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
Daniel "Mudcat" Dudeck
Lightnin' Wells
Bill Puckett
John Price

Advisory Board
B.B. King
Bonnie Raitt
Dickey Betts
Jimmy Herring
Derek Trucks
Susan Tedeschi
Carey W. Williams
Tom Hamilton
Bobby Pulford
Colonel Bruce Hampton
Pura Fe
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Music Maker Relief Foundation
4052 Summer Lane
Hillsborough, NC 27278
Celebrate! 10 YEARS OF KEEPING THE BLUEST OF THE BLUES ALIVE!

Helpful Party Hints

Here are a few hints for your party. For further information go to musicmaker.org and download the HOST PACK.

These parties are all about raising money, not spending it, so we know you’ll want to keep costs as low as possible. Here are some items to keep in mind when developing your budget, and some suggestions for how to minimize your costs:

- **Graphic design and invitation printing**: Use MMRF’s sample invitation and flyer, which you can download in a PDF format and customize with the details of your party. Go to musicmaker.org.

- **Postage**: The Post Office won’t donate its services, but you can save money by using email, hand-delivering invitations to friends, neighbors and coworkers, and posting flyers in semipublic places (local shops, the gym, churches, schools, etc.). Of course, please get permission before posting flyers.

- **Catering**: (food, soft drinks, alcohol): Ask friends to bring food or beverages, or ask local supermarkets, restaurants and liquor stores to donate some items.

- **Advertising**: Approach the radio stations and newspapers in your area and ask for donated ads. Every media outlet routinely has last-minute space available (when an advertiser cancels, for instance), and most will consider donating the ad space to a worthy cause. Don’t forget to approach weekly papers or local “shoppers” which are even more likely to help out by giving you a free ad or running a story on your party.

- **Rental of party location**: Most likely you’ll hold the party in a private home or restaurant or bar, and won’t have to pay anything for the space. If you do need to rent a party space, try to get the owner to donate or discount the rental (it’s tax deductible). Also try to get extras like security, bartenders and sound equipment thrown in for free.

- **Decorations, props and signage**: Hand-made is the best, and cheapest option. If you do need something more, balloons are festive and cheap.

- **Rental of tables, chairs, glasses, etc.**: Again, only the largest parties will need to rent these items. If you need them, ask caterers, restaurants and other businesses to lend them to you.

- **Music CDs**: Easy and easily accessible. Plus this would be a great time to showcase your MM collection. If you want live music, ask around about up-and-coming local groups, who might be willing to play for free.

In short, be creative — and ask lots of people and businesses for their help. Getting local businesses to donate products and services can eliminate many of these expenses. Keep a record of who donates what, and the value of the donation; MMRF can provide them a tax receipt.

Commemorating ten years of keeping the bluest of the blues alive by illuminating and lifting up the forgotten pioneers of the blues, Music Maker is asking supporters to host a year of fundraising parties. Please consider hosting a Music Maker 10th Birthday Bash in your city or town!

The idea is based on a fundraising party series that Tori Amos has successfully set into motion for RAINN in recent years. Music Maker is a non-profit organization and presently takes no government funding or endorsements. So, small individual donations and grassroots events like the Birthday Bash are the lifeblood of the Foundation. Without the help of supporters, there wouldn’t be any way for Music Maker to continue providing the essential financial help to all of its valuable artists, many of which can’t survive on social security alone from year to year.

The basic idea of the Birthday Bash for supporters is to organize and throw individual birthday parties raising money for the Foundation. We encourage supporters to make this a late spring and all summer fun-time event, but it certainly can extend into autumn or winter. We expect most supporters to hold parties in their homes, with some bigger parties in restaurants, clubs, coffeehouses, and the list could go on... the more creative you get in the planning, the greater your results will be. There are no limits.

Another determining factor in your success will be the organization that goes into the event. There is a lot of information in our online Host Pack to get you started. Each organizer will set a fundraising goal and ticket prices for their party. Music Maker hopes that each party will shoot for a goal of at least $1,500, though any amount raised will certainly be welcome. Music Maker will be offering incentives to anyone who meets their goal.

Sharing the love of the music and bringing people together has been what has kept Music Maker alive these first ten years, we hope that these events will allow more folks to share that joy.

We hope these parties may become annual gatherings that people will come to look forward to.

If you are interested in sponsoring a party, you can contact Amy Nolan through e-mail: info@musicmaker.org or via telephone: (919) 643-2456. You’ll receive a packet of information giving you all the specifics and also generating fundraising ideas for your party.

