

THE MUSIC MAKER RAG

Official Newsletter of the Music Maker Relief Foundation, Inc.

VOLUME THREE, NUMBER ONE

Spring/Summer 1997



ALBERT SMITH

photo: TIM DUFFY

Music Maker Relief Foundation, Inc.
Rt. 1 Box 567 Pinnacle, NC 27043

MAIL RATE
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 1
PINCINNACLE, NC
27043

INTRODUCTION

Dear Friends,

This spring has been a very active time for Music Maker, meeting new artists and expanding our programs. Albert Smith, Elder James & Pauline Goins and Sister Annie Griggs are all elder musicians who have never performed outside of their small rural communities. It brings us joy to meet such incredible talents and to relate to them that there are many people in the world who are anxious to learn about and hear their music. It is a momentous occasion to witness another unfolding and realization that indeed there still are great unheard voices. Our purpose is to expose the world to these traditional musicians who have spent 70 plus years making music on their own terms. In addition to "discovering" new artists we have been able to continue helping our constituency. We have connected many recipient



David Johnson's Home - Elba, Alabama

Photo: Tim Duffy

artists with performances at festivals both here and abroad. Music Maker has been blessed with support to continue this work and we strive to provide more services.

We would like to give special thanks to Mark Levinson and Cello, Ltd. for being valiant champions of our cause. There is not a month that goes by that we do not get a call, a letter, or meet some dynamic individual that has learned about us through Cello. John and Linda Porter are new friends who

have helped tremendously. John has produced some of the finest blues records today including artists such as Buddy Guy, Otis Rush, Taj Mahal, Keb Mo' and B.B. King. The Porters have opened a new world for us and because of their generosity we have enlisted the support of many major recording artists.

Good things are happening. We give thanks to everyone who has contributed and we pledge to continue our work.

Best Regards,
Timothy & Denise Duffy

The natural venues for many traditional musical artists have evaporated in our increasingly homogenous, media dominated culture.

With no place to perform, these musicians are without an audience and have no means of making a living through their art. The purpose of M.M.R.F. Inc. is to provide these artists what they need to make music. We strive to accomplish this goal through financial assistance and advocacy programs.

Meeting a new artist, we discuss their needs and desires, in both their musical careers and standard of living. Music Maker makes many grants of cash or in kind awards to cover life necessities. The size and shape of relief varies with the individual's needs. The foundation has purchased vehicles, groceries, prescription medication, heating oil and other basics. This area is perhaps the most disheartening, as the need is immense. When writing our by-laws the initial maximum income requirement we contemplated was an annual income ceiling of \$12,000. Our accountant advised us to raise this to \$18,000 as he feared too many potential recipients would not qualify. Although we took his advice, he was shocked to learn that the average annual income of the artists we work with is \$4,800. The foundation strives to help as much as it can in this area but our funding at this time does not permit us to radically change the lifestyles of our recipient artists simply through cash awards.

Our programs are most effective for people who still desire a career in music. Initially many artists we contact do not own a decent instrument.

We have made substantial progress in rectifying this situation. High quality guitars have been procured for Etta Baker, J.W. Warren, John Ferguson Jr., Carl Hodges, Thomas Gable, the late Guitar Gabriel, Drink Small, Jimmie Lee Williams, Precious Bryant and Coozie Stark. Other instruments have been purchased for or made available to artists as well as instrument repair and maintenance funds.

Eugene Powell, age 88 of Greenville, MS, like some other recipients, only wishes to make a few public appearances each year. In spite of this Eugene maintains a public persona and Music

Continued on PAGE NINE



Etta Baker, Morganton, NC — Photo: Carol Kanner

MUSIC MAKER EVENTS

June 8

Mudcat and The Northside Tavern in Atlanta, Georgia sponsored their "Giving it Back Festival". They honored Cootie Stark and Guitar Gabriel. Portraits of these two artists were unveiled and will be on permanent exhibit in the Tavern. Accepting and performing posthumously for Guitar Gabriel was his band "Brothers in the Kitchen". Blues greets Captain Luke, Macavine Hayes, Beverly "Mamma" Watkins, Frank Edwards and Cora Mae Bryant and many wonderful blues acts from Atlanta performed. A special thanks to Danny, Katherine and Ellen.

