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Music Maker Relief Foundation helps the true pioneers and forgotten heroes of Southern music gain recognition and meet their day to day needs. We present these musical traditions to the world so American culture will flourish and be preserved for future generations.

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**New Orleans Musician's Fund** - assistance to musicians affected by Hurricane Katrina.

# MACAVINE HAYES

## AND HASKELL "WHISTLIN' BRITCHES" THOMPSON

MACAVINE HAYES WAS BORN IN 1943 IN TAMPA, FLORIDA. HIS FAMILY FARMED AND THERE WAS ALWAYS MUSIC GOING ON, WHETHER LISTENING TO THE RADIO OR BACKYARD JAMMING...

...IT'S WONDERFUL GOING OUT TO ENTERTAIN BECAUSE WE BRING HAPPINESS, JOY AND PEACE.

I LEARNED MOSTLY OFF RECORDS. I JUST PICKED UP THIS VASTOPOL TUNING AND I STICK WITH IT. I DON'T WRITE MATERIAL, BUT I PUT IT TOGETHER. I PLAY A LOT OF SONGS THAT ARE WAY BEFORE MY TIME, JUST SO FAR BACK, YOU KNOW.

...I GOT CHILDREN OUT HERE CLICKING AND GOING ON... THEY TRY THEIR BEST TO DO IT.

...I JUST LOVE MUSIC. I AM A WORKING MAN THAT LOVES MUSIC, JUST LOVE PLAYING. I WILL NOT GIVE UP MUSIC UNLESS MY FINGERS GET CUT OFF...

LIVING WITH GABE WAS NOT A HARD LIFE - YOU JUST HAD TO DRINK ALL THE TIME.

MACAVINE MET GUITAR GABRIEL IN THE LATE SIXTIES AND FOLLOWED HIM BACK TO WINSTON-SALEM, N.C. SOLID FRIENDS, THEY PLAYED IN DRINK HOUSES, JUKE JOINTS AND EVEN WENT TO CHURCH WHILE ON THE ROAD FROM FLORIDA TO ATLANTA. LATER ON THEY RAN A DRINK HOUSE TOGETHER.

MACAVINE AND GABE WERE NEIGHBORS OF BLUES VOCALIST EXTRAORDINAIRE "CAPTAIN LUKE" MAYER AND FOR TWENTY YEARS THESE THREE WERE THE HEART OF THE TRADITIONAL BLUES SCENE IN WINSTON-SALEM UNTIL GABE'S PASSING IN 1996.

HASKELL IS SINGULAR IN THAT HE CAN POP AND CLICK HIS TONGUE LIKE A BUSHMAN AS HE DOES HIS VOCALS WITH MACAVINE. "CAPTAIN LUKE" GAVE HIM THE NICKNAME "WHISTLIN' BRITCHES"...

Story and Art by Gary Dunn

# You Can Groove or You Can Slide

## Cool John Ferguson's Winding Road

By Mark Coltrain

Originally published in Living Blues, Issue #188, Volume 37 #2

Cool John Ferguson is one of the five greatest guitar players I've heard in my career. He's up there with Jimi Hendrix, Wes Montgomery, and Django Reinhardt. -Taj Mahal

Cool John Ferguson is a quiet man who usually lets his upside-down left-handed guitar wizardry do his talking. That guitar talks to a wider audience these days, as Ferguson enjoys steady work through the Music Maker Relief Foundation, a non-profit organization established in Durham, North Carolina, by Tim Duffy to provide financial aid and bring wider exposure to lesser-known blues and traditional musicians all over the United States.

Ferguson and Duffy met in 1995 in Beaufort, South Carolina, and Ferguson joined Music Maker a few years later. Since then he's garnered national and international attention as a guitarist. He has released three albums with Music Maker: a self-titled debut of live songs (2001), a studio album, Guitar Heaven (2003) with Taj Mahal's band, and a Christmas album, Cool Yule (2003). He has also played on many of Music Maker's studio album releases, with a guitar style flexible enough to complement sounds ranging from urban blues to country blues to country and western finger picking. He also backs Music Maker musicians on stage at clubs and festivals around the country.

Ferguson's own musical style is difficult to describe. He blurs the boundaries between blues, gospel, rock, soul, jazz, country, and funk, challenging listeners—from party animals to academics—to rethink their systems of labels, categories, and subcategories. During the course of his solo live shows, he may start country-picking in the middle of a Hendrix cover or launch into an extended surf-rock jam towards the end of a Chuck Berry tribute—but Cool John Ferguson is not just another rock 'n' roll knock off. He owes just as much to musicians George Benson, Roy Clark, and B.B. King as he does to Hendrix.

Cool John Ferguson draws much from the traditions of musicians like Taj Mahal and Gatemouth Brown. He chooses to blend many musical styles into a unique, personal sound.

I was fortunate enough to spend some time with Ferguson one chilly January morning inside Duffy's old Winnebago at the Music Maker Relief Foundation's headquarters just outside of Durham. Duffy, Cool John, and another local legend, Captain Luke Mayer, were packing for a trip to Washington, D.C., for a gig.

Cool John was born in 1953 on Saint Helena Island just off the South Carolina coast. His upbringing, while influenced by his mother's Gullah roots, was principally guided by the strict religious beliefs of both parents. He remembers the first time he saw a guitar.

"I was right around three or four years old. My mom used to do domestic housework over on Parris Island, South Carolina. My dad used to work too. There's a couple that she was working for that was gonna get transferred to Okinawa. And they had a whole bunch of stuff they couldn't take...they had a guitar. She brought all this stuff home, along with the guitar. And when I saw her come out of the car with it...I smiled like you couldn't believe it. You see, this is my first time really seeing a guitar.

"So, she came in the house and put all the stuff up. She put the guitar up in the closet. And I asked her, I said, 'What's that?'

"She said, 'It's a guitar'

"So after that, when she'd go to work I'd, you know, stack up a bunch of chairs and go and bring it down. You know, I'd just start strumming it and it was something magical about it.

"A couple evenings she came home from work before I was able to put it back up and I got my tail tore up! That was two times and on the third time she caught me, I was sitting on the front steps. It had got hot, you know, because the summers used to be hot back then in '57. So it was too late and I had just started playing a song, you know. Always used to leave the radio station on gospel. First song I played was Just A Closer Walk With Thee. And when my mom came home I said well I'm just gonna get spanked anyways, so I might as well finish playing, you know. And I kept on playing, and she said, 'Wow...!' and at the same time my dad, he



Cool John Ferguson performing at the Byron Bay Festival in Australia. ©Kate Belle

said, 'Well...okay.'

"But check this out: my mom, see I was like playing one-noters, but my mom tuned, after she saw my interest in the guitar, she sat down beside and she said, 'Let me hold it.' And she picked up my guitar and tuned it in a perfect open E, and she had never played guitar in her life but her brother played...her oldest brother played, my uncle. That was about '59 or '60 when I was allowed to see him."

"By about the age of five I was playing in churches. My folks was real religious. So I started playing in church and from that is when I started going to school. I started playing at the school after the kids kept after me to play...some of the kids went to the same church to hear me.

"I just kept playing through junior high school and joined the [high school] band and learned how to play trumpet and stuff like that. But guitar was my first love.

"I was like a regular in the church. A couple of old guys used to play there but when I came, it was like, 'move over, you know,' Ferguson appeared on Low Country Sing, a locally produced television show in Charleston, with his three sisters, the Ferguson Sisters, who were popular on the South Carolina gospel scene in the early-to-mid 1960s. Ferguson also played every morning at his elementary school at his principal's behest, and his interest in music deepened as he reached high school.

