

THE MUSIC MAKER RAG

Official Newsletter of the Music Maker Relief Foundation, Inc.

VOLUME FOUR, NUMBER ONE

FALL '97 / WINTER '98



COOTIE STARK

photo: David Gahr

Music Maker Relief Foundation, Inc.
Rt. 1 Box 567 Pinnacle, NC 27943

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Dear Friends,

The blues is on the move! We have been keeping a hectic schedule, meeting new artists, traveling to wonderful performing venues, and receiving tremendous support from new and old friends. This year Music Maker was befriended by many major music artists, producers and film professionals, some of whom have decided to commit their time and talents to our work.



Mark Levinson, Jocelyn Wildenstein, Lou Reed, Ceatile Stark, Neal Pattison, Laurie Anderson - Cello Music & Film.

Photo: Tim Duffy

The year ended on a high note. Cello Music & Film Systems has moved into the recording industry, starting Cello Records LLC and Jericho Records. They plan on signing major talent as well as traditional blues artists. We just wrapped a documentary film. On this project we were blessed to work with director Larry Banks and his crew. These talented, creative people eagerly shared our vision of the beauty and importance of the profiled artists' music and life stories.

We first met James "Guitar Slim" Stephens in 1987. At that time, we had no idea the work would continue and

grow to include so many artists and media professionals. It is difficult to reflect on the many friends that have passed on since that time, especially over the holidays. Guitar Gabriel would be proud that we have kept it going. It was so important to him that his name and music never die. Hopefully we have reached a point where his work and that of others like him will spread out from the veiled world in which it has endured.

It takes a great effort to reach world stages. We are grateful to Mark Levinson, John Porter, Taj Mahal, Andrew Lauder, Elliot Katzner, and Larry Banks for putting their professional credibility on the line for Music Maker.

The background and heritage of the blues musicians we work with reaches directly back to the turn of the century when much of this music originated. It is a real joy to see it still rolling strong, facing the dawn of a new millennium. We will continue with our work and welcome all to join us.

"We have a living past and a future coming in."
- Guitar Gabriel

Tim & Denise Duffy

MUSIC MAKER EVENTS, ETC.

This January Taj Mahal is returning to Pinnacle with producer John Porter and engineer Joe McGrath to record albums with Etta Baker, John Dee Holeman and Algia Mae Hinton.

Etta Baker and Algia Mae Hinton have been invited to perform at the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival this spring.

Crosscut Records has published, "Blues 1976-1997." This is a collection of 30 photograph postcards taken by blues researcher Axel Kustner. Axel has generously donated 50 signed sets to Music Maker which are available for a modest donation.

Special thanks to David Nelson, editor of Living Blues Magazine! The January/February issue has a 14 pg. feature on Music Maker and several artists. Photographs of Frank Edwards, Cora Mae Bryant, Beverly "Guitar" Watkins and Cootie Stark are on the cover.

Neal Pattman and Cootie Stark were busy recording in New York in early September. Lou Reed and Laurie Anderson dropped by the sessions at Cello Music and Film Systems to offer their encouragement.

Congratulations to Elder James and Mother Pauline Goins on the release of their CD on Lost Gold Records. To get your copy call: 803-337-8296. Thomas "Guitar" Gable is happy to announce the arrival of his short format cassette (18 mins). For info call: 704-264-5515.



Sam Stevens, Cootie Stark, Carl Rutherford - National Guitar Festival

Photo: Tim Duffy

MCA Records used several of Tim's photographs in the CD artwork of B.B. King's "Deuces Wild." Guitar Player magazine used his photos to illustrate their story on this project and producer John Porter in their JAN issue.

Please view our photo exhibition of blues artists by Axel Kustner, Mark Austin and Timothy Duffy at Cello Music and Film Systems, 41 East 62nd St. NYC, NY. Call for a showing anytime during business hours at 212-207-4016.



Taj Mahal and Etta Baker in Morganton, NC

Photo: Mark Austin

"Expressin' the Blues"

(working title)

In February, 1997 Mark Levinson introduced me to movie producer Elliot Kastner in New York. Elliot became interested in my work and offered to help produce a documentary film. I presented him with a film proposal. Elliot understood my vision and began his search for a director. In early November Elliot introduced me to director Larry Banks. We wasted no time and within weeks were shooting artists in North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia. By December 10th the film was wrapped.