June 23-28

The Port Townsend Blues Workshop and Festival is featuring Cootie Stark, Neal Pattman and Precious Bryant. (206) 385-3100.

June 28

The Thomas A. Dorsey Gospel Festival in Villa Rica, Georgia will feature blues artists Beverly "Mamma" Watkins, Frank Edwards, Cora Mae Bryant and Mudcat. This is an important festival not to be missed! (770) 459-7019.

July 27

Congratulations to Cootie Stark! He will be appearing at the internationally famous Newport R&B Festival. (212) 496-9000.

July 11-12

London Jewelers of East Hampton, New York is sponsoring two blues concerts this summer. Cootie Stark and Precious Bryant will be featured on July 11 & 12 and John Dee Holeman and Drink Small on August 15 & 16. We are thankful for Mark & Candy Udell who have pioneered this event and who have dedicated themselves to promoting M.M.R.F. Inc. in the Hamptons. (516) 671-3154.

Aug. 15-16

Aug. 22-23

The National Slide Guitar Festival in Brevard, North Carolina will donate all proceeds from their National Guitar Museum on site to M.M.R.F. Inc. Photographs from our archive will be on exhibit as well as a Music Maker series. Cootie Stark and Carl Rutherford will be performing at this annual festival. (704) 859-6464.

Aug. 29-30

Cootie Stark will be appearing in Europe for the first time at the Lugano Blues to Bog Festival in Switzerland. (041) 91 971 3030.

Oct. 9-11

The first annual Carolina Downhome Blues Festival in Camden, SC will be held on October 9, 10 & 11. All the Carolina blues legends will be in attendance. (803) 762-9125.



Cootie Stark & James Davis
in Perry, GA - Photo: Tim Duffy

MUSIC MAKER NEWS

▶ Tim, Denise, 7 month old Lucas Allen, Lucy Duffy and Cootie Stark took a road trip to Georgia in early March. We first visited Fred & Kathy Fussell in Columbus, who were great hosts and took us to the incredible four-acre Pataquan in Buena Vista. We were able to visit Precious Bryant in Waverly Hall for two days. Then to Perry, where we had a music filled evening with John Lee Zeigler and his family. The next day we met with James Davis, Essie Mae Brooks and Rufus McKenzie. Cootie Stark was a grand blues ambassador and all the artists enjoyed meeting, talking and making music together.

▶ We met Thomas Gable in Gastonia, North Carolina this spring. He claims to be Guitar Gable from the 50s Excelsio label. Blues scholars disagree, citing Gable Peradin from Louisiana to be the original. He is a powerful electric blues guitarist who has maintained his Guitar Gable persona for well over 40 years. We purchased him an electric guitar and amplifier and along with The King Bees, sponsored a live demo recording to help book festivals. Thomas needs to be heard and we are committed to seeing him back on the scene.

▶ Cootie Stark, Captain Luke, Frank Edwards, Big Boy Henry, Cora Mae Bryant, Beverly "Mamma" Watkins, Paul Gerania and Neal Pazzman were all a success at the Charleston Blues Bash this February.

▶ We purchased excellent guitars for artists, including a 1970 Martin D-35 for Etta Baker, a 1956 Guild archtop electric/acoustic for Drink Small, a 1966 Guild acoustic for J.W. Warren, a 1925 Gibson for Cootie Stark. A special thanks to Youngblood Musical Workshop, Abe Reid and Shannocks for

providing these vintage instruments.

▶ John Creech wrote a short story entitled "The Last Bluesman." This is a beautiful piece about Guitar Gabriel, Tim Duffy and the author.

