** on the Airway imprint, the first domestic solo release in his name. His most recent project is the 2014 collaboration with drummer Kenny Smith, **Keepin' it Together**.

2–3pm Kenny Smith & The House Bumpers

Kenny Smith, son of the late, great Muddy Waters' drummer Willie Smith, has taken big strides in his father's shoes, hewing to the tradition he knows and loves so well and ably carrying it forward. But Kenny, who is not only a master of his instrument but also a knowledgeable student of the history of American music, is also a product of a newer and younger generation. Kenny Smith & The House Bumpers' latest release **Drop the Hammer** on his own Big Eye label takes some interesting liberties with tradition. On guitar he has employed Buddy Guy's son Greg and former Willie Kent sideman (and

now bandleader in his own right) Guy King, and he includes a chorus of his own children on one track. With harp contributions by innovator Sugar Blue and bold rising star Omar Coleman, three back-up vocalists and a set list of genre-bending numbers, **Hammer** represents a big step outside of those big, yet potentially individuality-restricting, shoes.

3:30–4:30pm Mojo Morganfield & The Mannish Boyz

Joseph "Mojo" Morganfield, youngest son of Chicago blues legend Muddy Waters, is the latest of Waters' musical heirs to hit the stage. He first appeared at the Chicago Blues Festival with his brother Big Bill Morganfield in 2017. Joseph was only in high school when his father died, nonetheless he was able to learn a few things on guitar from him, and also from his father's rhythm guitarist, Bob Margolin. At that time he was living in the large, five bedroom house in Westmont that Waters bought late in his life, when he consolidated many of the family members under one roof. Joseph credits his father with saving him from a life of drugs and gangs by making that move. Joseph "Mojo" Morganfield has recently released **Mojo Risin'**, a self-produced, 4-song EP that pays tribute to his father's musical legacy with two covers and two original numbers written by Terry Abrahamson (who wrote for Muddy himself during Waters' Chess Records days) and Derrick Procell. Backing him are guitarists Rick Kreher of Muddy's final band, Maurice John Vaughn and Mike Wheeler.

5–6pm Mzz Reese

Representing Chicago's west side blues tradition is **Mzz Reese** and her band, Reese's Pieces. The husky voiced Reese has the vocal ability to hold powerful command of a crowd with her direct, pleading delivery and a repertoire of solid soul standards and southern soul blues, which to this day remain the staples at west



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Tickets: \$10-15 | rosaslounge.com

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 5

Lurrie Bell & Dan Carell:
Acoustic Blues Project

Rosa's Lounge, 3420 W. Armitage Ave.
9pm (Doors open at 8pm)

Tickets: \$10-15 | rosaslounge.com

THURSDAY JUNE 6

Doktu Rhute Muuzic

Record Row Concert Series

2120 S. Michigan Ave. | 6-7:30pm

Free Admission; Donations Appreciated
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Pre-Blues Fest Bash:

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City Winery Chicago, 1200 W. Randolph St.
8pm | Tickets: \$35-\$48 | citywinery.com

Melvin Taylor

Blues Heaven at the Historic Chess Records

2120 S. Michigan Ave. | Tickets: \$25

9pm | bluesheaven.com

Willie Buck Blues Jam Session

Rosa's Lounge, 3420 W. Armitage Ave.

Tickets: \$10-15 | 9pm (Doors open at 8pm)
rosaslounge.com

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Buddy Guy's Legends

Music nightly | 700 S. Wabash Ave. | buddyguy.com

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THE CHICAGO BLUES SUPER SESSION



FRIDAY JUNE 7

LURRIE BELL BILLY FLYNN

DIETRA FARR BOB STROGER

BROTHER JOHN KATTKE

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MUSIC JOINT 9PM 21+ \$15 ADV/\$20 DOS

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50TH ANNIVERSARY 1969-2019

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side Chicago clubs such as Dr. J's Lounge, Gene's Playmate Lounge, The Waterhole, Rooster's Palace and Bricks, where she and her band can be found performing with regularity. She has also performed at Rosa's Lounge, and also with John Primer & The Real Deal Blues Band at Buddy Guy's Legends in the South Loop.

6:30–7:30pm Breezy Rodio

Breezy Rodio (born Fabrizio Rodio in Rome, Italy), former rhythm guitarist and bandleader for Chicago guitarist Linsey Alexander's band, with whom he recorded three albums—two on the Delmark label, has broken out as a bandleader in his own right. His first blues recording was the 2001 self-produced *Playing My Game Too*, which included guest guitarists Lurrie Bell, Rockin' Johnny, Dave Herrero, Linsey Alexander and Guy King. He followed with a reggae album *Tribute to the Cool Ruler* (reggae being his secondary musical love) before releasing *So Close to It* (2015), which reached the number two spot in the Chicago Blues category of the Roots Music Report. He again self-produced the beautifully-engineered *Sometimes the Blues Got Me* (with guest harpist Billy Branch), which was picked up by Delmark Records for national and Japanese release. The big-band inspired recording sparkles throughout with clean guitar lines, masterfully played, and with plush, richly-layered arrangements in which the horns evoke the early recorded orchestrations of T-Bone Walker and B.B. King.

8–9pm Vance "Guitar" Kelly & The Backstreet Blues Band

Born on Chicago's near-west side on January 24, 1954, singer and guitarist **Vance Kelly** must certainly be known today to every Chicago blues fan, and to countless overseas fans as well. He and his west-side guitar picking have been a staple at Chicago blues clubs since he first took the stage at the fabled 1815

Club on West Roosevelt Road in the early 1970s. The self-taught guitar player and singer grew through his associations with singer Mary Lane, soul and R&B singer Johnny Christian and sax man A.C. Reed, who hired him in 1987 to be a member of his Sparkplugs band. After three years with Reed, Kelly chose to go on his own and formed the Backstreet Blues Band. At various times in the early years, his band included guitarist John Primer and saxophonist Eddie Shaw. Signed by Wolf Records of Austria in 1992, he has recorded several CDs for them, including *Call Me*, which won the *Living Blues* magazine award for Best New Recording of 1994 (he also was chosen for Artist Deserving Wider Recognition), and *Joyriding in the Subway*, with contributing lyrics and vocals from his daughter Vivian (who has also recorded and is now pursuing her own musical career). In 2018 Vance Kelly released *How Can I Miss You When You Won't Leave*, his ninth Wolf recording.

**PARK GRILL STAGE
Emcee: WDCB**

2–2:45pm Gerry Hundt's Legendary One-Man Band

Gerry Hundt is likely known to many blues fans as the singer-songwriting multi-instrumentalist (guitar, bass, harmonica, mandolin and more) touring and recording sidekick



GERRY HUNDT

to Corey Dennison, and prior to that, guitarist Nick Moss. But he has long enjoyed a musical alter-ego as a one-man band. Inspired by the spirits of Jesse "Lone Cat" Fuller,

Doctor Ross and Joe Hill Louis, Gerry Hundt is a guitar-pickin', drum-thumpin', kazoo-blowin' mashup of Blind Boy Fuller, Rube Goldberg and the entire Mississippi Sheiks. Hundt has at least two one-man band rigs: one is his standard street-corner multi-instrumental racket-maker and the other a walking personal thundering blues calliope (picture Dick Van Dyke in *Mary Poppins*, only much hipper). You can expect to hear fine finger-picking blues, sweet ragtime, hokum, gospel melodies and early amplified Chicago blues—all conjuring the spirit of a raucous, drum-crashing, cone-rattling, shout-through-the-harp-mike Sunday morning at the Maxwell Street Market.



ERIC NODEN

3–3:45pm Eric Noden

Eric Noden has developed a fine reputation for his percussive guitar style, which is rooted in the pre-war blues traditions of such legendary artists as Mississippi John Hurt, Charley Patton, Tommy Johnson and the Reverend Gary Davis. In addition to teaching in the Blues in the Schools program, Noden has frequently worked alongside blues harmonica maven and fellow Old Town School of Folk Music staff member Joe Filisko. In addition to his own outstanding recordings, and those made as a member of the Sanctified Grumblers, he accompanied Chicago harmonica legend Billy Boy Arnold on *Billy Boy Arnold Sings Big Bill Broonzy*, a critically-acclaimed recording of Broonzy compositions.

His most recent release is the self-produced ***Destination Unknown***, his fifth recording in partnership with Joe Filisko.

