The Reader’s Guide to the 22nd Annual BLUES FESTIVAL
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Lately the Chicago Blues Festival has been taking heat for booking so few big-name artists, and the Mayor’s Office of Special Events seems to have noticed: this year celebrities like Buddy Guy, John Mayall, Mavis Staples, and Koko Taylor are playing the Petrillo Music Shell. Also at Petrillo are several less famous but equally important figures—former Howlin’ Wolf sideman Hubert Sumlin, neotraditionals Billy Branch and Erwin Helfer, and still-vital Chicago veteran Jody Williams. As usual, though, many of the festival’s most compelling bookings are on the smaller stages—and aren’t high-profile mainstream figures by any stretch. Guitarists Eddie Kirkland and Eddie Burns, both former John Lee Hooker sidemen, will represent the postwar Detroit blues scene. Nonagenarian Robert Lockwood Jr., finally being encouraged to play the role he prefers: not as a quaint “folk” blues picker but out in front of a brassy band with solid jazz and jump-blues credentials. And when Lurrie and Carey Bell, recently reunited after years of professional and personal estrangement, take the stage together, the love they display for each other—and for the blues—is almost as moving as their exquisite craftsmanship.

This year’s lineup is well stocked with artists who manage to be remarkably versatile and creative while staying faithful to the blues as it was played during its postwar heyday, when it was nurtured in cities along the path of the Great Migration—Memphis, Detroit, and Chicago among them. This fidelity is certainly preferable to a lazy bastardization of blues tradition, but by honoring it to such an extent the festival has created a problem for itself: its bookings don’t offer a representative sample of parts of the country listen to today—the amalgam of 12-bar blues, 60s deep soul, contemporary R&B, 12-bar grind with the best of them. Helfer is also an educator, and he taught count- less aspiring blues musicians how to navigate the blues. He plays solo here.

As in past years, the Petrillo Music Shell show- cases national acts and top-tier locals. The Juke Joint, on Columbus north of Jackson, emphasizes relative intimate presentations. The Crossroads, at Jackson and Lake Shore Drive, concentrates on electric blues, while the Front Porch, south of Jackson and west of Columbus, focuses on acoustic and traditional styles. The Best Buy Showcase, on Columbus south of Jackson, as usual features a sur- plus of ham-handed bar bands (a notable exception is pianist Kenny “Blues Boss” Wayne, who plays on Sunday). The Route 66 Roadhouse, which hosts panels and workshops, is on the north side of Jackson, just east of the Petrillo entrance. All events are free.

Erwin Helfer
Erwin Helfer’s introspective, nuanced approach to the blues is strikingly informed by jazz, ragtime, and even classical music—but the veteran Chicago pianist is just as familiar with Pinetop Smith as he is with Thelonious Monk, and he can pound out a jetison, instanta. boppy or low-down 12-bar grind with the best of them. Helfer is also an educator, and has taught count- less aspiring blues musicians how to navigate the blues. He plays solo here.

Blues in the Schools
As it has for years, the Front Porch stage kicks off with performances from schoolchildren in the city’s Blues in the Schools program. A group from Stone Academy will be led by pianist Erwin Helfer, vocalist Katherine Danis, and multi-instrumentalist Eric Wislon, joined by Roland Tchakounte (see above). Harp and Blues in the Schools co-founder Billy Branch will perform with students from Grant Academy; and kids from Hesuis and Agassiz elementary schools will be joined by Dennis and guitarist Les Guteur. Guitarist Ruy Nytwor, aka Dikko Rehn, will perform with children who’s been working with in a similar program run by the Blues Heaven Foundation.

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Nick Moss & the Flip Tops
Guitarist and bassist Nick Moss was mentioned by Chicago veterans like Jimmy Dawkins, Jimmy Rogers, and Pinetop Perkins, from whom he learned the dying art of singing with intelligence and taste. Even at his most intense, Moss plays entire songs, not just notes; his string of releases on the Blue Bella label showcase both this sophisticated musicianship and his evolving gifts as a songwriter (the latest disc, ‘Sadie Mae’, is due this week).
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ERIC CLAPTON
Me and Mr. Johnson

ERIC CLAPTON
Sessions for Robert J

MEM SHANNON
I'm From Phunkville

PINETOP PERKINS
The Complete High Tone Sessions
Appearing Fri., June 10

ROBERT LOCKWOOD JR.
The Legend Live
Appearing Fri., June 10

BUDDY GUY
The Very Best Of
Appearing Sat., June 11

CHICAGO BLUES HARMONICA PROJECT
Diamonds In The Rough
Appearing Sat., June 11

JOHN MAYALL
The Best Of
Appearing Thurs., June 9

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VARIOUS ARTISTS
The Blues Collection

