

# **NORTH AMERICAN ENTERTAINMENT GROUP INC.**

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## **THE TAMPA BLUES FESTIVAL COME TO**

### **St. Pete Times Forum**

Tampa, FL- The Tampa Blues Festival is a fantastic music celebration that delivers the dynamics of high-energy entertainment with love, happiness and nostalgia-all in the name of the Blues. The Tampa Blues Festival will be held at the St. Pete Times Forum, January 27th at 6 pm. The performers of the Tampa Blues Festival include Shirley Brown, Marvin Sease, Theodis Ealey, Latimore, Bobby Rush, Mel Waiters, Bobby Blue Bland, Floyd Taylor and Sir Charles Jones. With this great line up, Blues-lovers are sure to laugh, dance, and enjoy a memorable evening again and again! Tickets are available at the St. Pete Times Forum Box Office (813) 301 6867, all Ticketmaster outlets or charge by phone by calling (813) 287 8844 or online at [www.ticketmaster.com](http://www.ticketmaster.com).

### **Shirley Brown**

Shirley Brown is a soul singer, born January 6, 1947 in West Memphis, Arkansas. She had a classic Soul background, having started to sing in a Baptist Church in St Louis, Missouri at the end of 10. Very much a singer in the southern Deep Soul tradiiton, she is one of the few vocalists whose range and power invite comparison with Aretha Franklin.

She had sung professionally since the age of 22, and recorded for small labels in St Louis and Nashville. Her manager, bluesman Albert King negotiated a recording deal with Stax records in Memphis, and, resulted in national attention with the 1974 hit 'Woman to Woman' taken from the 1974 album of the same name. Soul critic Ron Wynn went on to call 'Woman to Woman' a 'seminal confessional and confrontational soul

masterpiece,' and it was actually the last hit for the Stax label and its success actually delayed its collapse into bankruptcy for several months.

Left musically orphaned by the collapse of Stax in 1975, Shirley Brown looked around for another label, and was one of the first signings to Clive Davis' Arista Records where she cut the undervalued 'Shirley Brown' album in 1976. She then recorded for several other labels, including 20th Century, the revamped and relaunched Stax, and Malaco. Surprisingly, none of her other recordings have enjoyed anything like the commercial success of 'Woman to Woman.

## Marvin Sease

Marvin Sease was born on February 16, 1946 in Blackville, S.C. where he became a gospel artist. He began his vocal career by joining a gospel group called the Five Gospel Crowns located in Charleston S.C. after singing with them Marvin then left at age 20 For N.Y.. At this young age settling into New York N.Y. he then joined another gospel group called the Gospel Crowns. Having the deep preference for the music style of R&B Marvin left the gospel groups to form his own R&B group. In this group Mr. Sease was accompanied by his own three brothers and named the the backing band Sease. Marvin leading this band called Sease with his three brothers did not find popularity and eventually broke up. He did not quit performing musically but began to cover songs that started a career with a reoccurring gig at the Brooklyn club Casablanca. Marvin however desired his own success singing his own music and greater artistic freedom so in 1986 he recorded the self titled L.P. featuring one of his most popular more popular songs, "Ghetto Man,". This started his current professional career with his fans in the south's circuit of bars, blues festivals, and juke joints. While promoting his self produced and publicized L.P. he came upon a record contract with Polygram recordings. With this contract, he was able to launch his music nationally with the re-release of his self titled L.P. on Mercury/London in 1987. This updated release of his previous material also included the new ten minute track "Candy Licker" which became an instant success for Sease through the South. Success had finally come to Marvin even without the help of radio airplay which deemed his sound

too explicit for the audience. Over the next decade Marvin would release several more records for London/mercury and Jive record which ranked on the Billboards R&B chart and pop charts. Seases success however has most notably been linked with his chart topping song "Candy Licker" and has ensured a strong female based following. The female fan base has been engrossed with his signature blues, gospel-drenched soul, racy lyrics that has ensured a continued industry with merchandising in the Deep South. Unfortunately for Marvin and his comparable sound to the likes of Jonnie Taylor and Tyrone Davis he has not found as great of a commercial fan base nationally.

## Theodis Ealey

Blues Guitarist, Vocalist, Songwriter Producer, and Entertainer... are just a few of the titles that describe the phenomenon of Theodis Ealey. This Mississippi native first picked up an instrument when his older brother Y Z Ealey first taught him how to play at the age of 4. Ten years later, Theodis on bass was playing at his first gig with brothers Y Z and Melvin Ealey in a group called Y Z Ealey and the Merrymakers. This brotherly trio made their debut in their hometown of Natchez, Mississippi at a local nightclub called Horseshoe Circle. One year later, Theodis traded his bass for a guitar and began performing with another Natchez group, Eugene Butler & the Rocking Royals. It was here that Theodis sharpened his guitar playing skills while hitting the local circuit.

