Music Maker Relief Foundation strives to help the true pioneers and forgotten heroes of Southern music gain recognition and meet their day to day needs. We support the health and well being of these legendary musicians. Our organization provides the ways and means to expand their professional careers and share their unique musical gifts with the world. Music Maker does this for the betterment of their lives and for the preservation of our culture.

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.
Fishing the Blues
Musician Taj Mahal Hosts a Fishing Tournament in Costa Rica with a Twist

By Charlie Levine, Marin Magazine

Few things even the playing field like fishing. Put two men in a boat with some bait and a few rods and they’ll have plenty to talk about no matter their religion, political affiliations, class or color. The same can be said for music -- it crosses all boundaries. Mix fishing with music and you’re on a course set for good times, whether you catch fish or not. That’s the basic premise behind Taj Mahal’s Fishin’ Blues Tournament and man does it work.

Taj Mahal plays the blues. He’s been at it for some four decades and his music is highly regarded around the world. But, this giant guitar player can also wield a fishing rod and the martin bug bit him years ago. Taj also reads Marlin magazine, and when he invited me to cover his non-profit billfish tournament in Costa Rica, monster sharks couldn’t keep me away.

After a hair-raising flight from San Jose, I seriously considered kissing the ground when I got to Golfito but there just wasn’t enough time. I hitched a ride on a panga to Roy’s Zancudo Lodge, hoping that one of the musicians might have overslept and was just getting ready to hit the blue water at the crack of 11 a.m. For a minute there I kind of felt like a musician — I was four hours late to my gig.

As we pulled up to the lodge’s dock, all the boats were gone except one, and the mate was up to his knees in mud changing out the lower unit on the outboard. His name was Ian and he told me that he’d finish the repairs in an hour and could shuttle me out to one of the boats offshore for some sailfishing. I was late, but I wasn’t out of the game.

Billfish and the Blues
The idea to host a fishing tournament came about over the years after Taj Mahal met Tim Duffy, founder of the Music Maker Relief Foundation. In 1994 Duffy began a crusade of sorts to help forgotten blues musicians from the American South, whether it was pitching in a few bucks for their medical costs or booking them gigs. Through his travels in the South, Duffy met scores of talented, obscure musicians and began recording their music. By the time he met Taj in 1997, Duffy had a bag full of recordings and he played them for the blues master. With Taj’s help, Duffy landed a recording deal and put together a tour for several Music Maker musicians. Thus began their symbiotic relationship.

Over the years, with assistance from musicians like Taj, Eric Clapton, B.B. King, Bonnie Raitt and many individual and corporate donations, Music Makers has touched the lives of over 100 musicians, put on hundreds of concerts, released over 50 CDs and raised over $25 million for their cause. Music Makers also became the beneficiaries of the Taj Mahal Fishin’ Blues Tournament.

“Taj always loved to fish. It’s his passion,” Duffy says. “He was heading down to Cabo San Lucas and said, ‘Tim, I’m gonna teach you how to fish.’ So I went and we caught all kinds of fish.”

Some time after that trip Duffy introduce Taj to his friend Bill Lucado who invited them to his home in Zancudo, Costa Rica just across the bay from Golfito. While down there, Taj spent most of his time on the water and that’s when the idea to host a fishing tournament came about. Lucado’s house sits just a little ways down the road from Roy’s Zancudo Lodge, a legendary fishing operation, and the perfect spot to host a fishing tournament.

In 2003, over 20 competitors showed up for the first Taj Mahal Fishin’ Blues Tournament. The event attracted a mix of anglers and music lovers from around the country; several musicians also showed up to get in on the action. Taj and his bandmates came, as did Derek Trucks of the Allman Brothers and Jimmy Harring who plays with The Dead. Each day the anglers woke up early ate a big breakfast and fish until late in the afternoon. After a shower and some dinner, a few of the musicians would break out the acoustic guitars and play into the night. The weeklong event ended with an awards ceremony and a concert. The event went off without a hitch and nearly every angler rejoiced for the following year.

This past February, the Music Maker folks put together another ensemble of artists and about 30 anglers showed up to fish with Taj and the boys at the second annual tournament.