VARIOUS ARTISTS
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Some titles may not be available in select stores.
4:30 PM
From Linda’s Lounge: L-Roy & the Bullet Proof Band with Lady D, Lady Kat, and Holly Maxwell

Linda’s Lounge, located on 51st Street, is one of the few remaining south-side clubs that books blues acts weekly; the featured singer is often the Fantastic L-Roy, who delivers funky re-creations of R&B standards in a muscular voice that can go from a Brook Benton-like croon to a sanctified shout. Vocalists Lady Kat and Lady D pattern themselves after soul-blues queens like Denise LaSalle, and what they lack in subtlety they make up for in hot-blooded intensity. Holly Maxwell’s classically trained soprano is less supple and nuanced now than it was back in the 60s, when she made a handful of notable singles here in Chicago, but a recent live CD recorded at Paris’s Maxwell Cafe (no relation) proves she’s still flexible enough to cover the ground between “Dr. Feelgood” and a lipstick-on-a-wineglass reading of “Since I Fell for You.” DW

2:45 PM
Grana’ Louise

Vocalist Grana’ Louise has churchy chops, a soul-influenced style, and an admirable repertoire—including standards both recent and vintage as well as originals like her saucy crowd pleaser “Big Arse’s Fancy,” her phrasing lends itself to the production, but her charismatic stage presence and her delivery make it hard to complain. DW

3:30 PM
After Midnight Blues

This San Antonio band delivers the usual blues-bar fare—heavy on the postwar standards, with a dash of post-70s guitar rock—but they do it with remarkable taste and emotional depth, perhaps because guitarist Lamar Spencer and guitarist-harpist Richard Nitschke have each been playing for about 30 years. DW

4:45 PM
Madman Blues Band

This local bar band, with its respectable repertoire of Chicago standards and southern-fried blues rock, probably won’t wear out its welcome before you decide it’s time for another beer run. DW

6:15 PM
Steepwater Band

On the strength of its live shows and two recent CDs, Brother to the Snake(2001) and Dharmakaya(2004), this local group has become one of the most popular bar bands in the city. The Allman Brothers’ 70s albums are the most obvious point of reference here, but the group adds new twists—melodic, harmonic, and especially rhythmic—to its time-honored repertoire of Chicago blues, Caterina Linares, and guitarist-harpist Richard Nitschke have each been playing for about 30 years. DW

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7-8:30pm  HARMONICA HINDS & FRIENDS

9-11:30pm  CARL WEATHERSBY

Friday
3-4:30pm  JOEL PATERSON

5-7:30pm  BIG JAMES & THE CHICAGO PLAYBOYS

8:10-10:30pm  JOHN PRIMER

11pm-1:30am  BILLY BRANCH

Saturday
10:30-1:30am  BLUES BRUNCH with WILLIE KENT & THE GENTS

2-4:30pm  NICK MOSS

5-6:30pm  CALVIN COOKE

7-11pm  CARLOS JOHNSON

11:30pm-2:30am  CAREY & LURRIE BELL

Sunday
12-3:00pm  STEEPWATER BAND

3:30-6:30pm  PHIL GUY

7-10:00pm  KENNY “BLUES BOSS” WAYNE

10:30-1:30am  LIL’ ED & THE BLUES IMPERIALS

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Reckless Conduct
Appearing Thurs., June 9

**After Midnight Blues**
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**Kenny “Blues Boss” Wayne**
Let It Loose
Appearing Sun., June 12

**Noah Wotherspoon Band**
Reel to Real
Appearing Sat., June 11

**Planetary Blues**
Planetary Blues
Appearing Thurs., June 9

**Matt Bessey**
Matt Bessey
Appearing Sun., June 12

**The Perpetrators**
The Gas And The Clutch
Appearing Fri., June 10

**Liz Mandville Greeson**
Ready To Cheat

**Liz Mandville Greeson**
Back In Love Again
Appearing Fri., June 10

**Liz Mandville Greeson**
Look At Me

**Aron Burton**
Past, Present & Future
Appearing Sat., June 11

**The Steepwater Band**
Dharmakaya
Appearing Thurs., June 9

**Molly Nova & The Hawk**
Another Shade Of Blue
Appearing Sun., June 12

**Michael Powers**
Dyir Root
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**Steve Arvey/Kraig Keenin**
Pass The Heat Acoustic Blues
Appearing Sun., June 12