Willa Mae Buckner, Carl Rutherford, Frank Edwards, Macavine Hayes, Haskell Thompson, Sara Captain Luke, Cora Mae Bryant, Cookie Stark, Musician Tim Duffy. Pensacola, NC ©Austin
Dear friends,

When I first met Guitar Gabriel and Willa Mae Buckner they were both in ill health. My first request was from a family friend for a few cases of Ensure (a nourishment drink) for these artists. Denise and I were living in a tiny house on the outskirts of Winston-Salem, N.C. at the time. I never will forget that big truck backing down our driveway and unloading two-pallet loads of Ensure. I was soon delivering this life sustaining drink by the caseloads to Willa and Gabe. The effect was staggering, within weeks they both had gained some weight and had energy to perform. For the rest of their lives MMRF was able to provide such basic support to these important artists.

Many of the artists we serve are living on the lowest end of Social Security and some artists receive absolute nothing at all. So when MMRF can help an artist through our Life Maintenance Program with $200 per month, in many cases we elevate an artists income by 50%. I can tell you that this truly makes a difference in someone’s life. We have never abandoned an artist we have started on such support.

It has been our mission for the last 10 years to locate such men and women and to illuminate their music for the world to cherish. By nurturing these folks along the way their art has remained some of the most imaginative country blues recordings ever to come from the Carolinas.

There is not room enough on these pages to reflect on all the accomplishments of the last decade. We are blessed to have worked alongside over 100 artists who have been with us through the good times and the hard.

It is time to celebrate this Music Maker milestone. We are asking everyone to throw a party and raise funds for our mission. Whether five people get together and raise $25 or a group of friends raise $200,000 we need your contributions so we can maintain and grow our programs. These events should be fun for everyone involved. Please let us know if we can be of any assistance.

With warm regards,

Tim and Denise Duffy

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Artists Notes

Butch Ruth of MS wrote to us about Bill Wallace a blues singer/guitarist down there. Butch writes that he has a big history that is not really appreciated.

Little Freddie King was recognized by the seven member New Orleans City Council and presented a Proclamation from the City by Oliver Thomas, chairman of the council. They are recognizing him as a Cultural treasure - blues master and one of the greats in New Orleans music for over fifty years. Also of note is that Little Freddie King has recently recorded a CD for Fat Possum Records.

Abe Reid has been helping us with our work with musicians since 1988. He is a real deal authentic young Carolina musician, straight from the heart of the bible-belt of Southern music. Abe is an awesome singer, harpist and guitarist and has offered his music to MMRF. We are hoping to schedule a recording session this year. Abe has just completed a fantastic CD and maintains a constant performing schedule with his road seasoned band The Spikedrivers. Sign up to be on his email list at aereign.com.

Tommy Brown of Atlanta, Georgia is a new MM recipient. Tommy was an integral part of Atlanta’s rhythm and blues scene of the late 40s. Tommy is an incredible singer, dancer, songwriter, producer and comedian. He recorded in the 50s for labels such as Savoy, King, Dot, United, Groove and Imperial and in his day had a #1 Billboard hit, “Weepin' & Cryin'”. Tommy recently lost everything in a house fire and we were able to make a contribution. Tommy has a classic CD of his old hits and a new release. Contact Tommy atthommasbrown@worldnet.net.

Wille King is preparing his 21st Annual Blues Festival in Alcaville, Alabama. For the last several years it has been called The Freedom Creek Blues & Gospel Festival. MMRF has proudly supported this event for the last 7 years. The festival brings people together from all walks of life. Wille and the Rural Members Association, a 501 (C) 3 non profit organization, are seeking support to stage this event created to bring forth harmony and love. This event is scheduled for June 9th. Please send your contributions to: Rural Members Association, 791 Old Memphis Road, Alcaville, AL 35442.

Banjo playing innovator Billy Faier now resides in Terlingua, Texas. He recently donated his archive of recordings to the Southern Folklore Collection at UNC Chapel Hill.

Dave McGrew is making a quick trip out to Hillborrough to perform at the Shakori Hills Grass Roots Festival and to put cedar shingles on the MM offices that were recently donated.

Contact us for any leads you have for us, please send them on.

Music Maker News

Many of our CDs are now available on iTunes.

The Chicken Redd honoring Mr. Frank Edwards was an incredible weekend!

Ken Ray is our webmaster and he does an excellent job! Check out our site, Ken keeps it current, easy to use and navigate. Ken truly helps out MM, so if anyone out there needs a web master, we highly recommend our friend.