Mixin’ Music and Pleasure
Before I could set down my bags, Ian had managed to get the outboard purring and we were off to find the fish some 16 miles offshore. We made it to the blue water early in the afternoon and picked up the rest of Ian’s party, who had jumped on another boat while Ian made his repairs. Bill Rich, a bassist who has played with Taj for a number of years and Ryan Costello, a director of Music Maker based in the D.C. area hopped on board and quickly went to work. Just a few minutes into our troll, we spotted a pack of bonitos and sailfish working in the distance. We made our way over and saw our first sail of the day. Like clockwork, a spindletack appeared in the spread behind one of the bird-and-lure setups and Rich dropped back a bait. The fish took one look at the bait and swallowed it whole. Rich pulled the rod tip up and let out a hoot, as line zipped off the reel, a Penn 30-wide. In watching Rich fight the fish, I must admit that I was a bit shocked at how well he performed. After all, he lives in Colorado, but in his travels with Taj, he’s gotten to wet a line in places any fisherman dreams about… Panama, Fiji, Mexico, Australia, Hawaii, the Caribbean and more. The first saltwater fish Rich ever caught was an 80-pound wahoo in Fiji. About an hour later, Costello reeled in a sail that took a green chopper to get his name on the docket. Before we knew it, the lines out call came and we all headed in.

On the last day of fishing I found myself paired with Taj and Scott Edmonds of Ft. Meyers, Florida. I had so many questions I wanted to ask Taj about the music business and the various artists he knows and plays with, but before I could get to any of them we were on the subject of billfish. I couldn’t help but notice that Taj brought along three duffel bags overflowing with lures, leader materials, rubber bands, pliers and everything else you might find rolling around the cockpit of a sportfishingerman. He pulled a few lures out and he talked about the local bait and what might work best. Taj then told Edmonds and me how he got into fishing.

Taj grew up in Springfield, Massachusetts, and got his first taste of saltwater fishing chasing striped bass on the East Coast. The thrill of the catch and the rhythm of the ocean made a big impact on him. “I was always reading about the saltwater action,” Taj recalls. “I’d pick up whatever magazines I could find. I would look at these pictures of men with huge fish of all types and I’d ask myself, ‘How did they do that?’ I was amazed.”

Like his guitar playing, Taj is a self-taught angler. He read books, talked to anglers and just went out and learned by trial and error. In the early ’60s his career took him west to California. Once settled in, he booked a five-day long-range trip to learn how to tuna fish. He followed that up with a nine-day trip, and then a 14-day trip. “I came back with a ton of fish,” he says. “I started in San Diego and drove all the way up to San Francisco giving fish to everyone I knew.” In San Francisco, he found a small tackle shop and went inside to rap with the owner about the local bite. “There was this huge lure hanging on the wall, a Kona clone,” Taj says. “It was real old. No body wanted it. I asked the man what type of fish would eat a lure that big. ‘Marlin,’ he said. He took the lure down off the wall and it left this shadow because it had been there so long I bought it, and I ended up catching my first marlin on that lure.”

As Taj told me this story he reached into one of his tackle bags and produced the very same lure. He held it up with a grin on his face. The lure tricked a marlin in Fiji in the early 1980s. Since then, Taj has racked up a long list of billfish catches but one stands out — the 650-pound black marlin he caught on Hannibal Bank off Panama, but his heart is in Hawaii. Taj lived in Kauai for 15 years and still gets out there on a regular basis. His time in Hawaii is usually spent fishing. “In Hawaii I learned that there’s more to fishing than dropping bait over the side. You’re hunting in Hawaii, as soon as you get in the water – constantly scanning the horizon, looking for birds, porpoises, anything. Any signs of life. We’d set a course zigzag that way we’d cover more water.”

Nowadays, Taj is on the road about 200 days a year so needs to make time for fishing. “When I was in Hawaii it was easier,” he says, “all I had to do was pick up a phone. But I make time. Fishing
Dear Friends,

We wish to thank everyone that contributed and worked so hard to make this a miraculous 10th anniversary year for the Music Maker Relief Foundation.

Early this year Amy Nolan our Programs Coordinator suggested having Music Maker Birthday parties sponsored by our supporters. We have been thrilled that so many folks have held these events. This past July Director Ryan Costello staged the First Annual Congressional Blues Festival in honor of Music Maker.

This event went so well, Ryan decided to stage a huge Birthday Bash on October 26th at the "The Railhead," located at Boulder Station in Las Vegas. We are thrilled to announce that the original Blues Brothers Band will be performing as well as Mudcat, Cocine Stark, Cool John Ferguson, and Beverly "Guitar" Watkins. The show starts at 8:00 and tickets are only $11. Call (866) 264-1818 for more information or buy tickets.