**Steve Arvey**
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Appearing Sun., June 12

**Howard And The White Boys**
Live At Chord On Blues
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**Fernando Jones**
Stranded
Appearing Thurs., June 9

**Fernando Jones**
I Was There When The Blues Was Red Hot

**David “Honeyboy” Edwards**
Delta Bluesman
Appearing Thurs., June 9

**Johnnie Mae Dunson**
Big Boss Lady
Appearing Fri., June 10

**Hubert Sumlin**
About Them Shoes
Appearing Fri., June 10

**Honesick James**
Goin' Back In The Times
Appearing Sat., June 11

**Henry Gray & The Cats**
Blues Won't Let Me Take My Rest

**Henry Gray & The Cats**
Live In Paris

**Henry Gray & The Cats**
Watch Yourself
Appearing Fri., June 10

All titles available at the Best Buy tent at Blues Fest. Some titles may not be available in select stores.
2 PM Blues in the Schools roundtable
Educators who've participated in Blues in the Schools over the years discuss their work, the evolving philosophy of the program, and the legacy they hope it will leave. Scheduled participants include Kay Jones (Grant Academy), Hurt Wright (Spencer Academy), whose grandfather was Mississippi John Hurt, and Bob Hall, former Savoy Brown pianist Bob Hall. Host Jim O'Neal, the only non-Brit participant, co-founded Living Blues magazine.

8:20 PM John Mayall & the Bluesbreakers featuring Mick Taylor
More British blues rock—this time from the guitarist of the movement, whose energetic keyboard antics, elastic harmonica riffing, and hearty vocals harken his 71 years. He's mentored many a rock icon in his day—Eric Clapton, Jack Bruce, John McVie, and Mick Fleetwood all passed through the Bluesbreakers before going on to fame, and tonight's guest guitarist, Mick Taylor, played in Mayall's band before replacing Brian Jones in the Rolling Stones.

8:30 PM Hubert Sumlin and Steady Rollin’ Bob Margolin
Both these guitarists have played in the bands of Muddy Waters, albeit during different decades; Hubert Sumlin quit Howlin’ Wolf’s combo to join Muddy for a brief stint in the mid-50s, then returned to his mentor and emerged as one of the most dazzling lead guitarists of his era. Bob Margolin signed on with Waters in 1974, sharing fretboard duty with Luther “Guitar Junior” Johnson until the band defected en masse in 1980. Margolin’s sympathetic accompaniment should temper Sumlin’s occasional unpredictability in this set.

Petriillo Music Shell
6 PM
David “Honeyboy” Edwards 90th Birthday Celebration
David “Honeyboy” Edwards has a hallowed place among blues musicians—he’s one of very few still alive who’ve traded licks with the legendary Robert Johnson (Robert Lockwood Jr., who plays the fest on Friday, is another). In past years he’s usually been booked on the Front Porch, but to celebrate his 90th birthday, coming up on June 28, he’s taking to the main stage. Edwards’s dexterous guitar work and burrished baritone vividly evoke a bygone era of Mississippi Delta blues, and he’s usually at his best with his heart’s in the Chicago sound his late father helped codify in the 50s and early 60s. On postwar tunes both well-known and obscure, he updates his dad’s classic solos, even playing one of the old man’s vintage guitars—and he’s increasingly confident with his increasingly confident technique.

7 PM Kim Simmonds’s Savoy Brown 40th Year Celebration with Bob Hall
Why throw a party for this long-lived but wobbling British blues outfit when so many artists with more intriguing histories have yet to receive their first fest invitation from the city? But here they are: lead guitarist Kim Simmonds—Savoy Brown’s guiding light since 1966, when the band cut its first 45 for producer Mike Vernon—brings his latest lineup along for a reunion with pianist Bob Hall, an integral part-time member during the group’s early years.

2 PM Detroit Junior
Chicago pianist Emery “Detroit Junior” Williams has a playful streak a mile wide: his best-known and most-covered tune, “Call My Nick,” proves the simple joys of sleeping in after a long weekend of revelry, and the title of his new album—”If I Haven’t Been Right” pretty much says it all. Junior’s skills at the ivories are no joke, though—a natural showman, he’s been at it since moving here from Michigan in the mid-50s.

