

Porretta Soul Festival, BIO

Anthony Paule Soul Orchestra

Anthony Paule, Guitar; Paul Olguin, Bass; Tony Lufrano, Keyboards; D'Mar, Drums; Charles McNeal, Tenor Sax; Thomas Poole, Trumpet; Derek James, Trombone; Sweet Nectar (Sue McCracklin, Maureen Smith, Lorelee Christensen) Background Vocals.

Anthony Paule, Guitar and Musical Director

was born on December, 21, 1956, in Durban, South Africa. He came to Los Angeles at 10-months old, and settled in Northern California when he was 15. Paule has worked with some of the best singers in the business during the past quarter century. They include Johnny Adams, Brenda Boykin, Earl King, John Nemeth, Bo Diddley, Louisiana Red, Jody Williams, Brownie McGhee, Maria Muldaur, Kim Nalley, Tommy Ridgley, and Boz Scaggs. He spent a dozen years as a member of the Johnny Nocturne Band and also toured with groups led by Muldaur, Scaggs, Mark Hummel, Charlie Musselwhite, and Mitch Woods. His extensive discography includes two albums of his own – 1999's Big Guitar and 2001's Hiding in Plain Sight – and two with Home Cookin', a band that featured Boykin.

Paul Olguin – bass

Paul Olguin has been living and working in and around the San Francisco Bay Area for over 20 years. Originally from Los Angeles where he learned his craft both in school and on the job in a vibrant and thriving music scene in which the friendly though sometimes fierce competition provided a fertile learning environment. Averaging 250 plus bass jobs per year, Paul brings his knowledge of the instrument, general musicality and sense of humor to bear on every gig he plays. Paul has performed with many great acts including: Mary Wells, Brenton Wood, The Drifters, Tracy Nelson, Roy Rogers, Augie Meyers, Carl Weathersby, Mitch Woods, Ramblin' Jack Elliot, Bob Weir, Elvin Bishop, Chuck Prophet, Richard Berry, Rosie & The Originals and many more.

Tony Lufrano - keyboards

Tony Lufrano is a lifelong resident of Oakland, CA and a much-in-demand keyboard sideman for some of the Bay Area's finest Rock, Blues and R&B artists. He earned his bona fides backing up The Whispers on coast-to-coast Chittlin' Circuit tours, highlighted by shows at Harlem's Apollo Theater. Since then, Tony has gigged, toured and recorded with a cavalcade of stars, including Boz Scaggs, Bonnie Raitt, Huey Lewis & The News, Elvin Bishop, Maria Muldaur, Robben Ford, Taj Mahal, Tommy Castro, Bill Champlin, Steve Miller, Joe Satriani, Carla Thomas, James Cotton, Linda Tillery, Eddie Money, Harvey Mandel, John Handy, Zigaboo Modeliste, Little Anthony & The Imperials, Earl King, Ernie K-Doe, Otis Clay, 'Chinna' Smith, Syl Johnson, Richard Berry, Johnny Johnson, Booker T and many more.

Derrick D'MAR Martin

Derrick "D'MAR" Martin's is standing between two worlds where the gap grows by the day and D'MAR is the epicenter .He is simply a force of nature. D'MAR is a musician, producer, songwriter, singer, educator, entertainer and motivational speaker. He has been traveling the world for the last 16 years as the lead drummer for the legendary Little Richard. D'MAR has also worked with a number of other artists such as: Dorothy Moore, Bobby Rush, Vastie Jackson, Ali Woodson (The Temptations), Big Jack Johnson, Billy Preston, Roy Gaines, Mitch Woods, Mark Hummel, Jackie Payne, Kid Andersen, Syl Johnson, Bob Margolin and Tutu Jones just to name a few. His career started when most of us were still playing with skateboards and riding Big Wheels. From the moment he beat on his mother's couch at the age of five to the present, D'MAR has done what he loves to do: perform and play the drums. It was natural for him to be "All-City Band", first chair in the percussion section and section leader before he was an upper classman in high school. What is more amazing is after working at a local record store for a couple of months while in college, he decided to fulfill a childhood dream and goal: he would play drums for a living and work for himself. As it would happen, D'MAR had an opportunity to audition for the living legend, Little Richard in which he got the drummer spot in the band!

Within three years, he was the lead drummer and the youngest member of the Little Richard band. Even though he was young and surrounded by fame and fortune, the lifestyle he lived was not one of great jet setting. He took the time to learn the craft from one of the founding fathers of Rock and Roll. He began to develop his Berry Gordy business acumen and learned to identify business opportunities, which led him to open several businesses, which are still active today.

17 years later, D'MAR has traveled globally, entertained amongst the hottest stars, and served as co-owner of Airtight Productions for twenty years and put together one of the most innovative music education programs ever seen. Not only is D'MAR in the business of producing, being an artist, teacher and musician, in 2009, he landed a role in the movie Chess: Who do You Love in which he plays Muddy Waters' drummer, "Elgin Evans". Despite his full schedule and full life, D'MAR gives back to his community through volunteering with the youth arts programs. He has also created music education program called Drums & More, which he performs for schools throughout the world.

Charles McNeal, Tenor Sax

Studied extensively in Denver Co. privately and at the college level with teachers that include: WaltFowler, Willie Hill, Rich Charluce, Keith Oxman, Ron Miles, Javon Jackson, Nelson Rangell, Brad Leali, Walter Barr. Has been a featured performer at many national and international festivals including: Monterey Jazz Festival (CA), San Jose Jazz Festival (CA), San Francisco Jazz Festival (CA), Playboy Jazz Festival(CA), Telluride Jazz Festival (CO), Umbria Jazz Festival (Italy), Porretta Soul Festival (Italy). Performed, recorded and/or toured with:

Jimmy Scott, Charlie Mussellwhite, Keb Mo, John Faddis, Wynton Marsalis, Leslie Drayton, McCoy Tyner, Ray Obiedo, Dave Garabaldi, RAD, Brenda Boykin, Claire Dee, Lavay Smith and the Red Hot Skillet Lickers, Barbara Morrison, Barbara Dennerlein, Jr. Mance, Bruce Forman, Mark Elf, Roberta Flack, The Temptations, Ollie Woodson, Norman Connors, Jean Carne, Curtis Olson, Peter Horvath, Jaz Sawyer, Boz Scaggs, Nicolas Bearde..."

Thomas Poole, Trumpet

Tom is also one of the top trumpet players in the Bay and has played with just about everyone. See his email below when I asked him for bio information! 2 Grammys . One from Etta James , one

from the Pacific Mambo Orchestra (PMO) . Billy Preston , Bobby Womack , original Boz Scaggs band , original Malo band (Suavecito) , Gregg Allman Band , Elvin Bishop , Shirelles , Drifters , Coasters , Percy Sledge etc. , etc. , etc . For 25 years I have worked with every oldies act from Tiny Tim to Billy Preston . The list is endless.

Derek James - Trombone

Grammy winner with Pacific Mambo Orchestra. Top player in San Francisco Bay . Performer with Bobby Rush, George McCrae, Toni Green, Falisa Janaye, Theo Huff, Stan Mosley, John Ellison and many more.