The 11th Annual Texas Film Festival gave our short doc, Film “Living the Blues” their “Directors Choice Award.”

Emily Huffman our booking coordinator has headed out to San Francisco. She did an incredible job securing work for MM artists. We are presently seeking artist representation with an agency. Anyone have any leads for us, please send them on.

Check out www.deltamages.net

Bill Lucido’s recent staging of Taj Mahal, Mudcat, Derek Trucks, Jimmy Herring, Kester Smith, Bill Rich and Sammy Blue on the beaches of Zancudo, Costa Rica was among the most dreamlike and visionary concerts witnessed in a long time.

We are open to issuing our 50th CD. Recently we counted another 45 albums we have recorded and ready to go. We plan on paying tribute to Mr. Frank Edwards with our summer record club.

We are sorry to say that the Roots on 9th Festival will not happen this year. This free event on the streets of historic Durham was truly a jewel example of a grass-roots festival, featuring largely Music Maker artists of our region. We hope that we can raise awareness and sponsorship in the coming months so that this event is kickin’ next year. If any corporation wants to help sponsor this event next May please contact us.

We are always seeking interns here at our headquarters. Mats Lemberger of Dartmouth College is interning with us from September through January. We are searching for housing for Mats during this time.

We are seeking inexpensive housing for an artist in the Orange, Durham, Person County, N.C. region. Please contact us if you have any leads.

If you are a skilled graphic artist willing to donate their efforts to design CD art please contact Amy Nolan here at MM.
You could see it build. With each Saturday night that Cool John Ferguson, a native of St. Helena island off the South Carolina coast and now based in Durham, performed at the All People Grill in North Durham, the crowd grew exponentially until it was no longer a surprise to see cars parked in the adjoining field and folks flowing out of both of the Grill's doors. What drew the masses is guitar hero Ferguson's no-boundaries blend of blues, rock, jazz, even country, and true to his nickname, a certain intangible cool. The Independent Weekly spoke to Cool John Ferguson about his earliest days, his guitar style, and the Music Maker Relief Foundation.

IW: According to your Web site, you began playing guitar at the age of 3. What are your earliest guitar memories?

CFJ: My earliest memories are probably from the year before I started first grade, but they say I’ve been playing since I was schooled by me because my mom used to do domestic housework on Parris Island. The man of the family was transferred to Oxnai, so they gave her a Harmony guitar as a Gift because they couldn’t take it. So she brought it home and put it up in the closet. There was just something mystical about it. I’d get up in the morning when she was at work, standing up on chairs and stuff, and take it down. I grabbed it spanked it for three or four times. Then one day she came home, and I was sitting out on the porch actually playing a song, “Just a Closer Walk With Thee.” She said, “My God, I believe this boy is gonna play this guitar.” She stopped spanking me and gave it to me.

Letters From Louisiana
By: Slewfoot

As I write this letter to all the wonderful people who support the Music Maker Relief Foundation, I realize that I’m going into my twenty-fourth Mardi Gras celebration as a resident of New Orleans, Louisiana. Oh, Lord, I feel old sometimes. I came here in 1980, right around Thanksgiving, not knowing anything about Professor Longhair, the W.Ild Tchoupitoulas or the W.Ild Magnolias, both incredibly, visually overwhelming bands with a Grass Roots feel, and to be very honest, knowing even less about the true histories involving most of the music that later came to totally shape and engulf my whole life. I learned, y’all.

A freezing night in the lower ninth ward, on Charbonnet Street, while house-sitting for a friend, I found a Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee album titled “Hole in The Wall.” It had “Packin’ Up, Getting’ Ready,” as well as “Rockin’ Chair” from the late, great Jimi Hendrix because he did more stuff with a guitar that I’ve ever heard in my natural life. A lot of his chords was stuff that I’d come up with during my developmental years in the early ‘60s, and he just got a break. But that didn’t stop me. I played gospel in churches for years. I did a lot of wed-dings, funerals, what have you. I just play music, you know. Right now I’m playing blues simply because I was into the religious circuit, and it just didn’t pay as much. And I’ve always wanted to be a musician, so I have to choose the most lucrative scenario. But my head in deeply rooted in gospel because I acknowledge the fact that you’reסלום,杀人 in talent from God.

IW: You are closely affiliated with the Music Maker Relief Foundation. Can you tell us about some of the Music Maker recordings with which you’ve been involved as well as the other work you do for Music Maker?