"I formed a band back in about tenth or eleventh grade, a three piece. And we played like for the prom and we played little shows all over town. And my music instructor teacher, Earl Davis, he used to play at clubs. And started getting me to play guitar...it was him and his wife, Pauline. And he taught me a lot of stuff about jazz and jazz theory. But I always had the blues and gospel, I already had that...but as far as the jazz theory, I didn't know how to recognize.

"My love for music, a lotta times, was coming up through high school. You know I played football, stuff like that, most of my time I spent in the band room hanging out with the band director." It was also around this time that Reverend "You can't lose with the stuff I use" Ike rolled into Beaufort. He and Ferguson happened to meet and instantly clicked. Reverend Ike hired Ferguson for a two-week gig with his tent revival service, which was growing in popularity by the day, attracting large crowds of gospel seekers and music fans alike. Ike took Ferguson on the road with him to larger venues around the South, including ones in Georgia and as far west as Texas.

Gospel wasn't all that Ferguson was listening to on the radio. When his parents weren't around, he stayed hip to what was popular. "[I listened to] WAPE, the Big Ape in Jacksonville. And they played a little of everything. That's when I learned The Twist, Hound Dog by Elvis, Midnight Hour, Johnny B. Goode.

## Taj Mahal on Cool John Ferguson

"I met him around with Tim [Duffy] and I heard about him a long time before I heard him play. Tim talked about him, told me what he was doing. So it was interesting to hear a cat from down in South Carolina where half my family's from. My mama and them's from down there. Bennettsville and Cheraw, South Carolina, is where all my family lives on my mother's side. So it was nice to hear another kind of guitar player from Beaufort or from off the islands off the coast there, got that kind of energy. And he played in and around Atlanta, was in the studios and worked with a lot of stuff but still really had this deep feel for the music down there.

"It's real nice to hear somebody that can play across the spectrum of the music and be viable and vital in any particular direction and is a monster guitar player, you know. John is really fantastic. You can put him in any musical situation and the guy will shine playing and always come with something.

"Ofentimes guitar players who have the kind of prowess that he does on the instrument can't connect with what's happening at the moment with the artist that they're playing with or the musician that they're jamming with because they got a style. You can play in their style or they can step on yours, you know what I mean? You can't create any middle ground with them. You can always create middle ground with him! It's really great. I really enjoy it with him. It's like the music's standing up, just like you can hear. The guy's playing totally improvisatorially but he's got chops to be able to pull the stuff off. Well it isn't like, 'it's really great but it's about a 76,' you know, it's like, 'it's great and it's at 150 on a scale of 1 to 100!' The guy can play! He's really all over the music. I realized was that he just never got the shot to go out there because the business is not built on how good you are, you know, the business is built on what kinda business people are doing for you and all that kinda stuff. Fortunately some people are getting to hear him and they're always amazed with it when he gets out there.

"The guy's [also] got a great sense of humor. He's got some old, way downhome country jokes. Stuff that really cracks you up. It's genius the stuff he comes up with sometimes.

"[Over the years] with my ear, he seems to have come out of himself a lot more. He tends to be very introspective, very quiet, you know, unassuming type of guy but when you put the guitar in his hand, it's that same kind of thing that Hendrix had: real quiet, real soft, understated but put that guitar in his hand he's a monster...whatever instrument you put in his hand...Musically, the guy's still on fire. Every time I hear him he's great...I love what he's playing, I just hope more people get to hear him and that he gets a great break to get out there because the guy's just fantastic."

came home early...they both had kinda converged on that scene and instead of getting spanked my dad said, 'I believe that boy can play that thing. Let him have it.' And then my mom

"I learned a lot of speed from watching cats like on Hee Haw like what's the guy's name? Roy Clark! I said how do you guys get so fast?! I learned how they got so fast...they were with the instrument and they learned it. If you wanna get there, you can get there. But see it used to put me off because I thought back in the day, I was about top dog in the southeast...you know Beaufort, Savannah, Charleston, Jacksonville stuff like that. And then I started watching like Roy Clark and those guys, how they got that speed, I kept listening to it until it stuck. And then I'd watch them every chance I'd get. You keep watching something and hearing something you learn how to do it.

"That guy ain't doing nothing! One little spot, I found out how to wiggle them fingers like he was doing it.

"I picked that up [country]. We was allowed to listen to country music because it was kinda close to gospel...the lyrics weren't that bad, weren't rock 'n' roll. So you could get by with that. So I started listening to the chord structures and the lead-ins and the chords that they actually use...just coming up through the years, I got a chance to hear all kinds of music. I got to the point where I could just hear a song once and could play it in the next five minutes."

After Ferguson graduated high school in the early 1970s he and his mentor formed the Earl Davis Trio with Earl on saxophone, Earl's wife, Pauline, on organ, and Ferguson on guitar, playing jazz. This group launched an active period for Ferguson as he took on gigs in clubs, churches, weddings, and funerals.

Shortly after, Ferguson moved to New York City to try to break into the music scene up north. He played gigs at his sister's church and discovered some important new influences.

"George [Benson] is one of my favorite guitar players, you know, on the cool side. Then Hendrix...when I got into Hendrix, he was already dead when I really got into him. But when I started listening to Hendrix...I filtered him...you know, like his soul just absorbed into my body. I love his music. I understood his...I finally understood his lyrics. You know I don't know all his songs but the ones that I liked I learned."

Other influences on Ferguson include B.B. King, Chet Atkins, Eric Clapton, Stevie Ray Vaughan, Ernie Isley, Eddie Van Halen, and Albert King.

As the 1970s gave way to the 1980s, Ferguson found himself back around his old stomping grounds in coastal South Carolina, which is where he remained until the mid-1990s when Tim Duffy entered the picture. Duffy heard Ferguson in South Carolina sometime around 1995, toward the end of his "wild days." During this time Ferguson was also making trips to Atlanta to visit and collaborate with his niece, who worked at LaFace Records. Duffy and Ferguson kept in touch for the next few years and shortly after Duffy's friend and musical partner Guitar Gabriel died, Duffy proposed that Ferguson come to work at Music Maker Relief Foundation. Ferguson agreed immediately.

"What inspired me-or should I say what led me to hang around this area this long-you know like I said earlier, a man's gotta make a living. In them old days it was always work. And wherever they's work is where a man got to be. I mean I like to travel but I don't

## Dear Friends,

Music Maker is on the move! This July we embark on our most epic tour of Europe to date. Artists Adolphus Bell, Pura Fé, Eddie Tigner, Sol, Slewfoot, Cary B, Macavine Hayes, Essie Mae Brooks, Albert White, Beverly "Guitar" Watkins and Captain Luke will be displaying their great talents and letting the world know of our mission. Adolphus Bell, who struggles to get a gig in the states, is traveling back to France again in the fall and a MM revue is planned for April and May of 2007. These are truly special times and adventures for us.

Back home we are delighted that the Parks and Recreation Department of Durham, North Carolina is sponsoring our 3rd Warehouse Blues Series. MM artists will perform every Friday night during the months of June, July and August. These shows are held at the West Village Apartments' courtyard on Morgan Street. The events are from 6-8pm and are free and open to the public. Please come and enjoy these performances. We have some of our country's most authentic blues artists playing, on the same streets in which blues legends such as Blind Boy Fuller plied their trade in the 30s.

We continue with our mission to help the many artists that cannot perform. We are glad to report that George Higgs is recovering from some serious health concerns and Etta Baker is doing ok at 92. Presently we are struggling to keep up with 200 recipient artists and we are doing our utmost to build our organization so we can serve these artists.

