

2011 Keeping the Blues Alive (KBA) Award



The Blues Foundation Press Release

The Blues Foundation Keeps the Blues Alive

With Its 30th Annual Awards Ceremony in Memphis this February

Honorees Include Key Movers from Around the Globe

[For Immediate Release November 9, 2011] Memphis, TN - On the heels of achieving its all-time high membership (quickly approaching 4,000 total), The Blues Foundation will honor 21 individuals and organizations with its 2011 Keeping the Blues Alive (KBA) Award during a recognition brunch on Saturday, February 5, 2011, in Memphis, Tennessee. Each year, The Blues Foundation presents the KBA Awards to individuals and organizations that have made significant contributions to the blues music world. The KBA ceremony begins at 10:00 A.M. and will be held in conjunction with the 27th International Blues Challenge (IBC) weekend of events that will feature the final rounds of the world's most prestigious blues competition and largest gathering of blues acts, as well as seminars, showcases, and receptions for blues societies, fans, and professionals on February 1-5.

The KBAs are awarded strictly on the basis of merit by a select panel of blues professionals to those working to actively promote and document the music. Nominations are accepted from affiliated blues societies, past KBA recipients and current members of The Blues Foundation's Board of Directors.

"The recipients of this year's awards - as with every year - are people and organizations who are an integral part of not only promoting blues music, but of preserving it as well. Their work applies to the business of recorded music, also to live events, print media, radio and visual broadcasts, and increasingly, the international blues community," notes Art Tipaldi, KBA chairman.

The 2011 Keeping the Blues Alive Awards recipients are:

1. Agent: Intrepid Artists, Charlotte, North Carolina
2. Blues Club: Chan's Fine Oriental Dining, Woonsocket, Rhode Island
3. Blues Organization: Billtown Blues Society, Williamsport, Pennsylvania

4. Education: Gary Allegretto, Los Angeles, California
5. Festival (International): Notodden Blues Festival, Notodden, Norway
6. Festival (U.S.): Tampa Bay Blues Festival, St. Petersburg, Florida
7. Film, Television, and Video: Mako Funasaka, Toronto, Ontario, Canada
8. Historical Preservation: Canada South Museum, Windsor, Ontario, Canada
9. International: Paul Jones, London, England
10. Internet: Mary4Music.com, Baltimore, Maryland
11. Journalism: Tim Parsons, Lake Tahoe Action, California/Nevada
12. Literature: Mary Lou Sullivan, Coventry, Connecticut
13. Manager: Paul Nelson, Bullseye Management, Stamford, Connecticut
14. Photography: Bill Steber, Murfreesboro, Tennessee
15. Print Media: Twoj Blues, Chorzow, Poland
16. Producer: Michael Freeman, Barrington, Illinois
17. Promoter: Didier Tricard, Montferrier sur Lez, France
18. Publicist: Debra Regur, Blind Pig Records, San Francisco, California
19. Radio (Commercial): Mark Pasman, WCSX-FM, Detroit, Michigan
- 20. Radio (Public): Tom Wendt, KBOO-FM, Portland, Oregon**
21. Record Label: Electro-Fi Records, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Tickets to the KBA ceremony are sold only as part of the IBC Big Blue ticket package, available online at www.blues.org or by calling 901.527.2583. The IBC weekend,

commencing Tuesday, February 1, 2011, is sponsored in significant part by ArtsMemphis, Budweiser of Memphis, FedEx, First Tennessee Foundation, Gibson Guitars, Lee Oskar Harmonicas, Legendary Rhythm & Blues Cruise, Memphis Convention & Visitors Bureau, Smokin' Bluz Radio and Entertainment Network, T. Clifton Art, Tennessee Arts Commission, and VividPix & Design.

Media sponsors include Beale Street Caravan, Big City Rhythm and Blues, Blues Festival Guide, Blues Revue, BluesWax, Downtowner, House of Blues Radio Hour, Living Blues, Memphis Flyer, WREG-TV, and Sirius XM Satellite Radio B.B. King's Bluesville.