4-4:45pm Jimmy Nick & Don't Tell Mama

Singer and guitarist **Jimmy Nick** cites as influences Howlin' Wolf, Chuck Berry, Elmore James, Bobby Rush and Angus Young of AC/DC, and he credits the veteran blues musicians he first sat in with at north side Chicago clubs like Kingston Mines, Rosa's Lounge and B.L.U.E.S. on Halsted with teaching him a few things. He has now won a handful of honors, including twice becoming a semi-finalist in the annual International Blues Challenge in Memphis (2013 and 2016), and has recorded several CDs, the latest of which is titled ***Dangerous Decisions & Bad Things***. The former high school jock from north suburban Crystal Lake puts on a wild stage show with his band of local stalwarts, getting physical with high kicks, jumping, leaping, crawling—and head shaking, bobbing and facial expressions that alone may be medal-worthy.

ROSA'S LOUNGE Emcee: Tony Mangiullo

11am-9pm Daily showcase of Chicago Blues legends and emerging artists that have called Rosa's Lounge home over the last 35 years.

JAY PRITZKER PAVILION

Emcee: Tom Marker

5-6:15pm Charlie Musselwhite with special guest Billy Boy Arnold

Charlie Musselwhite was born in Kosciusko, Mississippi, and raised in Memphis, Tennessee, where he was mentored on harmonica by Will Shade, founder of the Memphis Jug Band. He came to Chicago for a factory job and became arguably the first non-African

American to acquire bona fides in post-war Chicago blues, playing alongside Muddy Waters, Howlin' Wolf and others and befriending Big Walter Horton in the early 1960s. He earned the nickname "Memphis Charlie" before heading off to California in the late 1960s. He has issued more than 30 recordings over a 53-year recording history including three nominated for Grammy® Awards, and he won the Grammy® Award for Best Blues Recording in 2014 for ***Get Up!*** with singer and guitarist Ben Harper. On his latest, ***No Mercy in This Land***, he is again paired with Ben Harper. In 2014 and 2015 he won Blues Music Awards for Best Instrumentalist—Harmonica and has to date amassed 33 BMAs overall. Charlie Musselwhite was inducted into the Blues Hall of Fame in 2010.



BILLY BOY ARNOLD
PHOTO BY PAUL NATKIN

Chicago-born **Billy Boy Arnold** idolized Bluebird recording star Sonny Boy Williamson as a boy and would go to his Bronzeville home for lessons, up until Williamson's brutal murder. Arnold's classic early compositions, covered by many artists over the years (notably The Yardbirds, The Paladins and David Bowie), include "I Wish You Would," "Ain't Got You," and "Rockinitis," and he also played harmonica on Bo Diddley's timeless "I'm a Man." He retreated from music for a while, then resurfaced with two fine recordings for Alligator Records in the 1990s. However he never

forgot his inspirations, and in 2008 he recorded a lovely tribute CD on Electro-Fi, ***Billy Boy Arnold Sings Sonny Boy Williamson***, which he followed in 2012 with a tribute to another hero, Big Bill Broonzy—both recordings notable for their fresh-sounding, period feel. Even more recently he recorded ***The Blues Soul of Billy Boy Arnold*** for Stony Plain in 2014. Billy Boy Arnold was inducted into the Blues Foundation's Hall of Fame in 2012. This should prove to be a magical pairing of two Hall of Famers. Billy Boy went on the road playing bass for Charlie in the 1960s and Charlie does some of his material.

6:30-7:30pm Jimmy Johnson Blues Band

Jimmy Johnson, age 90, whom this writer has called "the Charles Atlas of Chicago blues and soul, and the Dorian Gray of guitar," has just recorded a new CD, his fourth, for Delmark. Brother to both Chicago soul icon Syl Johnson and the late bassist Mack Thompson, Jimmy Johnson has amassed an impressive catalog of recordings—all since turning 50 years of age—on such respected labels as Delmark, MCM, Verve, Alligator, Storyville and Ruf Records. Johnson, who sang gospel and backed all the Chicago soul greats after coming to Chicago from Holly Springs, Mississippi, has said that he's still learning the blues. Nonetheless, the former welder exudes a jazzy sophistication in his polished blues repertoire (for years his break song was Dave Brubeck's reading of Paul Desmond's classic "Take Five"), and even collaborated on an album of Persian traditional music, ***Beyond Any Form*** (2014). He is a Chicago musical treasure and ought rightly to be an internationally-heralded celebrity for his sublime, soul-imbued vocals, ethereal guitar work and solid stage presence.

7:45–9pm **Bobby Rush**

Perhaps the finest showman in blues today, guitarist, harp blower, singer and songwriter **Bobby Rush** was born Emmett Ellis, Jr. in 1937 in Homer, Louisiana. He moved to Chicago as a young man to sing blues, then soul and funk. After recording a few singles in Chicago in the 1960s, his now-classic **Chicken Heads** (1971) went to number 34 on *Billboard*'s soul charts and has remained a rousing jukebox favorite and bar-band standard both north and south. After several moves among styles and geographical locations, retaining a strong grasp of each, he has called Jackson, Mississippi, home for more than 30 years and "folk-funk" his style of music. Rush seems to be able to produce award-worthy CDs at an astonishing pace (nearly one every year since 2003), including the full-frontal assault **Folkfunk** (2004), the acoustic **Raw** (2007), **Down in Louisiana** (2013) and, most recently **Porcupine Meat**, which won the Grammy® Award for Best Traditional Blues Album in 2017. But it's his incredible stage shows, complete with tight rhythms, punchy horns and well-endowed dancers, that may be his biggest hits. Bobby Rush, now in his 80s, is smokin' hot after more than fifty years as a performer and is a huge star of the southern "chitlin circuit" as well as blues festivals around the world. Rush was inducted into the Blues Hall of Fame in 2006.

SATURDAY, JUNE 8 **BUDWEISER CROSSROADS STAGE** **(Chase Promenade South) Emcee: WDCB**

11am–Noon **Melody Angel**

Beautifully named by her mother, who also gave her a pawnshop Stratocaster for her 15th birthday, **Melody Angel** proudly represents the south side of Chicago. Possessed of a killer, passionate voice, with a terrific vocal range and impressive stage presence, Angel has a repertoire that covers a wide range of folk, blues, urban, country, R&B, and pop, and her performances have drawn comparisons to those of Mary J. Blige and Tracy Chapman, among others. But she is beginning to forge an identity for herself with some original material that melds her emotionally-charged vocals with some capable storytelling, tackling personal issues and urban themes such as drive-by shootings. A self-taught guitarist, she still plays that pawnshop Strat. She has recorded two albums to date, the most recent of which is **Angels & Melodies**.

12:15–1:15 pm **Marquise Knox**

Young blues performer **Marquise Knox**, born in 1991 in St. Louis, boldly avers that the blues is his heritage and way of life. Raised with the knowledge of the blues' deep history in his own family, and first taught guitar by his grandmother, then mentored by the late, legendary guitarist/pianist/singer

Henry Townsend, Knox has unimpeachable credentials and a bedrock foundation for a blues career. Sam Lay, who met Knox in Clarksdale, Mississippi, provided the connections that led to a three-CD deal with Chad Kassem's APO label. **Manchild**, the first of these, recorded when he was 16, was nominated for the Blues Foundation's Best Debut award, and won *Living Blues* magazine's 2010 Best Debut Recording award as well. Knox has recently teamed with Alonzo Townsend, Henry's son, to present a two man show on the elder Townsend's life in stories and music. Knox has fully recovered from a stab wound to the neck sustained in an attack in 2017. Also that year his current CD **Black And Blue** was released.

1:30–2:45pm **Rico McFarland, Carl Weathersby and Wayne Baker Brooks**

Chicago guitarist **Rico McFarland** learned a few things from a couple of lesser-known but significant bluesmen, Big Guitar Red and Willie Hudson, who had played with his father, a musician before him. McFarland advanced to become a much in-demand sideman and studio guitarist for such local luminaries as Jimmy Johnson, Big Time Sarah, Cicero Blake, Artie "Blues Boy" White, Valerie Wellington and several others. He and his band Amusement Park also achieved some mainstream success. In 2001 McFarland recorded a solo album, **Tired of Being Alone** (Evidence Records), but he may be best known for his playing behind James Cotton, Lucky Peterson and harp monster Sugar Blue, with whom he has appeared on five recordings. In addition he has recorded twice with his old friend Carl Weathersby, who joins him today.

Carl Weathersby came to East Chicago from Jackson, Mississippi as a child. He got a few guitar pointers early on from the neighborhood mechanic and friend of his father's, who as it turned out was Albert King and years later hired him to play in his band. After serving in Vietnam and putting in years of gigging, touring, and recording, he has finally achieved a respected seniority status on the scene. In 2017 Carl Weathersby was inducted into the Chicago Blues Hall of Fame. His musical resume includes fifteen years touring and recording as a member of Sons of Blues with Billy Branch, five albums with Mississippi Heat, and eight albums of his own.