Music Maker artists John Dee Holeman, Cool John Ferguson, Macavine Hayes, Whistlin' Britches, Captain Luke and our board of directors were all thrilled to meet the Carolina Chocolate Drops at a recent get together at our headquarters. This group is issuing their new CD on the Music Maker series and is busily forging friendships with many MM artists. We look forward to watching their popularity grow and thank them for embracing our mission.

We applaud Music Maker director Ryan Costello for his tremendous efforts organizing the highly successful 3rd Annual Congressional Blues Festival. This is a gigantic undertaking and we thank Taj Mahal and all the artists and sponsors that helped make this event a success.

MMRF exists through the generosity of spirited individuals. Your generosity truly impacts the lives of the artists we serve. Please join our effort by making a donation to Music Maker today. If you have not renewed your support this year, please do so today, so we can keep sending you this rag. We need your help, and we thank-you for it.

With warm regards,

  
Timothy & Denise Duffy

## Music Maker News

Advisory board members **John Price & Kenny Wayne Shepherd** have been quite active. J.P. helped us purchase **Captain Luke** a car, secure work for artists, helps with recording projects and is brainstorming on fundraising events. **Kenny Wayne** is a guest at our Congressional Blues Festival and is busy putting the finishing touches on his blues film that features many MM artists.

**Precious Bryant** of Waverly Hall, GA called up and had a sore spot on her tongue from using the wrong brand of Snuff, she also had a sour stomach. Amy Nolan sent her some Tums and a few boxes of her CDs. Precious called up and thanked us for the help. She does not like to travel too much, but is still performing at local shows. We were also able to send her a grant so she could buy a cane.

Many thanks to **David Bleckley** and **JoAnn Clark** who both have volunteered their time as grant writers to Music Maker! If you are interested in volunteering with MM email volunteer@musicmaker.org.

We thank **Eric Clapton** for writing MM a letter of support for a Grammy Foundation Grant to archive Tim Duffy's field recordings at the Southern Folklife Collection at UNC-Chapel Hill.

**Pura Fé** has released a CD on the French **Dixie Frog** label. During our last trip to Paris she conducted 15 interviews in 5 days with journalists from newspapers, television and radio. Everyone involved in the project believes that Pura Fé will be greatly received. She goes on her first solo show in Germany this August. And she received Female Artist of the Year from the NAMMYS (Native American Music Awards) where she was nominated in three categories.

We wish to thank the local **Carolina Friends School** for their continued support and volunteering for MMRF.

**Alabama Slim** is patiently waiting for the release of his debut CD, "The Mighty Flood." We hope this will be

musicmaker.org.2

our December Record Club offering.

**Albert White**, a tremendous guitarist and singer, began his career with **Beverly "Guitar" Watkins** as a member of the original "Dr. Feelgood and the Interns," lead by the infamous **Piano Red** from Atlanta. **Albert** has been a key man in our recent tours to Europe, both backing artists and doing his own set. We are



Pete Witcher and Gale Cesar, Pittsville, VA

thrilled to learn that **Ardie Dean** has begun work on Albert's first solo CD.

MM took a trip to **Pittsville, VA** and met an extraordinary blues artist by the name of **Pete Witcher**. He introduced us to his 22-year old cousin **Gale Cesar**. We spent the afternoon on a front porch playing tunes. The **Witchers** have been a musical family in this tiny community going back as far as they can remember. Young Gale is a very talented guitarist knowing both old-time country and blues music. Pete is a great guitarist and singer, very much in the Virginia Piedmont style of playing. Pete knows literally hundreds of songs. What is exciting is that there are several elder family members and friends in there 70s and 80s that are still active. We look forward to meeting many of these artists in the near future.



John Dee Holeman

**Lee Gates** is so happy with his two new CDs that he has already headed back in **Huntsville, AL** to work with producer **Ardie Dean** on his next release.

**Essie Mae Brooks** is patiently waiting for us to get her new CD issued.

**Drink Small** is suffering from some health issues but is still performing. He could really use all the help he can get. If anybody has interest, just contact us.

We have so many CDs we want to issue that it is ridiculous. We have repackaged our first recording, "**Guitar Gabriel, Toot Blues**" and put it into national distribution. We hope to get out CDs by **Etta Baker, Samuel Turner Stevens, Bishop Dready Manning, Pete Witcher, Drink Small** and others soon. This requires a great deal of time and resources, so please purchase as many CDs as you can.

On June 20th at the **Avalon Theater** in Washington, D.C. **Chris Johnstone** and **Anna Ferrarie** held a very successful premier featuring films that are included in our upcoming "Drink House to Church House" DVD series.

Many thanks to **John Laird** for helping us complete our Strategic Plan! We are presently seeking an enabling grant to hire a

**Director of Development**. If anyone wishes to help raise or donate for this effort, please contact Tim or Denise Duffy.

**Beverly "Guitar" Watkins** has moved to a new apartment and we were proud to be able to help her with moving expenses.

**Roy Ventura** of Playa Zancudo, Costa Rica called and checked in with us and is looking forward to the 5th Annual **Taj Mahal Fishin' Blues Tournament**. He has retiled his pool and got some new chairs and lounges. His fishing lodge is truly unique, right on the beach and absolutely gorgeous. We hope donors who

have been on the fence make sure they come this year to our 5th Anniversary Tournament.

Blues artist **David Butler** of Sanford, FL is doing well and has recently gotten great press. He is a recipient of the Angel Food program and of late has been working hard on finishing his first solo CD with the great help of **Steven Morris** and **Doc Williamson**.

**Give to Music Maker**. One Search at a Time Check out [www.goodsearch.com](http://www.goodsearch.com), a new search engine powered by Yahoo! that donates about 1 cent per internet search to the charity of your choice. Simply select Music Maker as your charity and each time you search the web you'll be making a donation to MMRF!

As GoodSearch says, "The pennies add up quickly...A charity with 1000 supporters searching the internet just twice a day can earn more than \$7000 each year."

Our **Feed An Artist** for a Year program is really taking off! Donor **Leslye Wood**, who is sponsoring **John Dee Holeman**, wrote to us about this new program:

"One of the things I love most about Music Maker is the personal touch you guys are so faithful to...not only with the musicians, but with your donors. I loved getting the card from/about John in the mail and immediately looked him up online. I feel honored to be able to help."

**Barbara Friedman** also wrote to us: "I am thrilled to be able to provide my support. There are so many programs that I could choose from, but this one really touched my heart."

Many thanks to all our donors who have responded to this need: **Russ Corner, Tyler Haskell, Mike Kramer, Leslye Wood, Chuck Snider, Neal Pattison, Gale Johnson, Niel and Aletha Prankus, Barbara Friedman, Rich Cox, Carl Waddell, Henry & Shelly Slyker and Jenny Eggleston's art class!** These donors have made it possible for us to feed artists **Captain Luke & Whistlin' Britches, Macavine Hayes, John Dee Holeman, Adolphus Bell, Jessie Mae Hemphill, Skeeter Brandon, Etta Baker, George Higgs, Cora Mae Bryant, Precious Bryant, and Essie Mae Brooks**. And we are in the process of setting up **Eddie Tigner, Beverly "Guitar" Watkins, and Algia Mae Hinton**.

@Duffy

**Algia Mae Hinton**.

Thank you for your donations! They have allowed us to continue making grants to artists in need. We have recently been able to help **Drink Small** when his girlfriend's house burned down; sponsor the Freedom Creek Festival for **Willie King, Washboard Chaz** from New Orleans the funding to produce a new record; help **Precious Bryant** pay her phone bill; give a grant to our newest recipient artist **Pete Witcher** from Pittsville, VA, and many more needed emergency grants needed for day-to-day needs.