Blues Diva Ruth Brown checked in the other day and was delighted to hear of the event and promised to join us. Our friend Kenney Wayne Shepherd will be in town that day. It is really going to be a party, we are honored by The Blues Brothers Band taking the time to help Music Maker.

As many of you know, the original Blues Brothers film was a momentous event. Akroyd and Belushi created the most successful blues movie and record of all time. They brought blues to an international level of popularity. Their band featured the greatest musicians in R&B history, lead on guitar by Steve Cropper and the bass of Duke Dunn, these guys have written and recorded a laundry list of hits. The legendary Eddie "Knock on Wood" Floyd will be singing. We are thrilled to share the stage with this 13 piece R&B all-star band.

All these legends coming together recalls memories of a wonderful day I spent with the original Music Maker Revue, Willa Mae Buckner, Guitar Gabriel, Mr. Q, Macawine Hayes and Preston Fulp as we stood in the free cheese line. I was so happy to be in company with such illustrious musicians. Gabe had his guitar and walked up and down the line singing the "Welfare Blues," Willa and Q were arguing, Macawine kept wandering in and out of the crowd finding us drinks and 82 year old Preston was just laughing and enjoying the moment. I treasure it.

Of course I could never have predicted that Music Maker would ever have such a year; that we would be in Vegas with a great new crew of artists sharing the stage with the Blues Brothers. Dan Akroyd was right, facing tremendous adversity he and Belushi were "going to get the band back together," he proclaimed, "We are on a mission from God." Many days I have felt the same sentiment.

The mission we embarked on 10 years ago is just as relevant and urgent as it was when it began. We are racing against time. Please join us as we keep on celebrating our 10th birthday.

With warm regards,

Tim & Denise Duffy

Artists Notes

Cora Mae Bryant and Joshua Jacobson just finished a new CD where she plays some great guitar and sings some wonderful original songs.

We are proud to have booked Birmingham native Adolphus Bell at the King Biscuit Blues Festival in Helena, AR this year. Adolphus plays in the rare one-man band style, and makes his living playing on the streets and for house parties. Recently the Birmingham News wrote, "He moved to Pittsburgh at 12, where George Benson put a guitar in his hands, he said. He found his passion, and later opened for B.B. King, James Brown and Bobby "Blue" Bland, he said.

Bell returned to Birmingham and lives in a Woodlawn boarding house. He gets by on scarce paying gigs, but shares the blues anywhere, such as schools and jails. "It's not about money," Bell said, but making people happy. "Blues is something you gotta suffer in life that nobody but you and the good Lord know about. If you're a musician or entertainer people can feel that through your music."

Mudcat has a new release, "I'll Be Young Once Too." Mud will celebrate this CD by touring Europe from October through December!

Beverly "Guitar" Watkins feels great, has been given a clean bill of health from her doctors and is back in business. Beverly suffered a mild heart attack in Washington, DC this summer. Many thanks to MMRF Musical Director, Ardie Dean (and his very patient family) for looking after Beverly in DC and bringing her safely home to Atlanta.

Whistlin' Brochites of Winston-Salem, NC has recovered from the hand surgery he underwent in April. Thanks to intern Josh Morin for all those trips to the doctor's offices and pharmacies.

Many thanks to Norman Hewitt of the Blues to Bop Festival in Lugano, Switzerland for hosting Lee Gates, Dionna Greenleaf and the Gospel Starlight Singers at his prestigious festival.

Precious Bryant is a jewel. She has an infectious uplifting spirit. We love her so! We checked in with her and as usual she was very chippy despite, not having money for her utility bill, her telephone bill was run up by a neighbor and with the daily struggles of living with diabetes to boot. We were so glad to be able to help pay the utility bill.

Thanks to Tim's efforts and the legendary music attorney Bill Kraslovsky, Etta Baker will finally clarify her ownership and receive payment for her contributions to the influential album, "Instrumental Music of the Southern Appalachians." Issued in 1956 this album has always been available. Many thanks to Rykodisc for clearing up this issue.

We presented Macawine Hayes with a demo of his first record. He and his wife Lilly loved it.