BIOGRAPHIES OF RECIPIENTS:

Agent: Intrepid Artists - Charlotte, North Carolina

Now in its 17th year, Intrepid Artists continues to dedicate itself to booking the finest blues and roots artists in the world. Founded by Rick Booth, Intrepid has always chosen to remain a "boutique" agency with emphasis on quality, not quantity. Booth, along with his first-class staff of agents, Jake Lankheit, Brad Stewart, Kevin Hopkins, and longtime office manager Michelle Kiser, work diligently to keep their artists working the finest clubs and festivals around the world. Through the years, Intrepid has selectively represented many of the major blues talents. Today's roster is a veritable who's who of the blues, including Janiva Magness, Joe Louis Walker, Kenny Neal, Watermelon Slim, Walter Trout, Lil' Ed & the Blues Imperials, John Lee Hooker, Jr., Rick Estrin & the Nightcats, and exciting newcomers like Honey Island Swamp Band, Trampled Under Foot and Dana Fuchs.

Blues Club: Chan's Fine Oriental Dining -- Woonsocket, Rhode Island

How about this as a pitch for a blues club? The best national blues acts every weekend, eight o'clock shows, free parking, and an all-you-can-eat Chinese buffet. What began 34 years ago under the name of Chan's Egg Rolls and Jazz has evolved into the home of great blues every week. Visually, Chan's is a blues anomaly. Instead of Southern folk art on the walls of a faux juke joint or blues memorabilia scattered throughout a dimly lit saloon, Japanese paper lanterns hang from the ceiling, tiny Christmas lights twinkle above the stage, and Chinese artwork adorns the walls inside John Chan's personal blues parlor, a 125-seat banquet room. Throughout the years, more than a thousand blues performers have played here. In 2010 alone, 138 performers took the stage. Because Chan's has a reputation as the blues place to be, you might be sitting next to Jerry Portnoy or Doug James or Duke Robillard, who, on an off night, has come to see a friend.

Blues Organization: Billtown Blues Association -- Williamsport, Pennsylvania

What began in 1990 has become a model for every affiliated blues organization. Today this blues society boasts a membership of over 300 who expertly keep the blues alive in Williamsport and the surrounding Susquehanna Valley. Over the years, the organization has staged the very successful Billtown Blues Festival. It produces a quarterly newsletter, The Billtown BlueNotes, and has produced other longstanding events like the Fall into the Blues fundraiser, the Billtown Songwriter's Showcase, and The Music of Billtown, an event presenting a variety of music influenced by the blues and performed by area musicians. Like many organizations, it has supported local music education by donating to the Uptown Music Collective to encourage blues as part of its curriculum. In August 2010, the organization was honored by a city proclamation calling August "Billtown Blues Association Month." And it even had a float in the Little League World Series parade.

Education: Gary Allegretto -- Los Angeles, California

Gary Allegretto is a world-class harmonica player who shares his passion through his acclaimed work as a BITS educator and blues harmonica workshop teacher at camps, special events, and festivals. But perhaps most remarkable is the impact of Gary's humanitarian work, which quite literally changes lives around the world. Through his nonprofit organization Harmonikids, he provides music therapy and harmonicas to children with a wide range of physical, emotional, and/or economic disadvantages. Since 1985, Gary's programs have reached over 20,000 children globally. His most challenging work has been with child tsunami victims in Indonesia, Katrina victims in New Orleans, and recent earthquake victims in Haiti. Throughout the year, Allegretto is most often found working in schools, in hospitals, and with at-risk youth. The joy and hope that he has brought to children around the world are immeasurable.