We are having such a fun time at our **Warehouse Blues Series**. Many thanks to the City of Durham, Parks and Recreation Department for sponsoring this event. Every Friday in June, July and August Music Maker will be presenting top notch blues at the West Village Apartments. See our listing below for the complete line up!

## Warehouse Blues Series

Join us this Summer every Friday in June, July and August for the Warehouse Blues City sponsored by the City of Durham and showcasing Music Maker talent. This will be at the West Village Courtyard, 604 West Morgan Street (near Main) in Durham, NC.

**June 2** - Cool John, Electric Blues

**June 9** - Bishop Manning & Essie Mae Brooks, Gospel

**June 16** - Captain Luke, Macavine Hayes, Whistlin' Britches, Winston-Salem Blues

**June 23** - Joe Thompson & Carolina Chocolate Drops, Old Time / Bluegrass Music

**June 30** - Adolphus Bell, One Man Band

**July 7** - Terry Bean (One Man Band) & John Dee Holeman (Piedmont Blues)

**July 14** - Sol, Electric Blues

**July 21** - Benton Flippen (Bluegrass) & Lightnin' Wells (Acoustic Blues)

**July 28** - Skeeter Brandon, R&B

**August 4** - Mosadi (Spoken word, Hip Hop) & Tad Walters (Blues)

**August 11** - The Tim Smith Band, World Fusion/Rock Band

**August 18** - Abe Reid, Electric Blues

**August 25** - Cool John, Electric Blues

**Cool John Article**

like to be like every night in a different city like that, I mean, but if I got a lucrative offer to get on the road then I'd probably look at it you know." Not long after Ferguson moved to North Carolina to work with Duffy at Music Maker, he began playing regular weekend gigs at a greasy spoon called the All People Grill, located right next to Ferguson's one-time residence on Guess Road, a few miles outside of Durham. He attracted a weekly crowd that ranged from college students to locals to yuppies. Branford Marsalis even stopped in a time or two. But as his work with Music Maker has become more and more time consuming, Ferguson plays less often at All People.

These days Ferguson is on the road with some combination of Music Maker musicians throughout much of the year, in addition to playing on many of their studio albums. He says of his work at Music Maker: "I like to play with any other guitar player, you know, to see where they're coming from. I like to collaborate with anyone...to exchange licks and stuff like that." Recent pairings have found him with Captain Luke Mayer on Outsider Lounge Music, West Virginia folk and country singer Carl Rutherford on Turn Off The Fear, and Black Lucy's Deuce with Milwaukee's Lee Gates.

As far as a new solo album goes, in between all the traveling and studio gigs, Ferguson is reticent to make any concrete claims: "It's been discussed...been mentioned. Maybe this year. I don't know which way it's gonna go. I have so many groove tracks in my head that I haven't even publicly displayed yet. More than likely it'll be a variety." Throughout all his years of playing, back and forth from South to North, Ferguson has never forgotten his roots in church music. "I tell you what happened to me. I was born and raised up in the gospel arena...At my shows, I mean I play the blues and I play jazz, contemporary, whatever...but at some point at every show it turns religious where I just get that feeling and the people feel it with me. It's like a religious experience you know? That's when I gather more speed. When the



Cool John Ferguson and Captain Luke, Pinnacle, NC

spirit hits you and you think you can play good normally but when you focus, when the spirit hits you, you gonna move." As the end of our conversation draws near I ask him a final question about his opinion on contemporary music.

"Man I'm gonna tell you. I ain't gonna lie to you. No. I mean I can't get into it. It's too far gone, too way out there for me. Personally I don't listen to it. It doesn't suit my musical fancy. I'm gonna be honest...I can't see, I can't feel anything in it. I can't get into it. Especially with the new gospel that's out, I don't get into it. I don't wanna listen to it. When I turn on my radio, it's like, you know variety stations, '80s, '90s...I mean the stuff I just can't help hearing. I mean some of the new stuff, the new talent, is kinda golden like Mariah Carey, she's, you know, I got into her cause I kept hearing her, I felt her soul and I felt where she's coming from. "What really discourages me with the hip hop music scene is the simple fact that my musical intuition...There's not a musical form you know. It's a drum beat and a stupid bass line or a stupid chorus you know it's of no musical value to me. You know, the whole thing. I don't listen to it because all that I've heard...maybe there's messages

inside what they're doing but the presentation...I ain't with it. "It's the way of the world. Like the Bible says, there'll be the day when people'll believe a lie rather than the truth. I mean that's about as good an example as that. Stuff that's of no value is being raved after. I'm still kinda Biblical because everything that it mentions you know is coming to pass. It's the true thing. You can groove or you can slide."



Cool John at the Byron Bay Festival, in Australia, 2006 ©Kate Belle



**Cool John Discography**

(all recorded on the Music Maker label Except Kenny Wayne Film):

- Essie Mae Brooks - Rain In Your Life - 2000
- Cool John Ferguson - Cool John Ferguson - 2001
- Captain Luke and Cool John - Outsider Lounge Music - 2001
- Carl Rutherford - Turn off The Fear - 2002
- Sol - volume blues - 2002
- Lightnin' Wells - Ragged But Right - 2002
- Little Pink Anderson - Carolina Bluesman - 2002
- Dave McGrew - Fruit Tramp Ballads Of The Great Northwest - 2003
- Cootie Stark - Raw Sugar - 2003
- Cool John Ferguson - Cool Yule - 2003
- Cool John Ferguson - Guitar Heaven - 2003
- Mr. Frank Edwards - Chicken Raid - 2004
- Music Maker with Taj Mahal - 2005
- Pura Fé - Follow Your Hearts Desire - 2005
- Macavine Hayes - Drinkhouse - 2005
- Music Maker Treasure Box - 2005
- Lee Gates - Black Lucy's Deuce - 2006
- Larry Shores - Songs from T-Town 2006
- Kenny Wayne Shepherd - 10 Days Out, Blues From The Backroads - late 2006



Cool John, Pinnacle, NC

©Duffy

**EVENTS**

June 20th - Washington, DC - ONE time screening of "Drink House to Church House"

ONE time screening of "Drink House to Church House" at the Avalon Theatre, 5612 Connecticut Ave NW, Admission is a \$10 suggested donation, reserve seats by calling 919-643-2456 or email donations@musicmaker.org

June 21st - Washington, DC - Third Annual Congressional Blues Festival Taj Mahal, Beverly "Guitar" Watkins, The 2nd Amendments, Cool John Ferguson, Mudcat, The Carolina Chocolate Drops. These Blues are going to rock the House (and Senate!). Come out 6:30 - 11:30pm to the Mellon Auditorium, 1301 Constitution Ave, NW, Washington, DC. For more information visit bluesonthehill.org, and for ticket information email donations@musicmaker.org

July 1 2006, Vienne, France, Albert White, Eddie Tigner, Beverly "Guitar" Watkins, Pura Fé, Ardie Dean, and Sol Blues Night - 20.30, Festival Jazz à Vienne (France) For more information visit <http://www.jazzavienne.com>.

July 4th - Durham, NC - Festival for the Eno The 27th Annual Event is located on the banks of the Eno River and has some of the finest talent around out for a 3 day event. They welcome, Carolina Chocolate Drops, Cool John Ferguson, Macavine Hayes, Captain Luke, Whistlin' Britches, Lightnin' Wells and a lot more! Visit [www.enoriver.org/festival](http://www.enoriver.org/festival) for more information.

July 27 - 30 - Cognac, France - Blues Passions This prestigious festival has invited back Music Maker. Essie Mae Brooks, Captain Luke, Macavine Hayes, Slewfoot, Cary B, Eddie Tigner, Ardie Dean, Cool John, and Sol will be apart of this years music! Visit [www.bluespassions.com](http://www.bluespassions.com) for more information.