▶ Blues researcher and photographer Axel Küzner visited us in early June. Axel has been documenting the blues scene for 25 years and we have grown to depend on his encyclopedic knowledge of the blues.

▶ Mark Austin, a professional photographer from High Point, NC, has donated his services and he has helped enormously by traveling with Tim and creating fine photographs.



Thomas Gable, Gastonia, NC — Photo: Tim Duffy

MUSIC MAKER NEWS

In April, John Porter invited Tim to meet B.B. King as he was producing his upcoming duet record. B.B. was deeply pleased to learn of M.J.R.F. Inc. After a few sessions B.B. invited Tim to travel with him to London and New York. B.B. introduced Tim to Bonnie Raitt, Tracy Chapman, Dionne Warwick, Joe Cocker, Mick Jagger, Ronnie Wood, Darryl Jones, Keith Richards, Charlie Watts, Dan Aykroyd, John Landis, Taj Mahal, David Gilmour, Eric Clapton, Jeff Beck, Gabrielle, Jules Hoolland, Heavy D, Zucchero, D'Angelo, Simply Red and a host of the finest studio musicians working today. This was a miraculous time and a tremendous uplift.

Special thanks to Sid Seidenburg and Norman Matthews.

We thought you might enjoy seeing a few of the many snapshots taken during this time.



B.B. KING & ERIC CLAPTON

Photo: Tim Duffy



Capt. Luke & Macevine Hayes

Photo: Red Kautner



Taj Mahal

Photo: Tim Duffy



RON WOOD & JOHN PORTER

Photo: Tim Duffy

TIM DUFFY & DAN AKROYD

Photo: Tim Duffy



B.B. KING & TIM DUFFY

Photo: Tim Duffy





B.B. KING & THE ROLLING STONES in Los Angeles

Photo: Tim Duffy



Bonnie Raitt &
Tim Duffy

Photo: Tim Duffy

NEW ARTISTS

▶ **Annie Griggs** from Greenville, SC was introduced to us by Cootie Stark. She and Cootie have been singing in churches together for over 20 years. Her plaintive harmonies are reminiscent of Blind Willie Johnson's wife and she has a strong repertoire of inspiring gospel songs.

▶ **Alvin Anderson**, the son of the blues legend Pink Anderson, is living in Spartanburg, SC. He is a soulful singer who is leading a very adept electric blues band and recently he has taken to getting back to his roots. He has an acoustic guitar and is honing his father's old songs. Indeed, he is his father's son and you hear it immediately when he makes those signature bass runs. (864) 576-3127.

▶ **Albert Smith** is a rare jewel! He plays on an old blues piano style that is rarely heard today. At 84 he is still a strong singer and player, has never recorded or performed outside of his extremely rural home in SC. His piano has not been tuned in 70 years and we are working on getting this instrument tuned and repaired.

▶ **Bruce Erod** introduced us to Elder James and Pauline Goins. This couple in their late 80s sing very old-style gospel music. Some of their repertoire is directly from slavery times. They are both in excellent health and are willing to spread their message and music.

*Elder James &
Pauline Goins*
— Photo: Tim Duffy



PROGRAMS (cont'd)

Continued from PAGE TWO

Maker has been able to supplement his income by providing promotional tee-shirts (see contribution form) that he can sell at festivals and from his home. We have also provided tee-shirts for Willa Mae Buckner, Mr. Q and Guitar Gabriel. Music Maker is also a service provider. Assistance can be as simple as a ride to the doctor's office or as critical as an advocate in dealing with bureaucracies (ie. housing authorities, nursing home care, Social Security Commission, etc.). A particularly useful service we provide is passport acquisition for artists desiring the opportunity to perform abroad. This is often more challenging than you would expect. The majority of Music Maker artists were born in rural areas of the South early in this century. Home births were quite common and even in the case of hospital births there was often



Mr. Q - Photo: Tim Duff

no documentation. What birth certificates we can find are often riddled with misspellings and inaccuracies rendering them insufficient proof to the State Department. To further verify birth information we then track school records, census reports and marriage certificates. Although only two forms of ID are required we often have to track down many more to find those with consistent names and dates. More than once we have had to have birth certificates amended to be consistent with later records. Arduous though it may be, the process is instantly worthwhile when an artist like Mr. Q insists his photo be snapped as he departs to make his European debut.