CFJ: I’ve played with just about all the music artists, like Beverly “Guitar” Watkins. We just came back from Maine about two weeks ago, and that turned out great. The Winston cig-arette company and Music Maker paid for a 32- city tour. We went to Las Vegas, we went to Los Angeles, we went all over the place doing shows. The founder of it (Music Maker), I’m Duff, is a real swell guy. He’s done a lot for my career, and I’m not sure how to thank him. He was real from down there where Music Maker is. I’m loyal to Music Maker. And thank you guys for making me the Band of the Month. I finally saw the ad today, and I picked up about ten copies. (laughs) It’s really cool, you know!

UPCOMING EVENTS

April 17 - Little Freddie King at Rhythm and Blues O’Rears, LA; www.frenchquarterfestivals.org
April 17 - Sisters of the South Opening for Percy Sledge, DJ; File Ebbie Mae Brooks at Columbia Green Community College Sunday, April 15 @ 12:30 PM; Performing at 7 pm
April 17 - Little Freddie King at New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival - New Orleans, LA; www.Gospel.com
April 17 - John Dee Holahem’s Birthday John Dee and friends with Harvey Arnold and Billy Sessions for his 75th Birthday celebration! April 17, 2006 at All People Grill, Durham 620-9591 9:30 pm. Cover: $10
April 30 - Cool John Ferguson - Pittsboro, NC; Join Cool John and others from the Triangle for a night of music at the Firehannah Barn. For more information please contact the Pittsboro United Methodist Church, Durham, NC. 27712, 519-342-1121
May 22 - Cool John Ferguson, Hayti Heritage Center, Durham, NC
May 16 - Cool John Ferguson Wake County Fair, 5:30 pm, 1st Annual outdoor concert series.
June 5 - Willy King Freedom Rock Festival 411 Old Florida, Alabam
July 4 - The Mississippi Valley Blues Festival Davenport, Iowa Host of MM artists will be performing at the festival including: July 4: Lee Gates & The Lock and Key; 5 pm - Lee Gates; 6 pm - Cootie Stark w/Taj Mahal; 7 pm - Sweet Betty
July 10 - Ottawa Blues Fest, Cotton, Canada Featuring Musicians, Lee Gates, John Dee, Beverly “Guitar” Watkins, Cool John Ferguson, and Beverly “Guitar” Watkins
July 10 - 9th Annual Fleet BluesFest, Albany, NY; Ebbie Mae Brooks and Cara Mable www.albanybluesfest.com
October 12 Thru 17 - Little Freddie King at Nancy jazz and Pub, Nancy France. www.nancynajazzandpulsations.com
Music Maker's New Releases

Frank Edwards

\textbf{Chicken Raid}

This 10-track release by Milwaukee bluesman, Lee Gates, shows a smooth mix of soulful rhythm and blues and electric guitar. Gates' strumming and sultry vocals are sure to please fans of the genre.

\textbf{Alabama Cotton Kings}

This album features a mix of traditional and modern blues styles. The band's tight harmonies and driving percussion make for a compelling listen.

Jerry 'Boogie' McClain

\textbf{"Boogie" Is My Name}

This is the latest release by Jerry 'Boogie' McClain, a renowned blues musician. The album features a blend of traditional and contemporary blues styles, with McClain's distinctive style shining through.

Mudcat

\textbf{Kickin' Chicken}

This album is a new release by Mudcat, featuring a mix of blues, country, and folk styles. Mudcat's soulful vocals and intricate guitar work make for a unique listening experience.

Clyde Langford

\textbf{High Steppin' Momma}

This is the latest release by Clyde Langford, featuring a mix of blues, soul, and gospel styles. Langford's powerful voice and driving guitar work make for a dynamic listen.

The Feelings of Beverly "Guitar" Watkins

This album features a mix of blues, soul, and rock styles. Watkins' soulful vocals and soulful guitar work make for a compelling listen.

Reviews by Mark Coltrain

Frank Edwards

\textbf{Chicken Raid}

The title track, "Boogie Is My Name," begins the album and declares a truth we already know to be self-evident but never has to be reterat-
ed, especially by the man himself through grit-

ty vocals and the usual blow your mind har-

monica. "My New Next-Door Neighbor" takes

us through ten of Frank Edwards' early record-
ing sessions. He died shortly after being rushed to a nearby

hospital. "Evil Woman" was all recorded in Atlanta back

in 1996. The album's title track quietly pro-

claims some finger-shaking blues and R&B.