Music has always been a part of his life. Growing up, Theodis says this lifelong love affair with music began when he lived on Highway 61 on the other side of the road from Miss Willie Mae's Juke Joint. *"I would just sit on the steps and listen to the sounds coming from there"* the heart and soul of the Blues. Since leaving Mississippi, Theodis always carried the "Mississippi Juke Joint Spirit" with him through his music.

As one of 11 children in his family, Theodis wanted to travel the world and the U.S. Air Force provided the opportunity. During his military tour of service, Theodis was stationed in Hawaii for 6 years and then moved to Oakland, California before making Atlanta, Georgia his permanent home. Still holding strong to his Mississippi roots, Theodis

played guitar with such notable artists as Little Milton, Johnny Clyde Copeland, Richard "Dimples" Fields, the Blues Brothers, and the 'legendary' Charles Brown. This musical journey enabled Theodis to generate a personal style based upon his love of diverse music -- blues, country, soul, and rock.

Established as an accomplished guitarist, Theodis took a chance and the music industry soon discovered the voice behind the guitar. Theodis "the artist" was born. Ichiban Records, a respected blues label in Atlanta, recognized Theodis' multiple talents and immediately signed him to a deal in 1991. Over the next six years, Theodis and Ichiban Records would enjoy 4 very successful albums. It was Theodis Ealey's charm and magnetism that attracted audiences worldwide. His electrifying stage performances also opened doors to Hollywood. Theodis appeared in the NBC Movie of the Week "A Kiss To Die For," the Emmy-winning HBO special "Miss Evers' Boys," the major motion picture "The Fighting Temptations," and commercials for Rooms To Go and the Cartoon Network, forever "The Bluesman Lover."

Theodis Ealey generated industry recognition for his innovative style and authentic Mississippi flavor as the recipient of the Mo' Better Blues Male Artist of the Year Award in 1997 and Male Vocalist Top Star Award in the San Francisco Bay Area (1994). Theodis Ealey also crossed music genres and performed as a featured vocalist with Hip-Hop Group Ghetto Mafia "On Da Grind" CD, further expanding his fan base.

The "Bluesman Lover" created lemonade out of lemons when Ichiban Records eventually closed its doors. Seizing the moment, Theodis Ealey used this opportunity to create his new label home IFGAM Records. The name alone is symbolic of the Theodis Ealey spirit...I Feel Good About Myself (IFGAM). At his new label home, Theodis released his fifth project called "It's A Real Good Thang," continuing with the Ealey tradition of music diversity filled with pure soul.

His current project "Stand Up In It" has been a runaway success as the #1 Single on Billboard's Hot R&B/Hip Hop Singles Sales Chart for five consecutive weeks, debuting as #5 on Billboard's Blues Album Chart and #69 on Billboards R&B/Hip-Hop Charts. Theodis thought this song and

album was just for "grown folks" but the radio industry and listeners thought otherwise.

## Latimore

Deep-voiced **Latimore's** sultry mid-'70s output for Miami's Glades label was a steamy marriage of soul and blues. Initially billed as **Benny Latimore**, the Tennessean began recording for Miami mogul **Henry Stone** in 1965, and his late-'60s Dade singles are solid deep-soul. Dropping his first name on *Glades*, **Latimore** finally found stardom in 1973 with a jazzy reading of **T-Bone Walker's** "Stormy Monday." He topped the soul lists in 1974 with the anguished "Let's Straighten It Out," a simmering soul/blues hybrid, and encoored with the incendiary "Keep the Home Fires Burnin'" the next year. Most of **Latimore's** *Glades* sides were produced in Miami by Steve "Every Day I Have to Cry" Alaimo, and when he wasn't cutting his own hits, **Latimore** acted as a house pianist for parent TK Records. **Latimore** moved to Malaco during the '80s, his appeal undiminished.

## Bobby Rush

At a time when most of his contemporaries are resting on their laurels, Bobby Rush—a 50-year veteran of the stage—continues to be one of the most exciting and creative artists in the R&B/blues arena. Rush's live shows are without parallel, replete with costume changes and comedic sketches acted out with the assistance of his lovely female dancers. In addressing a broad range of matters of the heart, Rush adopts various onstage persona—the adoring lover, the cuckold, the boastful stud—delivering all with a knowing wink that assures the audience that he's in on the joke.

