



Edinburgh Jazz & Blues Festival: Blues takes centre stage

Edinburgh Jazz & Blues Festival is pleased to announce the largest blues line up in the festival's history.

Over 25 major blues concerts will take place from 17 - 26 July 2015, alongside an outstanding line up of jazz, funk, soul and swing performances.

We present a host of major American names, many of whom are making exclusive UK appearances. We have a big night of Chicago Blues, and a celebration of the centenary of Willie Dixon. In a special project, two leading Scottish blues musicians have been on a US road tour, hooking up with great musicians from San Francisco, Memphis, Mississippi and Florida along the way. They'll be coming over to Edinburgh in July.

We cross all blues styles, from Mississippi country blues to contemporary rock-blues, but our emphasis is on the core of the music, and picking out the original, the special, and the innovative.

We go back to Chicago and the music of the 50's and 60's for two of our feature concerts.

Muddy Waters' son, **Mud Morganfield**, sounds uncannily like his "pop" and sings his great tunes with a band that recreates the authentic sound. **Lurrie Bell** is another great son of Chicago, and the guitarist is currently enjoying a golden moment with his latest album winning awards for the best Blues Album of the year. They play the Festival Theatre on July 24.

Willie Dixon was probably the greatest songwriter in blues history. His music fuelled the success of Muddy Waters, Howlin Wolf, and Little Walter, but also created huge successes for rock bands. "Little Red Rooster", "Spoonful", "Bring It On Home", "Hoochie Coochie Man", "I Just Want To Make Love To You" and more than 500 others, were major hits for The Rolling Stones, Led Zeppelin, Cream, The Animals and countless others. In Dixon's centenary year, Scotland's leading blues singers, **Maggie Bell and Tim Elliott** are the headline acts in a concert, at the Queen's Hall on July 26, that features all his greatest songs.

Another highlight from the current Chicago scene is the concert by **Lil Ed & The Blues Imperials**, who are sure to bring their fiery, flamboyant hard-rocking blues to St Andrew Square on July 19. One of Chicago Blues' great drummers and singers is **Willie Hayes**, and he'll play a couple of gigs with his UK touring band, featuring leading Edinburgh guitarist, **John Bruce**, at St Andrew Square on July 25.

Two southern USA music dynasties come together in the blues-rock-soul super group, **Royal Southern Brotherhood**, with singer, Cyrille Neville, and guitarist, Tyrone Vaughan, and featuring young blues guitar sensation, Bart Walker. They play the Queen's Hall on July 18.

From the mid-west come the high energy guitar/harmonica/drums trio that is **Moreland And Arbuckle**. They call themselves a roots rock band, but blues fans be re-assured, this is hard driving rocking blues, with a few country and soul echoes. They play St Andrew Square on July 26. We've already got to know **Davina And The Vagabonds**, another mid-west export, and we know Davina Sowers' band is not strictly a blues act, but her rollicking piano playing and singing is soaked in blues, as well as swing, and boogie, early rock n' roll, and traditional N'Orleans. They'll be here for three days: July 17-19.

Mississippi is the home of the blues, and we're delighted to welcome back **Terry Harmonica Bean**, from Pontotoc. Anyone who heard Terry in Edinburgh in 2013 knows that he's the real deal. He learned the music and the songs from his forebears and he's mastered the traditional Mississippi style on guitar and harmonica. He's a favourite across Mississippi and Tennessee at all the barbecues, juke joints, bar and grills where blues music continues to hold sway. He'll be in town from July 21-23.

Stefan Grossman is not a local, he's from New York, but he studied and played with the masters of country and folk-blues – notably the Rev Gary Davis - and he's now probably the most influential player of the old finger-picking style of guitar playing and a great singer and raconteur too. He'll play on July 22.

Cedric Burnside has one of the most famous Mississippi names. The drummer and singer is the grandson of legend, RL Burnside. His "Project" with electric guitarist, Trenton Ayres, simultaneously mines the history of North Mississippi Hill Country music and makes one of the most thrilling and electric sounds in contemporary blues. They'll play two concerts on July 20 and 21.

Another rising star from Mississippi and the winner of the 2014 International Blues Challenge, is the phenomenal guitarist and singer, **Mr Sipp**. From Newcomb, MS, he's a swaggering front man who exudes good vibes, and has a reputation for creating positive, upbeat, and hugely enthusiastic audience reactions. Unsurprisingly, he comes from a gospel music background, and remarkably has only been playing blues for a few years. Mr Sipp (no Missy Sipp that we know yet) will be in Edinburgh for four days from July 17-20.

