

# Celebrating 15 Years

Our Mission: Preserving Music by Preserving Musicians



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**MUSIC MAKER PROGRAMS**  
**Musician Sustenance /** Grants to meet basic life needs and emergency relief.  
**Musical Development /** Grants and services for recipient artist professional development and career advancement.  
**Cultural Access /** Supports the preservation and proliferation of American musical traditions.

**New Orleans Musician's Fund /** Assistance to musicians affected by Hurricane Katrina.  
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### Dear Friends,

**Music Maker is celebrating its 15th Anniversary!** We began this mission as a heart-felt response to the needs of a small group of incredibly talented artists in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. **Guitar Gabriel, Captain Luke, Willa Mae Buckner, Mr. Q, Jahue Rorie, Preston Fulp, Macavine Hayes** and others were so talented, and yet struggling so hard to survive, that Denise and I dedicated ourselves to getting their voices heard—and their day-to-day needs met. The success of our early assistance and support of their talents, led to our discovering others—hundreds of incredibly talented artists.

**Captain Luke, now 82, is the last of the original group of Winston-Salem artists still with us.**

I remember the day I met him: It was Guitar Gabriel who took me up the stairs to his apartment. Together, we set up my recording gear and Luke sang for us his stunning rendition of "Careless Love." Over the years, Luke has introduced me to the hidden world of drink-houses, traveled with me everywhere, and told his community that I was someone to be trusted. Without his partnership over the past 15 years, Music Maker would not be where it is today.

**Big Ron Hunter is a new discovery for Music Maker.** He represents a continuum in our relationship to Winston-Salem. As a teenager, Big Ron learned the blues from Guitar Gabriel. "Gabe always told me to discover my own sound, write my own songs, be my own musician," says Hunter. You can hear that he



listened well to our mentor and his new MM album is something very much his own. His modern joyful blues is supported by incredible musicians and produced by long-time MM partner **Ardie Dean**. The release could not have come at a better time as Ron was just laid off from his long-term day job due to the recession. He now makes his living selling this

CD and MM has gotten him a number of gigs, including a show in Luxemburg this May.

**A MM donor who loves to see new careers launched,** and lives changed for the better, made big Ron's new record possible. Friends of Music Maker make all of our work possible. Your commitment and great charitable gifts, large and small, keep our mission alive. Music Maker could not have continued its mission for 15 years without you. We are honored and privileged to do this work. We need your support to get through these uncertain times.

In response to how people communicate these days, we are now issuing the collectible Music Maker Rag twice yearly and also sending weekly e-letter, so you will be informed in a timely manner about the artist we are assisting and the music they make.

We've devoted two pages of the Music Maker Rag to explaining the various programs and how you can become part of the Music Maker Family. Please do call us or write us if you have any questions. Your donations, large and small, make such a big difference in these artists' lives.

With warm regards,

*Tim & Denise Duffy*  
Timothy & Denise Duffy

MUSIC MAKER RAG

VOL14, NO3 The Official Newsletter of the Music Maker Relief Foundation SUMMER 2009

# George Higgs

*Story and Art by Gary Dumm*

**BORN IN 1930 NEAR SPEED, N.C. ("A SLOW TOWN WITH A FAST NAME"), GEORGE HIGGS GREW UP NEAR TARBORO, THE SON OF A HARP-PLAYING FARMER. BESIDES HIS MUSICAL FAMILY, OTHER EARLY INFLUENCES WERE SPIRITUALS, THE "GRAND OLE OPRY" ON THE RADIO AND LEGENDARY MEDICINE SHOW MUSICIAN, "PEG LEG SAM." GEORGE'S FATHER HELPED HIM BUY A GUITAR WHEN HE WAS 12, AND PLAYING AT HOUSE PARTIES, FISH FRIES AND IMPROMPTU GUITAR "CONTESTS" DURING THE FIFTIES HELPED HIM TO HONE HIS MUSICAL SKILLS.**

**IN THE 1960S HE SANG AND PLAYED GUITAR FOR A WHILE WITH THE FRIENDLY FIVE GOSPEL QUARTET, BUT SOON DECIDED THAT THE BLUES WAS A MORE HONEST MUSICAL EXPRESSION FOR HIM. GEORGE COAXES BLUES MELODIES LACED WITH FINE IMPROVISATIONS FROM HIS MARINE BAND HARP AND HIS GUITAR, MAKING HIM A FEATURED PERFORMER AT CONCERTS AND FESTIVALS. MAY YOU BE FORTUNATE ENOUGH TO HEAR SOME OF HIS LIFE-STORY SONGS, PLAYED AND SUNG IN THE KEY OF GEORGE.**

WHEN YOU SING THE BLUES, YOU'RE SINGING FROM EXPERIENCE--- WHAT YOU FEEL.