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10 PM

“Chicago’s Best After-Hours Bar”

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“Chicago’s Best After-Hours Bar”

“Best Live Music Venue”

“Chicago’s Best After-Hours Bar”

“Best Live Music Venue”

“Chicago’s Best After-Hours Bar”

“Best Live Music Venue”
1 PM
Sunnyland Slim Memorial Piano Set featuring Barrenhouse Chuck and Henry Gray
A tribute to pianist patriarch Albert “Sunnyland Slim” Susan as a fest tradition. This year’s elder statesman is Henry Gray, a Louisiana native who spent the 50s and most of the 60s in Chicago, where he was an essential member of Howlin’ Wolf’s band and provided crashing accompaniment to the bluesman on classic sides by Bo Diddley and Chuck Berry. His style updates what used to be called “soul jazz”—a hybrid of blues and gospel—infused with R&B that’s infused with gospel and sometimes called “soul jazz”—a hybrid of blues and gospel—infused with gospel and sometimes“soul jazz”—a hybrid of blues and gospel—infused with gospel and sometimes

2:30 PM
Eddie Taylor
Guitarist Eddie Taylor, who died on Christmas Day in 1998, was a pioneer of the postwar Chicago style, but because he spent most of his career as a sideman—notably with Jimmy Reed—he’s somewhat obscure. Two of Taylor’s old compatriots, Little Arthur Duncan and Johnnie Mae Duncan, anchor this tribute set, the band is the New Legends of Blues All Stars, fronted by Billy Flynn and Taylor’s own Eddie Jr. Both on guitar, Taylor’s son Jim will sit in on drums, and stepson Larry and daughters Edna, Demetria, and Brenda will each step up for a few songs.

5 PM
Kim Simmonds and Bob Hall
Guitarists Kim Simmonds has been the one constant in British blues-rock band Savoy Brown over the past four decades, and pianist Bob Hall—a fairly ubiquitous presence in this fest—played in the group during its formative years, when its repertoire included Chicago-style tunes are still heartfelt and remarkably dexterous, but despite his monumental style tunes are still heartfelt and remarkably dexterous, but despite his monumental

3:30 PM
Eddie Kirkland with Eddie Burns
Next to John Lee Hooker, these two guitarists—who’ve both worked and recorded as sidemen to the Boogie Man—are probably the most significant Delta bluesmen of their generation, with considerable legacies of their own. At 76, Kirkland is still a pike driver, with enough energy to push a sweaty blues riff over the line into absolute mayhem. Though less rhythmically, Burns is just as inventive, deeply influenced by tradition and propensity for improvisational flourishes.

3:15 PM
Scott Bradbury
Harpsit Scott “Bad Boy Scotty” Bradbury has picked his role models well; he has a squalling tone and high-energy stage presence reminiscent of James Cotton, tempered with little warbles that recall Big Walter Horton and an impish sense of humor—off-time trills, dramatic swoops, hot-blues-mama act ought to raise the temperature in Grant Park considerably.

4:30 PM
Roy Meriwether
Roy Meriwether, a nephew of centennial honoree Big Maceo, was raised in a strong-religious family in Dayton, Ohio—which helps explain the sanctified funk in his keyboard work. His style updates what used to be called “soul jazz”—a hybrid of blues and gospel—infused with gospel and sometimes

4:30 PM
Latvian Blues Band
This Latvian group, making its first stateside appearance, has already accompanied Chicago artists like Grand Masters of the Blues and Sharon Lewis on overseas dates.

5:45 PM
Liz Mandville
Although she bills herself as a blues artist, Liz Mandville Greene’s raucous theatricality, three-octave vocal range, and taste for salty pop ballads and over-the-top brokenheart numbers suggest there’s a torch singer inside her struggling to get out. Her hot-blues-mama act ought to raise the temperature in Grant Park considerably.
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BLUES FEST

7 PM
Perpetrators

Though the Winnipeg blues trio takes juke- joint primitives like Hound Dog Taylor and his Burnside as role models, its fiery display commands their dynamic blues. But the band's headed in the right direction: on the recent self-released CD, the gang and the Clutch, drummer and singer Scotty Mills deliver a (considering reading of Taj Mahal's "Lover in My Baby's Arms" that proves they aren't entirely deer to noise.

ROUTE 66 ROADHOUSE

NOON
Howlin' Wolf's Family Birthday Party

Wolf’s daughters Beverly Kelly and Barbara Basin join family and friends to celebrate the 80th birthday of the Chicago blues giant, who would've turned 80 today.