Guitarist **Wayne Baker Brooks**, the youngest son of Chicago bluesman Lonnie Brooks, was born in Chicago in 1970. He first served an apprenticeship in his father's band from 1990 to 1997 before forming a band of his own. In 2004 he recorded **Mystery** (Blues Island Records), which melded blues with a bit of rock and funk, and in 2012 he released the EP **Tricks Up My Sleeves**. Brooks is a co-author of *Blues for*

Dummies (Wiley & Sons, 1998) and appeared in the film **Blues Brothers 2000**.

3–4pm **Billy Boy Arnold**

See Friday's Jay Pritzker Pavilion schedule above for Billy Boy Arnold's biography.

4:15–5:30pm **Dave Alvin & Jimmie Dale Gilmore with The Guilty Ones**

Musically, they might be considered a shotgun marriage of rockabilly, alt rock, blues, and outlaw country, but **Dave Alvin and Jimmie Dale Gilmore** are definitely an auditory treat of traditional American music at its finest.



DAVE ALVIN & JIMMIE DALE

Dave Alvin and his brother Phil formed The Blasters in 1979, known for their Americana mix of rockabilly, punk, and alt rock. Dave left around 1986 to play in LLos Angeles-based alt and punk bands Gun Club, X and The Knitters, appearing on two Knitters albums. He recorded four solo albums rich with his poetic song-writing and knowledge of roots music before scoring big with his fifth—**Public Domain: Songs From the Wild Land**—a collection of traditional folk and blues classics which won the 1997 Grammy® Award for Best Contemporary Folk Album. He reunited with his brother Phil to revisit their love for blues, recording **Common Ground** (2014), a set of Big Bill Broonzy songs, and **Lost Time** (2015) a collection of covers including four titles by Big Joe Turner. Dave Alvin's songs have been covered by dozens of major artists and his music

featured in television shows and movie soundtracks.

Often credited as one of the founders of alt-country, **Jimmie Dale Gilmore** also writes poetic lyrics and blends elements of folk, rock, country, blues and bluegrass. Born in Amarillo, Texas his father played guitar in a honky tonk band. The family moved to Lubbock, the birthplace of many great musicians, where, when he was 12, he met Butch Hancock and later Joe Ely who introduced him to the music of master songwriter Townes Van Zandt. A few years after, Gilmore, Ely, and Hancock formed the Flatlanders. They recorded their first album in 1972 (as an 8-track only, but reissued in 1991), but then, lacking promotion, the band broke up. Gilmore left music and moved around the country before settling in 1980 in Austin where he began playing regular gigs. Finally, in 1988, Gilmore released his debut solo album, **Fair and Square**, followed by his 1989 self-titled album. Gilmore soon signed with Elektra Nonesuch, with whom he released three albums, including the Grammy® Award-nominated albums, **Spinning Around the Sun**, and **Braver Newer World**. Gilmore has released two solo albums on Rounder, one the Grammy® Award-nominated **Come on Back**, produced by Joe Ely. In 2011, Gilmore recorded **Heirloom Music**, an album of "old-timey" songs. Today, he appears and tours with different amalgamations of old friends, including his former band, The Flatlanders, and of course, Dave Alvin.

VISIT MISSISSIPPI JUKE JOINT STAGE (Chase Promenade North) Emcee: Kamel King

11:15am–12:15pm **Jesse "Guitar" Robinson**

Jesse "Guitar" Robinson has covered a bit of ground in his lifetime of playing the blues but is most associated with his adopted

hometown of Jackson, Mississippi where he has long been a fixture and an essential player in the storied Farish Street blues scene. Born a preacher's son in Benton, Mississippi in 1944 and raised in Mileston, he first played guitar in church when not working on the family farm. He met the great Elmore James in Jackson as a teen and soon was playing with Sam Myers, Jimmy King, Duke Huddleston and others. In his 20s he worked in a television factory in Chicago and on weekends sat in with heavyweights Buddy Guy, Junior Wells, Magic Sam, and Freddie King. In 1971 he moved permanently back to Jackson, and took up residency with his band at the Avalon Court and later hosted Blue Mondays at Dorsey's which led to long stints working with Little Milton and then as bandleader for Bobby Rush with whom he recorded. In the late 1980s he was a regular performer at the Subway Lounge (and appeared in the documentary film **Last of the Mississippi Jukes**), and in the 1990s began Blue Mondays at Fields Cafe on Farish Street. He has been honored with a mention on five Mississippi Blues Trail markers. A song he wrote with Cassandra Wilson, "Show Me a Love," appeared on her **Belly of the Sun** CD in 2002. His first album, **Blues Child**, was released in 2004.

12:30–1:30pm **Super Chikan**

A favorite of several previous Chicago Blues Festivals, Mississippi folk artist and musician **James "Super Chikan" Johnson** is a true original. The jovial, gold-toothed free spirit is the nephew of Big Jack Johnson, "The Oil Man" of Clarksdale, Mississippi fame, whose band The Jelly Roll Kings gave him his start as a young man. His "Super Chikan" nickname harks back to his boyhood penchant for following the chickens around the yard, talking to them. Starting with a primitive one-string diddley bow he graduated to an acoustic guitar that was lacking four of its strings and bought at a Salvation Army store. Eventually he began

selling his own brightly decorated stringed instruments made out of junk and found items—gas cans, motors, toolboxes—even an old shotgun. Mostly performing solo, he has recorded eight albums since his 1997 debut, ***Blues Come Home to Roost***. Super Chikan has toured internationally and has even played for the President of the United States. But his regular gig remains Morgan Freeman’s Ground Zero Blues Club in Clarksdale, where he is reportedly Freeman’s favorite artist.



JOHN PRIMER

1:45–2:45pm John Primer & The Real Deal Blues Band

John Primer, now with two Grammy® Award nominations under his belt, only grows in stature and significance with every passing year as an elder of the Chicago blues scene. He was a principal in the bands of Willie Dixon, Muddy Waters (until his 1983 death) and then Magic Slim until going on his own in 1995. His signature guitar “lump” has become synonymous with Chicago blues. Born in Camden, Mississippi in 1945, Primer ultimately worked his way up to join the house band at Chicago’s famed Theresa’s Lounge in 1974 before being hired by the great Muddy Waters as guitarist and bandleader in 1980. After Waters’ passing, he then logged more than a decade with Magic Slim’s touring and recording unit The

Teardrops. While still with Slim, he recorded CDs as a bandleader on the Code Blue, Earwig and Wolf labels. By the mid ’90s he was working with his own unit, The Real Deal Blues Band, and was touring nationally and internationally. In 2010 he was nominated for a Grammy® Award for his role on ***Chicago Blues: A Living History***. To date he has issued more than a dozen albums. The most recent of these is this year’s ***Soul of a Blues Man***, his third release on his own Blues House label. Nominated for Traditional Blues Male Artist of the Year in 2013 and 2014, Primer deservedly won this coveted award from the Blues Foundation in 2016.

3–4pm O.B. Buchana

O. B. Buchana was born in Mound Bayou, Mississippi in the 1960s and spent his youth in Clarksdale, Mississippi. He began his musical career at the age of eight singing gospel songs in a Baptist church choir. When still a teenager, he became lead singer of the gospel group The Mighty Suns of God. In the early 1990s O. B. signed with Blue River Records and released the single, “Back Up Lover,” which became a big hit. Soon after, O. B. signed with Suzie Q Records in Shreveport, Louisiana and recorded two CDs: ***It’s Over*** and ***I Got Caught***, both of which sold well, the songs “Let’s Get Drunk” and “I Can’t Choose” receiving much radio play throughout the southern states. Memphis-based Ecko Records signed Buchana in 2004 to record ***Shake What You Got***, which included the hits “That’s My Bad” and “Shake What You Got,” and followed it soon after with ***I Can’t Stop Drinking***. Buchana, who cites as inspirations Tyrone Davis, Bobby Blue Bland, Johnny Taylor and Marvin Sease, has amassed quite an impressive recorded catalog at this point. He and his band—two keyboard players, guitar, bass, drums and three background singers—have been together for an impressive 25 years.

4:15–5:30pm Jam Session with Kenny “Beedy Eyes” Smith

See Friday’s Visit Mississippi Juke Joint Stage for jam description and Friday’s Front Porch Stage for more information on Kenny Smith.