AS LONG AS I'M ALIVE...I'M GONNA TRY TO CARRY THIS OLD MUSIC... BECAUSE IT'S LIKE HISTORY TO ME.

## News & Notes

from Music Maker Relief Foundation



### The Amazing Native American Influence on Southern Music

>>> **Pura Fe** (front right) and the **Deer Clan Singers**

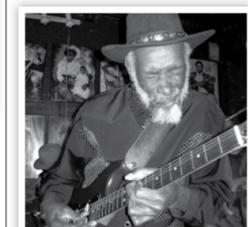
seen her career blossom, most notably overseas, performing more than 80 shows in France last year. 2009 Hillsborough, NC. © T. Duffy



### Two New Artists Join Music Maker

>>> **Chicago Bob Nelson** grew up with men like Muddy Waters, Howlin' Wolf and John Lee Hooker. We recorded his first acoustic record and he joined our Music Maker

Revue in Belgium this past March. In this photo are **Tim Duffy**, along with **Mudcat**, a longtime board member, who has introduced so many artists to Music Maker, most recently Chicago Bob. When Chicago Bob called to say he wanted to work with MM, we were overjoyed.



**Robert Lee Coleman** is from Macon, Georgia. He recorded and per-

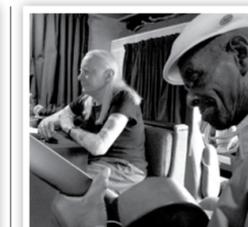
formed with James Brown as a member of his legendary band the JB's. **Mudcat** arranged a performance at his legendary Atlanta "Chicken Raid." And Robert tore down the house. We thank **Ardie Dean** for his current work, helping Robert create a killer CD to be issued, hopefully, this year. 2009 Atlanta, GA. © V. Tseng

### Songs That Put Some Recess Back into the Recession

>>> **Denise Duffy** calls **Big Ron Hunter's** music a sort of Healing Blues. Historically, the Blues has always been best at making the moon shine in dark times. And Big Ron's songs



guide us through the lean times. They may even help put a little recess into the recession: **"Not Gonna Stress Myself," "Hard Times,"** and **"Play Your Cards Right."** Many fall in love with Big Ron Hunter, when they hear him. The Great Unknown is this spring's selection for the 4-times-a-year Giving it Back Record Club. 2008 Winston-Salem, NC. © J. Williams



**Johnny Winter & John Dee Holeman** >>> Performing since the early 60s, **Johnny Winter** is recognized as a real guitar hero. This past spring, **John Dee Holeman** and Johnny Winter found they share a love for the blues of Lightnin' Hopkins. Hanging out in the bus, before their show, John Dee played Winter some old, favorite songs. 2009 Clayton, NC. © T. Duffy



**'95** After living for a while in Kenya, **Denise and Tim Duffy moved to rural NC.** They'd often set out in the car to scout artists they'd heard about from friends. Here, Denise & Tim Duffy are on their way to visit artist **Jimmy Williams**. 1995 Poulan, GA. © T. Duffy



**'96** Assistance to artists, at one time, included an earmark for Willa Mae Buckner's snakes. **Willa Mae Buckner, known as "The Snake Lady,"** was so poor she couldn't even afford food for her pet pythons. Music Maker helped feed the pets she loved and then **steered her career toward a show at Carnegie Hall.** 1996 Winston-Salem, NC. © M. Austin



**'92** Over the years, **MM artists have made hundreds of trips overseas.** It was Guitar Gabriel who led the way. **Lucy Duffy, Tim Duffy, Guitar Gabriel and John Creech** on the very first Music Maker performance in Europe. 1992 Utrecht, Holland. © L. Duffy



**'94** Artist **Samuel Turner Stevens** took Tim Duffy under his wing back in 1981, when he was still a student. **Stevens became a prominent part of the Winston Blues Campaign**—this photograph appeared in 125 weeklies and 50 monthly magazines. 1994 Asheville, NC. © T. Duffy



**'93** From street corners, to small clubs to weekend festivals across the US, and ultimately onto stages in Europe, **Tim Duffy and Guitar Gabriel performed hundreds of shows together.** 1993 Pittsburgh, PA. © T. Droege



**'97** While visiting a donor's beach house in East Hampton, Long Island, **Cootie Stark was discovered by a promoter, who booked him to open for Aretha Franklin.** After 70 years of obscurity, this single event was a turning point. 1997 Newport R&B Festival. © D. Saverese

# MUSIC MAKER Milestones

Photographs from **15 Years** in NC & On The Road



**'98** For the **Winston Blues Revival**, Music Maker toured with mentor **Taj Mahal**, to 36 US cities. **Denise Duffy worked the Music Maker booth** and met many new supporters in places like the **Knitting Factory** in New York. 1998 New York City. © T. Duffy



