

The Motor City, the Windy City, the Music City, the River Cities and the Crescent City • April/May 2025

BIG CITY Rhythm & BLUES

ON THE ROAD
From Chicago to New Orleans,
from Mississippi to Atlanta



Blues Guitars Coco Montoya, Ronnie Baker Brooks & Sue Foley

Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas, USVI, 1/29/25

USA \$5.95 Canada \$7.95



bigcitybluesmag.com



JANUARY 18-25, 2026

- ★ Ft. Lauderdale
- ★ New Orleans
- ★ Cozumel

Holland America Line *Eurodam*



Use
PROMO CODE

BIGCITY

for SPECIAL
SAVINGS!

..... *Featuring performances by*

- Little Feat ★ Samantha Fish ★ Galactic ft. Jelly Joseph*
- Anders Osborne ★ Marc Broussard ★ Cyril Neville with
Omari Neville and The Fuel ★ Jon Cleary & The Absolute
Monster Gentlemen ★ The Soul Rebels ★ Cowboy Mouth
BeauSoleil Avec Michael Doucet ★ George Porter Jr. &
Runnin' Pardners ★ Chubby Carrier ★ D.K. Harrell
John "Papa" Gros ★ Shake 'Em Up Jazz Band ★ Honey Island
Swamp Band ★ Susan Cowsill ★ Helen Gillet ★ Minx Burlesque
Chef Kevin Belton *and many more!*

(*Special appearance by Galactic ft. Jelly Joseph at Tipitina's in NOLA)

LET THE GOOD TIMES ROLL AT SEA!

SCAN FOR DETAILS



Enjoy 75+ Performances • Artist Interactive Events
New Orleans Culinary Experiences • Theme Nights

And More!

BIGEASYCRUISE.COM
(855) 923-7456

Facebook Instagram BigEasyCruise StarVista LIVE

Artists and ports subject to change

TAMPA BAY *Blues Festival*

APRIL 11, 12 & 13, 2025
VINOY PARK • ST. PETERSBURG FL

CHRISTONE "KINGFISH" INGRAM • JJ GREY & MOFRO • TAB BENOIT
CURTIS SALGADO • RONNIE BAKER BROOKS • ANA POPOVIC • WALTER TROUT

ALSO PERFORMING: NORTH MISSISSIPPI ALLSTARS • TAJ FARRANT • RUTHIE FOSTER
JOANNE SHAW TAYLOR • TAD ROBINSON • SELWYN BIRCHWOOD • DK HARRELL & MORE



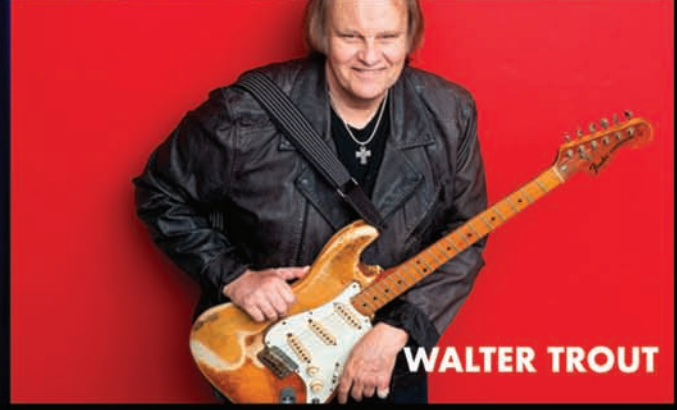
CHRISTONE "KINGFISH" INGRAM



JJ GREY & MOFRO



TAB BENOIT



WALTER TROUT

TICKETS & VIP AT: TAMPABAYBLUESFEST.COM



**THE BLUES
FOUNDATION
PRESENTS**

THE 46TH ANNUAL BLUES MUSIC AWARDS



MAY 08, 2025 • MEMPHIS, TN

BIG CITY **BLUES** VIEWS

Why Blues Guitar?