**FRONT PORCH STAGE
(Wrigley Square)
Emcee: Mike Jeffers
Chicago Jazz Magazine**

11am–Noon Mary Lane

West side singer **Mary Lane** has lived a life in the blues. Born in Clarendon, Arkansas in 1935, in the cotton country southwest of Memphis, she began singing as a teen with now-legendary musicians Robert Nighthawk and Joe Hill Louis and sat in with Howlin’ Wolf at her uncle’s place, The White Swan, in Brinkley, Arkansas. As a young mother, she moved in 1957 to Waukegan, Illinois where at a club one night she sat in with guitarist Morris Pejoe. It evidently went well because they eventually



MARY LANE
PHOTO BY PAUL NATKIN

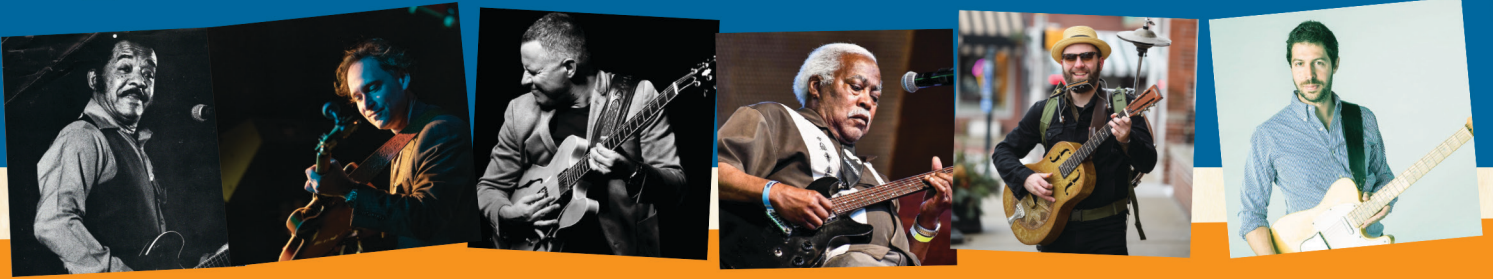
moved together to Chicago where she sang with his band through the 1960s (along with Henry Gray and Willie Young, before those two left to join



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**FRIDAY
JUNE
7**

**JIMMY JOHNSON | JOHNNY BURGIN
GUY KING | JIMMY BURNS
BREEZY RODIO | GERRY HUNDT**



LURRIE BELL

SATURDAY

CHRIS FOREMAN

JUNE

8



**SUNDAY
JUNE
9**

**OMAR COLEMAN
MIKE WHEELER BAND
ERWIN HELFER | WILLIE BUCK**

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Howlin' Wolf's band), and had three daughters before their marriage ended. She became good friends with Magic Sam, Otis Rush and Elmore James and worked at the Avenue Lounge on West Madison Street and Pepper's and Theresa's on Chicago's south side, before settling on the west side where the locals played the more raw-sounding blues that she preferred. Apart from an unissued single in the 1960s and an obscure 1970s 45, she had recorded only a few tracks for Wolf Records in the 1990s before she made her first full recording in 1997, ***Appointment with the Blues*** (Noir). Today she continues to make local appearances in Chicago, the suburbs and northwest Indiana with her No Static Blues Band, anchored by her husband, bassist Jeffery Labon, often performing before crowds who know little to nothing of her incredible history, but who are moved nonetheless by her simple, sincere and soulful singing. She is the subject of a new documentary titled ***I Can Only Be Mary Lane*** and her recently released CD ***Travelin' Woman***.

12:30–1:30pm Joel Paterson Organ Trio featuring Chris Foreman

The measure of Joel Paterson's musicianship may be approximated by the number of bands with which he is concurrently working: The Modern Sounds, The Cash Box Kings, Devil in a Woodpile, The Western Elstons and the Joel Paterson Trio—which may not even represent a full accounting. He has recorded and produced a tidy catalog of CDs on his own Ventrella label, including sessions with Carl “Sonny” Leyland and three with The Modern Sounds. He has recorded with harpist Jim Liban, The Cash Box Kings, Honeyboy Edwards, The Four Charms, Deke Dickerson and Wanda Jackson. He is truly a masterful guitarist and a tastefully cool cat who brings old instruments and vintage rock, blues, country and jazz tunes to renewed life.

Organist **Chris Foreman**, a

native south side Chicagoan, is renowned for his Hammond B3 playing inspired by the playing of Jimmy Smith, Richard “Groove” Holmes and Jimmy McGriff. He has recorded two CDs with the Deep Blue Organ Trio for Origin Records and two for Delmark Records. For several years Foreman performed with singer Kimberly Gordon at the historic Green Mill jazz club in Chicago's Uptown neighborhood and, with her, recorded ***Melancholy Serenade*** on the Sirens label in 2005. Foreman released his own CD ***Now is the Time*** on Sirens in 2013. Chris Foreman currently plays a solo set, “The Flipside Show,” every Friday at the Green Mill jazz club and also performs there for the immensely popular late set every Sunday, in partnership with Joel Paterson and drummer Mike Schlick. He is also a major part of the Soul Message Band's 2019 Delmark CD ***Soulful Days***.

2–3pm Chicago Blues Piano Master—A Tribute to Otis Spann with Oscar Wilson, Johnny Iguana, Sumito Ariyoshi, Rie Kanehira, Roosevelt Purifoy, Harlan Terson, Frank Krakowski and Kenny “Beedy Eyes” Smith

Those who think that blues is about volume and speed, that it requires shouting or that it's about *guitar*, need to know about pianist **Otis Spann**. There are few piano players who play like Otis Spann—but then how would one capture that facility and originality, that ability to play a solo that elegantly dovetails into, or contrasts with, the mood, or that unanticipated and heart stopping yet nearly unobtrusive fill?

Born in either Jackson or Belzoni, Mississippi, Otis Spann came to Chicago in 1946 and was mentored by Big Maceo Merriweather, eventually replacing him in Muddy Waters' band. His life's work is largely defined by the tracks he recorded with Muddy Waters—approximately 100 studio sides—over a 17-year tenure with arguably the best band that ever

played electric combo blues. Also a fine singer, Spann recorded early in his career with Jody Williams, B.B. King, Chuck Berry, Walter Horton and Robert Jr. Lockwood, and appeared on a smattering of albums, a few of them as bandleader. Connoisseurs also treasure the few numbers he recorded as a duo with his dear friend, drummer S.P. Leary, as intimately captured on Vanguard's ***Chicago The Blues Today, Vol. 1***. Spann was only in his forties when he died in 1970.

3:30–4:30pm Dom Flemons

Multi-instrumentalist and “American songster” **Dom Flemons** won one Grammy® Award for his work with the trailblazing African-American string band, the Carolina Chocolate Drops (cited by the *Guardian* as, “the most electrifying acoustic act around” and praised by *Rolling Stone* magazine for their “dirt-floor dance electricity”), of which he was a founding member. He was recently nominated for another Grammy® Award for his own recording, ***Black Cowboys*** (2018), a musical exploration of the contributions of African Americans to the shaping of the American west. To date, he has released five albums under his own name. His research and musicianship with The Carolina Chocolate Drops as well as on his own has breathed new life into and reclaimed the nearly lost celebratory music of early rural African Americans. Originally passionate for the music of the Carolina Piedmont region in particular, Flemons has, through research, record collecting and collaboration, moved his quest further west to document the previously-misunderstood breadth of African-American influence on the music of this county.

5–6pm Bridges to the Blues

Supported by the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs & Special Events (DCASE) and facilitated by Art of Culture, Inc., Bridges to the Blues is a multi-generational program

that challenges young Chicago musicians working in diverse genres to re-imagine the blues. Program participants learn blues fundamentals from Kenny “Beedy Eyes” Smith, one of today’s best blues drummers, as well as songwriting and performance best practices from Oscar and multi-Grammy® Award-winning artist Che “Rhymefest” Smith. They then collaborate on original music and audition for an opportunity to perform at the festival.

6:30–7:30pm Morry Sochat & The Special 20s

Morry Sochat and The Special 20s have crafted their music and stage presence to evoke a sophisticated and sexy musical era that might have existed—in terms of style—somewhere between the age of the territory bands and *Mad Men*, but with largely original compositions based on classic 1950s rock ’n’ roll, swing music and Chicago blues. Bandleader Morry Sochat (pronounced ‘sock-et’) picked up the harmonica after moving to Chicago from Texas in 1990 and played in a couple of local bands before creating The Special 20s in 2005. In 2006 they released their first, eponymous album, and the following year issued *Swingin’ Shufflin’ Smokin’*, produced by fellow bandleader and guitarist Nick Moss. By 2010 when they recorded *Eatin’ Dirt* (produced by Jimmy Sutton), they had added a horn section, which has come to define their current sound—full vintage and well-orchestrated. Their most recent album, released in 2015, is titled *Dig In*.



