Dear Friends,

B.B. King once encouraged us, "When people find out of the Foundation’s work, they will be happy to help." This seems to be true and we wish to thank all of you that helped us grow the Music Maker Relief Foundation in these uncertain times.

Congress has declared 2003 as the Year of the Blues. We agree.

For our part, we feel special recognition is due to the "Sisters of the South," by honoring one such woman who was an inspiration to the founding of MMRF. We asked a small group of supporters to pool their resources in honor of our dear departed friend Willa Mae Buckner.

These generous folks responded by creating the Willa Mae Buckner Challenge Gift. The Challenge is to you, our supporters. They pledge to match your gifts to MMRF this year dollar for dollar. To inspire new supporters of the mission they will match initial gifts $2 to $1. They pledge to do this to the tune of $150,000.

Early donations to this Challenge came from Al Scheinberg and Mike and Marty Koether who donated their winnings of the "Calcutta" bets of the first Taj Mahal Fishin' Blues Tournament. Many thanks to Bill Lucado, Taj Mahal and to all the fishermen who made this a truly amazing fun(d)-raising journey.

On another note, we have steadily been issuing CDs and we want everyone to know about our spring Record Club release. We are especially proud of the new "Cootie Stark: Raw Sugar." Taj Mahal and I have been working together with Cootie for a number of years on this project. Taj performs on bass, piano, harmonica, banjo and harp and co-writes a couple tunes with his South Carolina elder. The result of Cooties' interpretations of age-old classics and his own mystifying originals make this one of the most powerful albums to come from us in a long time. You'll hear a master in full revelry, at the top of his game, mature and delivering the goods that clearly place him as a true King of the Piedmont Blues.

There is so much going on! Please stay in touch! Check out our website! Contact us to organize a concert in your town! But, first and foremost, as our good friend Jerry "Boogie" McCain reminds us "Don’t forget to love the blues!"

With warm regards,

Timothy & Denise Duffy

[Signature]
Bottles of champagne are nice, liquor is quicker, you can drink all you want down in Costa Rica," riffed Taj Mahal in that famously low, thick growl of his, as we sat side by side at the bar of the Zancudo Beach Club. It was his last night in Costa Rica, along with the rest of the relaxed, regular guys, (some a little sunburned, some a little drunk) he'd brought along for the ride.

Regular guys, that is, except that several of the fishermen gathered in Zancudo last week were no ordinary fishermen, but top musicians, including founding member of the Allman Brothers Band guitarist Dickey Betts and current addition Derek Trucks, Dead guitarist Jimmy Herring, and blues musicians Sammy Blue and Daniel "Mudcat" Dudeck.

The small community of Zancudo, near the Southern zone town of Golfito, played host to the mixture of die-hard fishermen and top musicians (some of them also die-hard fishermen) in the first Taj Mahal Fishing Blues Tournament Feb. 17-22, with proceeds benefiting the Music Maker Relief Foundation, which helps struggling traditional musicians with money for basic necessities, touring and promotion.

The lucky group of 20 fishermen spent $5,000 for six days and five nights including three days of deep-sea fishing, with food and lodging included. Half of the proceeds went to Music Maker, which netted approximately $50,000, including $3,000 in funds returned to the foundation from fishing bets.

On Friday afternoon, most of the musicians attended a party at Music Maker board member Bill Lucado's beach home. After the barbecue, over slices of fresh watermelon and pineapple, Betts casually asked Mudcat if he would "practice" with him, and they along with Tim Duffy spent the next few hours trying out different blues tunes as the guests looked on, smiling contentedly.

"People drive tons of miles to see these guys, and we're just sitting here with them," said Don De Lavorgna, from Long Island, New York, who said he will definitely be attending again next year.

The festivities ended with pizza and an intimate concert at the Zancudo Beach Club, where the musicians met a slightly larger public of about 150 mostly locals.

Mudcat started the show, with his can't-sit-down tunes, such as "Rattlesnake." Sammy Blue added his own Costa Rican touch to his rendition of "Sweet Home Zancudo" with Taj Mahal accompanying on guitar. Mahal also played solo, including tournament favorite "Fishing Blues" and "Hula Blues."

Betts, Herring and Derek Trucks performed "In Memory of Elizabeth Reed" and "Georgia on a Fast Train" and thrilled the expectant crowd with "Ramblin' Man." As the night progressed, the musicians joined each other, in different permutations, with Betts joining Blue again, Taj hitting the crown again and Mudcat choosing down the small restaurant at 1:30 a.m.

Betts compared Zancudo to the beauty of Jamaica 50 years ago, and Taj Mahal said he planned to come back before the next tournament for at least two weeks of "hanging out and fishing."