“Don’t think about it, just feel it.” **Albert Collins** aka “The Master of the Telecaster”

“Sometimes you’ll want to give up the guitar, you’ll hate the guitar. But if you stick with it, you’re gonna be rewarded.” —**Jimi Hendrix** played a Fender Stratocaster and sometimes a Gibson Flying V

“I’ve said that playing the blues is like having to be black twice. Stevie Ray Vaughan missed on both counts, but I never noticed.” **B.B. King** loved his ebony Lucille guitars

“If you don’t know the blues, there’s no point in picking up the guitar and playing rock and roll or any other form of popular music.” —**Keith Richards’** favorite “Micawber” is a modified 1953 Fender Telecaster



Ronnie Baker Brooks, 1994 Ultimate Rhythm & Blues Cruise

As Honeyboy would say: “I don’t like it, I love it!” The blues guitar is the backbone of not only the blues but is so far reaching that it has influenced all musicians around the world. **Big City Rhythm & Blues Magazine** has been featuring blues guitarists beginning with our inaugural issues in 1995 with **Mr. Bo, Son House** and **John Lee Hooker** then in 1996

with **Willie D. Warren, Jim McCarty** and **Johnnie Bassett**. Over the past 30 years we have featured hundreds of blues guitarists like **Corey Harris, Larry McCray, Jimmy Burns, Luther & Bernard Allison, Bonnie Raitt, Honeyboy Edwards, Freddie King, Johnny Winter, Albert Collins, John Hammond, Robert Jr. Lockwood, Willie King, Hubert**

Sue Foley debut at Antone's 15th Anniversary with Albert Collins! July 1990



April/May 2025, Vol. 31 No. 2

INSIDE

Blues Guitars

Coco Montoya The Grateful Icon	8
Ronnie Baker Brooks You Can't Spell Dynasty Without DNA	13
Two Prong Crown Poem by Mike "Mojo" Griffin	15
Sue Foley Always Fresh and Innovative!	16
The Guitar Kings of the Blues	18
Randy Jacobs Great Shakes	20
Little Freddie King "Still Down for the Blues"	21
Brad Vickers An Amazing Ride	22
David Lambert 1957-2024	23
Doug Deming A Guitar Gem	25
Lil' Ed Keeping J.B. Hutto's Legacy Alive!	26
Michael Garrett An Imperial Bluesman	27
Kenny Sultan Acoustic Guitar Master	28
Nathan James Crafting a Blues Legacy	29
Kenny Neal Guitars, Like Cars, Can Take You Far	30
John Fohl Wonder Fohl Gigs, Guitars, and a Great Guy	31
Paul Filipowicz Knuckle Busting Blues	32
John Primer The Soul of a Blues Man	34
HastingsSt Boogie Jim McCarty Virtuoso	36
ON THE ROAD	
New Orleans	38
Atlanta	40
Mississippi	41
Chicago	43
Boston	44
Minnesota	46
Atlantic City	47
Broadacst	48
REVIEWS	
Blues Birthdays	50
Junior's Art Page	54
Imagine Sampler #36	56
Subscribe	58
Sugar Mae	60
Festivals 2024-25	62
On the cover: Photo by Shirley Mae Owens at Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas, USVI, 1/29/25	