Wee Willie Walker , SOUL SURVIVOR - SOUL LEGEND

Willie is the winner of TWO 2016 Living Blues Music Awards! *Critics' Poll* - COMEBACK ARTIST OF THE YEAR and *Best Blues Album of 2015* - NEW RECORDINGS / SOUTHERN SOUL for his Little Village Foundation release "If Nothing Ever Changes"

Willie is 2017 Blues Award Music nominee for Soul Blues Album « *Live! Notodden Blues Festival* » and Soul Blues Male Artist

Sometime in 1968, Willie Walker, sometimes known as Wee Willie Walker, recorded his final tracks for Goldwax Records. Goldwax was once the home of one of the premier Soul singers of all, James Carr, as well as Spencer Wiggins, Louis Williams and the Ovations and a host of others. To the best of my knowledge, Mr. Walker had laid down nine sides for the Memphis based company. That's an odd number, which makes me want to believe there's at least one more side out there.

Throughout the time he recorded in Memphis, he lived in Minnesota, and still does. The circumstances surrounding it all are rather unique but not sensational; as many others, life stories would be. The most spectacular part of it all was his voice. That was Willie's vehicle that took him everywhere, from churches to Jewish Community Centers, from Sam Phillips, Studio to Rick Hall's Fame Studio, and from Memphis to Minneapolis and back to Memphis.

Willie spoke of travelling in a Cadillac in the mid-to-late 1950's with a Gospel group called the Redemption Harmonizers. (One incarnation of the Harmonizers included, Roosevelt Jamison, the author of the Soul standard "That's How Strong My Love Is" and also a song Willie recorded, "There Goes My Used To Be," which is now available on *The Goldwax Story Volume 1*. Kent 203) An early photo of Willie with the group shows him then as a 15 year-old in the matching suit flair of Gospel performers with a pencil-drawn moustache. The fake moustache was the only dishonesty I could find about the man and it's that honesty that distinguishes Willie's brand of Soul.

Even when I asked him his age, he clarified the slightest discrepancy. He said he was born in Hernando, Mississippi in 1941, even though he wasn't really from there. He arrived while his mother was visiting her mother on December 21st. What he later found out when relocating to Minnesota and gathering his birth records, the state had his birth date listed as December 23rd, which was probably the date it was filed. Willie said, "It's the 21st though. I always believe my mother."

Willie relocated from Memphis to Minneapolis in 1960. The Redemption Harmonizers, tour had brought him this far North a couple of times and he told his band mates that upon their next visit to Minneapolis, he was going to stay there. A fellow Harmonizer who had family in Minneapolis defected with Willie at that time and since then Willie Walker has lived in Minnesota. His Minnesota connection was a member of another Gospel group, the Royal Jubileers and Willie found a home amongst them.

He first ventured into secular music when he met a man named Timothy Eason in a laundry mat. Tim said Willie looked like a guy who could sing and introduced him to his business partner, Jimmy Crittenden. Tim was also a friend of Dick Shapiro who was starting Central Booking. The band, the Val-Dons formed in a merger of Willie and some of his vocalist friends along with a group of musicians headed by local legend Willie Murphy. They were once described as "Little Richard meets the El Dorado's." Dick Shapiro had them booked into Jewish Community Centers all around the Twin Cities.

Willie did have some bouts with being homesick. He stated that his decision to live here was based on a summertime impression. He said it was pride that kept him here. He didn't want to hear the "I told you so's" from his old runnin' buddies back in Memphis. Pride did not stop him from visiting though. It was on a trip back to Memphis in 1965 that Willie recorded his first track for Goldwax.

Willie said, "recording in Memphis was like getting a job. It was all about who you knew on the inside." And the Goldwax roster was laden with musicians rooted in Gospel, just like Willie. He signed a contract with the label owners; Quinton Claunch and Doc Russell where the fruits of his labor were rewarded with some free airline accommodations between Minneapolis and Memphis. There were no hotel accommodations included in the package. Willie used to stay with his old friends, usually Roosevelt Jamison or George Jackson.

George Jackson was a prolific songwriter, lending his talents to such hits as Johnnie Taylor's "Who's Makin' Love," Clarence Carter's "Too Weak To Fight" and even Bob Seger's "Old Time Rock & Roll." But Willie said George wasn't getting his proper respect at Goldwax, claiming Claunch was squeezing Jackson. Walker claimed that Jackson sometimes would put up the money for studio time. Willie said, "You see, the people needed money. That's what it was about. People would sell songs to people like Quinton Claunch for \$35.00."

Hence that's how Quinton got his songwriting credits. Willie added, "Sometime, I'd go into the studio and Quinton would hand me a poem on a piece of paper. I'd start singin' it, making it up (the melody) in my head and the band would put in the changes. On the record it said the song was written by him."

If you haven't guessed by now, Willie never saw a royalty check from Goldwax. Goldwax did supply him with boxes of 45's when he returned to Minneapolis. Willie would then distribute them to the local record shop selling Soul music. But instead of sending Willie more singles to sell, when the music stores ran out of them, they ordered them from Goldwax, cutting out the middle-man, in this case, the artist himself.

It was quite the grass roots approach in music distribution considering Goldwax had a deal with Amy / Mala / Bell Records for distribution too. Also, Goldwax leased two singles to Checker Records. Checker, a subsidiary of Chess, a label synonymous with Chicago Blues was making a foray into southern soul, working with the musicians around Muscle Shoals, Alabama. Checker had released albums recorded by Etta James, Irma Thomas and other Soul singers backed by the Rick Hall's funky conglomerate at Fame Studios.

Willie's single "A Lucky Loser" b/w "Warm To Cool To Cold" (Checker 1211, 1968) did get some attention from noted Nashville Disc Jockey and hit maker, John Richbourg, a.k.a. John R. As the story goes, Willie got a call at his home from John R. and he asked Willie to introduce his new single on WLAC in Nashville.

Willie thought it was a prank so when it came time to introduce the number, Willie said in reference to the moment, "I just started cussin' and click went the phone."

Another brush with the big time came when Willie was performing with a group called the Exciters (not the Exciters of "Tell Him" notoriety.) Through a connection Willie and his music were introduced to Curtis Mayfield. Mayfield wanted Walker to join the "Mayfield Family" but Willie was still under contract with Goldwax. When hearing that Mayfield was interested in Walker, Claunch set the buyout price of Walker's contract at a mighty steep price, a price too high for Mayfield.

But Willie still persevered. Back in Minnesota, Willie found an old contact in Willie Murphy and became the original singer of Willie & The Bees. Walker and Murphy shared a past in the Val-Dons. After Willie and the Bees, there was Salt, Pepper and Spice, a Blood Sweat & Tears / Chicago-type horn band in the seventies.

Most recently, Willie has collaborated with the legendary Twin Cities-based soul/blues/R & B powerhouse The Butanes. Together, they recorded three highly acclaimed modern soul records and toured the Netherlands, Switzerland and Japan. He also fronts his own R & B unit, Willie Walker and We "R" with whom he has a monthly residency at the Minnesota Music Café in St. Paul. Willie has also partnered up with Minnesota's own Paul Metsa, renowned singer, songwriter, author and teller of tales. It's just Paul's guitar work and Willie's voice interpreting everything from "Blowin' In The Wind" and "My Girl" to "What A Wonderful World" and "Good Time Charlie's Got The Blues."

