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The Blues Foundation Announces Nominations for the 2008 Blues Music Awards

Online Voting and Ticket Sales Open December 13

Memphis, TN (December 12, 2007) – The Blues Foundation will present the Blues Music Awards for the first time in their 29-year history in the Mississippi Delta, the birthplace of the Blues. Performers, industry representatives and fans from around the globe will celebrate the best in Blues recording and performance from the previous year on May 8, 2008 at the Grand Casino Event Center in Tunica Resorts, Mississippi, just down the road from Memphis, the Awards' home since their 1980 inception.

Among those heading the list of the honorees is Mississippi favorite son Bobby Rush who garnered four nominations, including another historical first—nomination as Artist of the Year in both the Acoustic and Soul Blues categories. This singular achievement stems from the nominators' recognition of the two personas exhibited in his 2007 public performances--some shows featuring his long-running soul revue while others found him alone with a guitar and a harmonica in support of his Acoustic Album of the Year nominee Raw.

Watermelon Slim & the Workers returned in force, securing six nominations for the second consecutive year on the strength of their Album of Year candidate The Wheel Man. The "Queen of the Blues" Koko Taylor returns to form with four nominations, including one for her Album of the Year nominee Old School. The other artists with Album of the Year selections rode them to three nominations apiece, including On the Jimmy Reed Highway by Omar Kent Dykes & Jimmie Vaughan; Bettye LaVette's The Scene of the Crime; Nick Moss & the Flip Tops' Play It 'Til Tomorrow; My Life, My Friends, My Music by Sugar Ray & the Bluetones; and James Blood Ulmer's Bad Blood in the City. Lurrie Bell also was honored with three nominations, including one he shares with his late father Carey in the newly-created DVD category.

"At this time of year, releasing the list of nominees is like letting a Blues fan open a gift a little bit early," according to Jay Sieleman, The Blues Foundation's Executive Director, "and members are able to play with it right away by rushing out to purchase the nominated CDs, accessing the ballot to start marking their choices or purchasing tickets to get the best seats for the show. Looking into next year, we are really excited about the opportunities the 2008 event will offer Blues fans worldwide, the chance to soak up the deep Blues history of the Delta both before and after the Awards show itself. As the State of Mississippi continues to develop its Blues Marker Trail, you know Mississippi will be ready."

Online voting begins December 13 for members. Voting, ticket and host hotel information can be found at The Blues Foundation's website—www.blues.org.

The Blues Music Awards are universally recognized as the highest honor given to Blues artists. The presenting sponsor will once again be The Gibson Foundation. In 2008, the State of Mississippi, the Tunica Convention and Visitors Bureau and the Grand Casino and Resort are also sponsoring the Blues Music Awards. The Blues Music Awards are also sponsored by BMI, Casey Family Programs, Eagle Rock Entertainment, FedEx, and the Sierra Nevada Brewing Company.

The Blues Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony and Charter Members' Dinner will be held the night before on Wednesday, May 7 at the Tunica RiverPark museum situated on the banks of the Mississippi River. The 2008 inductees will be announced early next year.

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The Blues Music Awards are produced by The Blues Foundation, a non-profit organization established to preserve Blues history, celebrate Blues excellence, support Blues education and ensure the future of this uniquely American art form. The Foundation consists of a worldwide network of 165 affiliated Blues societies and has individual memberships spanning the globe. In addition to the Blues Music Awards, the Foundation also produces the Blues Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony, the International Blues Challenge and the Keeping the Blues Alive Awards. It fosters education through its Blues in the Schools programming and supports the medical needs of Blues musicians with its HART Fund. Throughout the year, the Foundation staff serves the worldwide Blues community with answers, contact information and news. For more information or to join The Blues Foundation, log onto www.blues.org

2008 Blues Music Awards

Presenting Sponsor: The Gibson Foundation

NOMINEES

Acoustic Album of the Year

Bobby Rush - Raw
Dave Riley and Bob Corritore - Travelin' the Dirt Road
Fruteland Jackson - Tell Me What You Say
Jimmy "Duck" Holmes - Done Got Tired Of Tryin'
Marie Knight - Let Us Get Together

Acoustic Artist of the Year

Bobby Rush
Doug MacLeod
Eric Bibb
Fruteland Jackson
Guy Davis
Mary Flower

Album of the Year

Bettye LaVette - The Scene of the Crime
James Blood Ulmer - Bad Blood in the City
Koko Taylor - Old School
Nick Moss & the Flip Tops - Play It 'Til Tomorrow
Omar Kent Dykes & Jimmie Vaughan - On the Jimmy Reed Highway
Sugar Ray & the Bluetones - My Life, My Friends, My Music
Watermelon Slim & the Workers - The Wheel Man