Festival: Tampa Bay Blues Festival - St. Petersburg, Florida

What better way to shake off the snows of winter than with a blues extravaganza in sunny Florida? Held each spring since 1995 in Vinoy Waterfront Park in St. Petersburg, Florida, the Tampa Bay Blues Festival remains one of the first major blues festivals on the yearly circuit. "Warm weather and hotter music" has been the mantra of founder and producer Chuck Ross, who has grown his dream blues event into one of the major festivals of the year. Each year, Ross not only assembles a lineup to appeal to hard-core blues

aficionados, he also books roots-based bands to bring out fans of this music genre. Thus, fans who come to see Little Feat or Los Lobos also hear Curtis Salgado and Tommy Castro. In April 2011, the fest features a "Best of the Fest" where fans and industry friends selected the lineup featuring their favorite performers of the past decade. Three great days of blues by the bay!

Festival International: Notodden Blues Festival - Notodden, Norway

The 23-year-old Notodden Blues Festival is a blues adventure every fan should experience. Staffed by a force of 700 volunteers and an administrative staff of 3.6, the festival turns the tiny Norwegian town of Notodden, population 7,000, into the cosmopolitan blues center of Europe, drawing over 30,000 fans from all corners of the blues world. It is the town's commitment to this festival that wins over fans the moment they set foot on Notodden's main streets. The city turns every available nook into a stage for the music. Normal clubs burst at the seams, restaurants transform into Mississippi jukes, and alleys sprout stages and sound systems and morph into intimate venues. The festival, which serves as a tower of pride for the region and for the nation's enthusiastic blues community, is strongly supported by the residents of Notodden.

Film, Television, and Video: Mako Funasaka - Toronto, Ontario, Canada

It's not uncommon to see this quiet man lugging tripods and video and sound equipment as he documents special moments in blues music. Since 2000, Canadian filmmaker Mako Funasaka has traveled the world to record interviews and performances by a wide variety of blues personalities, before editing those conversations to create informative videos, podcasts, and broadcast material. The result, *Talkin' Blues*, is currently a 39-part series examining the current state of blues music, documenting the stories and the passion behind the music. The series was syndicated on Bravo! Canada and also appeared on BET-Jazz. In addition, Funasaka continues to produce video podcasts (37 and counting) available on iTunes, featuring song performances and conversations with both international and local blues performers. Funasaka's archival library is essential to chronicling the history of the blues. He has also been the guiding hand in producing *In Memoriam* films that honor the past year's deceased at each Blues Music Awards show.

Historical Preservation: Canada South Blues Museum - Windsor, Ontario, Canada

Opened in 2004, this is a live performance museum housed in Place Concorde at the Oasis Pub, a 175-seat venue, where the Canada South Blues Society inducts each honoree before a full house. Once the MC unveils the induction star, the artist performs a show. The initial inductee was Johnny Johnson, and to date 28 artists have been inducted, including Eric Burdon, Jeff Healey, Bobby Rush, Honeyboy Edwards, Kim Wilson, Downchild, Alberta Adams, and Jeremy Spencer. The museum is also hosting youth clinics where professional musicians provide children lessons in the blues.

International: Paul Jones - London, England

Paul Jones is perhaps most recognizable as the vocalist and harmonica player in Manfred Mann, one of the most popular bands of the British Invasion. In 1979 he founded The Blues Band, which helped kick-start another boom in blues music. The band has now recorded 17 albums, and tours throughout Europe. This award honors his 20-plus years as the host of BBC radio's weekly blues program. The show runs every Monday and features both recorded blues and musicians live in BBC studio sessions. Since his show began, Jones has been a major blues voice that reaches all of Europe, and his impact on the European blues scene has been immeasurable.