But how exactly did the illustrious group of artists end up in tiny Zancudo? "Duke of Decadence" Lucado, blues-loving philanthropist from Macon, Georgia, had a great deal to do with it.

Betts, Herring and Trucks all said they ended up at the event through their friendship with Lucado, who has donated a great deal of time and money to the Music Maker's over the years. Blue called Lucado a mix of Ernest Hemingway and the Great Gatsby, with an incredible passion for the blues.

Three days of fishing netted serious prizes for the Music Maker Relief Foundation, as well as for several winning fishermen. The group caught 74 sailfish total, and netted another $2,500 from the one-day and three-day
Beverly "Guitar" Watkins just waxed the "The Baghdad Blues." This is Track 2 of the "Sisters of the South." (see page 5 for lyrics.)

Etta Baker turned 90 this past March. She recently composed a guitar piece called "Up the River Blues." She and Tom have begun work on her new CD.

Lightnin' Wells is steadily performing. Buy his CD if you haven't already. It is terrific!!!

We welcome the Bareback Rider of Rapid City, SD and Lee Gates of Milwaukee, WI as new recipient artists.

Robert "Wolfman" Belfour is playing better than ever.

On Wednesday, March 16, Ernie Williams was highlighted on WMHT’s first episode of their Successful Aging series, entitled "It’s an Age Thing." He also appears in the opening and closing credits for the entire 13 week series.

Soft’s remix of a Guitar Gabriel guitar line on track 1 of "Wakame Blue" appeared on the American Express, Tiger Woods commercial a couple times during the Oscars!

The great R&B singer Skeeter Brandon is living in Durham and wants to get out and do some big shows.

Precious Bryant has been out doing shows and is scheduled to perform in France this summer. She recently received the American Federation of Independent Music’s award for best blues artist.

Mudcat is busy entertaining the world. We wish him the best on his trip to France this April and May.

Eddie Tigner has been acknowledged by the Georgia Council for the Arts as a master artist and was presented a grant to teach an apprentice for one year.

Dr. Needmore from Flibennin, AL, is using his remedies to help Whistlin’ Britches.

Capt. Luke remains the pillar of his community in East Winston. His recent performances and with ladies and men standing in line to kneel and kiss his hand. He was recently honored by the NC Folklore Society, with the Brown-Hudson Folklore Award.

George Herbert Moore of Burgaw, NC died on April 1st.

April 6th was Beverly "Guitar" Watkins 4th birthday!

Thanks to Barry Dollins, the Chicago Blues Festival is honoring the 50th anniversary of the Delmark Record Company this year. We thank him for booking Drisk Small at this prestigious event.

Beverly "Guitar" Watkins and Essie Mae Brooks recently auditioned for a major part in the Coen Brothers' upcoming film, "Ladykillers."

We thank Cool John for his commitment to the mission. In recent weeks he has missed several episodes of Jerry Springer to do interviews with the press.

The infamous Pat Sky is expressing interest in rekindling his recording career.

Bishop Dready Manning of Roanoke Rapids, NC has been honored a NC Folklife Award. The Bishop has been performing for church audiences in Halifax and Northampton counties for 39 years. Over that period, he founded his own church, performed for countless prayer meetings and revivals, released a series of locally-produced 45rpm discs, LP albums, and commercial cassettes; and built a large audience for his long-running Sunday morning radio show over Weldon’s WSMF-AM.

We are saddened by the deaths of Lydia Wenworth, William C. Hinger IV, Albert Smith, Robert Marker and Othar Turner this March.

We have reissued "Guitar Gabriel, Toot Blues." This rare and classic was only released on cassette and drew international attention. This CD comes with the original cassette artwork plus office’s first postcard and his Chief Wahoo Medicine Oil labels, limited collectors edition.

Amy Nolan our Programs Coordinator is doing a terrific job!

Tuesday March 4th, The New York Times ran an article on the blues. They had a big color photo of Cool John Ferguson on the cover of the arts section and a great photo of Robert "Wolfman" Belfour. Stephen Kinzer wrote: "The strongest affirmation that blues is alive and thriving however may not be coming from Mississippi but from the Music Maker Relief Foundation of Hillsborough, NC. In the last few years it has produced several dozen recordings of largely unknown artists whose mastery of blues and other idioms has surprised even those who believed these traditions were dying out. From the big-throated north Mississippi blues of Robert Belfour to the lilting Piedmont guitar of 89-year-old Etta Baker, these artists prove the vibrancy of blues tradition."