Ruth Brown called in and is doing fine. She is excited about the Scorcese film, "Lightnin' in a Bottle" that will be in theaters in October. Ruth had the chance to sing, "Mama Keep Your Daughter Mean" in this work. Ruth offers her help to Music Maker in any way she can. We just love Ruth Brown!

Cootie Stark and Carl Rutherford received Lifetime Achievement Awards at the Portsmouth Blues Festival.

Cool John Ferguson and Tim Duffy were featured on North Carolina Public Television, NC. Now Cool John continues to stun audiences with his guitar artistry.

Pura Fe's, "Follow Your Heart's Desire" is complete. It is the first Music Maker release for this unique lady whose spiritual presence and wisdom are translated directly from her intimate, soulful voice to your heart of hearts. Pura Fe called in and proudly announced that Utah the singer/drum group that she traveled for the last 18 years was just honored with an award for their "Inspired Voice" along with Buffy St. Marie, Tantrino Cardinal, Cicly Tyron and Lisa Bonnet.

This summer's Warehouse Blues Series was a great success in downtown Durham, NC. For more information on who's jamming in the October series head over to muscianmaker.org.

Music Maker News

Many thanks to MM volunteers Brandon Miranda and Ninian Beall for their time and effort assisting us with our recent Donor appreciation mailer. Shane Marsh has also been of great help to Music Maker in recent months.

Help us pass out Music Maker Rags, join the Music Maker Street Team if you can commit to distribute 100 rags or more in your community. Email info@musicmaker.org or call 919.643.2456 to join the Street team today.

Music Maker intern Simon Beins spent a summer with Mudcat and Willie King. Presendly he lives in Brooklyn and has produced an excellent CD with his group The Woz entitled "Long, Grain Rights." Check out www.thewozw.com

BBDO of Atlanta has helped us with our new mailer and pledged their support to MM! Thanks!

Our great champion Taj Mahal directed us to reach a national level with the Do-DIs. We were pleased to be welcomed by Allegro Corporation out of Portland, Oregon to distribute Music Maker CDs to retail stores throughout the nation. We spread our national distribution with an exquisite album of Etta Baker with Taj Mahal, a compilation CD that features Taj with 9 Music Makers and Pura Fe, "Follow Your Heart's Desire."

We were mighty proud to receive a $1,000 grant from the HART (Handy Artists Relief Trust) Fund.

This was established by the Blues Foundation to provide relief to blues musicians and their families in financial need due to medical problems. We urge folks to support this program. Learn more at www.blues.org.

Many thanks to Great Brook Lumber of Lebanon, Maine for donating cedar shingles to spruce up the MMRF Headquarters.

Congressman Jon Porter of Nevada and MMRF Musical Director, Ardie Dean of Huntsville, AL had a surprise reunion on stage at our First Annual Congressional Blues Festival. Turns out they grew up together playing in rock bands back in Iowa.

MMRF will be featured in the January issue of Southern Living (North Carolina region), the December issue of Delta Airlines Magazine, and in the December issue of Hope magazine.

Tracks Magazine is giving free one-year subscriptions to all supporters of MMRF. This goes for any purchases or donations for the upcoming month.

Pick up a copy of the October/November issue of Marlin Magazine for Charlie Levine's report on the 2004 MMRF Taj Mahal Fishin' Blues Tournament.

Gadaw Guitars of Durham, NC has repaired dozens of MM artists' instruments, raised MM money by selling our CDs on their sales floor and in recent months furnished Cool John Ferguson with two incredible guitars. One of which is the official Cool John model. Gadaw has also pledged to make a donation to MM with
Ask Amy

Find out what you have always wondered about your favorite Music Maker Artist. Email your questions to amy@musicmaker.org.

I am intrigued by Pura Fé’s elucidation on the influence of Indian music on the blues. Did she say the blues beat called the shuffle is from Indigenous people?
-Sam Duffy, Hoboken, NY

I asked Tim and he told me that the shuffle is a beat in blues music often explained as the backbeat. Pura Fé told me, “The shuffle is a Native beat, every Nation has this rhythm and it showed up as the heart beat of blues music, in western nations it is from the Round Dance in the East it is from our Stomp Dance.”

I just got my Cootie Mailing and heard he was diagnosed with cancer and wondered how he was doing? - Susan Reznak, Raleigh, NC

Thanks so much for your concern, Susan.

Hosts Caroline Weaver and Tony Reevy are holding a Birthday Bash here in Durham, NC. Cheers, mates!