Internet: Mary4Music.com -- Baltimore, Maryland

This blues and indie music website, which started 13 years ago, has become one of the go-to sites on the Internet for blues fans. Founder Mary Roby partnered with Peter "Blewzzman" Lauro to produce this online blues resource. Here, fans can keep track of record labels and their new releases, and can check out blues festivals, clubs, and radio stations playing the blues. There is a blues club and blues band directory that can take fans directly to those sites. In addition, the site lists musician services with links to information on the blues industry. There are links to publicists, managers, agents, promoters, distribution, studios, etc. There are also up-to-date CD, DVD, and show reviews. Central to the timely aspect of this site is Lauro's insatiable appetite for the blues in all its live forms.

Journalism: Tim Parsons - South Lake Tahoe, California

In an age when newspaper content is shrinking, coverage of the arts is usually the first to go, but Tim Parsons continues to steadfastly provide comprehensive coverage of area

blues shows via the various publications of the Sierra Nevada Publishing Group. In 2010 alone, he published more than 25 stories in its arts and entertainment weekly promoting area blues shows. When the 27-year newspaper veteran became its editor in 2006, Lake Tahoe Action was a standard A&E weekly covering the South Shore. Today it is a hard-core blues magazine covering both the South Shore and North Shore casinos that have brought many well-established artists to the area. Parsons has the responsibility for coverage of every blues act that plays in his area. Not only does he promote these shows, his insight also provides his readers with an accurate history of the music. He consistently has rock 'n' roll, jazz and country artists confirm blues as the origin of their genres, keeping the blues alive in the hearts and minds of Lake Tahoe's readers.

Literature: Mary Lou Sullivan - Coventry, Connecticut

Mary Lou Sullivan's quest to tell the story of Johnny Winter began when she interviewed him for a local article in 1984. That dream came true in 2003 when she finally secured the access to Winter that she needed. Culled from hundreds of hours of interviews with Winter and honest talks with nearly every person who was part of his life, *Raisin' Cain, The Wild and Raucous Story of Johnny Winter* is a first-class biography. Her accurate descriptions of Winter's childhood in Texas, from his early days listening to Howlin' Wolf on KWKH radio and seeing B.B. King when Johnny was 16 to his days playing at the Vulcan Gas Company, jammin' with Jimi Hendrix, Woodstock, and his revitalizing of Muddy Waters' career in the late 1970s make this book as much about the times as it is about this iconic guitarist. In its first year, it went into its third printing, an impressive accomplishment for a blues book.

Manager: Paul Nelson -- Bullseye Management, Stamford, Connecticut

In 1999, Johnny Winter met a guitar player who would change his life: Paul Nelson, a top session and touring guitarist. He was invited by Winter to participate as guitarist and songwriter in the recording of *I'm a Bluesman*. Winter, whose health was poor and deteriorating daily, then asked Nelson to join his band full time. In 2005 Nelson took over the job of manager, enabling him to see the full extent to which Winter's problems were affecting him both personally and professionally. Nelson instituted a health regimen that weaned Winter from the effects of drugs and alcohol. Winter began to recover, and his health, as well as his playing, improved. Nelson also undertook the negotiation of a number of career-reviving license deals: instructional and live-performance DVDs, the Top-10-charting live bootleg audio series, a Gibson Firebird guitar, the long-awaited release of Winter's Woodstock performance, and the highly praised biography *Raisin' Cain*. He also

continues to generate high-profile gigs, including Winter's appearances with the Allman Brothers at the Beacon Theater, worldwide reunion shows with his brother Edgar and Rick Derringer, and Winter's acclaimed performances at Eric Clapton's Crossroads Festivals, helping him reclaim his rightful place in the hearts of his adoring fans.

Photography: Bill Steber

In 1992, photographer Bill Steber first traveled through the Mississippi Delta, driving north on Highway 61 out of Natchez along the fabled Blues Highway. He stopped in Leland, met Son Thomas and photographed him with one of his full-size folk-art caskets. The journey, Steber acknowledges, forever altered his life. Through the "Stones in My Pathway" project, Steber found a way to combine his passions for photography and music by beginning an ambitious photographic survey of blues culture in Mississippi with an old Hasselblad camera and lots of black-and-white film. Since then, he has set out to document every living blues musician associated with Mississippi, as well as most of the state's juke joints, churches, river baptisms, hoodoo practitioners, traditional farming methods, folk traditions, and every other cultural tradition that gave birth to or influenced the blues. His work has been an integral part of Living Blues, the Oxford American, and many other blues publications.