MORRY SOCHAT

8–9pm Lurrie Bell

Lurrie Bell split his early years between his grandparents in Mississippi and his family in Chicago, where, as the son of blues harmonica great Carey Bell, he was often in the presence of many of the luminaries of the Chicago blues scene passing through his house. He picked up guitar quickly and by the age of 19 was a founding member of Sons of Blues with Billy Branch and Freddie Dixon (Willie’s son), recording and touring with them as well as with singer Koko Taylor as her guitarist. Recordings he made with his father and other artists were well received, but he was personally struggling. With assistance, he pulled out and ultimately triumphed with a string of four excellent recordings for Delmark, a 2004 duet with his father on the Alligator label, and a self-produced CD *Let’s Talk About Love*, which critics raved about. In 2009 he appeared on both volumes of *Chicago Blues: A Living History*, earning a Grammy® Award nomination. He started his own Aria BG label in 2012 and released *The Devil Ain’t Got No Music*, a sensitive and celebrated revisiting of the acoustic blues and gospel music of his youth, and he was honored with the Prix du Blues award from the prestigious French L’Academie du Jazz for the Best Blues Recording of 2012. He re-signed with Delmark for the 2013 *Blues in My Soul*, a return to straight-ahead Chicago blues; the title track, which he wrote, won a Blues Music Award for Song Of The Year. In 2015 he won the Blues Foundation’s award for *Best Traditional Male Blues Artist*. *Can’t Shake This Feeling*, recorded for Delmark in 2016, was nominated for a Grammy® Award and earned another Blues Music Award for Traditional Recording Of The Year. And last year, Lurrie returned to Delmark—with his brothers Steve, James and Tyson—to record *Lurrie Bell and the Bell Dynasty: A Tribute to Carey Bell*. Lurrie Bell is a jubilant

and grateful survivor and a true Chicago treasure—not to mention one incredible guitar player.

**PARK GRILL STAGE
Emcee: WDCB**

2–2:45pm Dom Flemons

See today’s Front Porch Stage above for Dom Flemons’ biography.

3–3:45pm Harmonica Hinds

Making a return to the Chicago Blues Fest stages is **Mervyn “Harmonica” Hinds**, who was born on the island of Trinidad and arrived in Chicago in the 1970s by way of New Orleans and Canada. Through much of the 1970s Hinds was a member of the house band at Chicago’s legendary Theresa’s, alongside Junior Wells, Sammy Lawhorn, Nate Applewhite and John Primer. In 1977 he was selected to travel to the Berlin Jazz Festival as a member of “The New Generation of Chicago Blues,” along with Billy Branch, Freddie Dixon, Lurrie Bell, Larry Taylor and others. He has performed and recorded with well-known Chicago blues artists Koko Taylor, Eddie Taylor Jr., Moose Walker and Larry “Mud” Morganfield. For several years he has appeared in regular rotation at Buddy Guy’s Legends, performing solo, as a duo (with the late Eddie Taylor, Jr.) and occasionally with his own band. In 2012 the Wolf label of Austria released *I’d Give You Anything If I Could*, a compilation of tracks from Hinds’ earlier self-released CDs.

4–4:45pm Doktu Rhute Muuzic

Singer, guitarist, actor, and educator Roy Hytower changed his name to **Doktu Rhute Muuzic** several years ago, in part because he had become known internationally for his signature number *Root Doctor*, and also to both honor his father, an herbalist or root doctor, and incorporate aspects of the principles of Kwanzaa. Originally from Mobile,



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Alabama, Hytower came to Chicago in 1962 where he cut some soul singles for small, indie labels Avin, Anthem, Jiffy, Expo, Brainstorm and Mercury's Blue Rock subsidiary. He played rhythm guitar for Otis Rush for a time, as well as with other Chicago blues notables, but soon was leading his own band. Hytower's 1988 album **Root Doctor** (with his band, Motif) was issued by Diamond Gem Records. In recent years Hytower has self-released a couple of CDs under the name Doktu Rhute Muuzic. His latest album **All Time Favorites** is on Root Doctor Records. As an actor, he has portrayed Muddy Waters and Otis Redding in Chicago's Black Ensemble Theater (BET) productions.

ROSA'S LOUNGE Emcee: Tony Mangiullo

11am-9pm Daily showcase of Chicago Blues Legends and emerging artists that have called Rosa's Lounge home over the last 35 years.

JAY PRITZKER PAVILION 5-5:15pm

Emcee: Tom Marker

5:15-6:15pm Latimore

Soul and R&B crooner and pianist **Latimore** (shortened from his birth name, Benjamin Lattimore) struck gold in 1974 with "Let's Straighten It Out," a number one R&B hit that also charted at number 31 on the *Billboard Hot 100* chart and still has lasting power on playlists today. Originally from Charleston, Tennessee, he sang gospel before turning his attention to R&B and moving to Miami, where he still makes his home. He recorded mostly covers on a number of small labels before his first big hit, then released five albums on the Glades label, before moving over to the Malaco label in 1982 where he recorded seven albums. He signed with Mel Waiters' Brittney label in

2003, releasing **Latt Is Back**, and reconnected with his old friend Henry Stone—for whom he first recorded in the 1960s—to record **Back 'Atcha** in 2007. He is also in demand as a session pianist and appeared on Joss Stone's albums **The Soul Sessions** and **Mind Body & Soul**. In 2017, Latimore was inducted into the Blues Hall of Fame.

6:30-7:30pm Don Bryant

Singer-songwriter **Don Bryant**, who began singing gospel as a child seventy years ago, might easily be remembered solely for *I Can't Stand the Rain*, the enduring Top 40 hit that he co-wrote in 1973 with vocalist Ann Peebles, the woman he soon married. But he has gone on to be credited on as many as 154 titles and has enjoyed a lifetime of beautiful songwriting and music making and could easily be said to be today in top performing shape—at age 77.

The Memphis-born Bryant moved from gospel to secular singing as a teen and with his band The Four Kings, began fronting Willie Mitchell's band for local gigs. Mitchell then hired him to sing and lead his band, and found that Bryant could also write songs. Bryant penned *I Got To Know* in 1960 for the 5 Royales, which Mitchell was then producing. In 1969 Don Bryant had a shot as a solo artist himself with the release of an album, but at the time, the field was thick with great singers and he retreated to the writing booth. He spent the 1980s and '90s focused on writing and producing gospel albums until he was invited to sing with the

Memphis-based Bo-Keys. With them, he recorded the album **Don't Give Up on Love**, released by Fat Possum in 2017. He was also a highlight of the Take Me To The River tour. A stylish recent music video of him performing his composition "How Do I Get There" shows him dancing and singing in fine form, a great indication of the treat we are in for.

7:45-9pm Bettye LaVette

Soul singer **Bettye LaVette** has been said to possess a voice that can "move from satin to sandpaper," and her success throughout her more than 50-year performing career is largely due to her ability to infuse her dyed-in-the-wool R&B sensibility into virtually any material. After all, she grew up in a Detroit home with a jukebox in the living room and a parade of traveling musicians dropping by. At age 16, her first recording, "My Man—He's a Loving Man," reached the #7 spot in the R&B charts and won her a spot on a tour with Ben E. King, Otis Redding and Clyde McPhatter. In 1965 her single "Let Me Down Easy" on the Calla label hit at the #20 R&B spot and landed her on TV's *Shindig*. She charted three more times in the 1960s and '70s. She hung up recording for a few years to star in the touring Broadway musical *Bubbling Brown Sugar* with Honi Coles and Cab Calloway. It wasn't until 1982 that she released her first album, **Tell Me A Lie**, backed by the Memphis Horns on Motown. Since 2000 she has released several compilations of earlier work and five CDs on the Anti- label. In 2009 she



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sang “A Change is Gonna Come” with Jon Bon Jovi at the Obama inaugural celebration at the Lincoln Memorial. LaVette’s 2012 autobiography, **A Woman Like Me**, was named for her 2003 Blues Express CD, which won the W.C. Handy Comeback Artist of the Year award. Her 2018 album **Things Have Changed** was nominated for Best Americana Album and Best Traditional R&B Performance at the Grammy® Awards, her fourth nomination.