**'98** **Taj Mahal credits Music Maker artists for reconnecting him to the real-roots,** blues performers, that he knew were out there. Taj took such totally unknown artists as **Neal Pattman, Cootie Stark and Beverly "Guitar" Watkins** on a revue tour throughout the US. He has since invited MM artists to join him on other stages. 1998 Austin, Texas. © T. Duffy



**'07** **Albert White** (far left) played for 40 years behind legendary R&B artists. It was not until **John Price, MM Board Emeritus** (far right), sponsored a recording session with **Elvin Bishop** (4th from left), and other A-list musicians, including **Ardie Dean** (4th from right), that a **Living Blues Award-winning** album was created. 2007 South Berwick, Maine. © T. Duffy



**'08** We met **Beverly "Guitar" Watkins** when she was **playing on the streets of Atlanta.** She has since issued CDs, toured the world, and received a key to a city in Italy. A few years ago, she developed lung cancer. She has survived to return to a busy schedule of recording a new Gospel CD and performing at such places as **Spoleto Festival USA.** 2008 Atlanta, GA. © J. Williams



**'01** **Haskel "Whistlin' Britches" Thompson** was homeless when MM met him 20 years ago. Since that time, he's needed help with shelter and such. He has spent his life being human. **His deep spiritual joy for life affects you.** 2001 Durham, NC. © T. Duffy



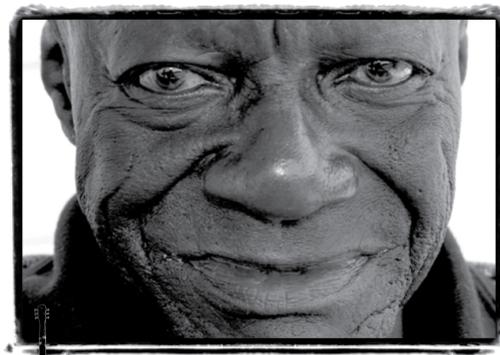
**'02** Music Maker couldn't do it without good people to help us. **Amy Weaver** (2nd from left with interns) **worked as programs coordinator for 5 years.** She developed the **MMRF intern program** that hosts students from coast-to-coast. 2002 Music Maker offices, Hillsborough, NC. © T. Duffy



**'03** **Adolphus Bell** had been living in this van for 5 years, when we met him at the **King Biscuit Blues Festival** for the first time. Now, Adolphus has an apartment, a phone, a CD, and a career that has taken him around the world. 2003 Helena, Arkansas. © T. Duffy



**'04** Guitar heroes like **Jimmy Herring, Bill Rich and Derek Trucks** have helped by performing for MM fund raising events. A favorite is the annual **Fishing Blues Tournament.** For many years now, MM has taken guys fishing and on the last day there is a big concert. 2004 Playa Zancudo, Costa Rica. © C. Levine



**'02** **Music Maker artists have amazing life stories.** **David Butler,** for example, played baseball in the Negro Baseball League and was a railroad man. His father was a blues pianist, who played with the elusive and legendary Tampa Red. But David wrote his own unique blues set for his wonderful guitar and harp playing. He had lost a leg in a motorcycle accident and he was very grateful for the monthly checks we sent to him for medicine. 2002 Sanford, Florida. © T. Duffy



**'06** California-based **filmmakers Chris Johnstone and Anna Ferrarie** approached MM about making a film on Music Maker's years of work. **A grant from Martin Scorsese and Paul Allen** gave funding to make this documentary. The resulting film, **"Toot Blues,"** has started making the rounds at film festivals. 2006 MM Studio, Hillsborough, NC. © T. Duffy



**'05** **Captain Luke is one of the founding Music Maker artists**, giving not just magnificent music, but sound counsel since 1991. **His voice melts your heart.** Women drape themselves around him after every show. **2005 Buenos Aires, Argentina.** © T. Duffy



**'03** **Ryan Costello, Lucy Duffy and Taj Mahal** have all helped tremendously. As a Music Maker Board member, Ryan helped create the **Congressional Blues Festival**, which informed senators, congressman and their staffers of the mission. **2003 Washington, D.C.** © T. Duffy



**'05** After Katrina, MM created a **New Orleans Musicians Fund**, that gave financial aid to many artists. **Slewfoot and Carrie B.** lived with MM for some time until it made sense to return home. **2005 MM Guest House, Hillsborough, NC.** © T. Duffy



**'09** Music Maker artists cherish **new instruments** and with them bring joyful music into the world. **Cool John Ferguson** holds a **Fender Stratocaster** guitar that was donated to him by Music Maker. **2009 Hillsborough, NC.** © T. Duffy