Taj Mahal came to North Carolina to interview and accompany several of the musicians and has agreed to narrate the film. John Porter offered his assistance and made the trip as well. The first shoot took place at several locations across North Carolina where we filmed: Willa Mae Buckner, Etta Baker, Algia Mae Hinton, Macavine Hayes, Mr. Q, Captain Luke, and John Dee Holeman.

After a brief respite for Thanksgiving the crew reassembled for a second week of shooting. We rolled through Georgia and South Carolina capturing the songs and stories of artists in Perry, Waverly Hill,

Atlanta, and Greenville. In this phase we filmed: Cora Mae Bryant, Precious Bryant, Beverly "Guitar" Watkins, Cootie Stark, Neal Pattman, Frank Edwards, Rufus McKenzie, Frank Edwards, Shelton Poe, Sammy Blue, John Ferguson Jr., and Alvin "Little Pink" Anderson. Taj Mahal returned East for the film's musical finale in Atlanta at the Northside Tavern. Our friends Jimmy Rip and Mud Cat were on the scene. The last night went so well there may be enough footage for a separate concert film, "Blues Came to Georgia" (working title).

It will take two months of editing to come up with a rough cut, and then another month to edit the final cut. Larry Banks is working constantly because it is Elliot's intention to have this film ready to screen at the Cannes Film Festival this coming May. If the film does well there it will be presented at other festivals, go to theatrical release and will eventually end up on television. Larry, Tim and the artists all have high hopes. The producers have pledged to donate 90% of all profits from this film to Music Maker Relief Foundation, Inc.



John Porter,
John Dee Holeman
and Taj Mahal -
Durham, NC

Photo: Tim Gully

Notes from the Screenwriter:

In this film we explore THE BLUES COMMUNITY. Although all too often portrayed as a solitary figure, an introspective artist grappling with his own demons, the bluesman was anything but. He was one visible extremity of a community of souls, a repository of corporate memory and the heart of the conviviality of the night-time respite from long, hard-working days. (In film these artists have been presented for the most part solely as musicians, ignoring their far more complex and important role as story keepers.)

In EXPRESSIV THE BLUES (working title) we present an organic exposition of the blues community. We expose/explore the journey of the musical form of THE BLUES, from its plantation origins and mind-set of the slave

experience through its cumulative cograte form in the modern urban South. We illustrate the various stops along this journey and the lives of the travellers AS THEY EXIST TODAY! We do this by framing many blues artists and the surrounding communities relating to their music in North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia.

We have a fast-moving, image-packed show, punctuated by extended musical performances. We feel that, given the nature of this project, the material unfolds organically, revealing the mysteries within the music. We have a panorama of proponents of THE BLUES as a modern living entity, filling its function unshaded by the penumbra of faddism or favoritism.

-Wesley Wilcox



Elliot Kazner in New York, NY Photo: Tim Duffy



Old News, but Good News

We had a wonderful Christmas party this year and were fortunate to have many musicians and friends come together. Neal and Deborah Patsman made the trip all the way from Athens, Georgia.

Music Maker and Timothy Duffy were the proud recipients of a Lifetime Achievement Award from National Resophonic Guitars. The award was presented at the 1st Annual National Slide Guitar Festival in Brevard, NC on August 22nd & 23rd. Giving the crowd a sample of what Music Maker does best were Carl Rutherford, Samuel Turner Stevens and Cootie Stark. Special thanks to Music Maker volunteers John Creech, Dennis Baird and Sonya & Mark Austin.

The Bull Durham Blues Festival donated a booth to Music Maker on September 12th & 13th in Durham, NC. It was good to meet with friends old and new, Bishop Dready and Marie Manning, Etta Baker, Taj Mahal and Dick Waterman, Cootie Stark, along with Tim, Dorise and Lucas Duffy spread the Music Maker word among the good people of Easthampton, NY for the month of July. Special thanks to Mark Levinson for his generous hospitality.

London Jewelers of Easthampton, NY was once again the center for good times and great music with Cootie Stark and Neal Patsman on July 11th and 12th. Special thanks to Darryl Dudok for his support and great guitar.