Walker's music comes from a different time, a different place and a different point of view. He's one of the few vocalists from the era that is still standing and that can still sing. And the fact that we're north of Chicago, there aren't many people in this town that has a past like Walker. Willie, it's good to have you in town. On his most recent release, "If Nothing Ever Changes", Willie exhibits his mastery of the soul idiom.

Portions excerpted from Mike Elias' article in *The Chord*.....

Vaneese Thomas

Born in Memphis, Tennessee, Vaneese is the daughter of Rufus Thomas, whose legendary career as a musician and entertainer began in Vaudeville and spanned more than half a century in rhythm-and-blues recording and radio. Her older siblings are the hit recording artist "Memphis Queen" Carla Thomas and the highly respected keyboardist and producer, Marvell Thomas.

Embracing this remarkable musical legacy, Vaneese carries forward the rich heritage of Memphis soul and R&B, a music that has touched several generations and crossed many divides. At the same time she has combined all the influences of her background and experience – R & B, gospel, blues, and jazz – to cultivate a soul-stirring style that's all her own.

Highly regarded within the music industry, Vaneese's talents as a singer, songwriter, producer, and actor have made her a sought-after solo performer as well as a first-call vocalist for projects by other top-name artists. She has worked with the Lady of Soul Aretha Franklin and with the renowned recording producer Phil Ramone and has sung with an astonishing array of internationally known performers including Luciano Pavarotti, Sting, Stevie Wonder, Michael Jackson, Celine Dion, Eric Clapton, Dr. John and numerous others.

Vaneese's vocal career has taken her to concerts and festivals around the world. She has sung with the Baltimore and Colorado Symphonies in "Too Hot to Handel" under the baton of Marin Alsop and at:

- several Pavarotti & Friends concerts in Modena, Italy

- the Montreux Jazz Festival in Switzerland
- the Michael Jackson & Friends concerts with Luther Vandross in Seoul, Korea, and Munich, Germany
- the Porretta Soul Festival, Italy.

Geffen Records released Vaneese's first major recording in 1987. The self-titled album included the Top Ten R & B hit "Let's Talk it Over." In 1999 Vaneese used her own Peaceful Waters Music label to release *When My Back's Against The Wall*, a gospel crossover hailed by *Billboard* Magazine as "a small label masterpiece that begs for attention from savvy majors." Following a few years later was *A Woman's Love*, which combined R & B and silky, smooth-jazz vocals. Vaneese then released *Soul Sister Vol. One*, a collection of seminal soul classics. The CD, and the live show Vaneese has created from it, both pay tribute to some of the original soul sisters and honor the historical value of this irrepressible music.

Vaneese's release *Blues For My Father* has taken the Blues world by storm! Ranking #1 for September 2014 in France, #7 in the US for 2014 and garnering 2 BMA award nominations for 2014.

The new album "The Long Journey Home" for Segue and the nomination at the Blues Awards 2017 for Soul Blues Female Artist are good news.

In addition to concerts and recordings, Vaneese has worked extensively in film and television. She was the voice of Grace the Bass on the PBS series "Shining Time Station" and Clio the Muse, Goddess of History, in Disney's *Hercules*. She has sung on numerous film soundtracks including *Anastasia*, *Mighty Aphrodite* and *The First Wives Club*. TV appearances include "The Late Show with David Letterman," "Late Night with Conan O'Brien," and "NBC's Today."

Vaneese has also produced recordings, created vocal arrangements, and written songs for Patti Austin, Freddie Jackson, Bob James, Larry Coryell, Melba Moore, and Diana Ross, who scored a Top Ten hit in the United Kingdom with Vaneese's "One Shining Moment." She helped found the Swarthmore College Gospel Choir and continues to direct the Alumni Gospel Choir.

Vaneese lives in Westchester County, New York, with her husband and producing partner Wayne Warnecke. Her songs are available on numerous download sites worldwide including iTunes and Amazon.

Carla Thomas, The Memphis Queen

Rhythm and Blues singer Carla Thomas is best known for a series of hit records in the 1960s which garnered for her the title, the Queen of Memphis Soul. Carla Venita Thomas was born on December 1, 1942, in the Foote Homes Housing Project in Memphis, Tennessee. Along with her siblings, Marvell and Vaneese, she was one of three children of Rufus and Lorene Thomas. Her father was a well-known entertainment personality in his own right as a disk jockey for WDIA, the local black-oriented radio station, and because he was the emcee of the Palace Theater on Beale Street. Because of her father's prominence in the local music industry, Thomas was introduced as a child to the music world.

In the early 1950s WDIA sponsored a rotating musical group of high school students called the Teen Town Singers. Isaac Hayes was among the notably teenage performers who would go on to professional careers. Although members of the group were normally required to be of high school age, Thomas joined in 1952 at

the age of 10 thanks to her father, Rufus. She continued to perform with the singers until her senior year in 1960.

In 1960, while 17 and still attending Hamilton High School in Memphis, Thomas made her first recording, "Cause I Love You." This duet with her father caught the interest of Jerry Wexler of Atlantic Records. He signed a deal with the owners of Satellite (later Stax) Records, Jim Stewart and Estelle Axton, to distribute the song and thus launched Thomas's professional career. "Cause I Love You" was the first recording of Stax, the company which would by the late 1960s be second to Motown Records in Detroit, Michigan as the nation's producer of soul, gospel, and R&B music.

In October of 1960, Thomas released her hit song, "Gee-Whiz." Originally written when she was 15, the record received little attention until February 1961 when it reached number five on the R&B Billboard chart and number 10 on the larger pop[ular] chart. Just as Thomas was in the middle of her first year at Tennessee State University in Nashville, the single's success propelled her into the national spotlight and led to a performance on American Bandstand.

Thomas completed college and returned to Memphis to become a regular artist with Stax Records. She continued to record, often on duets with her father. In 1966 her recording, "B-A-B-Y" went to number three on the R&B chart and number 14 on the pop chart. The follow year she teamed with newly signed Stax performer Otis Redding and in March of 1967 they released the album, "King & Queen." Three singles were released from the album: "Tramp" in April 1967 peaked at number two, "Knock on Wood" peaked in September 1967 at number eight, and "Lovey Dovey" in late 1968 charted at number 21. Otis Redding was killed in a 1967 plane crash and Thomas never again had a top-selling record or album.

Thomas stayed with Stax until the label closed in 1975. She rarely performed after that. In the early 1980s she became involved with "Artists in the Schools," a series of workshops designed to talk to Memphis teenagers about music, performing arts, and drug abuse.

In honor of her career achievements, the Rhythm & Blues Foundation awarded Thomas the prestigious Pioneer Award in 1993, where she joined legendary performers such as James Brown and Solomon Burke. She was also featured in the 2003 documentary, "Only the Strong Survive," that was shown at the Cannes Film Festival. The documentary showcased the major Stax recording artists including Otis Redding, Johnnie Taylor, Isaac Hayes, and her father, Rufus Thomas. Carla Thomas continues to live in Memphis. Carla Thomas performed regularly at the Porretta Soul Festival in Italy; the outdoor amphitheater in which they performed was later renamed Rufus Thomas Park.