2:30 PM
Centennial celebrations:
Henry Gray, Bob Hall,
Roy Meriwether, Pete Crawford,
and Jim O'Neal

Plaintain Gray, Hall, and Meriwether, guitarists Crawford, and living blues magazine cofounder Jim O’Neal discuss the boy's three centennial honorees, pianists Big Mama, Mojo Lewis Lue, and Jimmy Walker, all born in 1905.

PETRILLO MUSIC SHELL

6 PM
Jody Williams with the Willie Henderson Horns

In the late 40s and early 50s, guitar-ist Jody Williams developed an in-imitatable instrumental voice by combining the elegance of smooth-west coast styles like Johnny Moore and T Bone Walker, the advanced harmonica construction of B.B. King's lead—which King had adapted from jazzmen like Django Reinhardt—and his own piercing tone and aggressive attack, both solidly in the mold of the burgeoning Chicago sound. Williams appeared on seminal recordings by the likes of Bo Diddley (“Who Do You Love?”), Howlin' Wolf (“Forty-Four”), and appropriated versions of his solos and themes turned up in songs by Otis Rush and Muddy & Sylva, among others. Disenfranchised with the music business, he retired in the mid-60s, not to return till 2000; since then he's recorded the acclaimed discs Return of a Legend and Smokin' and Groovin', and his albums for the label have earned him a trove of honors. He's just as impressive onstage: let's not to its own devices, his young band would play everything balls out, leaving Howlin' Wolf little choice but to belt out as he couldn't, but to grit, interpreting all of it well usually to keep the boys in line.

3:30 PM
Raymon Meeches

Born in Fort Worth in 1945, Meeches builds a degree in geography and environmental science from the University of North Texas, but he's dedicated his life to exploring the vibrant tradition of southern cooler blues-he's not only adept at a variety of acoustic guitar styles but also performs a cappella when tackling older genres like spirituals and work songs.

5 PM
Chicago Blues Harmonica Project 2005:
Dusty Brown, Larry Cox, Russ Green,
Little Addison, and Omar Coleman

featuring the Chicago Bluesmasters

The Seven label has just released Chicago blues harmonica 2005, a disc with almost exactly the same lineup as this set—only Harmonica Khan, who's died since it was recorded, is absent. The Bluesmasters, accompanied by rhythmic Drummer Turner, include longtime Chicago saxophonists Mark Brumbaugh, Rick Kircher, and Pat McEwan on horns, the greatest harmonica player in Chicago, appropriately enough, is a harp player. Legendary Chicago harmonica stalwarts Little Addison are known to collectors and histrionics for their 50s and 60s work with Henry Gray, Elmore James, and Freddie King, among others; their voices have grown a bit corrugated, their harmonica chops are intact. Larry Cox, born in Tennessee but raised in Chicago, has spent much of his life as a professional blues player and often focused on musicology, exploring the south-side of Chicago and recording with Phil Guy. Green and Coleman, both from Mississippi, have chiseled styles that she rooted in tradition but spiced with tonal and rhythmical aggressions, illustrating the influence of Muddy and the debut rap and hip-hop on modern discs.

CROSSROADS

1:30 PM
Linsey Alexander with Joanne Graham

Vocalist Joanne Graham made acclaimed appearances on several albums by the Steevers, an unterdated Chicago vocal group of the 60s and 70s. She built a career in street-corner doo-wop. She's well-known on the south and west sides for her multi- octave range, flexible timbre, and look-but- don't-touch stage presence; she's also been on TV and radio with bluesman guitarist Linsey Alexander.

3:10 PM
Latimore

Benny Latimore is sometimes billed as "the Miami Sex Machine," but that epithet only gets you halfway
there: with his impeccable coiffure, sculpted physique, and repertoire of caring-guy ballads, the veteran crooner and keyboardist has built a career showing off the sensitive side of sexy. Born in Charleston, Tennessee, in 1939, he went solo in the mid-60s after years supporting regional blues and R & B acts; after cutting a few sides for the Miami-based Dade label, he broke out in 1973 with a swinging "Stormy Monday" on Glades and a year later scored the hit that would define his persona, "Let's Straighten It Out." Subsequent favorites have underlined the importance of a man's responsibility in a relationship ("Keep the Home Fire Burnin'", "Dig a Little Deeper") or advocated for a gentler kind of seduction ("Sunshine Lady," "Tonight's the Night"), and his softhearted image has remained intact despite occasional raunchy numbers like 2000's "I'm an Old Dog." Latimore hasn't charted for some time, but his supple, insinuating voice and charismatic stage presence—smoldering sensuality and good-humored grace combined with a peacock's strut—are both undiminished. Given the shortage of soul-blues artists at this year's fest, why isn't he at Petrillo? 