Lee Gates

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Hello Mr. Duffy,

It was good to see you in Northampton with the Sisters of the South with Beverly “Guitar” Watkins, Sweet Betty and Essie Mae Brooks. It was really a great event and good to see the place sell out and a very good crowd. I really enjoyed all the performances and the whole event was very well put together by you guys and the folks at the Acorn Music. It was a perfect place to hold such a performance as the sound was great and a nice closed environment, it really enhanced everything.

It was good to see the entire show this time since you guys got cut short at the Portsmouth Bluegrass Festival last year. I loved all the performances and the energy from the stage and each of the ladies was very contagious. The way you guys worked with James Montgomery and the bass player was very impressive and they were incorporated very well. Colm John’s versatility is pretty much awe inspiring, he playing some great gospel piano behind Essie Mae, or playing nice, smooth, understated guitar behind Sweet Betty or letting go on occasion, it’s a lot of fun to watch. Needless to say I really enjoyed each of the women and it was good to get to hang for a second, I hope your mother and everyone else had as much fun as I did.

Well just wanted to stop in and send my greetings and best wishes in all that is still to come for you guys. I wish you the best in all that you do and worked with James Montgomery and the bass player was very impressive and they were incorporated very well. Colm John’s versatility is pretty much awe inspiring, he playing some great gospel piano behind Essie Mae, or playing nice, smooth, understated guitar behind Sweet Betty or letting go on occasion, it’s a lot of fun to watch. Needless to say I really enjoyed each of the women and it was good to get to hang for a second, I hope your mother and everyone else had as much fun as I did.

Kris Handel

Sisters of the South: Essie Mae Brooks, Sweet Betty and Beverly “Guitar” Watkins, Northampton, MA (cfly)

Music Maker Rag / fiveoldstyleproportional
J.W. Warren, Ozark, AL
J.W. was good friends with Big Momma Thornton when they were both young. He was truly a great artist and a highly skilled guitarist.

Benjamin Gähnig, Pinnacle, NC
Benjamin is from Strasbourg, France and is the premier one-man band performer. Benjamin came to the states and helped us locate Cool John Ferguson, traveled with Guitar Gabe and Captain Luke. You can download his album off iTunes.

Benjamin Gähnig, Pinnacle, NC

Beverly "Guitar" Watkins, Irving Plaza, NY
Beverly prowls the stage and lights it on fire. Audiences go wild and jump in the air within moments of her first guitar solo. She is truly a God gifted star.

Mr. Q, Pinnacle, NC
When Mr. Q played the piano it just made you smile, his performances were truly eccentric, you never really knew if he was a genius or just truly nuts. Hopefully one day soon we will release a CD by this wonderful gentleman.

Cootie Stark, Lincoln Center, NY
Cootie performed on street corners for over 50 years. He was more than happy to travel all around Europe, the United States performing his music, recording CDs and meeting people. With all this activity later in life, Cootie's artistry developed and has become stronger and stronger.

Cool John Ferguson, Lincoln Center, NY
Cool John gave a stunning performance this afternoon in NY. His artistry is magnificent.

Rev. Perry Tillis, AL
Denise and I went to visit the Rev. one day. He would sit you in an area that was screened off, then he would walk off, the phone would ring, and it would be the Rev. talking all this wonderful stuff about angels, God. Really it is hard to remember, as the experience was so jarring and weird, it made us want to leave as quickly as possible. I wish we lived closer, so I could have gotten over that.

Macavine Hayes, Captain Luke, Willa Mae Budner, Cootie Stark, Winston Salem, NC

Macavine Hayes, Captain Luke, Willa Mae Budner, Cootie Stark, Winston Salem, NC
Blues Musicians Get Help Overcoming Hard Times

By Andrew Jacobs
First published: March 21, 2004, N Y Times

With an audience for his quirky style of music, Haskel (Whistling Britches) Thompson ended up in a Winston-Salem homeless shelter.

From the Appalachian highlands to the Mississippi Delta, musicians who got by on drink house tips and street corner busking have found themselves living in decaying mobile homes, formerly nimble fingers twisted with age, their homespun repertoires lost with their deaths.

"These people are our culture, our folk musicians, and no one is looking after them," said the bluesman Taj Mahal. "We're always putting our hands over our hearts and saying the Pledge of Allegiance and honoring Davy Crockett, yet we're allowing these people and their music to fall through the cracks."

In the 1980's, while recording old-time mountain musicians in North Carolina, Tim Duffy came to a similar realization.