Barbara Blue, (The Reigning Queen of Beale Street)

Born and raised in Pittsburgh Pa, Barbara has had the blues since the day she was born. She has been performing on Beale Street 20 years (June 7, 1997) 5 nights a week. (Always check her schedule page before planning a trip to Memphis!) Barbara has also performed along side various top notch artists such as:

Taj Mahal & The Phantom Blues Band (Tony Braunagel, Mike Finnigan, Johnny Lee Schell, Larry Fulcher & the Texicalli Horns, Darrell Leonard and Joe Sublett), Jeff Healey, Dutch Tilders, Eugene "Hideaway" Bridges, Anthony Gomes, Marcia Ball, Delbert McClinton, Maceo Parker, Al Jackson, Pinetop Perkins, James Cotton, Steady Rollin' Bob Margolin, Tab Benoit, Fiona Boyes, Corey Harris, Sean Costello, The Nighthawks, Big Mike Griffin, Candye Kane, Zack Harmon, Trudy Lynn, Carol Fran & Gaye Adegbaloba. From Pittsburgh to Detroit to Chicago, Boston, New Orleans, LA, KC, Hawaii, Memphis, Australia, Canada, England, Norway, Aruba & The Legendary Rhythm & Blues Cruise the journey continues.

Since forming her own band in 1989, Barbara has been progressing right up blues alley. With the release of her Debut CD "OUT OF THE BLUE", Barbara has reached a wider audience of blues lovers world wide. Now residing in Memphis Tennessee and performing nightly (See Schedule) on historical Beale Street for the past fifteen years, Barbara's understanding and cultivation of the Blues is deeper and richer than ever. Barbara's discography now boasts 3 additional recordings with Taj Mahal's world re noun Phantom Blues Band: SELL MY JEWELRY 2002, MEMPHIS 3rd & BEALE 2004 and LOVE MONEY CAN'T BUY 2006, all of which have made the first round of the Grammy Nomination process in 3 categories. A 2007 import has been released by SHOUT Records LTD, London UK titled: BY POPULAR DEMAND. It is a tasty compilation the first of it's kind with Barbara's recordings and a 12page color booklet. OUTSTANDING!!! 2008 has lead to the much anticipated release of Barbara Blue & Nat Kerr's first LIVE release.... Recorded at Silky O'Sullivan's on Beale Street, Memphis Tennessee 3 nights with Memphis' world renowned female engineer Dawn Hopkins. There was such a good groove, vibe & funk goin' on 3 LIVE Vol's were released!!

Scott Sharrard (Gregg Allman Band, Musical Director)

began his music career in Wisconsin in the early '90's. He spent his teenage years attending Milwaukee's prestigious High School of The Arts by day, while playing in clubs and touring by night. During that time, he played with local blues legends the Stokes, Willie Higgins, and Harvey Scales, as well as such international blues and jazz luminaries as Buddy Miles, Melvin Rhyne, and Clyde Stubblefield.

After rising to the top of the local circuit by the age of 19, Scott moved to New York City with his band, The Chesterfields. They recorded and released three albums, toured nationally, and were mentored by Ahmet Ertegun and recieved critical praise from the likes of Russ Titlemen, Rob Thomas, and Dr. John. The band also garnered rave reviews from Billboard Magazine, USA Today and many other national publications. The band dissolved in 2002 and Scott then embarked on his career as a solo artist. From 2002-2008, Scott released three albums (Dawnbreaker, Analog/Monolog, and Ante Up) to critical acclaim.

In the Fall of 2008, Scott joined the Gregg Allman Band as a touring guitarist, being hailed as "Gregg Allman's secret weapon" by Glide magazine. Scott has developed a close musical relationship with Allman over the last 7 years and he now serves as Musical Director for the Gregg Allman Band. Allman can also be heard covering Scott's song (from 2012's Brickyard Band album) "Love Like Kerosene" and there are plans to include it on his next solo album.

Scott Sharrard and the Brickyard Band, released their self titled debut in 2012 and embarked on a national tour soon after. His performance at Memphis Stax Museum with the Bo-Keys, February 2017 was great!

Over the years, Scott has also performed with such artists as The Allman Brothers, Levon Helm, Amy Helm, Jaimoe's Jasssz Band, Jennifer Johns, Marshall Crenshaw, Kelley Hunt, Katy Pfaffl, Brian Charette, and Jay Collins & The Kings County Band.

“I know all about guitar players-I’ve seen the very best-and Scott Sharrard is the perfect guitarist for my band. He understands that you don’t need to play just for the sake of playing; Scott isn’t one of those guys who thinks they get paid by the note. He never steps on the vocals, and he leaves plenty of room for everyone else to do their thing, but when it’s time to solo, Scott delivers, boy

— Gregg Allman

“One of the best young guitar players to come out in years.

— The Paper

“Imagine the soulful, funky rock of Prince and Lenny Kravitz combined with the confessional ballads of Coldplay and fused with the virtuosic guitar styles of Jimi Hendrix or Eric Clapton, and you’ll start to understand the sonic landscape that is the music of Scott Sharrard.

— Putnam County News

“I don’t know which genre I love him more – blues, rock, soul or pop (...) he sounds like an accomplished star in any of them. Scott Sharrard is one of those few who remind us there’s only one ‘genre’ – the music.

— Paul Bondarovski, Midnight Special Blues Radio

“Sharrard is the next Eric Clapton or Mike Bloomfield.

— Indianapolis Star Tribune

“Sharrard’s slide work evoked the Allmans’ signature sound, his playing was multifaceted, incorporating subtle volume swells, Memphis-tinged double stops and classic B.B. King licks.

— Mike Joyce, The Washington Post

“Gregg Allman’s secret weapon.

— Glide Magazine

“Scott Sharrard, guitarist for Gregg Allman’s band, is not only that, he is also an excellent songwriter and singer in a genre that is a little out of the expectations. Not southern rock, but more soul, a lot of soul (...) and blues. He combines his strong, soulful voice with delicious guitar with a strong, bluesy slant.

— Rootstime

“...he offers the songs with power and conviction. His guitar playing, much like his voice, is fluid and soulful, encompassing Cropper, Hendrix, and BB King. In fact, fans of King’s Indianola Mississippi Seeds era will find a lot to love about the Scott Sharrard Band.

— Brandon Findlay, Jambands.com

“An incredible guitarist.

— Jerry Shriver, U.S.A. Today

Falisa JaNaye’

Vocalist, Writer, Entertainer, Actress & Model

FaLisa JaNaye' the New Face of Tomorrow's Music Today. This recording artist is best described as Soulful and Original with a heavy Hip-Hop influence. Resting on the soothing power of her sultry voice FaLisa JaNaye brings an electrifying stage performance to her audiences. FaLisa JaNaye's musical talents were inspired by watching the power of Shirley Cesar, the grace of Whitney Houston and the showmanship of Michael Jackson.

By combining pure elegance with a powerful voice, FaLisa JaNaye' has quickly gained notoriety from audiences across the world with both live and televised appearances. FaLisa JaNaye's range in music has allowed her to travel the U.S. and Europe sharing the stage with many of the top acts in both the Gospel and Southern Soul markets. She has been billed with such greats as Gospel Award Winner Keith "Wonder Boy" Johnson and Blues notables Bobby Rush, Willie Clayton. Her love for fashion has allowed FaLisa JaNaye to model extensively in the U.S. and Europe. She has served as lead model for Mrs. Carol's Hair Salon of Hanau, Germany and for Total Transformation Hair Care Products of North Carolina (modeling at the 2006 Hair Extravaganza- Atlanta, GA). She is currently spreading her wings and venturing into the film industry with a role in the Independent film entitled "The Governor's Daughter" directed by Lawyer Henderson of Atlanta, GA.