Special thanks to Sarah McCoy, Paul Levine and Steve Stein from Spanish Mass Productions in Quincy, FL for making Music Maker the beneficiary of their upcoming festival, Down by the Farm which will be November 12-14! Visit spanishmassproductions.org for more information on this great event.

Musicmaker.org has received over 100,000 visitors. Hope you visit soon. Many thanks to our webmaster Ken Ray!

Our First Annual Congressional Blues Festival held on July 21st was a tremendous success and a whopping good time! MMF Director Ryan Costello is a man on fire that brought 500 people together in less than six weeks! He and his colleagues at the c2group welcomed us to a beautiful evening gathering on their terrace overlooking the Capitol dome. Gracing the stage were Mudcat, Cool John, Beverly Guitar Watkins, Little Sammy Davis and our dear friend, Leon Helm. Our heartfelt thanks to the 27 Member Host Committee & the generous sponsors that brought MMF’s mission to our nation’s capital.

27 Member Host Committee:

Hosting Sponsor: Volkswagen

Sponsors:

Capstan Lake, Durham, NC

EVENTS

See our full event schedule for information on the Autumn Blues Series in downtown Durham, NC.

Every Friday at October 6-8pm.

October 7, 2004: Cootie Stark, Guitar Bar Join the reigning King of the Piedmont blues at the Guitar Bar in Spartanburg, SC.

October 8, 2004: Beverly “Guitar” Watkins, Cootie Stark, John Dee Holman, Helena ABC, Come and be apart of the Historic King Biscuit Festival and check out our great blues! Go to http://www.kingbiscuitfest.com or call 870-335-8798 for more information.

October 10, 2004: Beverly “Guitar” Watkins Manteo, NC: Second Annual Carolina Music Festival sponsored by the Outer Banks Hotline. This will take place at the Roanoke Island Festival Park. For further contact info check our website at obihotline.org or call 252-473-5212.

Oct 12 thru 17: Little Freddie King @ Nancy Jazz and Pulatinion Festival - Nancy, France: www.nancynazzpulsations.com.

October 15, 2004: Lee Bates, Cootie Stark, Essie Mae Brooks, Sonny King, Salina, KS. They will be apart of Acoustic Sounds Salina Music Festival. For more information call 785-766-3553.

October 16, 2004: George Higgs & Taboon, NC. As a kick off to the upcoming B.B. King concert, George Higgs will be joining Scott Sawyer’s project GuitarSpeak for an afternoon of music. Tickets on sale Sept 17th, 15 in advance/20 at door. Call 252.883.6020 for more information.

October 16, 2004: John Dee Holman Black Mountain, NC. John Dee Holman and the rest of the artists at the Eden Arts Festival. For more info check out their website or call 828-686-3742.

Tuesday Oct. 26th: Music Maker Blues Revival has 10 Year Birthday Bash in Las Vegas. We are thrilled to announce that the original Blues Brothers Band will be performing as Medec Crowe! Call John Ferguson & Beverly Guitar Watkins

The event will be held at The Railhead,” located at Boulder Station. The show starts at 9:00 and tickets are only $30. Call (660) 264-1818.

November 5, 2004: Tim Duffy and John Dee Holman Tim and John Dee will be speaking and performing to the fourth and fifth grades at East Elementary School. This is a private event.

November 9, 2004: “Blues in the Schools” Lightrain Wes to speak/ play for the students of Edgecombe County School System on November 9th at Keshin Auditorium. Private Event.

December 18, 2004 – Cool John Ferguson to open for B.B. King Louisville, KY: Check out legendary blues performer and MMF supporter B.B. King and Cool John at the Keshin Auditorium.

Tickets on sale at Keshin Auditorium Box Office Oct. 14th. Call Eric Greene at 252.523.3686 ext. 187 for ticket information.

2009

January 29, 2005: Cootie Stark Cootie will be performing at the Cate de la
Give the Gift of Music Maker

“A fabulous project, real evidence that the music I have always loved is alive and well.”
—Eric Clapton

Tim Duffy is working to preserve the legacy of America’s older blues musicians by recording and promoting the pioneers. We salute Tim Duffy as “Person of the Week.”
—Peter Jennings, ABC News

$25
ONE NEW CD RELEASE PLUS
a donation in the recipient’s name and
a subscription to the Music Maker Rag.