Emily Huffman is our new booking intern. Find out how we can bring a Music Maker Blues Revue to your town. Mmmrbooking@yahoo.com
Dear Filda,

My wife Danise came up with the title "Sisters of the South." For an album late one night driving through Georgia in our van, we had been on an incredible adventure across the Southern United States, recording seven female blues and gospel artists in five days. These women, with their unique talents, had left us with a deep sense of the beauty and majesty of the human spirit. All of them had endured the trials of adversity inherent in their race, time, gender, geography, and social status. And all of them had emerged, beaten but unbroken, with the radiant strength of the soul survivor.

Our friend Willa Mae Buncher truly embodied this spirit. As Tg Winkie once commented, "There was never a period in the history of the world that could keep Willa down." Her indomitable nature from a legion of admirers. By paying tribute to Willa we wish to recognize all of the women artists of the Music Maker Relief Foundation including Bina Baker, Coree Mae Newport, Relene Mae Brooks, Coree Fiske, Beverly "Guitar" Watkins and Aliza Mae Hinton. We asked a small group of steadfast friends to help us honor these women and were thrilled when they responded with pledges totaling $150,000 as a Willa Mae Challenge Gift to inspire others to contribute to our mission.

This gift will match all gifts from existing supporters! To help us grow, this gift will match first-time contributors it as is.

Enjoy the special gift of spirit with our new CD series, "Tales of the South." This compelling CD of women artists is only available to people who participate in this Challenge Gift.

More news and new details on the Willa Mae Buncher Challenge! Learn more about our mission at musicmaker.org.

Sincerely,

[Signatures]

Tom & Denise D.
Cool John Ferguson will be at the All Peoples Grill on April 19, 26, May 10, 17, 24, 31 and Every Saturday in June.

May 3rd: Pre-Roots Party. Charlie’s Pub on Ninth St. in Durham, NC, 9 pm.
May 4th: Roots on Ninth, a free festival held on Durham’s Ninth Street, 3 stages for a full day of music and fun. Join Abe Reid Band, Slewfoot and the Angels, The Goins, George Higgins, Drink Small, John Dee Holeman, Carl Rutherford, Benton Flippin Band, Macavine Hayes, Cool John, and The Branchettes. Be sure not to miss this great music festival! 1pm-6pm
May 17th: Neal Pattman with Mudcat at the Blind Willie McTell Festival 12:00.

June 1st: Drink Small will be playing at the Chicago Blues Festival at 2pm.
June 14th: The Freedorn Creek Blues Festival. Don’t miss this incredible event! Aliceville, AL. Contact: 205 373 2521.
June 20th: Cool John Ferguson, Slewfoot and the Angels, Little Freddie King, Beverly "Guitar" Watkins, Tim Duffy & Ardie Dean will be playing Tipitino’s in New Orleans.
June 21st: Cool John Ferguson, Slewfoot and the Angels, Little Freddie King, Beverly "Guitar" Watkins, Tim Duffy & Ardie Dean in Mobile Alabama, Atheneum, June 21st.
July 20th: Cootie Stark, Eddie Tigner, and Beverly "Guitar" Watkins will be performing at the NY State Budweiser Blues Festival in Syracuse, NY.
July 17th Mudcat will be performing at The Cave, Chapel Hill, at 9:30 pm. www.thecavetavern.com
George Higgins will be performing at The Cave on July 19.
August 2, 2003 John Dee Holeman and George Higgins will be performing in the Pocono Blues Festival at the Boulder Ski Area.

New Releases

Dave McGrew, Fruit Tramp Ballads of the Great Northwest is a beautiful album of real life songs by a genuine folk-hero. Dave is joined by Taj Mahal, Cool John Ferguson and Abe Reid.

Sisters of the South Celebrate the women of the Blues! There is a little bit of everything here: gospel songs both wrenching and uplifting, lyrical guitarist mastery, a playful risqué number, and low-down driving blues.

Cootie Stark, Raw Sugar Follow up to Sugar Man, Stark proves once again why he is the reigning King of the Piedmont Blues.

Guitar Gabriel, Toot Blues Reissue of the classic album, that brought Gabe national attention. Get your limited edition with the original cassette tape artwork and Guitar Gabriel artifacts.

Add these 60's to your collection. All at the order form or go to www.musicmaker.org.
Fishing Tournament (Con't.)

"Calcutta" bets, which winners Al Schomber and Mike and Marty Koecher donated back to the foundation.

Top honors for the most sailfish at the informal award ceremony went to Mike Koecher, from Marco Island, Florida; Chank Middleton, Allman Brothers Band long-time assistant, and Al Schomber, who tied with seven each. Taj Mahal won the biggest marlin award, while the best spartanus shrimp prize went to Middleton and Neil Whitecliffe, who received an award for the biggest fish.