**'06** **Jean Herve Michel** (2nd from left) fell in love with the mission of Music Maker and has booked MM Revue Shows and artist Pura Fe at cultural centers, festivals and clubs throughout Europe. His work has **changed the lives of Music Maker artists.** **2006 Montpier, France.** © T. Duffy



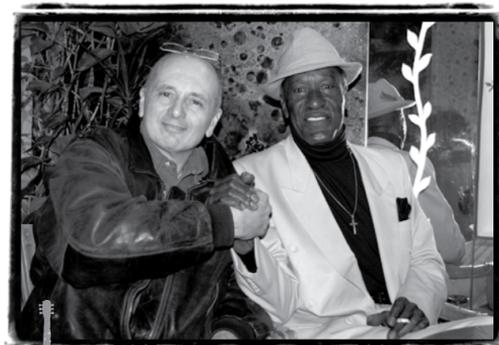
**'08** Drink-Houses are where some of the most real and rooted blues are performed in North Carolina. It was in a Drink House that **Macavine Hayes (center) passed away in his sleep in 2009. He was the happiest, most inspirational man, you could ever meet.** Despite the tremendous adversity of having a very sickly wife and little money, he remained steadfastly joyous. Asked how he did it, he'd say: "I pray to Jesus every morning." **2008 Winston Salem, NC.** © T.



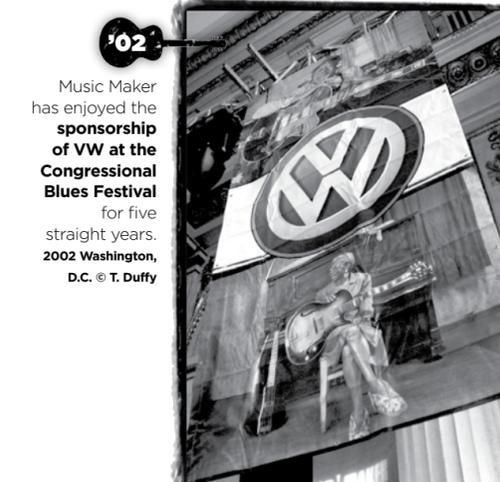
**'03** **Denise Duffy met Bonnie Raitt** to thank her in person for being a loyal supporter of Music Maker for so many years. **2003 Raleigh, NC.** © T. Duffy



**'04** **The Waifs**, a very famous **Australian folk/rock band**, visited for a week before setting out on their American tour. During their stay, they recorded a beautiful set with bluesman John Dee Holeman and have spread the word of Music Maker in their home country. **2004 Hillsborough, NC.** © T. Duffy



**'06** **Philippe Langlois** (left) runs **Dixie Frog Records**. He has issued 10 superb CD sets, treasured by French blues enthusiasts. **He has helped make Music Maker artists, like Adolphus Bell, very well known** in his country. **2006 Paris, France.** © T. Duffy



**'02** Music Maker has enjoyed the **sponsorship of VW** at the **Congressional Blues Festival** for five straight years. **2002 Washington, D.C.** © T. Duffy

# MUSIC MAKER Milestones

Photographs from **15 Years** in NC & On The Road



**'09** **Pura Fe, Rhiannon Giddens and Justin Robinson** are younger musicians, who have **helped spread the word** of Music Makers, through their highly successful musical careers. **2009 Hillsborough, NC.** © T. Duffy



**'06** **Lucas and Lilla Duffy's** growing up around Music Maker artists has included **the magic of having Cootie Stark at their breakfast table** and traveling with large groups of artists in France. **2006 Cognac, France.** © T. Duffy



**'05** Music is the universal language. **Botafogo** (2nd from right, back row) is the most **famous blues guitarist in Argentina**. He is revered. He **invited Beverly Watkins and Captain Luke on a highly successful, 10-day tour.** **2005 Buenos Aires, Argentina.** © T. Duffy



**'08** **George Higgs** is a bluesman from Tarboro, NC. He has performed at every one of our **Warehouse Blues Series**. Now in its 6th year, this Friday evening community event is **sponsored by the City of Durham.** **2008 Durham, NC.** © T. Duffy



**'08** Music Makers has witnessed the death of so many elderly musicians. Amazingly, incredibly **talented artists continue to reveal themselves—like Big Ron Hunter**, who has a great new CD full of Healing Blues. **2008 Winston-Salem, NC.** © J. Williams



**'07** Elder black artists, such as Joe Thompson and John Dee Holeman, are so proud to see their **music loved and absorbed and carried forward by The Carolina Chocolate Drops**. The Drops embraced Music Makers and, after issuing a number of CDs, have signed with Nonesuch, a Warner Brothers label. **2007 Durham, NC.**