COOL JOHN FERGUSON
COOL YULE

Cool the World/Christmas Day / Light My Fire/ White Christmas / Oh Holy Night / We Three Kings/ Cool Yule Come All to Faithful / Silent Night Have the herald
Absolutely beautiful guitar instrumentals of Holiday Classics, guaranteed to fill your home with the Christmas spirit.

"Cool John is up there with Hendrix, Wes Montgomery, Django Reinhardt, people like that."—Taj Mahal

ATTA BAKER WITH TAJ MAHAL (TM02)

John Henry / Cool Yule / Going Down the Road Feeling Bad / Chicago Blues / Painted Bill / Creole Creek / Louisiana Blues / Going to the Races / Fuck / Cool Blues / One Drop Blues / Sound of Mountain / Miss Brown Reclines / Going Down the Road Feeling Dad / Redhead Bill / Johnson Boys / Miss Brown Reclines / John Henry / Bolly of the Gown

This CD features Etta Baker with Taj Mahal plus Etta’s first influential recordings made in 1966. This release will be our Winter (December shipment) even. Back Record Club selection.

"From Bob Dylan to Taj Mahal, Etta has influenced the best of American music for 50 years.”—Tim Duffy

MUSIC MAKERS WITH TAJ MAHAL (TM01)

Etta Baker / Going Down the Road Feeling Bad / Redhead Bill / John Henry / Cool Yule / One Drop Blues / Sound of Mountain / Miss Brown Reclines / Going Down the Road Feeling Dad / Redhead Bill / Johnson Boys / Miss Brown Reclines / John Henry / Bolly of the Gown

"Music makers clearly dispel the notion that real blues musicians are long gone.”—Taj Mahal

PURAFÉ, FOLLOW YOUR HEART

Follow Your Heart: When You Still Think Whole World Is Made Up of Things You’re Not
Again the Catch Me If You Can of it’s She’s Gotta Have It
Everyday Life / Who’s hullin’ who / High Yellow in My Mind / Funeral Poor Lightnin’ / White I Mean Its Just a Sad Black Blue & White Rag / Cool John Ferguson / Cotton John Holmes / Levee You Love Taj Mahal / Yesterday Street Blues / Purr Blue

"Pura Fé’s voice soars the heavens, elegantly stating the Indigenous influence on the birth of the Blues.”—Tim Duffy

$45 THE BOOK AND 2 CD'S

The story of the Music Maker Relief Foundation comes to life in this beautiful collection of photographs and writings. The 84 musicians profiled in this book: they’re on a joyful ride over a never forget includes a 22-track CD and a 2 CD-21-track CD and a forward by B.B. King. 258 pages, 11 x 8.14. 146 black photographs, hand-come. Recover book. 2 CD's donation in the recipient’s name & a subscription to the Music Maker Rag. (RC4CD)

$100 GIVIN IT BACK RECORD CLUB

Etta Baker with Taj Mahal and 3 more new CDs throughout 2005, a donation in the recipient’s name & a subscription to the Music Maker Rag. (RC110)

$60 ALL THREE FALL RELEASES

Get 3 new releases, a donation in the recipient’s name & a subscription to the Music Maker Rag. (TM006)

$900 THE WHOLE NINE YARDS

Get the Whole Nine Yards from Music Maker. For $900, you can give everything in the Music Maker catalogue, 46 CDs and the Music Maker Book, “Portraits and songs from the Roots of America”, a donation in the recipient’s name & a subscription to the Music Maker Rag. (RC160)

$15 COOL YULE

Special price with one other music maker purchase.

Each gift arrives festively packaged with your personal note. All prices include shipping and handling.
Taj Mahal is the kind of person you could listen to for hours. He’s a child of the world. He speaks five languages, plays a laundry list of instruments, has traveled extensively, and can talk about organic gardening or cooking just as easy as telling a fishing story about Hawaii.

When listening to him I felt like a little kid watching Sesame Street for the first time, you just couldn’t pull me away.

“Fishing, music, life - it’s all integrated,” Taj says. “Fishing is an optimistic kind of thing. You fish if you’re an optimist.”