DW

BEST BUY SHOWCASE

1 PM
Diamond Jim Greene
Acoustic guitarist Diamond Jim Greene was inspired to take up the blues in the 70s by Blind Arvella Gray, a Maxwell Street singer who died in 1980. He's since learned vintage styles ranging from Piedmont picking to the percussive flailing and keening slide work associated with the Mississippi Delta; his playing is deft and heartfelt if not particularly original. DW

3:45 PM
Howard & the White Boys
More boogie bluse from the long-diddling Chicago bar band and inexplicable fest perennial, whose music crossed the line into self-parody long ago. DW

5:15 PM
Noah Wotherspoon Band
Young guitarist Noah Wotherspoon has grown from a gifted wannabe in the frenzied style of Hendrix or Page into a skilled and even artful student of styles ranging from modal "trance boogie" to roadhouse crunch and pop-jazz fusion. He and his band recently released a solid disc, Reel to Real, but they're at their best onstage. DW

7 PM
Vera Lee
Veteran nightclub singer Vera Lee Holley, mother of songwriter and producer Jerry "Swamp Dogg" Williams, demonstrates a sassy swing on her current collection of show tunes and torch songs, All and Still Playing With the Boys (SDEG). DW

ROUTE 66 ROADHOUSE

11 AM
Soul Cooking with Marie Dixon, Koko Taylor, and Katherine Davis
Marie Dixon (widow of Willie) and two blues divas share their favorite soul food recipes as part of the city's summerlong "Stirring Things Up" series, billed as "a delicious, exotic, eclectic mixture of the culinary, visual, performing and literary arts." Cooking demonstrations continue till 9 PM. DW
BEST BUY CONGRATULATES BUDDY GUY ON HIS INDUCTION INTO THE ROCK ‘N ROLL HALL OF FAME!

BUDDY GUY IS PERFORMING ON SATURDAY, JUNE 11

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sentiments from the Mayor’s Office of Special Events and the Mississippi Office of Tourism to discuss a growing trend: the marketing of local and regional blues history, music, and culture as a tourist attraction.

For this set the pianist is joined by jazz- and blues-apt jazz-rhythm section, and the effervescent Katherine Black, an underappreciated singer with lusty pipes and a natural flair for getting the crowd involved. Helfer will likely supplement the requisite boogie-woogie action with a smattering of rags, blues, and even a stray pop standard.

6:05 PM
Billy Branch & the Sons of Blues with Pete Crawford, Lurrie Bell, and Steve Freund

The Sons of Blues evolved from a group assembled in 1977 by Jim O’Neal, then coeditor of Living Blues magazine, at the behest of Swiss jazz pianist and composer George Gruntz, who wanted a roster of young Chicagoans to appear under the rubric “New Generation of Chicago Blues” at the Berlin Jazz Festival that year. Billy Branch was the featured guitarist, and when he returned to Chicago he continued playing with guitarist Larrie Bell, bassist Freddie Dixon (Willie’s son), and some of the group’s other members under the name the Sons of Blues. They soon developed into one of the city’s premier blues bands, replete with philosophy and based on what he might claim. Guy may be a living legend, but it’s hard to keep respecting him if he sullies his legacy pandering to the lowest common denominator.

2005/06 JAZZ at Symphony Center

Leaders & Legends

September 30, 2005
PAT METHENY Trio

October 7, 2005
JIM HALL Duo

THE CLAYTON-HAMILTON JAZZ ORCHESTRA

November 11, 2005
Featuring Dianne Reeves, Fontella Bass, Delia Evans, and Terri Lynn Carrington

November 18, 2005
SPANISH HARLEM ORCHESTRA

January 20, 2006
MATT WILSON’S ARTS & CRAFTS CHICAGO JAZZ ENSEMBLE with Jon Faddis