After the official three days were over, Taj Mahal, Trucks and Herring proved their love for the sport when they went for one last try, and each caught a roosterfish, ranging from 45 to 65 pounds each. Derek Trucks said as a Florida native he had fished before, but "never like this."

The 2nd Taj Mahal Fishin' Blues Tournament will fly to Zancudo, Costa Rica on Feb. 16, fish the 17, 18, 19, Beach Party & Concert 20th, Day Off 21st, Return home 22nd. Please call or email (info@musicmaker.org) for information on how to participate.

Music Maker News (Con't.)

Music Maker intern Isaac Deter-Wolf has been a great help to our organisation. Please contact amy@musicmaker.org to inquire about intern opportunities.

We must report that the Legendary Blues Cruise is truly an amazing event. We were proud to take part in workshops, jam on shows and enjoy the company of some of the nicest folks you could ever meet. Check out www.bluesctv.com to learn of their cruise next February.

Ardie Dean & Greg Rowell have done an incredible job hosting the MMRF Visiting Artist program in Vinemont, Alabama.

Mathieu Chabert has again donated beautiful guitars and equipment to our Instrument Acquisition program. Thanks!

Dickey Betts, Jimmy Herring, Derek Trucks, Susan Tedeschi, Carey Williams and Tom Rankin have all joined our advisory board.

Baghdad Blues
Baghdad, has been hit!
You know, these nations need to quit;
But I, tell you this
It doesn't mean a bit
Terrorist attack is how you know
It makes me want to cry
Baghdad blues, it makes me want to put on my blues walkin' shoes

Another American Marine, has been confirmed killed
You all know, that gives me chills
It is up to each country, to end this war

Guns blazing into Baghdad sky
I just, wonder why
Got the Baghdad blues,
It makes me want to put on my blue walkin' shoes
© Beverly "Guitar" Watkins 2003, Featured on Sisters of the South

Support

- Donation Fully tax deductible, will be matched by the Willa Mae Buckner Challenge Gift
- Sisters of the South Celebrate the Women of the Blues New Release $25
- "Baby let me play with your yo-yo, I'll let you play with mine."
  - Willa Mae Buckner
- Givin' it Back Record Club
  - 1 yr. Membership You receive a brand new Music Maker release CD every 3 months for a year (4 CDs) $100
- Taj Mahal Fishin' Blues Tournament
  - Fee 16-22, 2004
  - Total $2,500 ($250 tax-deductible)
- Book & CD Music Makers Portraits and Songs from the Roots of America and CD featuring Music Maker Artists $35
- Book and 2 CDs an additional CD featuring 21 additional artists $50

Music Maker New Releases

- Guitar Gabriel, Toot Blues
- Dave McGrew, Fruit Tramp Ballads of the Great Northwest
- Cootie Stark, Raw Sugar

T Shirts $25

- MMRF Mandala M, L, XL, XXL please circle a size
- Cool John Ferguson Child, M, L, XL, XXL please circle a size

Total

for a complete CD listing go to musicmaker.org
or call to request a catalog by mail

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4052 Summer Lane
Hillsborough, NC 27278

Music Maker Relief Foundation is a 501(c)3 tax exempt organization. All donations are tax-deductible to the full extent allowed by law.

Music Maker Relief Foundation, Inc. is a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping the true pioneers and forgotten heroes of Southern musical traditions gain recognition and meeting their day-to-day needs. Today, many such musicians are living in extreme poverty and need food, shelter, medical care, and other assistance. Music Maker's aid and service programs improve the quality of recipients' lives. Our work affirms to these artists that we value the gifts of music and inspiration they have delivered to the world. Our mission is to give back to the roots of American music.

Our criterion for recipients is that they be rooted in a Southern musical tradition, be 55 years or older and have an annual income less than $18,000.

Music Maker Relief Foundation, Inc. is a tax exempt, public charity under IRS code 501(c)(3).

Music Maker Programs
• Life Maintenance - Grants for necessities such as food, medical needs, housing, etc.
• Instrument Acquisition - Provides quality instruments and maintenance funds to recipient musicians.
• Tour Support - Provides funding and services to musicians wishing to tour and record.
• Emergency Relief - Substantial one-time grants to recipients in crisis (medical, fire, theft, etc.)
• Visiting Artist Program - Brings artists to our headquarters for professional development and assessment of needs.

Board of Directors:
Timothy Duffy - President
Denise Duffy
Taj Mahal
Bill Lucado
Daniel "Musical" Dookie
Lightnin' Wells
Bill Puckett
John Price

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