He's the first guest of the Festival's Expo funded project, which charged leading Edinburgh blues musicians, **Sandy Tweeddale and Jed Potts**, with making new connections across the US blues scene. The Scottish Government's support for the Festival has created a range of opportunities for Scottish jazz musicians, especially in terms of international connections, and this is the first year that Scottish blues musicians have been supported.

In addition to Mr Sipp, Jed and Sandy have introduced us to the swashbuckling young guitarist from Portland, Oregon, **Ben Rice**, and the gritty, down home harmonica playing and singing of **Brandon Santini**, the biggest new name on the Memphis blues scene. Both of them will perform at the Festival from July 24 – 26.

Here's what Jed and Sandy said: *"We were lucky enough to travel from San Francisco to Memphis to Mississippi on our blues tour of the USA. We found and invited the best of the best to Edinburgh Jazz & Blues Festival 2015 – they're all award winners, all outstanding musicians and all put on a great gig. We're really looking forward to playing with everyone."*

So far, with the exception of Maggie Bell, our programme has been a little male oriented, but on July 18, we present the lady we reckon is the greatest female blues singer of our time - **Janiva Magness** makes her Scottish debut. From Detroit, Michigan, she's had a well-documented hard life, and reacted with music that inspires and energises people to take charge, to feel on top. Her music is constantly fresh and forward looking, packed with musicality from her great band, but it is her voice that knocks people out. She'll headline a three band concert featuring female singers and their bands, with **Connie Lush and Dana Dixon**.

Another great singer, person, and songwriter, and a big favourite of ours, is **Grainne Duffy**. From Northern Ireland, she'll present her special blues-rock-singer/songwriter cross genre mix, headlining a concert, on July 25, of UK blues, also featuring one of Scotland's leading bands, **The Jensen Interceptors**, led by singer and harmonica player, Gary Martin.

Edinburgh star, Rosie Nimmo, fronts her rocking blues band, **Rosy Blue**, featuring the guitar of Stuart Allardyce in a concert on 22 July.

Concerts featuring Edinburgh favourites cover the last fifty years of blues in the city. All the main players are involved, and we have a band that hasn't played for 50 years. **East West** was one of the leading young bands of the Scottish blues boom of the late 60's and featured vocalist, Jimmy Nellis; guitarist, Iain Bairnson; and bassist, Kenny Ellis. For a year or two, they were the hottest young band on the scene. But Bairnson moved on to playing with Pilot, The Alan Parsons Project, Kate Bush and many, many more. For the Festival, the original band is reforming for one concert on July 22.

Other Scottish favourites include solo blues, one man band legend, **Mike Whellans**, playing on July 20; **Mud In Your Ear**, the acoustic duo of Alan Jones and Richie O'Donnell, who will welcome guest, Brandon Santini, on

July 25, and **Main Street Blues**, fronted by guitarist/vocalist Derek Smith, whose show will be on July 23.

Edinburgh Jazz & Blues Festival producer, Roger Spence, said: “ We have had blues in our title for 20 years now, and we’ve featured a host of great blues musicians over the years. Audiences have been growing year on year, and in 2015, we’ve decided to lift our blues programme to a new level. We want to be the place that specialist blues fans from all over the UK consider as one of the most interesting Festivals. We want to concentrate on quality and originality. We hope audiences will support us, and look forward to growing the blues programme in Edinburgh to create a major blues event in the future.”

Ticket information

Tickets are available from midday on Wednesday 6th May:

- Online at www.edinburghjazzfestival.com
- By phone on 0131 473 2000.
- In person from The Hub, Castlehill, Edinburgh, EH1 2NE.
- Tickets also available for relevant concerts from The Queen’s Hall (0131 668 2019) and Festival Theatre (0131 529 6000).

During the Festival, on-the-day tickets are sold until 4pm, then are available from 30 minutes before the performance time at the relevant venue.

Details of booking fees are available at www.edinburghjazzfestival.com

Festival-goers are encouraged to join in with the latest conversations through Twitter (@edinburghjazz, #edjazzfest) and Facebook (facebook.com/edinburghjazzbluesfestival).