As a student studying folklore at the University of North Carolina, he grew obsessed with Mr. Duffy, who lives in Hillsborough, N.C. "And the recordings don't put food on their table, it doesn't get them a gig." Over the last two decades, Mr. Duffy, 41, has turned his passion into a nonprofit organization, the Music Maker Foundation, which is part recording company, part artist management service and part social welfare agency. For those able to perform, the foundation he and his wife, Denise, run from their converted wood shop promotes roots music and offers artists a touring career; for those too old or sickly he sends monthly checks that average $100.

W hen unexpected hardships strike, as in the case of Little Freddie King's collapsing ceiling, Mr. Duffy provides emergency cash. When he learned that Mr. Thompson was living in a shelter, he arranged for him to stay with another Music Maker artist, Captain Luke Mayer, a smoky-voiced bari-tone who lives in a Winston-Salem housing project. Mr. Duffy also helps Mr. Mayer keep the van that ferries a half-dozen musicians to the grocery store, to doctors' appointments and to gigs around the state.

More than 100 musicians are served by the foundation, which has arranged whirlwind tours for musicians like Ms. W atkins, who still performs on the streets of Atlanta, and has appeared at blues festivals across the country and in Europe. The foundation also puts CDs into the hands of men like Cootie Stark, a blind guitarist from Greenville, S.C., who had never had his music recorded until he met Mr. Duffy. Mr. Holeman met Mr. Duffy in the early 1990's, his world opened up. Mr. Duffy arranged for him to get his $1,200 guitar, made sure he had a steady supply of nutritional supplements and helped him record two CD's. Over the past decade Mr. Holeman has appeared at festivals in Washington, Turkey and Japan. He performed at the Library of Congress, and he took part in a State Department-financed cultural tour of Africa. "Sometimes people stop me on the street and say, 'Aren't you famous?' " he said. "Now that's real nice." Another of Mr. Duffy's proud discoveries is Ms. W atkins, 64, whom he met at a shopping mall in Atlanta.

"She was prowling the sidewalk like Jimi Hendrix, flailing playing the guitar behind her head, failing to her knees, as if she was performing for a packed concert hall," Mr. Duffy said. "She was on fire. I couldn't believe my eyes."

Mr. Duffy gave her a $20 tip and said he wanted to help her reach a wider audience. "I'm ready," she says she told him. "Let's rock on."

She was soon booked on a 42-city tour sponsored by W inston cigarettes that included a dozen other Music Maker acts. She has been to Italy, Portugal, France and Switzerland.

"There are no lack of artists who could be helping," said Mr. D uffy, who said he raised about $50,000 last year in grants and donations. He pointed to a rack of digital audio tapes he said contained the raw material for 45 recordings.

"I can't get them out fast enough," he said, adding that every three years, four or five musicians die before he can get their music out. "I feel like I'm racing against time."

On weekends, he would play local drink houses, or birthday parties in the 1970's, he began appearing at a blues festival in Durham. W hen Mr. Holeman met Mr. Duffy in the early 1990's, his world opened up. Mr. Duffy arranged for him to get his $1,200 guitar, made sure he had a steady supply of nutritional supplements and helped him record two CD's. Over the past decade Mr. Holeman has appeared at festivals in Washington, Turkey and Japan. He performed at the Library of Congress, and he took part in a State Department-financed cultural tour of Africa. Sometimes people stop me on the street and say, 'Aren't you famous?' " he said. "Now that's real nice." Another of Mr. Duffy's proud discoveries is Ms. W atkins, 64, whom he met at a shopping mall in Atlanta. She was prowling the sidewalk like Jimi Hendrix, flailing playing the guitar behind her head, failing to her knees, as if she was performing for a packed concert hall," Mr. Duffy said. "She was on fire. I couldn't believe my eyes."

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No one ever said the blues was any way to make a living.

Beverly (Guitar) W atkins knew that, and returned to cleaning offices in Atlanta when the Holiday Inn lounge gigs dried up.

Broke even in good times, Little Freddie King survived by playing juke joints in New Orleans until old age left his body broken. Deprived of a steady income, he went without curtains or glasses, and one night, a heavy rain brought down the ceiling of his bedroom.

W ithout an audience for his quirky style of music, Haskel (Whistling Britches) Thompson ended up in a Winston-Salem homeless shelter.

From the Appalachian highlands to the Mississippi Delta, musicians who got by on drink house tips and street corner busking have found themselves living in decaying mobile homes, formerly nimble fingers twisted with age, their homespun repertoires lost with their deaths.