Print Media: Twoj Blues - Poland

For 10 years and more than 42 colorful issues, Twoj Blues ("Your Blues"), through its stories, interviews, and CD and concert reviews, has encouraged Polish blues fans to listen to the blues and learn its history. That has encouraged the double-digit growth of blues festivals in the country. The magazine can be viewed on its website, www.twojblues.com, where blues fans around the world can see the first-class quality in every issue. The magazine is published by Delta (www.delta.art.pl), a publishing and booking agency, and utilizes journalists from Poland, the Czech Republic, Great Britain, Germany, Latvia, Canada, and the United States. Twoj Blues has subscribers in Poland, Slovakia, Germany, Belarus, the Netherlands, Canada, and the U.S., and an especially significant number in the Czech Republic, where -- thanks to the similarity between the Polish and Czech languages - - it is treated as the main source of information about the blues.

Producer: Michael Freeman -- Barrington, Illinois

Michael Freeman's work as producer or engineer has appeared on 60 blues titles over three-plus decades. As a teenager in London in the 1960s, Freeman was listening when British DJs were introducing American blues and R&B to British audiences. He first came to the U.S. in 1973 to manage artists, and emigrated here by the decade's end. His recording career began in the suburbs of Chicago at Hedden West Studios. Freeman has produced 16 first-class blues records including Blind Pig releases by Deborah Coleman, Eddy Clearwater, and Studebaker John. He has also been at the controls for Mississippi Heat and Sharrie Williams. He was co-producer of the Grammy-nominated Pinetop Perkins & Friends album for Telarc in 2009 and Mississippi Heat's Let's Live It Up on Delmark in 2010. Most recently, he produced Pinetop Perkins and Willie "Big Eyes" Smith's Joined at the Hip on Telarc. As engineer, he worked on Alligator's Vu Du Menz for Corey Harris and Henry Butler, John Primer's The Real Deal, Bo Diddley's 40th-anniversary album A Man Amongst Men, and many others.

Promoter: Didier Tricard -Montferrier sur Lez, France

For over 35 years, Didier Tricard has been one of the main blues promoters in Europe. He created his Chicago Blues Festival Tour of Europe (41st in 2010) in addition to promoting individual tours with blues icons like B.B. King, Buddy Guy, Albert King, Junior Wells, Albert Collins, Snooks Eaglin, and Ike Turner. He first began in 1976 as the road manager for Luther Allison and John Lee Hooker on a two-week summer tour for Black and Blue records. As part of George Wein's European office from 1978 to 1981, he booked shows and went on the road with Muddy Waters, Fats Domino, and Chuck Berry. In 1982 he booked his first Chicago Blues Giants tour, including the Lonnie Brooks Band featuring Eddie Shaw, Lefty Dizz, and Melvin Taylor, followed by the 1982 Chicago Blues Legends tour with Little Milton, Magic Slim, B.B. Odom, and Lucky Peterson. Tricard books European gigs for Magic Slim (their business relationship started in 1978), Kenny Neal, Lil Ed, and Zac Harmon, and for the last 10 years has acted as the artistic director for Jazz Club Etoile, Hotel Meridien, in Paris. At the same time, Tricard has also been a first-class producer of blues recordings for his Isabel label, founded in 1979. The most famous of his recordings have been released in America, including Buddy Guy's Alone & Acoustic and Stone Crazy on Alligator.