That optimistic spirit infected all the participants of the tournament as the fishing was slow by Costa Rica standards. It was a case of you should’ve been here yesterday. January was fabulous,” says Roy Ventura, owner of Roy’s Zancudo Lodge. “Our boats were averaging 10 fish a day and some days got double that.” But by the time tournament rolled around in mid-February, the currents had pushed in some green water and each boat was seeing around 10 fish a day and hooking two or three. However, the free-jumping fish and pools of porpoises kept things lively. By the end of the tournament, 30 anglers caught and released 27 sailfish, two blue marlin and one big black marlin.

On the last day of fishing, Jimmy Herring, a guitarist from Atlanta hooked into the fish of his life. News of the hookup reverberated off the VHF and the boat could be seen in the distance-giving chase. Herring knew it was a big fish.

“At first I was fighting it stand-up and all I had was a little sailfish belt with no harness,” Herring said. “The fish came completely out of the air and my whole body just went numb. It was huge — just unbelievable. I’m use to catching bass and crappie!”

The big black marlin gave a few more jumps and Herring retreated to the small fighting chair in the stern of the boat. Eventually the fish went deep before Herring finally got the fish boatside away. The crew released the estimated 500-pounder and Herring won the marlin category of the tournament. Angler Mel Whitcliff from San Francisco, won the sailfish division with four releases.

The tournament ended on an extremely high note. All the musicians got together and put on an impromptu concert, inviting all the townspeople, tournament participants and anyone else with an ear for good blues. The afternoon rains cooled things down just enough for Sammy Blue, Daniel “Mudcat” Dudeck, Derek Trucks, Jimmy Herring and of course Taj Mahal and his bandmates to heat things back up.

The crowd was elated when Taj plucked out the intro to Fishing Blues, one of his signature tunes, and began to belt out, “Betcha can’t fish” all of your time, baby’s gone fishing too. Bet your life, your sweet life, catch more fish than you…”

**Fishin’ Blues 2005**

**February 6th-12th**

**Playa Zancudo, Costa Rica**

The Music Maker Relief Foundation and Taj Mahal invite you to join us February 6th-12th, 2005 in Costa Rica for the 3rd Annual Fishin’ Blues Tournament. This popular event guarantees world class angling, gorgeous beaches, new friends and music, music, music. Ask Jimmy Herring of The Dead, last year he caught (and released) a 500lb. Black Marlin. His best friend, Derek Trucks of The Allman Brothers, was there to witness this tremendous effort. Derek & Jimmy, along with Taj and Mudcat helped this small island of 350 to an amazing evening of music on the pristine, black sand beaches of Playa Zancudo on the southern Pacific coast of Costa Rica. Our musical alumni includes Dickey Betts, Cootie Stark, Lightnin’ Wells and Cool John Ferguson. Taj and Derek have already saved the dates on their calendar for 2005 and we promise some great other talent as well.

This winter we will have 32 fishermen at Roy’s Zancudo Lodge. Boats and all fishing equipment are provided. The captains are first rate and very experienced. We fish for Marlin, Sailfish, Dorado, Tuna, and more. All you need to bring is your shorts, sneakers, a hat and some sunscreen. Roy’s Lodge is comfortable and just big enough for our group. Rooms are double occupancy and do have air-conditioning. The beautiful Pacific is visible from everywhere, including the pool and open air bar and dining area. All transportation, meals and drinks are included. We fish and tour during the day. Evenings we dine and enjoy the non-stop music. Touring options abound with tropical rainforest, mountains, rivers and beaches to explore by boat, horseback, hike or drive.

Only the music and camaraderie of our Tournament surpasses the natural beauty of Zancudo! Our group is large enough that everyone will make new friends and small enough that you will keep them for life.

This trip is the ultimate cure for your wintertime blues and helps to keep the bluest of the blues alive! What will make you feel even better is that half the fee is tax-deductible! Do reserve your spot early, as we are limited to 32 fishermen (we sell out every year).

**February 6th 2005** - Travel to Zancudo

**February 7th - Fishin’**

**February 8th - Fishin’**

**February 9th - Fishin’ and Awards dinner**

**February 10th - Concert (optional touring, beach party or more Fishin’)**

**February 11th - Rest & Relaxation (optional touring)**

**February 12th - Depart for home**

The entrance fee for this tourney will be $5,750 ($2,750 tax deductible). This fee includes roundtrip airfare from Atlanta or Miami, all transfers, room (double occupancy), fishing fees, meals and drinks. There will be a few spaces available for non-fishing companions, the cost will be $4,500 ($1,750 tax-deductible).
This CD captures his last masterpiece. He made these recordings in the majority of which the majority of which are previously unheard. "Grasshopper Pie" features Preston Fulp, Сawmill Water, and creates anew under all circumstances.