www.bigcitybluesmag.com



Shirley Mae aka Sugar & B.B. King! Uptown Theatre, Kansas City, MO, 6/12/1987

Sumlin, Jimmy Vivino, Walter "Wolfman" Washington, Stevie Ray Vaughan, R. L. Burnside, Kenny Brown, Dwayne Burnside, Jorma Kaukonen, Roy Book Binder, Dave Alvin, Buddy Guy, B.B. King, Taj Mahal, Little Freddie King, Matt "Guitar" Murphy, Phil Guy, Linsey Alexander, Doug Deming, Selwyn Birchwood, Kenny Neal, Luther Dickinson, Eric Clapton, Keith Richards, Jimmy Johnson, Kenny Wayne Shepherd, John Primer, Ruthie Foster, Tab Benoit, R.L. Boyce, Samantha Fish, Lightnin' Malcom, Mike Zito, Albert Castiglia, Devon Allman, Duane Betts, Elvin Bishop, Lonnie Brooks and his sons—Ronnie & Wayne, Lurrie Bell, Rodriguez, Nick Moss, Toronzo Cannon, Lil' Ed Williams, Kingfish, D.K. Harrell, Eric Gales, Rev. Peyton, Magic Slim, Walter Trout, Laura Chavez, Eddy Clearwater, Marcus King, Ana Popovic and so many more – with more **Donald Kinsey & Chris Cain jammin' at 1988 Handy's (BMA), Memphis, TN J**



Photo/Marcie Ryan

to come.

I first met **Ronnie Baker Brooks** at **The Grand Emporium** in Kansas City. As a teenager Ronnie began touring with his dad **Lonnie Brooks** in the 80's. This is Ronnie Baker Brooks' third Big City Rhythm & Blues Magazine cover. We featured **The Brooks Dynasty** in 2004 (Lonnie, Ronnie & Wayne) and in 2009 Ronnie was on the cover in front of the historic **Apollo Theatre** in Harlem with **The Legendary Rhythm & Blues Revue** with **Tommy Castro, Deanna Bogart and Magic Dick**. Ronnie has been on tour promoting his new Alligator release "Blues In My DNA."

I remember first seeing **Coco Montoya** playing with **John Mayall & The Bluesbreakers**. Coco was also a regular at The Grand Emporium whenever he toured across the country with his own band. "Just play what you feel, be real about it, and enjoy yourself" is what Albert Collins taught him. Coco's sixth Alligator Records release "Writing On The Wall" is out. Coco says, and you will agree, that "it is the best record that he has ever made."

I met **Sue Foley** when she arrived in Austin to sign with **Antone's Records** in 1990. Owner **Clifford Antone** had invited me to **Antones Nightclub's 15th Anniversary**. Before the celebration, Clifford drove Sue and I to San Antonio to go to a radio show, but first we drove by where **Robert Johnson** recorded on November 23, 1936 at the Gunter Hotel. Sue Foley's 2025 Grammy-nominated Stony Plain Record "One

Photo/Shirley Mae Owens



Coco Montoya performing with John Mayall & The Bluesbreakers, 1996 Kansas City Blues Fest

"Guitar Woman" is a tribute to women guitarists Memphis Minnie, Sister Rosetta Tharpe, Maybelle Carter and others.

As we celebrate Big City Rhythm & Blues Magazine's 30th Anniversary, we have started working on our CD Sampler #37 that is not for sale but is given to subscribers who want more - and it is also promoted and given to blues cruisers on the **Legendary Rhythm & Blues Cruises**. Space is always limited so be sure to reserve a spot to get your song heard. For more information: blues@bigcity-bluesmag.com.

Take the high road, when you get to a crossroads, take it, may the river be with you, may the wind be at your back, surf's up, mahola, aloha and don't forget to boogie!

Hope, peace & happiness,
Best,
Shirley Mae Owens aka Sugar

Top 11 Songs on Junior's Jukebox

1. Tab Benoit - I Hear Thunder
2. Ronnie Baker Brooks - Blues In My DNA
3. Sue Foley - One Guitar Woman
4. Coco Montoya - Writing On The Wall
5. Shemekia Copeland - Blame It On Eve
6. Bobby Cristina's Caravan - True Blues Brother: The Legacy of Matt "Guitar" Murphy
7. Benny Turner - BT
8. Taj Mahal - Swingin' Live At The Church In Tulsa
9. Tommy Castro - Closer To The Bone
10. Ruthie Foster - Mileage
11. Big City Rhythm & Blues Magazine's CD Sampler #36