With the recent release of her debut CD under MiLaJa Records entitled "Sweet Love", a 2010 Jus Blues Foundation "Most Popular Southern Soul Artist (Female)" award nomination, and a featured article in Signature J Magazine (www.signaturejmagazine.com ; SEP/OCT/NOV pg 72-73) FaLisa JaNaye' is poised to take the music industry by storm.

"Listeners embrace the silky, golden voice that's distinctively FaLisa JaNaye'".

Vasti Jackson

Vasti Jackson (pronounced Vast-eye) (born October 20, 1959) is an American electric blues guitarist, singer, songwriter and record producer. He has also been the musical director, and guitarist for Z. Z. Hill, Johnnie Taylor, Denise LaSalle, Little Milton, Bobby Bland, and Katie Webster, plus Jackson has worked with those involved in gospel music including the Williams Brothers, the Jackson Southernaires, and Daryl Coley.

In the 59th Annual Grammy Awards, Jackson's album, The Soul of Jimmie Rodgers won the Best Traditional Blues Album category.

Jackson was born in McComb, Mississippi, United States, and he attended McComb High School. When he was a small boy he lived one block away from the train tracks which fascinated Jackson, and when old enough he hopped the train to travel short distances. At the age of twelve the railroad police caught his juvenile hobo act, although he retained a lifetime love of the railroad. Through his family he came to hear blues music, which ignited his second love. Jackson studied music at Jackson State University. He played in the juke joints around McComb, and his musical learning curve continued so that by the late 1980s and into the early 1990s, Vasti was employed as a session musician by both Malaco Records and Alligator Records. By 1993, Jackson was serving as the musical director on the television program, Blues Goin' On.

Also in 1993, Jackson's self-penned track, ""Let the Juke Joint Jump" was covered on Koko Taylor's album, Force of Nature. The following year, Jackson played on B.B. King's Grammy Award winning album, Blues Summit. In 1996, Jackson self-released his debut solo album, Vas-tie Jackson.

Jackson turned his hand to record production in 2000, with co-production credits on the Bobby Rush album, Hoochie Man, which was nominated for a Grammy Award the following year.[9] In 2002, Jackson provided backing vocals on "Only a Dream in Rio" on Cassandra Wilson's album, Belly of the Sun.[10] The following

year, Jackson was one of the performers in *Warming by the Devil's Fire*, one of the film documentaries in the series, *The Blues*, produced by Martin Scorsese. *No Borders to the Blues* (2003) was his next solo album. *Woman Thou Art Loosed* was a 2004 American drama film directed by Michael Schultz and written by Stan Foster. Jackson was the music producer for the film's soundtrack.

He returned to production work in 2004, with his work on Henry Butler's *Homeland* album on Basin Street Records. Jackson also played guitar and undertook backing vocals on the collection. In 2005, Jackson co-wrote and produced the track "Hello", on Morris Mills's album, *Love & Coffee*. Whilst Jackson's own composition, "Casino in the Cotton Field", appeared in the Lifetime Television Network film, *Infidelity* (2006). Jackson spent time touring his own work, which saw him appear in locations across the globe. In 2010, Jackson released his next studio album, *Stimulus Man*.^[14] The following year, Jackson performed at the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival and played the title role in the play, *Robert Johnson The Man, The Myth, The Music!* In June 2012, Jackson performed at the Chicago Blues Festival. The same year he was inducted into the Mississippi Musicians Hall of Fame and, in 2013, Jackson performed at Super Bowl XLVII. His next album, *New Orleans, Rhythm Soul Blues*, was released in 2013, before he was appointed in July the following year as a cultural ambassador for Mississippi. In February 2015, Jackson was on the cover of that month's issue of *Living Blues* magazine. Two months later he was one of the star performers at the Bluesfest Byron Bay in Australia, in the year he was also named as the Albert King Lifetime Guitar Award recipient. In April 2016, Jackson was a featured performer at the opening of the National Blues Museum, and played in July at the Porretta Soul Festival in Italy

His own, *The Soul of Jimmie Rodgers*, album was issued by CD Baby, which celebrated Jackson's appreciation of the influence of Jimmie Rodgers on the history of American music. Jackson had earlier stated in March 2015 that, "I like to talk about the triumph of the blues. Looking at struggle and rising above it. It's an art form derived from the necessities of life, having to navigate oppression."

Jackson was a guest performer on the title track of Bobby Rush's 2016 album, *Porcupine Meat*. It earned Rush a Grammy Award nomination for Best Traditional Blues Album, which placed Jackson in direct competition with Rush for the award.

Ricky Fanté

He's best known for his debut single "It Ain't Easy," which garnered critical praise,^[citation needed] in addition to numerous television and film soundtrack appearances. Fanté's vocal sound has been compared to Wilson Pickett, Sam Cooke, Al Green, and Otis Redding.

After serving in the United States Marine Corps for a few years after high school, a demo of his two-man group, produced by his partner ex-rocker Scott Rickett called Soul Surfers, fell into the hands of A&R executive Josh Deutsch, which led to a development deal in 2001. In 2002, Fanté met with Norah Jones's collaborator Jesse Harris, and began co-writing and recording his debut record.

Fanté was then signed by Virgin Records and released *Rewind* in July 2004. Fanté gained critical acclaim for the song "It Ain't Easy". He performed the single on NBC's long-running late night talk and variety show *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno*. Although the song was not considered a hit, the album garnered moderate success in the U.S. and abroad. The song reached No. #8 on Italian music charts.

In 2005, Ricky Fanté recorded the title song "Shine" for the film *Robots*, and the upbeat tune "That's All I Need" for the HBO film *Lackawanna Blues*. In the same year, he performed a duet with the Italian singer Giorgia Todrani for her MTV *Unplugged*.

In 2009, he recorded the theme song for the hit ABC television series Shark Tank, which was written by Berry Gordy and Janie Bradford. Afterward, he took a break from singing to return to school.

In 2015, he began work on a new album with Scott Rickett and Herman Matthews. In 2016, he released a collaborative album with Scott Rickett titled Good Fortune through their own independent label, Soul Surfer Records.

Acting

In 1998, Fanté portrayed legendary singer Marvin Gaye in the television mini-series The Temptations.

In 2005, he appeared in Yours, Mine and Ours, a movie starring Dennis Quaid and Rene Russo, and sang Major Harris's "Love Won't Let Me Wait" during a pivotal scene of the movie.

That same year, he also appeared in the television series American Dream and the successful ABC made-for-television movie Their Eyes Were Watching God.

Bernard "Pretty" Purdie

Batterista, musicista, produttore, arrangiatore e musical director, Bernard "Pretty" Purdie può essere fiero di avere una discografia con oltre 4.000 dischi. Dalle sue prime registrazioni con King Curtis e Aretha Franklin fino alle più recenti con Dizzy Gillespie, Paul Simon, Count Basie, Duke Ellington, Percy Sledge, Branford Marsalis, Larry Coryell, Miles Davis, Hall & Oates, Al Kooper, Herbie Mann, Todd Rundgren, Steely Dan, Cat Stevens, B.B. King, James Brown, Isaac Hayes, the Rolling Stones, Joe Cocker a centinaia di altri, il suo stile unico è legato alle più grandi canzoni della musica contemporanea. Il suo "groove" è stato copiato, imitato ed è riconoscibile nei classici del jazz, soul e funk.