Jerry "Boogie" McCain
My Name Is Boogie

McCartney
Guaranteed to make you want to get up and dance! Neill Patman
Frisco Blues

McDonald
There is the last true master of the amplified blues harp, a good singer, and a cookin' songwriter.

Deep McGrew
The High Steppin' Ballads of the Great Northwest

McGrew
This album tells the stories of the frosty tramps, Day pickers during the frosty harvest season. A beautiful yet sunny folky album.

Mudcat
Arkansas Chicken

McGregor
Guaranteed to make you want to get up and dance! Neill Patman
Frisco Blues

McDonald
There is the last true master of the amplified blues harp, a good singer, and a cookin' songwriter.

Deep McGrew
The High Steppin' Ballads of the Great Northwest

McGrew
This album tells the stories of the frosty tramps, Day pickers during the frosty harvest season. A beautiful yet sunny folky album.

Mudcat
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McGregor
Guaranteed to make you want to get up and dance! Neill Patman
Frisco Blues

McDonald
There is the last true master of the amplified blues harp, a good singer, and a cookin' songwriter.
Letters
Tell us what you think, e mail info@musicmaker.org

Hi -
I saw you guys on Australian TV last night. I think you're all doing an absolutely fantastic job. My heart was so filled with happiness upon hearing such music. Surely, the blues is America's and the world's treasure. All power to you in your efforts to save the blues music. Thank you so much!!
AR, Sydney, Australia

I saw a story about your foundation last night on a program called Foreign Correspondent here in Australia. What a great idea you had, with so many benefits to so many people...in such a troubled times! Congratulations and well done. I look forward to purchasing this CD/DVD's in the future.
Dave Coble

I was fortunate enough to hear Slewfoot (and Cary) on the Mississippi River levy in the French Quarter the first week of September. I put my digital camera in video mode and recorded -- with sound -- some phenomenal musicianship. After a week in New Orleans - visiting many music venues - I think I find Slewfoot to be exceptionally talented and in a league of his own. He was by far the most talented musician I have yet heard in my many visits to the area - and here he was playing for mere DONATIONS (go figure!!)
Lee Friedman

Hello Mr. Dufty,
I hope that all is well with you and everyone involved in making MMBF go and be successful. I felt like writing to say thank you once again for making me feel extremely comfortable at the Portsmouth Blues Festival this August.

I was really looking forward to seeing Mr. Rutherford's performance for a long time, as I've been a big admirer of his CD on MMBF for a while now. His performance was truly great and jaw dropping; it's amazing to see a man with that much skill on guitar and vocals. I really can't put that performance into words, as he was just absolutely breathtaking as the music had such power and the energy coming from the stage was great. Mr. Stark's performance was also equally wonderful as his blend of special Piedmont guitar and vocals really got the crowd's attention. This definitely was the best performance I've seen from Mr. Stark and that's something as the past 4 times I've seen him have been really great. Once again, thank you so much for all the hard work and passion you put into putting the music out there and finding so many great performers, it is truly special.
Best Wishes, may everything be of good will towards you all,
Kris

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Get a great deal on Music Maker memorabilia that are available for a limited time. Quantities are limited, so act today!

CD Collection

AMM0.30
Limited Offer! Collectors Item! Mint Condition! Limited Stock. Three CDs (Guaranteed, Deep in the South, Countie Stark, Raw Sugar, Neal Parrman, Prison Blues) issued in 1999 by Cello Recordings, the top of line Music Maker Series. Elegantly produced with full color booklets with short stories, Viennese manner literature, essays, and the outsider art of the late James Herald Jennings and photographs by Axel Kusnier, Mark Austin and Tim Dufty.

Living Past

LP01.30
Get a piece of Music Maker History with the Living Past CD and Book. Tim found a box of the original patron's sampler book. They were first sold for a $100 contribution. This beautiful booklet explores the artists and their songs and showcases photographs, and song lyrics.

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RC30.00
You can help save CDs for the recipient artists. Most of these men and women have spent a lifetime performing their music and have never recorded. Join the "Givin' it Back Record Club" for $10, and you will receive a Music Maker CD every three months for one year. The CDs are mailed out in December, March, June and September.

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