September 8, 2006 - Lightnin' Wells - Dallas, NC

Join Lightnin' for the Blues Out Back Series at the Gaston County Museum, visit their website [gastoncountymuseum.org](http://gastoncountymuseum.org) for more information.

September 15th - 17th - Bristol, VA/TN - Rhythm & Roots Reunion Celebrating Bristol's musical heritage, Adolphus Bell, Cool John Ferguson and the Carolina Chocolate Drops will be apart of this 3 day festival of music. Visit [www.bristolrhythm.com](http://www.bristolrhythm.com) for more information!

November 10 - 22 - France - Adolphus Bell Will be touring France! People in France love his sound and show. Email [info@musicmaker.org](mailto:info@musicmaker.org) if you want more information about this.

January 14 - 21 - Caribbean Cruise - Legendary Blues Cruise Beverly "Guitar" Watkins, Mudcat, George Higgs, Albert White, Adolphus Bell, Eddie Tigner, Sol, Ardie Dean, and Tim Duffy will

Join Taj Mahal and other talents on this exciting cruise. Visit [www.bluescruise.com](http://www.bluescruise.com) for more information.

February 4 - 10 - 5th Annual Taj Mahal Fishin' Blues Tournament The Taj Mahal Fishin' Blues Tournament For 5 years running, Taj Mahal has brought together his two great loves, fishin' and blues for a phenomenal week of fun and music to raise awareness and funds for the Music Maker Relief Foundation. Email [fishin@musicmaker.org](mailto:fishin@musicmaker.org) or our fishin' page at [www.musicmaker.org/fishinblues.html](http://www.musicmaker.org/fishinblues.html) to find out more.

February 23 - City of Clayton - Cool John Ferguson, John Dee Holeman and Captain Luke Cool John Ferguson, John Dee Holeman and Captain Luke will be performing in Clayton, NC. More information to follow.

For a current listing of all events visit [musicmaker.org](http://musicmaker.org)

# FEATURE ARTISTS

## Pura Fé

### CONGRATULATIONS



Pura Fé with her Nammy  
**FEMALE ARTIST  
OF THE YEAR**

## CD Review *Follow Your Heart's Desire*

Music Maker MMCD48

Hailing from North Carolina's Tuscarora Nation is Pura Fé, a gifted singer, activist, educator, mother, guitarist, actress, seamstress and traditional dancer. Many know Pura Fé from her work with the internationally acclaimed Native American women's a capella trio Ulali and the Deer Clan singers, a traditional long-house group celebrating Tuscaroran music and dance. On "Follow Your Heart's Desire" she lays bare the deep connections between indigenous and African-American cultures of the



Southeast and their equal roles in the birth of the blues. Indeed, from her work as a teacher and mentor of Native youth in communities in the U.S. and Canada to her long musical career in traditional Tuscaroran music and dance, blues and jazz, Pura Fé is a cultural emissary, testifying to the shared history of Southern blacks and Native Americans.

Pura Fé's father hails from Puerto Rico (her name means "pure faith" in Puerto Rican Spanish), her mother is a Tuscaroran woman of mixed African and Native roots. Although Pura Fé was born and raised in New York, her connection to North Carolina, the original homeland of the now dispersed Tuscarora

Nation was ever present in the music handed down to her from her mother. In this collection of original and tradi-

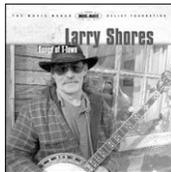
tional songs, Pura Fé's guitar, piano, and voice take center stage. The title track features Pura Fé's simple, elegant piano playing accompanying her soulful, lifting voice. On other tracks, such as "Wait Till You Come Back Again", this songstress plays lap-style slide guitar to accompany her down home vocals. The album's lyrics resonate with Native pride, love, resistance, and celebration and protest. Simply stated and effectively recorded, the songs are all earthy and rootsy in flavor. "Rise Up Tuscarora Nation" tells of the tortured but proud history of the Tuscarora people, who have yet to be recognized by the United States government. "Authorities, holy men, missionaries take control/send Christ their only savior/to wash away the Native soul." Like the greatest speakers, activists and singers, Pura Fé speaks truth to power, all the more when she is singing her deep blues from red heart of America, Indian Country.

-Corey Harris

Originally published in *Living Blues*, Issue #188, Vol. 37#2

## Larry Shores

Larry Shores was born in 1948 in Elkin, Surry County, North Carolina, the sixth child to the teen bride of a man just back from World War II. Hard times saw young Larry a seasoned farmhand by the time he was on his own at 14. At 22, he headed west and made his career with the migrant orchard workers of California, Oregon, Washington, British Columbia and Montana. Retired from labor, but still on the road, he is playing more music than ever in the grange halls and taverns of enduring America.



Larry has a new album "Songs from T-Town" now available!



Larry Shores, Hillsborough, NC

©Duffy



Sol, Macavine, Ardie Dean, Cool John, Tim Duffy and Adolphus Bell at the Byron Bay Festival in Australia. ©Kate Belle



Whistlin' Britches, Captain Luke, William Maxwell and Macavine Hayes pose in Winston-Salem, NC

©Duffy

"I've fished in marlin tournaments up and down the East Coast, and throughout the Caribbean and Central America. I can honestly say that I've never had as much fun as I did fishing the Taj Mahal Fishin' Blues Tournament."

Charlie Levine Marlin Magazine  
Managing Editor



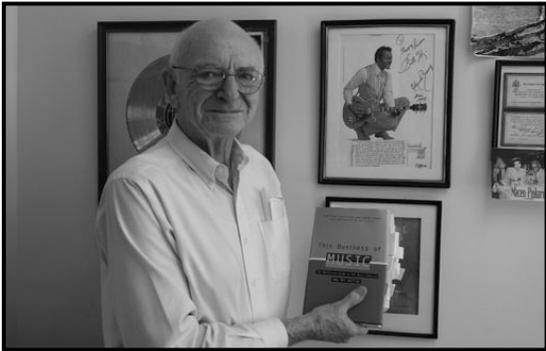
## 5th Annual Taj Mahal Fishin' Blues Tournament

February 4th-10th 2007  
Playa Zancudo, Costa Rica  
Billfishing and Blues to benefit Music Maker Relief Foundation

The week-long trip features 3 days of amazing sailfish and marlin angling competition. The billfishing is all catch and release with round hooks to keep the fish happy and healthy. We usually catch some very tasty dorado (mahi-mahi), yellow fin tuna and wahoo.

Hang out with Taj Mahal and other musicians during this week long event!

Do reserve your spot early, as we are limited to 30 fishermen. The entrance fee for the 2007 tournament (our 5th Anniversary!) is \$5,500. This fee includes your airfare from Atlanta or Miami\*, transfers, fishing, accommodations\*\* meals, and drinks. For more information call Denise or Tim Duffy at 919-643-2456 anytime or email fishin@music-maker.org.



Bill Krasilovsky in his office, New York, NY

©Duffy

## Music Maker Salutes

**Bill Krasilovsky** is among the world's most eminent music business lawyers. Introduced to us by the folksinger Pat Sky, Bill has been representing Music Maker and Tim Duffy since 1991, and actually filed the Music Maker Relief Foundations' articles of incorporation pro bono in 1994. Bill is among Music Makers most important advisors and has helped the Foundation and its artists constantly over the years.

Bill is co-author of the books, "This Business of Music" and "More About This Business of Music" published by Billboard, the leading trade paper of the music industry. These books have both been referred to as the "Bible" of the music business by working musicians and lawyers in the industry.