BERNARD Purdie è nato a Elkton, Maryland undicesimo di quindici figli. Inizia a sei anni su batterie improvvisate. A 14 anni acquista la sua prima batteria e diviene la fonte principale di sostegno per la famiglia. '...ho dovuto conoscere tutti gli stili e non avevo paura a provare qualcosa di nuovo."

Si trasferisce a New York nel 1960 dopo aver finito il liceo e suonato con (tra gli altri) Lonnie Youngblood prima di ottenere il suo primo successo con King Curtis. Poi il suo legame con Aretha Franklin di cui diventa musical director nel 1970 dopo la tragica morte di King Curtis - l'inizio di una carriera senza pari. Da allora, Purdie è stato un ospite regolare negli studi delle stelle del Jazz, Soul, e Rock.

Il 15 Agosto 1965 è al Shea Stadium con la band di King Curtis per aprire lo storico concerto dei Beatles. Davanti a 55.000 fans dei Beatles, Bernard capisce che è arrivato. Ma lui, anche se poi smentisce, i Beatles li aveva conosciuti prima. Nel 1963 gli avevano fatto fare le parti di batteria su un nastro di una band inglese (nascondendogli il nome) in ben 21 canzoni tra cui "Ticket To Ride", tanto che a proposito di questo brano, un noto critico scrisse: "...la ritmica è senza dubbio all'avanguardia per quei tempi, la chitarra elettrica incisiva e penetrante e il lavoro alla batteria di Ringo Starr martellante ed esaustivo come mai in passato...."

Da qui la famosa risposta di Lennon alla domanda di un giornalista che gli chiese se Ringo fosse il miglior batterista del mondo e lui sarcastico rispose "Per la verità non è neanche il migliore batterista dei Beatles....."

C'è chi dice che Bernard fosse stato minacciato di morte se avesse svelato la verità. Di certo c'è che è sua la batteria di "Aja" degli Steely Dan, "Rock Steady" di Aretha Franklin, "Bitches Brew" di Miles Davis, "Cold Sweat" di James Brown e "It's A wonderful World" di Louis Armstrong.

Willie Hightower by Red Kelly on the "B" Side Blog.

He had come up singing Gospel in his home town of Gadsden, Alabama but had switched to R&B and was performing locally by the late fifties. He hooked up with a local dee-jay named Shelly Stewart who would become his manager and secure him a recording contract with Bobby Robinson up in Harlem. There he appeared at The Apollo, and recorded two singles for Bobby's Enjoy and Fury labels in 1965 and '66.

Robinson sold Willie's contract to Capitol, but continued to produce him for the label. They would release an album made up primarily of his earlier Fury sides, and a couple of singles were released from the album (one of those singles is now up on The A Side). This was around the same time that Capitol began really hitting its stride with chartbusters by both the Beatles and the Beach Boys, and Hightower's releases were strictly a low priority. FAME had signed a distribution deal with Capitol during this period, and they figured it would be a good idea to send Willie down there to record. It was.

Today's absolutely fantastic selection is the B side of the equally great Walk A Mile In My Shoes, a cover of the Joe South hit that Rick Hall felt 'cried out' for a funkier treatment. I can't say enough about how much I love this man's voice (Barney Hoskyns has described it as sounding like "Sam Cooke after a night on the tiles"). Written by Willie as well, this great record shows just how good he, and the Fame Gang were. His other two FAME singles are smokin' two-siders as well, and have all recently been made available on an Honest Jons UK release. Buy it.

Willie Hightower went on to sign with Mercury after leaving Fame, and as of 2004 was still performing locally in Alabama. In 2015 he performed at Ponderosa Stomp with the Bo-Keys and finally in 2017 at Porretta Soul Festival!

King Louie & LaRhonda Steele

only formed in 2015, but this dynamic duo—featuring organist Louis "King Louie" Pain and vocalist LaRhonda Steele—has already received plenty of buzz. Their soulful, spontaneous debut CD, "Rock Me Baby," has received rave reviews world-wide, including being honored by Downbeat as one of the "Best Albums of 2016," and it debuted at #8 on the Living Blues radio chart. In a Northwest music scene known for its world-class blues artists, Pain is known as "Portland's Boss of the B-3," and Steele as "Portland's First Lady of the Blues." The duo appears annually at the Safeway Waterfront Blues Festival (the 2nd largest blues festival in the U.S.), and they'll be performing at Italy's prestigious Porretta Soul Festival in 2017 (with special guest Rob Paparozzi, front man with the Original Blues Brothers). Louis "King Louie" Pain and LaRhonda Steele are popular Northwest USA artists whose debut CD, "Rock Me Baby," is something very special. The deeply funky and soulful CD features a stripped down, spontaneous sound that sets it apart, and the dynamic duo performs the same way live. What makes the approach work is the talent & soul of these remarkable artists. Pain, who toured & recorded with the late Evidence Records bluesman Paul deLay for an decade, is Portland's "first call" blues, jazz, & soul organist, playing with such legends as Solomon Burke, Howard Tate, Bo Diddley, Bernard Purdie, and Martha Reeves. Pain performed innumerable times

at Portland's top music venue, Jimmy Mak's, including for 20 years on Thursday evenings with legendary Motown drummer Mel Brown. Steele, winner of the 2016 Cascade Blues Association award for "Best Vocalist," began her musical journey in Jones, Oklahoma, singing her first solo in church at age 13. Since moving to Portland, she's worked with most of the top Northwest musicians, including the late Obo Addy, with whom LaRhonda performed at New York's Lincoln Center. LaRhonda is a cancer survivor who has emerged from her successful battle with the disease a remarkably powerful and joyous performer. As she puts it, "I've been through the fire."

Rob Pappozzi

New Jersey-based frontman, singer, & harmonica player Rob Pappozzi has been a blues performer since 1967. But Rob is far from being strictly a blues musician. In fact, he's at home playing a wide range of music, ranging from rock to blues to jazz to pop. This versatility is reflected in the long and remarkably diverse list of major artists Rob has worked with, including B.B.King, Dr. John, Bruce Springsteen, Whitney Houston, Carole King, Roberta Flack, Culture Club, Cyndi Lauper, Randy Newman, Jimmy McGriff, and James Galway. Rob has toured the world with the "Original Blues Brothers Band", featuring guitar legend Steve Cropper and special guest Eddie Floyd and also as Frontman-Lead Singer for the Legendary "Blood Sweat and Tears" Rob's own band The Hudson River Rats features Ed Alstrom, John Korba, Chris Eminizer, Bernard Purdie, George Naha and Bailey Gee. The shows are Local in NY-NJ as well as International, Europe & Asia. In 2008 Rob worked on his debut CD which features many varied styles and "special guests". In 2009 the CD has been getting lots of airplay worldwide and terrific acclaim in the press. Special thanks to Bob Putignano, Gary Walker, Michael Bourne and Rich Skelly for having Rob on their radio shows in 2009 **WBGO**, **WFDU**, **WRSU** and Roxy Perry on **KCOR**

More Reviews and Press releases!