SUNDAY, JUNE 9
BUDWEISER
CROSSROADS STAGE
(Chase Promenade South) Emcee: WDCB

11am-Noon Omar Coleman

Born on Chicago’s west side in 1973, **Omar Coleman** first heard Chicago blues and soul on the jukebox at his mother’s place, Louise’s Lounge, on west Madison Street where musicians Tyrone Davis, Bobby Rush and many others used to stop in. But blues wasn’t the music of his generation and he didn’t fully embrace it until he picked up the harmonica years later and found a new appreciation for it. Coleman has a commanding, soulful voice that is perfectly suited for the blues, and his stage presence is remarkably assured for a relative newcomer. In 2005 he appeared on **Diamonds in the Rough: Chicago Blues Harmonica Project** (Severn). While touring Europe with guitarist Sean Carney in 2011, they recorded **Very Lucky Man** (Get Down Blues). Coleman quickly followed up with his own **West Side Wiggle** (Honeybee) the same year with eight original titles among the 13 tracks of solid Chicago-style blues. Signed by Chicago’s Delmark records in 2015, Coleman issued a well-received set of nearly all-originals, titled **Born and Raised**, and followed it the next year with **Omar Coleman Live! at Rosa’s Lounge** and **Omar Coleman & Westside Soul** (3 on the B Records).

12:15–1:15pm Melvin Taylor & The Slack Band

Melvin Taylor was born in 1959 in Jackson, Mississippi and moved to Chicago with his family at the age of three. He took up the guitar at a very young age, learning from his uncle Floyd Vaughan. He was still quite young when he appeared regularly at Chicago’s famed Maxwell Street Market with The Transistors, a blues and ’70s pop group of fellow inner city teens and pre-teens—often backing up guitarist Pat Rushing. He studied the recordings of his heroes Albert King, Jimmy Reed, Wes Montgomery, George Benson and Jimi Hendrix, and before long his lightning-quick guitar leads began to draw attention. In 1980 Taylor was invited to accompany Legendary Blues Band musicians Pinetop Perkins and Willie Smith for a European tour where he was well-

received by audiences. He was recorded (in Chicago) by the French Isabel label for two eventual releases: **Blues on the Run** (1982) and **Plays the Blues for You** (1984). He also became a popular regular at Rosa’s Lounge.

Beginning in 1995 he had a very productive string of releases starting with the self-titled **Melvin Taylor and the Slack Band** for Evidence, his first American release and a good seller for the label, which was followed the next year by **Dirty Pool**, and two years later by **Bang That Bell**. In 2002 he capped the run with a collaboration with guitarist Lucky Peterson, titled **Rendezvous With the Blues**. Since then, Taylor has taken the route of self-production to issue **Beyond the Burning Guitar** (2010), **Sweet Taste of Guitar** (2012) and **Taylor Made** (2012).

1:30–2:30pm The Kinsey Report

The Kinsey Report was formed in 1985 when the Kinsey brothers—guitarist Donald and drummer Ralph—joined forces in 1985 with their dad, Lester “Big Daddy” Kinsey, a Mississippi-born, Muddy Waters-style singer, slide guitarist and harpist. The two sons were already established musicians—Donald had played and recorded with Bob Marley, Albert King and Peter Tosh. Later, a third brother, Kenneth, joined on bass. And they all sang. They offered the rather unique combination of old-school blues, reggae, with a tinge of solid rock and funk, and also incorporated their family history of gospel (Big Daddy’s father was pastor of Gary, Indiana’s Chase Street Church of God for nearly 50 years). In 1988 they released their first album, **Edge of the City**, on Chicago’s Alligator Records. They followed with another the following year, then issued two on Pointblank in 1991 and 1993 before returning to Alligator in 1999 to record **Smoke and Steel**. The Kinseys have soldiered on since the 2001 passing of “Big Daddy” Kinsey, pushing the blues envelope from a strong vantage point. Their most recent issue is **Standing (I’ll Be)**, released in 2014 on the RDK label.

2:45–4pm Toronzo Cannon

Toronzo Cannon is one of the rising—or perhaps we should say, already risen—“next generation” Chicago blues guitarists and singers. But like many of his generation, Cannon, who was born in 1968, did not have the blues on his radar at first. Growing up near 48th and Indiana, Toronzo nearly missed the proverbial forest for the trees. He began to realize that it was *blues* that he remembered in his grandfather’s record collection and that his aunts and uncles listened to at family gatherings, and it was blues that drew his uncle to go to work literally just down the street at Theresa Needham’s now-legendary corner basement blues bar. Starting out, he played rhythm guitar for Wayne Baker Brooks, L.V. Banks, Tommy McCracken and Joanna Connor before organizing his own Cannonball Express band to work the North Side club

scene. He's put it together very nicely, as evidenced by his self-produced CD **My Woman** (2007) and releases on the Delmark label—**Leaving Mood** in 2011 and **John the Conqueror Root** in 2013. In 2016 he moved over to the Alligator label and released **The Chicago Way**, a set of all original compositions. A new Alligator CD is due later this year.



ROOMFUL OF BLUES
PHOTO BY SETH JACOBSON

4:15–5:30pm Roomful of Blues with special appearance by guest vocalist Lynne Jordan

Expect tight, bright arrangements of swing, jump blues, boogie, and old fashioned rock 'n' roll when this 5-time Grammy nominated 8-piece juggernaut takes the stage.

Roomful of Blues has now been around for 50 years and can boast of an all-star cast of former members including Duke Robillard, Ron Levy, Ronnie Earl, Porky Cohen, Curtis Salgado and Sugar Ray Norcia. And they have previously collaborated on wax with Lou Rawls, Eddie “Cleanhead” Vinson, Big Joe Turner, Earl King and Stevie Ray Vaughan, which ought to give sufficient clue to their abilities if you don't already know their pedigree. Make room for dancing!

Joining Roomful of Blues will be guest vocalist **Lynne Jordan**—a familiar Chicago club presence for decades—known for her boldly expressive voice, comedic patter and elaborate outfits—often replete with wild headdresses. The late Chicago *Sun-Times* film critic Roger Ebert declared her his “favorite diva.” Lynne Jordan grew up in a gospel-singing family in Dayton, Ohio. She came to Chicago to study journalism at Northwestern University but soon changed her major to theater and never looked back. She has released two self-produced CDs to date, the most

recent titled **A Bit Of Fun**, and she made appearances singing backup on two recordings by Tom Waits and on one by alt rockers Urge Overkill. Drawing on her theater background she has performed her “Musical Tribute to Nina Simone” to sold-out crowds in New York and Atlanta. In 2017 at Chicago's City Winery she debuted her one-woman show titled “A Great Big Diva,” which features raw humorous anecdotes, true stories and the killer songs for which she has become so well known.

VISIT MISSISSIPPI JUKE JOINT STAGE (Chase Promenade North)
Emcee: Kamel King

11:15am–12:15pm The Fred T & Chris Gill Band

Chris Gill has been lighting up stages for more than 20 years as a Mississippi blues guitarist and slide guitarist, playing the blues in the Bentonia style as well as reggae blues. Fred Robinson—**Fred T**—has a Mississippi gospel background starting out as a bass player and is now a guitar master with a hot, soulful, gospel sound. Both Chris and Fred have toured nationally and internationally and performed previously at the Chicago Blues Festival. This year they come together with bass player Keith Collins and drummer Forrest Gordon to meld their funky, rhythmic Mississippi sounds as the Fred T and Chris Gill Band.

Othar Turner. He also played drums with Jessie Mae Hemphill. It was later that he picked up a guitar and began to play the mesmerizing, improvisational numbers for which he is now known celebrating friends, his community and whatever was on his mind at any particular moment. This is the music of hill country picnics, juke joints and sittin' around on the porch passing a bottle. At the age of 52 he recorded his debut album **Ain't the Man's Alright** with Luther Dickinson, guitarist for the North Mississippi Allstars, and drummers Cedric Burnside and Calvin Jackson (son and grandson, respectively, of the late R.L. Burnside). And ten years later, in 2017, he recorded **Roll and Tumble** for the Waxploitation label, which was nominated for a Grammy® Award. He followed this up in 2018 with both **Rattlesnake Boogie** and **Ain't Gonna Play Too Long** with the same lineup.