Bill represents the estates of Lorenz Hart, Rachmaninoff, Duke Ellington, Buddy De Sylva, Ray Henderson and Fats Waller. He also represents or has represented classic industry figures such as Johnny Cash, Crystal Gale,

Chuck Berry, Mary Wilson of The Supremes, Billy Taylor, Gian Carlo Menotti, Harry Connick Jr., Barry Eastmond and Dick Hyman as well as numerous other composers, publishers, recording artists, producers, studios and record companies. Mr. Krasilovsky has represented Warner Brothers music publishing companies and the American Guild of Authors and Composers (now Songwriter's Guild of America), and has served as officer and/or director of a number of music publishing companies.



8 year old Marquis Manning plays drums with his grandfather Bishop Dready Manning at the Warehouse Blues Festival. Marquis is an amazing drummer, and is on Bishop Manning's soon to be released CD.

©Duffy



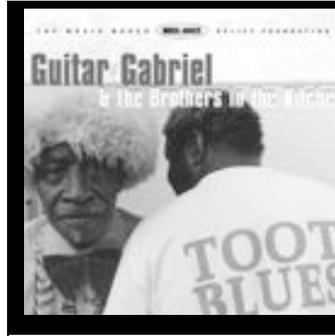
Bishop Dready Manning has brought his full-voiced singing, his fluent guitar picking, and his exuberant harmonica playing to African American church audiences in Halifax and Northampton counties for 39 years. We were pleased to have him perform with Essie Mae Brooks June 10th at the Warehouse Blues Festival in Durham, NC.

©Duffy



Essie Mae Brooks, from Perry, GA, is a troubadour. She has traveled all around the world, singing gospel. Essie Mae sang "God Save the Children" during her performance at the Warehouse Blues Series that she wrote that really touched the crowd. It was an amazing show with Cool John Ferguson playing back up. Cool John was brought up in the church and played a few gospel numbers himself.

©Duffy



## Guitar Gabriel

and the Brothers in the Kitchen

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Carl Hodges and Donna of Saluda, VA checks in with us frequently. Carl has been very sick and had to have a leg amputated. He has been in and out of the hospital. He remains optimistic and always looks forward to our next visit. Here he is pictured in our throne painted by "Sam the dot man" in Pinnacle, NC.

©Austin

# all CDs \$10 • shipping \$5 per address

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**Little Pink Anderson • Carolina Bluesman** showcases a masterful country blues player displaying some exceptional guitar chops and soulful vocals. Little Pink evokes the relaxed charm of his father tackling songs he obviously played with the old man.



**Etta Baker • Railroad Bill** "One of the signature chords of my guitar vocabulary comes from her version of Railroad Bill. Enjoy this beautiful album of guitar instrumentals." -Taj Mahal



**Etta Baker with Taj Mahal** A set of timeless beauty, spanning almost half a century, from a great lady of American vernacular music. Etta Baker is credited with helping spark the folk music revival in the 60s- no small feat for someone who didn't become a professional musician until she was in her 60s. This set includes duets with Taj Mahal plus all of her classic 1956 recordings.



**Etta Baker & Cora Phillips • Carolina Breakdown** This set was recorded in the late 80s when Etta Baker was in her prime. Her older sister Cora Phillips backs her up on guitar while Etta plays the banjo. Etta sings two songs on the release!



**Adolphus Bell • One Man Band House Rockin' Foot Stompin'** authentic Alabama One Man Band! This high energy release is guaranteed to give you a good time!



**Sweet Betty: Live and Let Live.** Betty grew up singing gospel, blues and popular songs of the day. In the mid 1380's, she met saxophonist, Grady "Fats" Jackson. Jackson was so impressed with Betty's voice that he began featuring her on his shows throughout Georgia. Sweet Betty has since traveled throughout the United States and Europe and is considered the finest blues singer in Atlanta.



**Essie Mae Brooks • Rain in Your Life** Essie Mae raises her voice and expresses her faith in her original collection of gospel songs. Cool John Ferguson accompanies her on most of the album with his light and masterful improvisations on guitar and piano.



**Cora Mae Bryant • Born with the Blues** Cora Mae Bryant is the daughter of Georgia guitar legend Curley Weaver. The combination of her father's and her own songs, accompanied by expert Georgia blues guitarist Joshua Jacobson, make this a very entertaining set.



**Cora Mae Bryant • Born in Newton County** "is a stunning record featuring exceptional guitar playing that owes a strong debt to her father but also to his frequent partner Blind Willie McTell.



**Precious Bryant • My Name is Precious** In this CD we did not hold back, we went through hours of recordings and have presented 26 songs showcasing Precious' unique voice and infectiously charming style. The recording quality is absolutely stellar, among the finest audiophile recording quality one will ever stumble across.



**Mr. Frank Edwards • Chicken Raid** A career that spanned nine decades, Edwards saw blues music evolve. This CD captures his last recording session the day of his death. That day he played the strongest of his career.



**Pura Fé • Follow Your Hearts Desire** Naive chanteuse Pura Fé didn't just chance upon the myriad music styles you hear on her debut. They flow in her blood... Robbie Robertson recently said Pura Fé has the voice of an angel. Believe the hype! -Toronto Sun



**Cool John Ferguson** Here is Cool John Ferguson, a previously uncelebrated musician, laying down tracks that led Grammy winner Taj Mahal to proclaim him one of the world's finest guitarists.



**Cool John Ferguson • Cool Yule** Cool John's incredibly innovative arrangements make this album of Christmas instrumentals so wonderful you will play this disc all year long!



**Preston Fulp • Sawmill Worker** Preston Fulp, born in 1915, was a sawmill worker, a tobacco sharecropper, moonshiner, and blues and



old-time guitarist. He made these recordings at the age of 78. Preston weaves stories of his life through both secular and sacred songs.



**Lee Gates and the Alabama Cotton Kings** One must rejoice in the "happening" of this CD, especially the glorious tone of Lee's guitar. After performing for 52 years I have a feeling that Lee is just beginning his recording career.



**Lee Gates • Black Lucy's Deuce** The follow up album to his debut record, "he sounds like the kind of party-mad juke who'd shoot or stab you - and then go home with your woman - as readily as he'd smile in your face.



**Guitar Gabriel • Volume One** "Guitar Gabriel ventures well beyond drink houses into his own private Birdland, an improvisational crossroads where the starkly pre-modern meets the startlingly postmodern and the Devil's "got his hair tied up in a ponytail/ to keep all the drunks confused." -Cree McCree



**Guitar Gabriel • Deep in the South** Guitar Gabriel boogies and cries heart-felt country blues in this set. He knew Blind Boy Fuller in his youth, traveled with medicine shows.



**Guitar Gabriel • Toot Blues** "This CD is not for the faint of heart. It is raw, unembellished, and drenched with feeling-liable to elicit whoops, hollers, and spontaneous banging on whatever furniture is handy." -David Nelson



**Macavine Hayes • Drinkhouse** A powerful, raw release after 50 years of playing the blues. Cool John Ferguson, Ardie Dean, Michael Parrish and Tim Duffy create a tight combo that perfectly matches Macavine Hayes' pure juke-joint blues.



**Big Boy Henry • Beaufort Blues** He is one of the sweetest, most gentle men ever to sing the blues. A patriarch of the Carolina Blues, Big Boy has recorded a collection of timeless songs, respectfully backed by a group of friends.



**George Higgs • Barbara Blues** Acoustic Piedmont blues by George Higgs, a North Carolinian, who was inspired to take up the harmonica as a child after hearing Deford Bailey on the radio and seeing Peg Leg Sam at medicine shows and then learning to play guitar as a teenager. Voted the best blues album of 2001 by Living Blues.