"Please take the time to listen to Rob's new album. I'm positive you will be amazed if you have not heard him before."

--**Steve Cropper** (Booker T. & the MGs, original Blues Brothers Band)

"Rob's CD sounds amazing and his performances are over-the-top killing!"

--**Will Lee** (David Letterman, Fab Faux)

The Original James Brown Orchestra feat. Fred Wesley

Twelve of James Brown former musicians and Fred Wesley decided to get back together since his disappearance from this legendary group, The JB's, to perform a series of exceptional concerts throughout Europe.

Nominated this year for the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, the group has invited, for the first time since 2006, two of its founder members, Fred Thomas and the impressive singer Martha High, James Brown's number one chorist for 35 years of intense collaboration.

So here today, 10 years after he left, the refreshed echo of true James Brown music in a vibrant and joyful tribute performed by those who wrote history by his side. A unique opportunity to experience great moments like *Godfather of Soulhommagr* which, during six decades, was one of the most influential

figures in the twentieth century's most popular music, classified by the magazine Rolling Stone in the Top Ten of the « 100 Greatest Artists of All Time ».

On the programme, the ever-popular « *Sex Machine* », « *I Feel Good* », « *It's a Man's Man's Man's World* », « *Please, Please, Please* » will be enjoyed by one of the most widespread fan-club on the entire planet!

The lineup includes 11 musicians accompanied by the legendary entertainer Danny Ray with special guest the legendary Fred Wesley. The year in which the musician joined James Brown's band is mentioned in brackets.

Musical Director/ Trombone – Tyrone Jefferson: (30 years)

Mr. Jefferson joined the James Brown Elite Family of Funk in 1979. In addition to writing and arranging music for the Godfather of Soul, he was one of six composers from around the world commissioned in 1983 by the Minister of Culture in Basse Terre, Guadeloupe to compose original music for World Peace. He has also performed with jazz legends Frank Foster and Slide Hampton as well as with The Dells, The Manhattans, and Grammy-nominated vocalist Carla Cook.

Emcee / "Cape Man" – Danny Ray (49 years)

Mr. Ray joined the James Brown Elite Family of Funk in 1960. Born in Birmingham, Ala. Mr. Ray is best known as the Master of Ceremonies for the James Brown shows and for draping the star-studded capes over the Godfather of Soul at the close of a concert. Mr. Ray met James Brown at the Apollo Theater in New York City and worked as Mr. Brown's valet for two years until 1962 when an announcer failed to show up for a James Brown concert. Mr. Ray's rich baritone voice and strong desire to be in the entertainment business made him a "natural" announcer. Yet Mr. Ray was much more than an announcer as Danny Ray and James Brown were partners - each one understanding the dynamics, timing and professionalism necessary for each high energy James Brown performance –that usually started with Danny saying: "Ladies and Gentlemen..., IT'S STARRRRRRR TIME!

Bass Guitar – Fred Thomas (38 years)

Mr. Thomas joined the James Brown Elite Family of Funk in 1971 and was a member of the original JB's band. He is currently setting up a tour of School and Colleges for clinics with their music departments – sharing how James Brown put it all together and how he made it work. He will soon release a CD that speaks to the music from his lifetime of writing and arranging. 2

Trumpet – Joe Collier (30 years)

Mr. Collier joined the James Brown Elite Family of Funk in 1980 and has also performed with 'Clarence Carter, Albert Collins, Aretha Franklin, and Joe Cocker. His TV and movies credits include Rocky IV and Mama Flora's Family featuring Cicely Tyson and the Tonight Show with Johnny Carson.

Guitar - Ron "Rock" Laster (29 years)

Mr. Laster joined the James Brown Elite Family of Funk while working with the Jerry D'amico Group after a brief stint with Rick James & The Stone City Band. Mr. Brown hired him on the spot as the lead rhythm guitarist behind the late great Jimmy Nolan. His career began by playing violin under the teachings of Wilbur Hatch, musical director for the "I Love Lucy Show!" After 6 years of violin training, he developed a feel for the guitar and taught himself since his school had no guitar teachers. Ron has shared stages and performed w/musical greats as BB King, Aretha Franklin, Prince, Michael Jackson, to name a few. Ron has been heard on HBO's (The Wire), David Letter Letterman, Good Morning America, Arsenio Hall, European TV and The Johnny Carson Show.

Drums – Robert "Mousey" Thompson (20 years)

Mr. Thompson joined the James Brown Elite Family of Funk in 1990 and has also performed with Wilson Pickett and Chuck Brown. Mousey currently resides in the Washington, DC area.

Percussion – George "Spike" Nealy (19 years)

Mr. Nealy joined the James Brown Elite Family of Funk in 1990 and was featured in the movie "Drum Line". He currently teaches in the Music Department at South Carolina State University and has also performed with the SOS band, Keith Sweat and Xscape just to name a few.

Vocals – Cynthia Moore (18 years)

Ms. Moore joined the James Brown Elite Family of Funk in 1991. A native from Buffalo NY, who eventually became the lead vocalist. Ms. Moore shared the spotlight with Mr. Brown on several songs. Ms. Moore has spent 9 years performing with "The Unity Band" in Buffalo.

Vocals - Sheila Wheat (17 years)

Ms. Wheat joined the James Brown Elite Family of Funk in 1992 and feels at home on the theatrical stage as well as the concert stage. In betwixt and between her road life with JB, she has worked with jazz, gospel, and R&B artists such as Johnny Taylor, Shirley Caesar, Max Roach and the Black Eyed Peas to name a few. Sheila has performed in theatrical works presented by The Alliance Theatre, Seven Stages Theater, Jomandi Productions, The Lake George Opera Festival and Liberty Theater. Ms. Wheat was featured as solo artist in the National Black Arts Festival and The National Association of Jazz Educators Sheila is proud of her vocal contributions to projects such as "Full Moon of Sonia" by Sister Sonia Sanchez; TC Carson's phenomenal recording project "TRUTH"; Black Eyed Peas international multi-platinum album "Monkey Business", jazz pianist Geri Allen's "Timeless Portraits and Dreams", the PBS documentary "Homecoming: The Plight of Black Farmers in Georgia", the motion pictures "Tuxedo" and "Miss Evers Boys".

Fred Wesley – Trombone (Special Guest)

Born in Columbus, Georgia, and raised in Mobile, Ala., Fred Wesley began his career as a teenage trombonist with Ike and Tina Turner. He later was music director, arranger, trombonist and a primary composer for James Brown from 1968-1975, then arranged for and played with Parliament-Funkadelic and Bootsy's Rubber Band.

With Brown and as leader of his backing band The JB's, Wesley "was the world's most famous sideman, orchestrating the sinuous grooves and contributing the bold, surgically precise solos that defined the language of funk." In teaming with George Clinton and Bootsy Collins, he played a key role in taking funk to the next level. Wesley is featured in the documentary film "Soul Power," as well as the Oscar-winning "When We Were Kings" and countless other documentaries about James Brown and funk music.

Seminal hits he helped create include Brown's and the JB's "Big Payback" and "Pass the Peas." Others include Parliament's "P-Funk" and Bootsy's "Stretching Out."