January 27, 2006
LINCOLN CENTER JAZZ ORCHESTRA with Wynton Marsalis

March 24, 2006
JOE SEGAL’S ALL-STAR 90TH BIRTHDAY BASH

Yusuf Lateef tenor saxophone and flute

Jim Greenfield baritone saxophone

Benny Golson tenor saxophone

Hank Jones piano

April 28, 2006
BILLY AND ME

Featuring Dianne Reeves, Fontella Bass, Delia Evans, and Terri Lynn Carrington

March 24, 2006
JAZZ SON! DAVE HOLLAND

Dave Holland bass

Romero Lubambo guitar

Trilby Gatts percussion

April 28, 2006
JIMMY HEATH TRIO

Jimmy Heath tenor saxophone

Irma Sullivan tenor saxophone

Von Freeman tenor saxophone

May 12, 2006
JAZZ INNOVATOR: CHRISTIAN McBRIE

The Christian McBride Band and Special Guests

June 9, 2006
MARIAN McPHERSON with Eric Reed and Gonzalo Rubalcaba

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- Koko Taylor Royal Blue
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- Koko Taylor Deluxe Edition
- Mavis Staples Have a Little Faith
- Buddy Guy & Junior Wells Alone & Acoustic
- Tinsley Ellis Highway Man
- Marcia Ball Down The Road

Performing on the Best Buy Fun Zone Stage:

Thursday, June 9, 2005
2:00-2:45 Planetary Blues
2:35-3:15 After Midnight Blues
3:10-3:30 Midmen Blues Band
3:35-4:15 Steeleye Span

Friday, June 10, 2005
2:00-2:45 Pat Smillie Band
2:35-3:00 Scott B. Moore
3:05-4:00 Latin Blues Band w/special guests
4:05-4:45 Liz Mandeville Group
5:00-6:00 The Forreverinos

Saturday, June 11, 2005
1:00-1:45 Diamond Jim Green
2:00-2:45 Michael Powers
3:05-4:00 Howard & The Whiteboys
5:00-6:00 Nash Wickerpoon Band
6:00-7:00 Yen Lee

Sunday, June 12, 2005
1:00-1:45 Steve Arroyo & Craig Renning
2:00-2:45 Big G & The Real Deal
3:00-3:45 Kenny "Blues Boss" Wayne
4:00-4:45 Matt Beres
5:05-6:00 Molly Verna & The Hawk

Times subject to change, check the schedule at the Best Buy tent for final times and artists.

JOIN US FOR A NIGHT OF BRITISH BLUES ON JUNE 9!

John Mayall & the Blues Breakers w/Special Guest Mick Taylor
performing at Petrillo Band Shell

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by the disc’s success, and the undiminished flexibility and passion in their performances make the historical comeback at least as inspiring as Jody Williams’s return to the blues a few years ago.

4 PM
Calvin Cooke
Calvin Cooke is an elder statesman of the gospel genre popularly known as “sacred steel.” Proficient on both lap and pedal steel guitar, he prefers material based on traditional hymns and praise song, but he’s remained current, embellishing his playing with modern effects like wah-wah and reverb and often choosing backing that owes as much to funk, R & B, and pop as it does to old-school gospel.

6 PM
George Stancell
This veteran Milwaukee vocalist and guitarist made his debut album, 1999’s Gorgeous George (JSP), after more than 45 years in the business. He’s a soul man, loyal to the pre-synth 60s sound, with a charismatic pleading delivery on ballads and enough ballsiness and conviction to sell his up-tempo testimonials.

CROSSROADS
1:30 PM
Sharrie Williams & the Wiseguys
Sharrie Williams, who calls her music “rockin’ gospel blues,” often uses her nightclub act to tell the story of how her faith helped her win a battle with drugs and alcohol. She’s never self-righteous, but even her rawest material is infused with spiritual uplift, melding the sacred and the sensual in a way that recalls vintage Mavis Staples. The recent Hard Drivin’ Woman (Crosscut) suffers from instrumental and vocal overkill, but Williams is capable of nuance in the right setting.

3:30 PM
Fernest Arceneaux & the Thunders
 Zydeco accordionist Fernest Arceneaux was born in 1940 in Carencro, Louisiana, and by his teens he was playing at house parties and dances. In the 60s he fronted R & B bands as a guitarist, but in the late 70s he picked up the squeezebox again; he’s been playing zydeco ever since, infused with elements of blues and R & B.

5 PM
Kenny “Blues Boss” Wayne
A native of Spokane, Washington, Kenny “Blues Boss” Wayne is keeping the flame of boogie piano burning. He attacks the ivories with crashing abandon, pounding out thundering bass lines with his left hand, and he has a predilection for the repertoires of postwar jump-blues greats Amos Milburn and Memphis Slim—his new disc, Let It Loose (Electro-Fi), pays tribute to both, and his nickname comes from Milburn’s ’63 album Return of the Blues Boss.