Publicist: Debra Regur -- Blind Pig Records, San Francisco, California

For nearly a decade, Debra Regur has been the publicity director for Blind Pig Records. Through her tireless efforts to promote the label's artists, she has helped many of them

significantly advance their careers. Her daily contact with all forms of media has increased their appeal and fan base and also brought them greater recognition and critical accolades beyond just blues outlets. Her efforts have resulted in features and reviews of Blind Pig artists on National Public Radio, in national print and internet publications, on syndicated radio programs, etc. She also provides valuable tour support by advancing touring dates to publicize local shows and appearances. The artists on the label appreciate her dedication and love of the music. One example of the kind of up-and-coming performer who has benefited from Regur's expertise is John Németh, who says, "Club owners, promoters, and myself know that the seats will be filled because I have the best publicist in the business on the job, Debra from Blind Pig."

Radio (Commercial): Mark Pasman -- 94.7 WCSX-FM, Detroit, Michigan

Mark Pasman has hosted "The Motor City Blues Project" every Sunday night for 22 years on the classic rock station WCSX-FM, with over 50,000 watts. "The Paz Man" has one of the top 10 shows in the market, with an average listenership of over 35,000. Pretty good numbers for the blues on radio! In 2009, Pasman was awarded the Blues Horizon Award by the Detroit Blues Society and was inducted into the Canada South Blues Society Museum. In addition to his "anything will do" blues attitude in music selection, Mark has brought many legendary performers like B.B. King, Koko Taylor, Willie Dixon, Bo Diddley, Lonnie Brooks, and Robert Cray to the show for personal interviews and plugged in his guitar to host live, on-show jams with Double Trouble, Levon Helm, Robert Randolph, Johnny Bassett, Thornetta Davis, and many others.

Radio (Public): Tom Wendt -- KBOO-FM, Portland, Oregon

When Curtis Salgado says, "When you meet somebody like Tom Wendt, you realize you can't even carry his lunch pail," one takes note. Wendt has been the station's volunteer blues DJ, hosting "Blues Power" (now called "Blues Junction") since 1974. A lifelong student of the blues, Wendt credits KPFA in Berkeley and Chris Strachwitz of Arhoolie Records with turning him on to the blues. Through his vast selection of modern and rare recordings, Wendt has been instrumental in helping his audience learn about and enjoy the blues. It is that dedication to sharing the music that has made him a mainstay of the blues in the Portland area. Whether he's at the stage absorbing a new blues performance or sharing his experiences about legends who have passed away, Wendt is truly a living blues historian.

Record Label: Electro-Fi - Toronto, Ontario, Canada

With a mission to record the unsung heroes of the blues, Andrew Galloway opened the doors of Electro-Fi Records in 1997. With a focus on older, African-American artists who either hadn't been recorded in a long time or hadn't been recorded properly, Electro-Fi has recorded multiple records by blues legends such as Snooky Pryor, Billy Boy Arnold, Mel Brown, Little Mack Simmons, Curley Bridges, Sammy Myers, and Willie "Big Eyes" Smith. At the same time, the label has become home to a new generation of blues traditionalists: Mark Hummel, Harrison Kennedy, Julian Fauth, Kenny "Blues Boss" Wayne, and Andrew "Jr. Boy" Jones among others. Throughout the years, the label has released over 65 original records, many of which have been nominated for or won Blues Music Awards or Junos, the Canadian equivalent.

About The Blues Foundation

The Blues Foundation is Memphis-based, but world-renowned as THE organization dedicated to preserving our blues music history, celebrating recording and performance excellence, supporting blues education, and ensuring the future of this uniquely American art form. Founded in 1980, TBF has 3,500 individual members and 190 affiliated local blues societies representing another 50,000 fans and professionals around the world. Its signature honors and events make it the international center of blues music. Its HART Fund provides the blues community with medical assistance, while its Sound Healthcare program offers musicians health insurance access. TBF's Blues in the Schools programming exposes new generations to blues music. Throughout the year, the Foundation staff serves the worldwide blues community with answers, contact information and news.

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