Lorry Benks, Tim Duffy, Precious Bryant, Kathy Bonks, Lance Phax, Caleb Mese, Tony Hardmon (The Film Crew) in Waverly Hill, GA

Photo: Tim Duffy

ARTIST NOTES, ETC.

We were thrilled to meet Herbert Moore of Burgaw, North Carolina. He visited us in Pinnacle and we were able to provide him with a Gibson Les Paul guitar. We were able to donate a brand new National "Style-O" guitar to John Dee Holman of Durham, North Carolina.

Wanted: Good home for 16-foot snake. Wills Mae Buckner, "The Snake Lady", regrets the need to find a new home for "Slam," her Burmese python. He is a well-behaved and affectionate fellow but has a hefty appetite and is getting a bit large for Wills to handle. Only serious inquiries from true reptile lovers, please, at 336-325-3261.

Wills Mae Buckner hit number 362. A \$2.00 bet generated \$1,000 of winnings.

Cootie Stark knocked 'em out at the Newport R. 88 Festival July 26th where he opened the show for Aretha Franklin and The Neville Brothers. Cootie

made his European debut in Switzerland at the Blues to Bop Festival in late August. In October he performed in Germany and in November he performed with Neal Pattman in France, where we were escorted by our good friend Benjamin Tehoval. Cootie

and Neal along with Jimmy Rip and Mudcat performed in November on Robin's Island, NY.

October 25th - Mudcat, The Northside Tavern and Music Maker hosted another popular "Giving It Back" Festival. This event celebrated the memory of

Barbecue Bob and Pink Anderson. His son Alvin "Little Pink" Anderson performed in honor of his father.

November 7th - Cootie Stark and Neal Pattman performed at The Fern Center's Annual Homecoming Celebration, St. Helena Island, SC. The Fern Center is an African-American heritage and cultural center on the campus of the first school built for freed blacks in the South.

November 17th - High Point, NC. Wills Mae Buckner, Macavine Hayes, Captain Luke and a host of Music Maker Artists performed the opening night at the National Furniture Market. Hosted by Sue Williams and Trade Route.

We are saddened at the loss of legendary song writer and piano man, Bob Gaddy this September in New York. David Johnson died on September 14, 1997. He was a tremendous folk artist and harp player. He was a dear friend of photographer Axel Kuznetz.



Neal Pattman, Cootie Stark in Eperney, France *Photo: Tom Doherty*



Jimmy Blue, Beverly "Guitar" Watkins, and Cootie Stark at the Northside Tavern, Atlanta, GA. *Photo: Mark Austin*

Acknowledgments

Music Maker gratefully acknowledges corporate support from D'Addario Strings, National Acoustic Guitars and Highlander Pick-ups.

Special thanks to Pete Townsend for his support and words of encouragement to Music Maker at "The Who's" performance of "Quadrophonia" in Hartford, CT August 4th.

Hits off to The Northside Tavern, Elyn Webb, Mudcat, Katherine Wilkins, John Creech, Dennis Baird, Lightnin' Wills and the blues fans of Atlanta for their support of Music Maker and the documentary film project.

We have been blessed to have Dave McGrew catalog our extensive photo archive.

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. (\$12 deductible)
- _____ \$20 per title. A Living Past, Guitar Gabriel, Vol. I and Come So Far. (\$10 deductible)
- _____ \$25. Subscribing supporter. Receive Music Maker Rag. (\$25 deductible)
- _____ \$20. Axel Kustner Blues 1976-1997. 30 photograph postcards, signed. (\$10 deductible)
- _____ Donation to Guitar Gabriel Memorial Fund. (entirely deductible)
- _____ \$100. Music Maker Patron. Receive the 3 CDs. (\$70 deductible)
- _____ \$20 each Willa Mae Buckner or Eugene Powell T-Shirts (Sizes L or XL) (\$10 deductible)
- _____ \$1,000. Music Maker Angel. Receive all of the above. (\$947 deductible)

Name _____

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MISSION STATEMENT

Music Maker™ Relief Foundation, Inc.

is a 501 (c) (3) tax exempt organization 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 & Layout by Terry Anderson

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Rt. 1 Box 567 Pinnacle, NC 27043

Tel (336) 325-3261 Fax (336) 325-3263

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