Another service we offer is road management to artists travelling far from home. By working together with promoters we have been able to bring artists nationwide and abroad. We have provided escort to Precious Bryant, Captain Luke,

Willa Mae Buckner, Maxine Hayes, John Dee Holman, John Lee Zeigler, Rufus McKenzie, Big Boy Henry, Coozie Stark, Mr. Q, Carl Hodges, the late Guitar Gabriel and Jack Owens.

On a continuing basis Music Maker works to promote these artists and connect them with quality festivals and other first rate gigs in the US and abroad.

The foundation also provides legal advocacy to artists in dealings with the music industry. Thomas Gable recently came to us desiring release from a particularly unfavorable management contract depriving him of 60% of his income in performance and recording. He was further relieved of 75% of his publishing income as the unworthy party had assigned co-authorship of Gable's work to himself in the copyright filing. We gathered the facts and presented them to legendary entertainment attorney Bill Krasilovsky. He has done his best to extricate Gable from this onerous arrangement and Gable is free to go on in his work. What is most rewarding to our volunteers and patrons is the transformation that takes place when the musical gift of artists that have been isolated and inactive for many years is suddenly rekindled.

Fingers that haven't touched the fret board in ages become once again limber and articulate. Song writers who haven't composed in twenty years rediscover their voice and have so much to share.

What seems to make the difference is not the monetary amount of assistance received but that someone cares and is interested in their musical expression. M.M.R.F. Inc. recognizes the bountiful cultural treasure embodied in its recipient artists. We try and do the most for the most with our limited resources and appreciate all of the time and funding provided by our supporters.

DONATIONS



Music Maker Relief Foundation, Inc.



We are offering a few premiums for your tax deductible donations. We have a very limited supply of our early Music Maker Recordings. The sound of these CDs is exquisite and the music is some of the most powerful, poetic, heart-felt country blues one will ever hear. We are offering a 16" by 20" reproduction of Axel Kustner's photograph of David Johnson's hands. We also have a supply of tee shirts both of Eugene Powell and Willa Mae Buckner. Thank-you for your support!

Donations:

- _____ \$15. Music Maker Relief Foundation, Inc. poster.
- _____ \$20 per title. A Living Past, Guitar Gabriel, Vol. I and Come So Far.
- _____ \$25. Subscribing supporter. Receive Music Maker Rag.
- _____ Donation to Guitar Gabriel Memorial Fund.
- _____ \$100. Music Maker Patron. Receive the 3 CDs.
- _____ \$20 each Willa Mae Buckner or Eugene Powell T-Shirts (Sizes L or XL)
- _____ \$1,000. Music Maker Angel. Receive all of the above.

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Telephone (_____) _____

MISSION STATEMENT

Music Maker Relief Foundation, Inc.

is a non-profit organization founded by audio pioneer Mark Levinson and musician/folklorist Timothy Duffy in April 1994, and is dedicated to helping forgotten blues and folk musicians rooted in Southern musical traditions.

Now in their 70s and 80s, these artists represent the end of an era. Sadly, many are suffering from extreme poverty and need food, shelter, medical care, and other assistance. Our goal is to keep administrative expenses under 25% of our total budget. All other funds go directly to these artists in need, in the form of cash or in-kind grants.

Written by Timothy and Denise Duffy. Edited by Kay Hill.

Design by Terry Anderson Design Associates; Terry Allen

The Music Maker Rag is published by

Music Maker Relief Foundation, Inc.

Pc. 1 Box 567 Pinnacle, NC 27043

Tel: (910) 325-3261 Fax: (910) 325-3263

©1996 Timothy Duffy. All Rights Reserved.