"These people are our culture, our folk musicians, and no one is looking after them," said the bluesman Taj Mahal. "We're always putting our hands over our hearts and saying the Pledge of Allegiance and honoring Davy Crockett, yet we're allowing these people and their music to fall through the cracks."

In the 1980's, while recording old-time mountain musicians in North Carolina, Tim Duffy came to a similar realization.

As a student studying folklore at the University of North Carolina, he grew obsessed with Mr. Duffy, who lives in Hillsborough, N.C. "And the recordings don't put food on their table, it doesn't get them a gig." Over the last two decades, Mr. Duffy, 41, has turned his passion into a nonprofit organization, the Music Maker Foundation, which is part recording company, part artist management service and part social welfare agency. For those able to perform, the foundation he and his wife, Denise, run from their converted wood shop promotes roots music and offers artists a touring career; for those too old or sickly he sends monthly checks that average $100.

W hen unexpected hardships strike, as in the case of Little Freddie King's collapsing ceiling, Mr. Duffy provides emergency cash. When he learned that Mr. Thompson was living in a shelter, he arranged for him to stay with another Music Maker artist, Captain Luke Mayer, a smoky-voiced baritone who lives in a Winston-Salem housing project. Mr. Duffy also helps Mr. Mayer keep the van that ferries a half-dozen musicians to the grocery store, to doctors' appointments and to gigs around the state.

More than 100 musicians are served by the foundation, which has arranged whirlwind tours for musicians like Ms. W atkins, who still performs on the streets of Atlanta, and has appeared at blues festivals across the country and in Europe. The foundation also puts CDs into the hands of men like Cootie Stark, a blind guitarist from Greenville, S.C., who had never had his music recorded until he met Mr. Duffy. Mr. Holeman met Mr. Duffy in the early 1990's, his world opened up. Mr. Duffy arranged for him to get his $1,200 guitar, made sure he had a steady supply of nutritional supplements and helped him record two CD's. Over the past decade Mr. Holeman has appeared at festivals in Washington, Turkey and Japan. He performed at the Library of Congress, and he took part in a State Department-financed cultural tour of Africa. Sometimes people stop me on the street and say, 'Aren't you famous?' " he said. "Now that's real nice." Another of Mr. Duffy's proud discoveries is Ms. W atkins, 64, whom he met at a shopping mall in Atlanta. She was prowling the sidewalk like Jimi Hendrix, flailing playing the guitar behind her head, failing to her knees, as if she was performing for a packed concert hall," Mr. Duffy said. "She was on fire. I couldn't believe my eyes."

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Fishin’ Blues 2004
Playa Zancudo, Costa Rica, all photos © Austin
The 2nd Annual Music Maker Taj Mahal Fishin’ Blues Tournament was a resounding success as twenty-seven anglers showed up to Roy’s Zancudo Lodge in Zancudo, Costa Rica, to kick back with a few fish, enjoy some incredible music, and hopefully win one of the coveted solid-gold necklaces up for grabs. When the final tally was done, Mel Whitcliffe won the sailfish category, releasing three sails, biggest other fish was a 500 lb. Marlin caught by Jimmy Herring, and the legendary Taj Mahal, those competitors who managed to keep their eyes open after fishing ten hours a day, were treated to soulful sounds under the stars and palm trees of Costa Rica.

“Getting out on the water is a great way to calm down,” Taj Mahal says, “It gives you a chance to put things in perspective and just relax. This tournament and meeting all these fine people is wonderful fun. It’s a great sport and I enjoy introducing others to it.”

Taj may be a showman up on stage, but put him in the cockpit of a boat and you’re up for a show of another variety. He meticulously goes over all his tackle (and he carries three duffel bags full of it), rubbing his fingers along the leaders of his many lures as if he were moving his fingers along the neck of a delicate antique guitar. He drags the hookpoints of each lure across his fingernail making sure they’re all razor sharp, and tests the drag on each of his reels.

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

Despite the slower-than-usual fishing, perfect weather, gourmet food, good tunes and the heavenly location kept all anglers reeling in delight. With musicians such as Mudcat, Derek Trucks, Sammy Blue, Jimmy Herring, and the legendary Taj Mahal, those competitors who managed to keep their eyes open after fishing ten hours a day, were treated to soulful sounds under the stars and palm trees of Costa Rica.

“The Feelings of Beverly Guitar Watkins” is our current selection for March.

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.