2:30 PM
Big G & the Real Deal
Former Pearl Handle Band front man George Millspaugh, aka Big G, plays the usual bar-band mix of blues-rock shuffles and southern-fried boogies with his current group.

3:45 PM
Kenny “Blues Boss” Wayne
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6:15 PM
Molly Nova & the Hawk
Electric violinist Molly Nova and drummer Turk E Krause (aka Wildturkeyhawk) play music with significantly more rhythmic and textural variety than most bluesy jam bands can manage, but the lyrics rarely rise above the pedestrian.

ROUTE 66 ROADHOUSE
NOON
Songwriters:
George Jackson, Bruce Bromberg, and Bob Jones, hosted by Larry Hoffman
Three composers discuss the bushels of blues standards they’ve written. In addition to striking gold in the pop world with Bob Seger’s “Old Time Rock & Roll” and the Osmonds’ “One Bad Apple,” Muscle Shoals songwriter George Jackson is responsible for Z.Z. Hill’s bandstand perennial “Down Home Blues” and loads of southern soul gems. Bruce Bromberg helped mastermind Robert Cray’s rise to fame in the 80s, and Chicagoan Bob Jones has been cranking out well-loved contemporary blues tunes since 1973, when he wrote Arlo Guthrie’s “Alaska Blues” with his band “Learn to Fly.”

2:30 PM
An hour with Al Bell
Former gospel DJ Al Bell arrived at Stax/Volt Records in 1965 as its new promo man, and three years later he was co-owner of the label. At the time his roster included Sam & Dave, Albert King, and Rufus Thomas, and Bell produced hits...
for both Isaac Hayes and the Staple Singers. He was at Stax’s helm through its golden years in the late 60s and early 70s and was still in charge when the label tanked in the mid-70s after a slew of bad business decisions—he should have some juicy stories to tell.

Petrillo Music Shell

5 PM
Howard Scott & His Southside Review featuring Jesi’ Terrell and Stan Mosley

The rubric for this program has been provided by the city—the "Southside Review" is in fact Howard Scott’s World Band joined by two extra vocalists. Scott’s ensemble is one of the tightest and most versatile in Chicago blues, proficient in everything from gutbucket 12-bar raunch to breezy neosoul; his punchy vocals are grittier than a gravel road but surprisingly melodic, and on guitar his brother Walter can handle gnarly funk and slow-burning blues with equal aplomb. Guest singer Jesi’ Terrell has undergone a remarkable transformation since her 2000 debut, Come Get This Love (Annie G): her tentative, kittenish mewl has grown into a full-bodied soul-blues wail, and her confidence and sensuality onstage reflect the change. Stan Mosley hit the local blues circuit hard in 2000 with the Wacoan single “Kojack Was My Boy!”, but he’s struggled to find a follow-up. I’ve heard tracks from an in-progress CD that he plans to release himself, and his grainy, Womack-influenced vocals are as rich and nuanced as ever, a match for his warm and inviting stage presence.

6:40 PM
Lucky Peterson Band

Second-generation bluesman Lucky Peterson, son of guitarist James, recorded his first hit single at the tender age of six, chirping the tune “1-2-3-4” at a session produced by Willie Dixon. Since then the mercurial Peterson, who’s fluent on both guitar and keyboards, has ranged all over the map, from blues and gospel to soul and funk—but though his extreme versatility sometimes makes it hard to tell where his real strengths lie, it never obscures his stratospheric energy level.

8:20 PM
Mavis Staples

Last year Mavis Staples released Have a Little Faith (Alligator), her first album since a Mahalia Jackson tribute with Lucky Peterson in 1996 and her first solo effort since 1993’s The Voice. She’s still in full command of the vocal instrument she developed on the gospel highway in the 50s and 60s with the Staple Singers, with its fierce enunciations, dramatic segues between singing and speech, and thrilling ascents from somber meditation into choked ecstasy—and if anything the coarsening of her voice over the years has lent it even more depth and power. Onstage she sometimes inserts old secular favorites like the steamy 1975 number “Let’s Do It Again” between newer tunes and versions of Staples standards like “Respect Yourself” and “I’ll Take You There,” but her focus is overwhelmingly on the power of the sacred. On songs like “God Is Not Sleeping” (from Have a Little Faith) and “Blood Is Thicker Than Time” (from The Voice) she gives herself over so fully to the spirit that she seems completely helpless and completely transformed—a riveting, inspiring, and sometimes terrifying demonstration of faith.