**Algia Mae Hinton • Honey Babe** "Algia Mae is a great example of what is called in and throughout the African Diaspora, "Original Joe." This is an innovative character that survives and creates anew under all circumstances. Algia Mae Hinton is someone not to be missed!" -Taj Mahal



**John Dee Holman • Bull Durham Blues** "John Dee Holman is a wonderful carrier of the south-east blues tradition." -Taj Mahal



**Clyde Langford • High Steppin' Momma** Everyone needs an dose of his East Texas Blues!



**Capt. Luke & Cool John • Outsider Lounge Music** Here is Captain Luke, singing like a disenfranchised Dean Martin, rumbling low and wise enough to make Barry White sound pre-adolescent. Features a beautiful 20 pg. Booklet.



**Jerry 'Boogie' McCain • This Stuff Just Kills Me** No one plays a harp or sings the blues quite like Jerry "Boogie" McCain. Backed by a stellar rhythm section, Jerry's accompanied by a lineup of guest musicians including Johnnie Johnson, Anson Funderburgh and Jimmie Vaughn.



**Jerry 'Boogie' McCain • Unplugged** Jerry "Boogie" McCain is the greatest post war harp player alive today. This is Jerry's one and only acoustic album. Jerry shines with his brilliant song writing in this intimate set of down home blues.



**Jerry 'Boogie' McCain • My Name is Boogie** McCain is the last true master of the amplified blues harp, a good singer, and a crackjack songwriter

**Dave McGrew • Fruit Tramp Ballads of the Great Northwest** tells the stories of the fruit tramps. Day jobbers during the fruit harvesting



season. A beautiful yet uneasy folk album.



**Mudcat • I'll Be Young Once Too** a tremendous slide guitarist, and most of all a god-gifted entertainer. I have witnessed him light up packed houses at the Great American Music Hall in San Francisco, at the Irving Plaza in New York, to open air concerts in front of 10,000 folks in Lugano, Switzerland, to sitting on a curb in San Jose, Costa Rica entertaining dozens of young kids. Mud is born to make people smile and enjoy life



**Mudcat • Kickin' Chicken** Guaranteed to make you want to get up and dance!



**Mudcat • The Mess is On** The new release from Mudcat featuring new band member Little Jo, Mudcat tears it up!



**Neal Pattman • Prison Blues Featuring Taj Mahal & Lee Konitz** Neals harp playing ad vocals have that classic sound that can only come from someone who has been steeped in the blues all of his life. He plays joyous, animated harp that recalls the whoopin' sound of Sonny Terry and an equal amount of country thrown in for good measure.



**Carl Rutherford • Turn Off the Fear** Here is grandfaterly Carl Rutherford's devastating take on "The Old Rugged Cross" and other jewels that showcase his unique blend of Buck Owens-styled twang, old time gospel numbers and harrowing mining songs making him a true American original.



**Larry Shores • Songs from T-Town** Larry Shores, a seasoned framhand by the time he was 14, plays folk music from the Northwest. This is a treat!



**Slewfoot and the Angels • Grasshopper Pie** Slewfoot's debut release for MM showcases his incredibly diverse and original song writing. With vocal partner Cary B, "Grasshopper Pie" features a stellar array of New Orleans' finest. New Orleans second-line, the blues and even Hawaiian slack-key combine to bring a fresh new flavor to the Music Maker lineup.



**Slewfoot and Carrie B • Rainin' in New Orleans** Slew and Carrie rainin' in new Orleans: In this second release Slewfoot is joined by his muse Carrie B. These are real songs from the streets of New Orleans. Slewfoot is a great poet, both are wonderful singers and musicians, a must have.



**Sol • volume blue** While many young, white musicians attempt to replicate the blues masters' art, sol steers clear of imitation in favor of excavation and transport. Sounds carry beyond genre, beyond origin and often beyond the grave. Ancient truths of the blues arrive in some new place, through some new voice, through some kid who is sol.



**Cootie Stark • Sugar Man Featuring Taj Mahal & Lee Konitz** Sugar Man does not merely proclaim "Cootie Stark was here." It is evidence that Stark was, and is, an idiosyncratic, tremendously talented musician. It's a sonic monument, and a mirror that immediately blurs the textbook pages dedicated to Piedmont Blues. It's a big deal.



**Cootie Stark • Raw Sugar** Cootie is one of the last great bluesmen from the Piedmont Tradition. Taj Mahal joins Cootie on hambone, piano, bass, harp, banjo and guitar. 72-minutes of the best blues and old-time music. Tremendous recording, a masterpiece, buy this CD!



**Eddie Tigner • Route 66** Eddie Tigner performed as an Ink Spot for over 30 years. In this album Eddie and his band exuberantly nail a set of timeless standards.



**Beverly 'Guitar' Watkins • Back in Business** Here is Beverly "Guitar" Watkins, previously heard from as one of Dr. Feelgood's interns, decreeing herself "Back in Business." This is a highly charged record by this powerful performer.



**The Feelings of Beverly 'Guitar' Watkins** Beverly is the leading woman guitar player of her generation. Beverly is a pyrotechnic guitar player whose searing, ballistic attacks on the guitar have become allegorical tales within the blues community.



**Lightnin' Wells • Ragged but Right** Lightnin' Wells has been performing his Piedmont-tinged variety of American roots music for 35 years. His vibrant, good-natured vocals and melody-rich guitar playing recall the sounds of 1930's and 40's string bands and barrelhouse bluesmen. Producer Tim Duffy, Cool John Ferguson and Taj Mahal and Ardie Dean sit in on a few tracks.



**A Living Past** This was the first album in the Music Maker series and has been heralded as a classic recording by reviewers throughout the world. This album is a superb sampler of the traditional blues scene in North Carolina.



**Blues Came to Georgia** Music Maker's Tim Duffy has assembled this collection of 15 songs to illustrate the continuing vitality of grassroots blues in Georgia at the turn of the century.



**Come So Far** This CD presents eighteen selections by twelve astonishing blues and gospel artists. This album was made in the field, in old trailers, kitchens, living rooms and nursing homes.



**Expressin' the Blues** This collection features 21 songs by 21 of the most talented and unsung heroes of the blues. Here is a collection of some of the most emotional, gut-level music available on disc, the feelings intensified by the immediacy of the recordings.



**Music Maker with Taj Mahal** Blues legend Taj Mahal backs up Music Maker artists on upright bass, hambone, banjo, piano and guitar. Plus two wonderful solo acoustic tracks by the great man himself.



**Sisters of the South** The music covers a wide spectrum, from gospel and country blues in the Piedmont style, to the modern blues of Beverly "Guitar" Watkins. Original recordings. Women, too, do have the blues...



**Songs from the Roots of America II** A companion to the book "Music Makers: Portraits & Songs from the Roots of America" this CD presents 21 songs by 21 artists, the majority of which are otherwise unreleased recordings.



**Collector's Item • Dixiefrog Presents Music Maker** We have a limited supply of this compilation that was released in France, this 2 CD box set features Music Maker artists. Sells for \$30. Limited supplies.



**Music Maker Book with CD \$30** The story of Music Maker comes to life in this beautiful collection of photos and writings. The 70 musicians profiled in this book take you on a soulful ride you'll never forget. Includes a 23-track CD and a forward by B.B. King. 208 pages, 11" x 8", 160 b&w photographs, hardcover.



**Music Maker Book with 2 CDs \$40** Get the Book plus CD and Songs from the Roots of America II, an additional 21 track CD including Taj Mahal's version of "Creole Belle"...all but two tracks previously unreleased.