We wish to thank Steve Bashinsky of Macon, GA for donating these 18k Gold awards to the event for the past 2 years. ©Duffy

500 lb. Marlin caught by Jimmy Herring (Charring

We wish to thank Steve Bashinsky of Macon, GA for donating these 18k Gold awards to the event for the past 2 years. ©Duffy

Beverly “Guitar” Watkins plays low-down, hard stompin’, railroad-smokin’ blues. She’ll tell you, “people are impressed to see a black woman play like a man.”

Mr. Frank Edwards’ “Chicken Raid” is our selection for June.

Robert Thomas is a very special man, and we regret that down, and dirty of doing blues field research in our book.

Denise Duffy & Robert Thomas, Society Hill, AL © Austin

Lori Beth Edgeman, Irving Plaza, NY ©Edica Graham

Samuel Turner Stearns, Asheviille, NC ©Duffy

Taj Mahal & Edica Graham, Morganton, NC ©Austin

Music Maker Relief Foundation
3rd Annual Taj Mahal Fishin’ Blues
Playa Zancudo, Costa Rica

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Mark your calendars for 2005 more of this yearly event.

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CD Collection

All CDs are in excellent condition and are shipped in sturdy cardboard mailers. If you wish to return them, they must be in the same condition as received.

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Music Maker Relief Foundation
Check enclosed
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A Living Past
This is the first album in the Music Maker Relief Foundation’s A Living Past series. It features two dozen outstanding musicians who have recorded throughout the last century.

Circles and Covenings
This collection features 20 tracks of original music by musicians who have participated in the Music Maker Relief Foundation’s recording sessions.

Compositions
This album features a diverse range of music created by musicians who have participated in the Music Maker Relief Foundation’s recording sessions.

Clapton’s Crossroads
This album features a diverse range of music created by musicians who have participated in the Music Maker Relief Foundation’s recording sessions.

CDs and Other Media
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My daddy the way they come to me. You got to see the world. It's not their business about my view with everyone. I do what I can do. I don't belong to anyone but God. I don't have to inter... You don't understand, and you will never understand. And all the way when I was big. You aren't born with... Cora Mae Bryant. People done took advantage... Tim came to Georgia looking for... Freedom Creek Blues Festival. Check out... Freedom Creek and, upon arrival in Birmingham, the crucible of... Join the Fourth Annual SFA Field Trip Alabama in Black and White... Fourth Annual SFA FieldTrip Alabama in Black and White Birmingham, Alabama, June 4-6, 2004 Join the Southern Foodways Alliance as we celebrate racial reconciliation through food. Gather with us in Birmingham, the crucible of the Civil Rights Movement, for a weekend of conversations and presentations and discussions commemorating the 40th anniversary of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Feast on a Lazy Susan Supper of barbecue and gravy, creamy grits, fried green tomatoes, and fried chicken. And they will feed the hunger. The church cooks who baked... We begin with a true eye-opener. Charles Owens, who has been a chef for over 40 years, will provide a taste of the Southern... Foodways Alliance. In commemoration, we will operate public spaces where people of all races freely congregate and celebrate. Of course besides Bev (who wrote everything) the Feelings... Beverly "Guitar" Watkins, Atlanta, GA. © Ulysses

Having never been to Alabama, I was looking forward to the prospect of trying Southern cuisine. We began our tour with a true eye-opener: Charles Owens, who has been a chef for over 40 years, will provide a taste of the Southern foodways. He started with a breakfast prepared by Goren Table and a panel discussion on the history of Southern cooking. Owens, who has worked with Southern chefs such as Bev and Verda Ford, walked us through the process of preparing traditional Southern dishes. His emphasis was on using fresh, local ingredients and showcasing the unique flavors of each region. Throughout the day, there were several sessions on different aspects of Southern cuisine, from the history of African American cuisine to the role of women in Southern cooking. One session was dedicated to the impact of Evangelical Christianity on Southern foodways. We heard from experts such as Jim Walton, Raleigh, NC, who talked about the role of Evangelicalism in shaping Southern cuisine. Another session focused on the relationship between food and race relations. We learned about the ways in which African American communities have used food as a tool for resistance and identity. We also heard from cooks who have been integral to the Southern food movement for decades. One such chef is Beverly "Guitar" Watkins, who has been cooking in Alabama for over 40 years. She shared stories of her upbringing in Alabama and her journey to becoming a chef. Watkins emphasized the importance of using fresh, local ingredients and the role of Southern cooking in shaping her identity. Overall, the conference provided a rich and diverse overview of Southern foodways, with a particular focus on African American contributions. It was a great opportunity to learn about the rich history and culture of Southern food and to connect with other food lovers who share a passion for this cuisine.