Author of the acclaimed memoir, "Hit Me, Fred: Recollections of a Side Man" (Duke University Press 2002), Wesley is one of music's most-sampled musicians. Artists who have sampled his work include Janet Jackson ("That's The Way Love Goes") and Nas ("Nastradamus").

A veteran of the Count Basie Orchestra, Wesley also has worked with a who's who of other artists including Ray Charles, Pancho Sanchez, Van Morrison, Usher, the SOS Band and Cameo, as well as with his close friends and cohorts Maceo Parker and Pee Wee Ellis.

Today, he plays and records with his own jazz-funk band, the New JB's, and is one-third of the innovative "klezmer-funk" collaboration Abraham Inc. He also freelances as an arranger, producer and studio performer, and shares his wealth of musical knowledge with young musicians and music students in educational settings worldwide.

Toni Lynn Washington

Boston-based blues singer Toni Lynn Washington recorded and released *Blues at Midnight* for the Tone-Cool subsidiary of Rounder Records in 1995. Washington is considered Boston's "queen of the blues," where she has a long and storied history on the club scene.

Raised in a procession of gospel choirs in Southern Pines, North Carolina, Washington performed with classic R&B artists like Sam and Dave and Jackie Wilson throughout the South in her youth. Washington also made USO tours of the U.S. and Asia in the 1960s and recorded the Top 50 single "Dear Diary" for the New Orleans-based Conti label, then a subsidiary of Atlantic Records.

After two decades off the road and out of the recording studio, Washington returned to performing in 1992 with a ten-piece band. On her debut for Tone-Cool, *Blues at Midnight*, Washington comes across best as an interpreter: she tackles B.B. King's "Ask Me No Questions," Jimmy Reed's "Ain't That Loving You Baby," and a tune popularized by Jimmy Rushing and the Basie Orchestra and T-Bone Walker, "Evening."

It's My Turn Now followed in 1997, and in early 2000, Washington returned with *Good Things*.

Davell Crawford

The genius of Davell Crawford arises from his ability to play and sing the music of his passion—the music of his life. The New Orleans keyboardist, vocalist, composer and arranger soaked up the surrounding rhythms and harmonies that were his deep musical roots and nurtured his natural talent. Acclaimed as the "Piano Prince of New Orleans," Crawford brings equal exuberance to both modern and classic jazz, rhythm and

blues, funk, blues, gospel, soul, pop, American folk and touches of country-western. Growing up in New Orleans and presently residing there and in New York City plus spending many youthful days in Southwest Louisiana, Crawford's influences run the gamut from Fats Domino to Sarah Vaughan, to Patsy Cline and even Liberace. In the tradition of those from the Crescent City who came before him, Crawford also believes in the art of entertainment. He'll get up from the piano, move to the apron of a stage, prance, joke and make folks feel at home. As a child, Crawford attended both Baptist and the Catholic churches. He watched the pipe organist so attentively that when he first sat in front of the impressive instrument he already knew the function of the stops and pedals. The organ at his church was the first he ever played and throughout his life he's continued to man the organ in both church and club settings. The prowess he developed is best exemplified on his 1998 Rounder Records release, the swinging, soulful and funky, *The B-3 & Me*. Tellingly, it includes two Ray Charles hits: "I Can't Stop Loving You" and "Hallelujah I Just Love Her So." At age seven, Crawford, who has often been compared to the great Ray Charles, made his first public appearance playing his favorite tunes from the master on a piano outside of New Orleans' famous coffee stand, Café du Monde. Backed by quintets, big bands and on occasion orchestras, he's also paid tribute to Charles at several outstanding shows around the world. His 2005 tribute to Ray Charles when he assembled some of New Orleans' finest players to form the Davell Crawford Orchestra, has been noted as "One of The Best Concerts Ever". At just 10 years old, Crawford made an impression on the New Orleans gospel community by taking on the position of accompanist to the St. Peter Claver Catholic Church choir. By the time he was 11, his talents were utilized by the St. Joseph Baptist Church where he became the youth choir director, pianist and organist to the sanctuary and men's choruses. Since then Davell has traveled the world conducting choral workshops and making appearances in gospel music. Throughout his career he's also lead a host of award winning gospel ensembles. He chose the 'creme de la cream' of New Orleans gospel vocalists to form The Davell Crawford Singers, whose members are spread from the East to West coasts, while the core members remain in New Orleans. They continue to reunite today and are heard on his gripping CD, *My Gift To You*, his first on the Basin Street Records label. Gospel is at the heart of everything that Crawford does. Davell is the godson of the iconic Roberta Flack and the grandson of the great vocalist/pianist/composer James "Sugar Boy" Crawford of "Jock-A-Mo" fame giving reason for the honesty, passion, and ample rhythm and blues that also fills his soul. Crawford can—and has—thrown down all night R&B concerts and parties jumpin' with tunes from the likes of pianists Fats Domino, Professor Longhair, James Booker and Huey "Piano" Smith. Crawford is definitely in that number as he carries the New Orleans piano legacy along with the complete American Roots legacy. A softer, quieter side of Davell Crawford is revealed when, as heard on his 1999 release, *Love Like Yours and Mine*, he slips comfortably into his jazz mode on such classics as "Fly Me to the Moon." His tenderness and informed jazz sensibilities shine with every note when Crawford approaches the standards. Often, he'll be in a trio or quartet setting behind the grand piano or standing at center stage with only the microphone and the trio backing him for an evening of classic or modern jazz. Then again, he might don a silly wig and an eye patch in honor of the late great James Booker and take the house down by emanating his fellow pianist's eclectic, frequently elegant panache. Crawford is also fully versed in the traditional jazz songbook of New Orleans, the birthplace of jazz. A fact that will be confirmed if you are lucky enough to experience a performance by Davell Crawford and His Creole Jazz Men of New Orleans. He's also been known to make special rare appearances at the music's landmark, Preservation Hall. With his immense talent and experience, the pianist and vocalist could have chosen his next release to be in any number of genres. On his meticulously produced album, *My Gift To You*, Crawford remarkably embraces the full spectrum of his interests and influences as he reaches into his rich bag of resources and natural abilities. On the disc, just as he has throughout the world during his decades-long career, Crawford celebrates his musical roots and becomes their ambassador. As the Prince of New Orleans joyfully expresses on the opening track of *My Gift To You*: "I am the Creole man, I come from

foreign lands to spread the news..." He also expresses, just as momentarily, on the closing track, "Louisiana, I love you for all you've given to me, I promise never forget you as I travel o've the stormy sea." Crawford's latest release, *Piano in the Vaults, Vol. 1* (Out April 2016 on Basin Street Records) takes a step back from the heavily orchestrated *My Gift to You* and showcases Crawford's raw talent as a performer saturated with the soul and history of New Orleans music. The album is the first in a series of six volumes of solo recordings done between 1998-2013. On the album Crawford draws inspiration from the long lineage of New Orleans piano players including Jelly Roll Morton, Fats Domino, Professor Longhair, Allen Toussaint, and James Booker. *Piano in the Vaults, Vol. 1* secures Davell Crawford's role as a tour-de-force of the New Orleans piano tradition with a unique vocal talent. Listeners of the album will have no trouble listing Crawford's name in the short list of truly great New Orleans piano players.