In the context of today's all too predictable and sanitized blues market, it's easy to understand why audiences new to Rush's performances often find them novel or even bewildering. Unique they are, but Rush's signifying, jesting, and double entendré jiving are at the heart of the blues, as exemplified by forbears such as Charley Patton, Memphis Minnie, Louis Jordan, and Howlin' Wolf.

Bobby Rush-it's pronounced as one three-syllable name-calls his music "folk funk," an apt description for a blend that's both decidedly modern and deeply rooted in tradition. Over the decades he has consistently updated his show by incorporating new styles-jump blues, Chicago style deep blues, soul, funk, and even hip-hop-into a fresh mix. At the same time, his original compositions often stem from his dipping into the well of folk wisdom, as exemplified by songs like "What's Good For the Goose is Good for the Gander Too."

The son of a preacher man, Bobby Rush was born Emmet Ellis, Jr., in the north Louisiana town of Homer; he later adopted his stage name out of respect for his father. He built his first instrument, a primitive guitar or "diddley bow," and in his early teens he was donning a fake mustache and appearing at local juke joints as a solo artist. In the mid-'50s he moved up to Chicago, where his bands included Freddie King, Earl Hooker, and Luther Allison, while on jaunts back to his family home in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, he performed with Elmore James and James' cousin Boyd Gilmore.

Rush began working as a bandleader already as a teenager after realizing that he could control his own destiny if he owned all the equipment. His entrepreneurial flair is legendary among fellow musicians, who fondly recall his working in disguise as the emcee on his own gigs, earning double pay from an unknowing club owner, and his shuffling between three gigs a night with separate bands at West Side nightclubs.

Rush's popularity as a live performer in Chicago set back the development of his recording career, but he began to achieve national acclaim in 1971 following the success of his hit "Chicken Heads" on Galaxy records. Over the next decade he recorded for labels including Jewel, Philadelphia International, Warner Brothers, and toured widely on the "chitlin circuit," the decades old network of clubs that stretches in a rough triangle between east Texas, north Florida, and Chicago.

In the early '80s Rush moved from Chicago to his current home of Jackson, Mississippi, where he recorded a series of albums for the

LeJam, Ichiban, and Malaco labels, and gained the title of "king of the chitlin circuit" in the wake of hits including "Sue," "Wearin' It Out," "Ain't Studdin' You," and "Hoochie Man."

In 2003 Rush fulfilled his longtime dream of forming his own label, Deep Rush, recording the CD "Undercover Lover" and capturing the magic of his live show on DVD at the club Ground Zero in Clarksdale, Mississippi. Rush's showmanship is also prominently featured in Richard Pearce's documentary film "The Road To Memphis," broadcast on PBS in September 2003 as part of Martin Scorsese's film series "The Blues."

In the last decade Rush has gained new audiences through performances at the Kennedy Center, Carnegie Hall, and on festival stages in Europe and Japan. But catch him on an average weekend and he's just as likely to be playing to packed houses in chitlin circuit clubs in places like Nesbit, Mississippi, Macon, Georgia, and Smackover, Arkansas, before mostly black, working class audiences that conventional blues wisdom suggests no longer exist.

Success in the American music marketplace generally entails leaving behind the people that sustained you during your early years, but that's not a price Bobby Rush is willing to pay. As his career takes off in new directions, he's determined to keep it real, presenting the same unadulterated show as he moves from Tokyo to Smackover. Or as he explains in what has become somewhat a mantra of late, "I want to cross over, not cross out."

## **Mel Waiters**

Born July 20, 1971 in San Antonio, Texas, this Blues man is the cousin of Southern Soul Recording Artist Mel Waiters. While Mel is a veteran of the southern soul circuit young Walter is making his mark on the blues and southern soul scene. Like many other recording artist Walter began his career in the Baptist church. It didn't take long for family members and friends to see that he was blessed with an amazing talent. He would listen to his mother talk to her friends and at night he would listen outside her bedroom to her prayers talking about the struggle to raise seven children alone. This was his first introduction to "The

Blues". Growing up in the early seventies he was influenced early by the likes of B.B. King, Little Milton, Booker T & the MG'S and Elvis Presley. Just as B.B. King would learned to master the guitar, young Walter began cutting his teeth on the keyboard. In the late 80's Walter along with his friend Maurice "Big Moe" Martin formed a two piece band, Maurice was the drummer and Walter was the keyboard player. The two of them began playing talent shows and local events in the San Antonio area it was here that young Walter was starting to grow as an artist.