JAREKUS SINGLETON
PHOTO BY MIKEL SAME

1:45–2:45pm Jarekus Singleton

Guitarist, singer and songwriter **Jarekus Singleton**, was born in 1984 in Clinton, Mississippi, where he began singing gospel and playing the bass in his grandfather's church. He switched to guitar as a teen and began to listen to secular music, including blues. But then he took up basketball. In 2002 Jarekus Singleton was the number one basketball player in the state of Mississippi. At William Carey University he won the National Player of the Year award. But the NBA never called. He played overseas for a team in Lebanon and returned home after the 1983 bombing of the U.S. Embassy in Beirut killed 63



RL BOYCE
PHOTO BY STEVEN LIKENS

12:30–1:30pm RL Boyce

RL Boyce hails from the hill country of Como, Mississippi where he began his musical career as a drummer for the Rising Star Fife and Drum band behind his uncle, the late patriarch of North Mississippi hill country fife and drum,

people—just two blocks from his apartment. Back home, a knee injury compelled him to give up basketball and return to the music. And he has proven himself a winner once again. In 2011 Singleton released his first CD, *Heartfelt*, (download only) which received airplay on *B.B. King's Bluesville* on XM/Sirius Radio. His first national release, *Refuse to Lose*, (Alligator) garnered nominations for the 2015 Blues Music Award's for Best Album award and for "Contemporary Blues Album," and in addition, the "Contemporary Blues Artist" award. He has been called one of the brightest and most exciting young performers on the blues scene today, and "the new face of Mississippi blues." Melding blues with funk and hip-hop wordplay he was named "Blues Artist of the Year" (2012) and "Local Artist of the Year" (2013) by the Jackson Music Awards in Jackson, Mississippi.

3–4pm Zac Harmon

Zac Harmon was born and raised in Jackson, Mississippi. His parents, who valued education but also played music, allowed him to pursue music, and as a teenager he began playing guitar with Sam Myers. Soon he was backing up visiting artists Dorothy Moore, Z.Z. Hill, McKinley Mitchell and others when they came through town on tour. As a 21-year-old in the early 1980s he moved to Los Angeles. He immersed himself in the music industry, working as a studio musician, and becoming a songwriter and producer for television, film and commercial production. In 1994 he produced songs for Black Uhuru's Grammy® Award-nominated *Mystical Truth* album. While working on some blues songs for a movie score, he decided to undertake a blues project of his own, and in 2003 he released the self-produced *Live at Babe and Ricky's Inn*. His follow-up, *The Blues According To Zacariah* (BlueStone 2005), led to a Blues Music Award for Best New Artist Debut. Previously, Harmon (and the Mid South Blues Revue) won the 2004 International Blues Challenge for Best Unsigned Blues Band. He travelled to Iraq and Kuwait in 2008 to entertain troops as part of Bluzapalooza and also toured Europe, where he recorded in Paris. He signed with the Northern Blues label in 2009 to record *From the Root*. Harmon performed at the 2010 "Mississippi Celebrates its Grammy Legacy" celebration, hosted by Mississippi Governor Haley Barbour, where he was presented with a Peavey Award. His most recent recording is *Right Man Right Now* (Blind Pig, 2015), a set of contemporary blues that proves the relevancy of the blues today, with guest artists Bobby Rush, Lucky Peterson and Anson Funderburgh.

4:15–5:30pm Jam Session with Kenny "Beedy Eyes" Smith

See Friday's Visit Mississippi Juke Joint Stage for jam description, and Friday's Front Porch Stage for more information on Kenny Smith.

FRONT PORCH STAGE (Wrigley Square)

Emcee: Mike Jeffers

Chicago Jazz Magazine

11am–Noon Willie Buck

Chicago vocalist **Willie Buck**, whose specialty is the classic era of post-war Chicago blues, is perhaps best known as one of the best living interpreters of the Muddy Waters songbook. Buck, an affable, barrel-chested auto mechanic with an easy-going smile

and a commanding baritone singing voice, knew Waters and would sit in on his shows, which amused and flattered the grand master who acknowledged that Buck may have had a greater vocal range than he did! Buck has since worked with many of Muddy's former bandmembers as well as with Louis and Dave Myers, Fred Below, Odie Payne, Sunnyland Slim, Byther Smith and Big Moose Walker, and he also appeared with Little Walter shortly before Walter's death.

He issued a handful of 45s and an LP on his own IRC, Arrow and Bar-Bare labels, which included his strong minor key original "I Want My Baby." In 2011 Delmark re-released his LP *It's Alright*, retitled as the CD *The Life I Love*, and followed it the next year with a brand new studio recording *Cell Phone Man* with several original titles. Buck's latest release is *Willie Buck Way*, also on Chicago's venerable Delmark label. Willie Buck made an appearance in the award-winning documentary *Hoop Dreams*, which featured the basketball prospects of two boys, one of them his son William Gates, who is now a successful minister.

12:30–1:30pm Erwin Helfer

Blues, jazz and boogie pianist and Chicago treasure **Erwin Helfer** is a genuinely pleasant and generous man who at age 83 still has the look of a slightly shy and amused schoolboy. But don't dismiss him—he learned from piano masters Baby Dodds, Grover Compton, Little Brother Montgomery and Cripple Clarence Lofton. Helfer has given lessons to countless piano players, including former "Blues Brothers" keyboard player Murphy Dunne—who incidentally organized the first Chicago Blues Fest in 1969. For many years Helfer provided regular employment and critical exposure for female blues singers and also helped prolong the careers of many aging and overlooked artists. The late Barrelhouse Chuck Goering, who passed in 2016, was his frequent piano playing and recording partner, and dear friend.

His recorded work includes two sessions with guitarist Big Joe Williams, a Testament LP with house-rent pianist Jimmy Walker, two releases on his own Red Beans label, one of them accompanying Jimmy Yancey's widow, Estelle "Mama" Yancey, and seven albums on the Sirens label, including his latest recording, *Last Call*.

2–3pm Cash Box Kings

The **Cash Box Kings** at its core comprises two seemingly disparate but highly synergetic singer/songwriters—founder/harpist **Joe Nosek** and **Oscar Wilson**.

Nosek brings powerful tone and lung power to his inventive harp



CASH BOX KINGS
PHOTO BY CHRIS MONAGHAN

playing, which is solidly rooted in the Chicago tradition, while Wilson's deep blues vocals will raise the hair on your neck. A moveable feast of very talented friends may flesh out the band, but the core comprises guitarist Billy Flynn, drummer Kenny "Beedy Eyes" Smith and bassist John Lauler, with pianist Lee Kanehira a new addition. Their repertoire runs a fascinating gamut from Delta and Memphis blues to 1950s Chicago electric blues. Their original material also conforms to these classic styles—intelligent, topical blues on such subjects as the gentrification of urban neighborhoods, inter-racial dating and police brutality. Since 2003 they have issued three CDs on Blue Midnight, one on Blue Bella and three on Blind Pig including *Black Toppin'*, *Holler and Stomp*, and *Holding Court*. Signed by Alligator Records, they released *Royal Mint* in 2017, and now, hot off the presses is *Hail to the Kings!*, which features Shemekia Copeland dueting with Oscar Wilson for one number.



IVY FORD

3:30–4:30pm Ivy Ford

Ivy Ford, who was born and raised in north suburban Waukegan, Illinois, got her start in the blues bar scene along the Wisconsin border, joining the Kenosha, Wisconsin-based band The Real Deal as a teenager. The largely self-taught multi-instrumentalist and singer moved on to join The Cadillac and expanded

her blues repertoire to include R&B and soul. Guitarist J.B. Ritchie ostensibly took her under his wing to school her on some of the finer points of blues tradition and the entertainment business, and she occasionally still makes appearances with him as his bassist. In 2016 she released an original solo effort, titled *Simply Solo*, and last year released the self-produced full album *Time to Shine*. Ivy Ford was an International Blues Challenge semi-finalist in 2018. Still in her twenties, Ford certainly knows her way around on a guitar and has a matured, sultry voice with a fully-confident stage presence that should take her far.

5–6pm Russ Green

Born in Chicago in 1967, singer and harp blower Russ Green lived on the west side until serving in the U.S. Army. After earning a degree at Southern Illinois University he returned to Chicago where he witnessed the stratospheric harmonica innovator Sugar Blue perform at Chicago's Blues, Etc., after which he became focused on following his dream of playing the harmonica. He moved to Seattle and worked on his craft, and on a return visit to see Sugar Blue, this time at Rosa's Lounge, he met his hero. Green moved back to Chicago, where he has remained, working in film production and developing a side career as a musician.

He, along with Omar Coleman and a number of other little-known or up-and-coming blues harp blowers, was included on *Chicago Blues Harmonica Project: Diamonds in the Rough* (Severn Records, 2005) and also on *The Chicago Blues Harmonica Project: More Rare Gems* (Severn, 2009). Russ also produced a CD for Big Llou Johnson that won a Blues Music Award for Best New Artist in 2013. In 2018 he celebrated the release of *City Soul*, his debut solo album on the Cleopatra label.