BIG CITY Rhythm & BLUES

Founding Editor
Robert Jr Whittall
April 14, 1948 - April 24, 2024
Publisher & Editor
Marketing Captain & Photographer
Shirley Mae Owens
Graphic Design & Production
Charlie Auringer
Copy Editor
Guy Powell
Assistant to the Publisher
And distribution specialist
Bob Monteleone

Contributing Writers
Bob Baugh, Peggy Brown, Laura Carbone, Ro Daley, Steve Daniels, David Glynn, Mike Griffin, Robin Hathaway, Eric Harabadian, Deak Harp, Kevin Johnson, Bob Krause, Jen Littleton, Carol Marble, Karen McFarland, Bob Monteleone, Shirley Mae Owens, Guy Powell, Julia Magness, Richard Radbil, Michael Richardson, Dick Shurman, John Sinclair, Carlin C-Note Smith, Albert Varosi, Erin Vickers, Bob-O Walesa, Carolyn Walkup, Kim Welsh, Dirk Wissbaum

Contributing Artists
Scott Dedenbach, Bette Evans, Jan Kaulins, Plastic Crimewave, Rick Ruby, Robert Jr Whittall

Contributing Photographers
Charles Auringer, Laura Carbone, Peter Hurley, Bob Krause, Aigars Lapsa, Jim Mills, Shirley Mae Owens, John Rockwood, Lindsay Shannon, Roman Sobus, Dick Waterman, Robert Jr Whittall, Dirk Wissbaum

BIG CITY BLUES MAGAZINE is published bimonthly by Detroit Blues Magazine, L.L.C., P.O. Box 1805, Royal Oak, MI 48068-1805. Copyright © 2025 Big City Rhythm & Blues Magazine L.L.C. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, or otherwise, without the express written permission of the publisher. Unsolicited materials, CDs, photos and manuscripts sent to Big City Blues will not be returned and Big City Blues can not be held responsible for these materials.

To SUBSCRIBE to *Big City Blues*, for one year (6 issues)—In USA send \$45. In Canada add \$10. Outside US/Canada add \$50.00 to: **Big City Blues Magazine**, P.O. Box 1805, ROYAL OAK, MI 48068-1805
blues@bigcitybluesmag.com
www.bigcitybluesmag.com
Sugar and Junior on Facebook:
www.facebook.com/BigCityBluesMagazine
www.facebook.com/bigcityblues
[X@bigcitybluesmag](https://www.facebook.com/bigcitybluesmag)

Call now for advertising and marketing help for our June/July 2025 Issue!
(248) 582-1544

"Soul-stirring blues, beaming, funk-inflected cuts and driving, gritty anthems, all led by fireball vocalist Tierinii Jackson" -Relix

Southern Avenue

Family

CD & CLEAR GREEN LP AVAILABLE APRIL 25th AT ALLIGATOR.COM
GENUINE HOUSEROCKIN' MUSIC SINCE 1971

LITTLE FREDDIE KING

I Use To Be Down

Made Wright Records, New Orleans, LA
GUT-BUCKET BLUES MASTER
Little Freddie King is one of the last great country blues players.
Little Freddie King (aka Dr. Bones) says
"I use to be down but my fans have raised me up!"

To Order CD or Book da KING:
<http://facebook.com/little.f.king> / [www.amazon.com / order@burnsidedistribution.com](http://www.amazon.com/order@burnsidedistribution.com) / www.louisianamusicfactory.com / www.bandcamp.com
Manager/Booking: "Wacko" Wade production, LLC / wackowade@yahoo.com

JOHN PRIMER

GROWN IN MISSISSIPPI

A Tribute to my Home

RELEASE DATE
APRIL
11th

ORDER NOW!

Featuring:
BOBBY RUSH, CHARLIE MUSSELWHITE, WATERMELON SLIM, LIGHTNIN' MALCOLM, EDEN BRENT, DEAK HARP, QUICKSAND, ALIYA PRIMER, STEVE BELL, & OTHERS...

AVAILABLE AT JOHNPRIMERBLUES.COM & BLUESHOUSEPRODUCTIONS.COM