**MM Treasure Box \$35** This is an anthology of the greatest hidden purveyors of roots music in the south featuring blues from the early years of last century, electric blues, R&B, Indian music, old-time country, singer-song writer, folk, jazz and spoken poetry. Nearly four hours of music in three CDs, presenting 38 Artists, 53 tracks, 41 of the songs never before issued! 3 CDs, 36 pg booklet, poster and guitar pick in a cool bag. Supplies are limited on the picks, bag and poster.



**Givin' It Back Record Club:** Join the Givin' It Back Record Club and you will receive a new Music Maker CD every three months for one year. The CDs are mailed out in December, March, June and September. You will be the first to receive a brand new release prior to us issue on our website or retail stores. George Higgs' new release, Rainy Day is our next selection.



**Want it all? Get the WHOLE NINE YARDS:** For \$595 plus shipping get every CD and our Book! It's a deal!!! And even makes a great gift.



**Feed an Artist for a year:** Sponsor Food from Angel Food Ministries for an entire year for a musician in need. Sponsor with a monthly \$25 donation or a one time donation of \$300!

# NEW RELEASE

CAROLINA CHOCOLATE DROPS:  
Dona Got a Ramblin' Mind



**CAROLINA CHOCOLATE DROPS WELCOMED BY NATIONAL TREASURES JOHN DEE HOLEMAN & ETTA BAKER**

When legendary Carolina bluesman and National Folk Artist Award winner John Dee Holeman first heard the band sing, a wide smile spread across the 70-year-old's face. They reminded him of his youth, he said, of a generation that's fading away. "It's up to the Carolina Chocolate Drops to keep the tradition alive", said John Dee.

"The Carolina Chocolate Drops breathe new life into old traditions," said Wyatt Marshall of Old Hat Records. "Informed by broad cultural knowledge and a ceaseless curiosity, these young musicians extend the rich musical legacy of the North Carolina Piedmont, with all the technique, vitality and depth of character needed to put it across."

Led by up-and-coming old-time fiddler and banjo player and vocalist Rhiannon Giddens, "The Drops" are doing just that. Rhiannon is 29.



Carolina Chocolate Drops with Joe Thompson

©Lissa Gatwals

Justin Robins (fiddle, voice) and Dom Flemons (guitar, banjo, jug, harmonica, snare and voice) are both 24.

Their sound and their style are compared with such musicians as Taj Mahal, Keb Mo, Corey Harris and Pura Fé - contemporary artists forg-

ing new territory by reclaiming their mixed ethnicity and musical identity.

Apprenticing under 87-year-old African American fiddler Joe Thompson, Rhiannon is learning Etta Baker's banjo style and soaking up the musical traditions of her elders, like Holeman.

When Rhiannon Giddens first met famed old-time Carolina banjo-player, Etta Baker, she had to hold back tears. Etta looks just like Rhiannon's grandmother in a photograph she keeps; the resemblance is uncanny.

Rhiannon's fiddling style, too, reminds one of a young Etta Baker who played the fiddle before turning to banjo and guitar.

Born and raised in Mebane, NC, Rhiannon, like Etta Baker, is of white, Native American, and African-American ancestry. She is musically curious and trained in opera and Celtic music. She says her rich musical education is in part a reclamation of her mixed-race heritage, long denied or reduced to one word: black.

The CD DONA GOT A RAMBLIN MIND will be released nationally September 2006.



# Ask Amy

Email your questions to amy@musicmaker.org!

I notice that Macavine Hayes is a real charmer with the ladies. I've seen him dancing with two women at a time, always having fun. How does he do it?

~ Albert Kessel, Rome, NY

Dear Albert, Macavine is quite the charmer. He sure uses his good looks and he is not shy in talking to anyone. He also has some great lines. Such as, "If you see a woman in water, ask her to get out and get baptized." Or upon meeting a woman ask, "Is your husband married?" He is also fond to ask the ladies "Do you roll your biscuits or beat them?"

Amy. How is Jessie Mae Hemphill doing?

-Alice White New York, NY

Thanks for asking, Jessie Mae is a real Mississippi blues woman. As you know she had a stroke several years back and she cannot play guitar anymore. In recent times she was evicted from her trailer and relocated to Senatobia, MS. Our good friend Mark Coltrain has been checking on her and she has been in some rough situations. Occasionally she falls from her electric wheel chair and is stuck on the ground for some time before someone finds her. Mark is looking into getting her some better care. Though out all of this Jessie remains in good spirits and is very thankful for the support we are able to help her with. With help from a Music Maker Donor we were able to set her up with our Feed an Artist for a year program, which has been a big help for her. With Mark's help we are going to try to help her with her quality of life, and see about help programs we can set her up on. Thanks for your concern!

I read in your last newsletter George Higgs was not well; how is he doing now?

-Phillipe Langlois, Paris, France

Thankfully George Higgs has rallied and has recovered quite well. He still must be on dialysis but besides that he is responding well to therapy and is looking forward to get back to performing this fall. He is very happy about his new CD, which is truly his greatest set of recordings. This CD is entitled *Rainy Day* and will be our next Record Club release.

Sweet Betty has been receiving wonderful reviews and has hit #5 on the Living Blues Record Charts!

Sweet Betty: Live and Let Live Music Makers MMCD59

Sweet Betty is Betty Echols Journey, a native of Duluth, Georgia, who was mentored by the late saxophonist Grady "Fats" Jackson and later established an association with guitarist Bob Margolin. Margolin featured her on his 1997 Alligator release "Up & In". Betty was a gospel singer in her younger days; her range is limited, but her coarse-edged alto



is imbued with deep feeling and she's capable of conveying fervid emotion with lo-key, almost conversational ease.

Music Maker, despite their dedication to "tradition", is no purist's outfit. Here Betty is provided with a brawny horn section equally capable of K.C.-like swing and fatback funk, and her material ranges from doo-wop-style balladry (Joe South's Untie Me through sanctified house wreckers (the venerable standard Weary Land, James Cleveland's Heaven) to modernist, pop-style mélanges (a reggae-tinged, molten-hot Damn Your Eyes). She negotiates complex runs and extended phrases with sureness; at times her vibra-

to widens to a point where it almost swallows the melody, but in general she remains in both melodic and timbral control. And the album is anchored by her obvious emotional commitment to everything she sings.

Betty is in her early '50s - still pretty young by blues standards - and it sounds as if she's still honing her style (she didn't become a professional entertainer until Jackson took her on the road in the mid-'80s). She's a talented and versatile vocalist; this strong outing should help her reach and expanded audience, both in the U.S. and worldwide.

-David Whiteis  
Originally published in Living Blues, Issue #188, Volume 37 #2

Cool John Ferguson guitar heaven

Newsletter Special Autographed  
**Cool John Ferguson Guitar Heaven CD**  
For a limited time AUTOGRAPHED Cool John's "Guitar Heaven" CDs for \$15 (plus the \$5 shipping fee). Just fill out the Quantity and we'll ship this out for you!

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JOIN THE RECORD CLUB

George Higgs' new release *Rainy Day* was made possible by a grant from the North Carolina Arts Council.

You can help issue CDs for our recipient artists. Most of these men and women have spent a lifetime performing their music and have never been recorded. Join the "Givin' It Back Record Club" for \$100, and you will receive a new Music Maker CD every three months for one year. The CDs are mailed out in December, March, June and September. You will be the first to receive a brand new release prior to us offering it to our website and mailings. We thank you for your support and we hope you join with us in trying to issue as many in this series as we can. George Higgs' new release *Rainy Day* is an incredible CD and our June selection for Record Club.

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