6:30–7:30pm Mike Wheeler Band

Born in Chicago in 1961, Mike Wheeler has been playing guitar and singing for more than thirty years. His first gig was as the guitarist for Muddy Waters' keyboard man Lovie Lee Watson, and he has gone on to record with Sam Cockrell, Big Ray and Chicago's Most Wanted, Cadillac Dave, and Peaches Staten and the Grooveshakers. Most

notably, however, Wheeler was the axe man for several years touring with powerhouse trombone funkster Big James and his Chicago Playboys, and appeared on five of their recordings. In 2012 Delmark Records brought him into the studio to record *Self Made Man*, which featured his smooth soul vocals and funky string squeezing on a set of all original songs. His follow-up Delmark effort, *Turn Up!!* was released in 2016. He appears regularly at Kingston Mines and other blues clubs all over Chicago and the Midwest, often accompanied by singer and fellow Delmark recording artist Demetria Taylor.

**PARK GRILL STAGE
Emcee: WDCB**

2–2:45pm Chicago Bound Blues Band

Chicago Bound specializes in the traditional blues of the 1940s, '50s and '60s as played and recorded by blues artists such as Sonny Boy Williamson, Muddy Waters, Jimmy Reed, Little Walter and John Brim. Singer and harmonica player Scott Dirks, guitarist Willie Greeson and drummer Dean Haas have some impressive bona fides, having backed such Chicago legends of the blues as Jody Williams, Dave Myers, Eddie C. Campbell, Elmore James Jr., Ardella Williams, Jimmie Lee Robinson and Willie Buck. In addition to his musicianship, Dirks has been a DJ and radio producer, is co-author of *Blues With a Feeling: the Little Walter Story* (Routledge Press, 2002), plus a producer of a number of major recordings for Delmark, Alligator and other labels. Guitarist Willy Greeson is a long-time veteran of the Chicago blues scene and a former member of the Legendary Blues Band. And drummer Dean Haas played for decades as a member of Scotty and the Bad Boys, and was accompanist to the legendary Jimmy Rogers with whom he appeared and toured in the 1980s and '90s, until Rogers' death in 1997.

3–3:45pm Rick King's Royal Hustle

Rick King, a Chicago native, has played drums for B.B. King, Chuck Berry, and Buddy Guy and is a veteran of the high-performance Chicago funk and soul jam band Lubriphonic. He was a founding member of the nationally-touring Lubriphonic and produced and played on five recordings with them.

These days Rick King fronts his own band, Rick King's Royal Hustle, featuring

some of the finest funk and soul musicians on the Chicago scene. On the keyboards is Marty Sammon, who spent many years playing behind Buddy Guy and before that Otis Rush. Pete Galanis, well-known to Chicago blues audiences for his fine guitar work behind Lurrie Bell, Omar Coleman and others, shares guitar duties with Radka Kaspárová, who came to Chicago from Philadelphia in 2016 to study jazz at DePaul University. On bass is Pennal "PJ" Johnson, the percussive five-string thumper from Lubriphonic with credits playing jazz, gospel and funk. Ron Haynes and Johnny Cotton, both with impressive resumes, represent on horns.



RICK KING

4–4:45pm Tom Holland & The Shuffle Kings

From the south side of Chicago, **Tom Holland** came to the blues by way of his father's record collection and states that his main guitar influences have been Muddy Waters, Earl Hooker, John Primer and Magic Slim. He started gigging as a teenager, playing first with guitarist L.V. Banks, then apprenticing under John Primer who took him on the road and into the recording studio for the first time in 1998. While still with Primer and throughout his next three-year tenure with Eddy "The Chief" Clearwater, he began putting together his own band, The Shuffle Kings, for side gigs. In 2002 he self-produced his own recording, titled **Tom Holland & the Shuffle Kings**, and began regular touring as a bandleader. But in 2003 he accepted an invitation from harmonica legend James Cotton to join his band and subsequently performed and toured with them until Cotton's death in 2017. During this period Holland recorded with Cotton on both **Giant** and **Cotton Mouth Man** for Alligator Records. Back with his Shuffle Kings, he recorded **No**

Fluff, Just the Stuff in 2013 on E Natchel Records and continues to be a growing presence on local and national stages.



TOM HOLLAND

ROSA'S LOUNGE
Emcee: Tony Mangiullo

11am–9pm Daily showcase of Chicago Blues Legends and emerging artists that have called Rosa's Lounge home over the last 35 years.

JAY PRITZKER PAVILION

4:45–5pm

Emcee: Tom Marker

5:15–6:15pm Larkin Poe

Roots-rocking sisters, Rebecca and Megan Lovell, who comprise **Larkin Poe** (named for their great, great, great, great grandfather), have been on a musical tear since their 2010 start down home in Georgia. Now based in Nashville, the sisters, who are both excellent singers and harmonizers, make their music with guitar, dobro and handclaps—when not backed by their bassist and drummer—to create a distinctive, often haunting and atmospheric interpretive mash-up of old country blues, road-house rock and outlaw country. They were invited by T Bone Burnett to contribute harmonies and instrumentation for **Lost on the River: The New Basement Tapes** in 2014. Last fall they released their fourth studio album, **Venom & Faith**, which in very short order reached the #1 spot on the *Billboard* blues album chart. In addition to their impressive repertoire of hard-driving original numbers and hair-raising covers of blues classics, they play a lovely version of Santo and Johnny's timeless instrumental "Sleep Walk."

6:30–7:30pm The CONNECTION: Mike Welch & Friends

"**Monster**" **Mike Welch** was playing guitar by the age of eight, and five years later he was given the "monster" moniker by Dan Aykroyd of Saturday Night Live and Blues Brothers fame after performing at the opening of the House of the Blues in his hometown of Boston. Welch played the prestigious Notodden Blues Festival at the age of eighteen. After releasing three albums on Tone-Cool, a subsidiary of Rounder Records, Welch appeared on **Sugar Ray & The Bluetones Featuring Monster Mike Welch** (Severn Records) in 2003, which led to a long relationship with The Bluetones. Concurrently he had become a guitarist in demand for session work with some of the best in the blues industry, including Shemekia Copeland, Ronnie Earl, Duke Robillard, Johnny Winter, the Mannish Boys and Sugaray Rayford, among others. In the midst of a three year consecutive run of Blues Music Award nominations for his guitar prowess,



Justin O'Brien is a musician and freelance writer most associated

with *Living Blues* magazine, founded in Chicago and now of the University of Mississippi, to which he has contributed since 1977. Additionally, he has written about blues and other subjects for various other publications, has penned more than 40 liner notes for blues, jazz and folk recordings, and was a contributor to the *Encyclopedia of the Blues* (Routledge Press, 2005). From 1995 to 2006 he was the host for 26 productions of the Chicago Public Library's "Speakin' of the Blues" program, broadcast on MUTV. In 2018 Garret Room Books published his personal account of the 1968 Democratic Convention, entitled **Chicago Yippie! '68**.

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he formed a partnership with vocalist and rising blues star Mike Ledbetter of the Nick Moss band. The musical chemistry between them was instantly apparent at the Otis Rush tribute at the 2016 Chicago Blues Festival, and together they constituted an indomitable stage force. In 2017 they recorded **Right Time Right Place** for the Delta Groove label. As fate would have it, earlier this year Ledbetter died suddenly of complications from epilepsy at the age of 33. Mike Welch lost his musical sidekick—a huge blow to both Mike personally and to the Chicago blues community. Two local memorials to his memory in April drew musicians from around the country. This set is certain to shake out as a tribute to the truly special musical relationship between Mike Ledbetter and "Monster" Mike Welch.

7:45–9pm Ruthie Foster

Born in the small town of Gause, Texas in 1964, **Ruthie Foster** first sang in the church, before going off to study music and audio engineering at a community college in Waco. She performed with bar bands before joining the U.S. Navy where she sang with the naval band Pride. After her service she moved to New York City and signed with Atlantic Records. But she walked away from a deal that might have molded her into a pop star, and moved back to

Texas to take care of her ailing mother. After self-releasing **Full Circle** (1997) and **Crossover** (1999), she signed with a brand new label, Blue Corn Music, with whom she has remained to this day, and thrived. Her eight (thus far) studio and live albums for the label began with **Runaway Soul** in 2002, followed by nearly an album every two years, to date. **The Truth According to Ruthie Foster** (2009) earned a Grammy® Award nomination, as did **Let It Burn** (2012), with guests The Blind Boys of Alabama, William Bell, and the Funky Meters rhythm section. **Promise of a Brand New Day** (2014) won her a third Grammy® Award nomination. Her most recent album is **Joy Comes Back** (2017).

Ruthie Foster has also won seven Blues Music Awards, three Austin Music Awards, the Grand Prix du Disque award from the Académie Charles-Cros in France, a *Living Blues* magazine Critics' Award for Female Blues Artist of the Year and a 2018 United States Artists' Fellowship award, with an unrestricted cash award. She has performed at Carnegie Hall, a presidential inauguration ball and on festival and concert stages around the world.

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