Soon after turning 18, he began sneaking into local blues clubs and played with a lot of the national and local acts that were performing. In the early 90's Walter had already established himself on the entertainment scene in San Antonio. In 1994 while attending a blues show which included a lineup of Willie Clayton, Buddy Ace and Tyrone Davis; There, Walter got the opportunity to meet the Silver Fox, Buddy Ace. Walter described the meeting as a life changing experience and credits the singer with giving him the spirit to see his dreams through. Sadly, Buddy Ace passed away a few months later but the encounter began the birth of "THE NEXT BIG THING".

Walter is a multi-talented artist in complete control of his career. He's a singer, song-writer, arranger, producer, and a great entertainer. Walter was turned off by record companies early in his music career mainly because of the control the company wanted over his career. In 2001 he released his Independent debut cd titled Don't Scratch My Back which included his first hit single "Don't Scratch My Back". In 2003 he released his sophomore cd titled Laid Back Kind Of Place which included the hit singles "Doing It" and "Married Man's Blues". In 2005 he released his third cd titled Staying on My Blues And Keys and it featured the hit singles "Careful Woman", "Creeping" and "Kaylah's Boogie". He performs regularly in the Midwestern areas but he's now beginning to expand his shows throughout the southern region of the United States. His genius on the keyboard has garnered him national fanfare from critics and other recording artists. Blues Boy Willie called him a "Keyboard Extraordinaire". His music is the blues smoothed out on the southern soul tip. With the boldness and energy of a young Ray Charles, a vintage voice that demands the audiences attention, his electrifying skills on keyboard and his exciting dance

moves makes Walter one of the top showman's on the blues and southern soul scene. His life inspires him to sing the blues and his reflections on where he came from and what he had to work with will only keep the desire to see his dreams come through. With Walter Waiters on the scene the future of the Blues

## Bobby Blue Bland

Everyone has their favorite artists and Bobby Bland is the Primer's, at least in the R&B idiom.

Undeniably one of the great blues vocalists of all time, rather like B.B. King he has straddled the charts over many decades and recorded in a variety of styles. Always a blues ballad stylist without peer, he had little difficulty in adapting to create the soul/blues hybrid represented by his albums from the 70's onwards.

There is still a tremendous amount of material available from his Duke label recording period, when he first consistently started hitting the Billboard and R&B charts - including any number of compilations of which "The Best Of" is but one example. This is a single CD at a relatively cheap introductory price but Bland is worth more than that - if you can, try and get hold of one of the many double CD collections which are still available. One of the best ways of accessing this material is through the three 2CD collections (Volumes 1-3) that cover the whole of the Duke period. Unfortunately, in the UK they tend to be available only on import, so if you can only afford one, go for Volume 2 "Turn On Your Lovelight". Better still, collect the original albums from the period - most have been reissued and Bland was one of the few artists around at that time who put albums together rather than a couple of single tracks surrounded by second and third rate filler - probably because he worked in partnership with Joe Scott, a talented arranger and writer of much of the material that Bland recorded.

One of the very best from the time was the album "Two Steps From The Blues" which includes Bland standards such as 'I Pity The Fool', 'Cry, Cry, Cry' and 'I'll Take Care Of You' as well as the title track.

When Bland joined ABC Dunhill, he teamed up with producer Steve Barri and a stellar set of session men and produced albums of the quality of

"His California Album", "Dreamer" and, perhaps best of all, "Reflections In Blue" (All still available on CD). He also showed his affinity for country with the neglected but worthwhile "Get On Down With" album - excellent interpretations of songs from country stalwarts such as Merle Haggard. At the time of writing you can get this and the "Reflections In Blue" release as a special price "twofer". On each of the ABC albums he proved himself to be a great interpreter of wide ranging material. The "Anthology" 2CD collection boasts material from both the Duke and ABC recording periods and is a great Primer for those new to Bland

## Sir Charles Jones

Sir Charles Jones was born in Akron, Ohio. When he was young his family moved to Birmingham, Alabama where he was then raised. It was in Birmingham, Alabama where his singing career started.

Sir Charles Jones taught himself how to write his own music. He also taught himself how to arrange and produce his music. He worked under the guidance of the soul and blues singer Marvin Sease. Sir Charles Jones is currently recording under the independent Atlanta, Georgia label Jumpin Records.

Sir Charles Jones has been crowned "The King of Southern Soul". It has been stated that Sir Charles Jones has "a versatile style and wide range of vocal ability; with just a touch of smooth rhythm melodic melodies, and the cry of love, pain, happiness, fun times, and the sincerity of commitment". His style ranges from jazz music to fusion, and from gospel