B.B. King Entertainer of the Year

Bettye LaVette
Bobby Rush
Janiva Magness
Tommy Castro
Watermelon Slim

Band of the Year

Lil' Ed & the Blues Imperials
Magic Slim & the Teardrops
Mannish Boys
Nick Moss & the Flip Tops
Watermelon Slim & the Workers

Best New Artist Debut

Diunna Greenleaf & Blue Mercy - Cotton Field to Coffee House
Gina Sicilia - Allow Me to Confess
Insomniacs - Left Coast Blues
John Nemeth - Magic Touch
The Soul of John Black - The Good Girl Blues

Contemporary Blues Album of the Year

Bryan Lee - Katrina Was Her Name
James Blood Ulmer - Bad Blood in the City
Kilborn Alley Blues Band - Tear Down Chicago
Tommy Castro - Painkiller
Watermelon Slim & the Workers - The Wheel Man

Contemporary Blues Female Artist of the Year

Bettye LaVette
Candy Kane
Debbie Davies
Fiona Boyes
Teresa James

Contemporary Blues Male Artist of the Year

James Blood Ulmer
Kim Wilson
Ronnie Baker Brooks
Tab Benoit
Watermelon Slim

DVD

Carey & Lurrie Bell - Gettin' Up: Live at Buddy Guy's Legends, Rosa's and Lurrie's Home
Kenny Wayne Shepherd - 10 Days Out: Blues from the Backroads
Pinetop Perkins - Born in the Honey
Son Seals - A Journey through the Blues - The Son Seals Story
Willie King - Down in the Woods

Historical Album of the Year

Blind Pig - The Essential Magic Slim - Magic Slim
Blue Witch - House Rockin' and Blues Shoutin' - Various Artists
Delmark - Kidney Stew Is Fine - Eddie "Cleanhead" Vinson
Delmark - Steady Rollin' Man - Robert Jr. Lockwood
Epic/Legacy - Breakin' It Up, Breakin' It Down - Muddy Waters, Johnny Winter, James Cotton

Instrumentalist-Bass

Bill Stuve
Bob Stroger
Calvin "Fuzz" Jones
Jeff Turmes
Larry Taylor
Michael "Mudcat" Ward

Instrumentalist-Drums

Jimi Bott
Richard Innes
Robb Stupka
Sam Carr
Sam Lay

Instrumentalist-Guitar

Bob Margolin
Duke Robillard
Kid Ramos
Lurrie Bell
Nick Moss

Instrumentalist-Harmonica

Carey Bell
James Cotton
Kim Wilson
Mark Hummel

Sugar Blue
Sugar Ray Norcia

Instrumentalist-Horn

Big James Montgomery
Calvin Owens
Deanna Bogart
Doug James
Kaz Kazanoff

Instrumentalist-Other

Gerry Hundt - Mandolin
Johnny Sansone - Accordion
Otis Taylor - Banjo
Robert Randolph - Pedal Steel
Sonny Rhodes - Lap Steel

Pinetop Perkins Piano Player of the Year

Ann Rabson
Bruce Katz
David Maxwell
Henry Butler
Honey Piazza

Song of the Year

'Gonna Buy Me a Mule' - Koko Taylor, Koko Taylor - Old School
'Jimmy Reed Highway' - Omar Kent Dykes & Steve Callif, Omar Dykes & Jimmie Vaughan - On the Jimmy Reed Highway
'Poor Man's Paradise' - Johnny Sansone, Johnny Sansone - Poor Man's Paradise
'The Last Words of A Fool' - Sugar Ray Norcia, Sugar Ray & the Bluetones - My Life, My Friends, My Music
'The Wheel Man' - William Homans, Watermelon Slim & the Workers - The Wheel Man

Soul Blues Album of the Year

Eugene Hideaway Bridges - Eugene Hideaway Bridges
Holmes Brothers - State of Grace
Mem Shannon - A Night at Tipitina's
Root Doctor - Change Our Ways
Tad Robinson - A New Point of View

Soul Blues Female Artist of the Year

Barbara Carr
Denise LaSalle
Irma Thomas
Sharon Jones
Sista Monica Parker

Soul Blues Male Artist of the Year

Bobby Rush
Eugene Hideaway Bridges
Jackie Payne
Mem Shannon
Tad Robinson

Traditional Blues Female Artist of the Year

Dianna Greenleaf
Koko Taylor
Nora Jean Bruso

Ruthie Foster
Sharrie Williams

Traditional Blues Album of the Year

Big George Brock - Live at Seventy Five
Darrell Nulisch - Goin' Back to Dallas
Koko Taylor - Old School
Nappy Brown - Long Time Coming
Omar Kent Dykes & Jimmie Vaughan - On the Jimmy Reed Highway

Traditional Blues Male Artist of the Year

Bob Margolin
Hubert Sumlin
Lurrie Bell
Magic Slim
Nappy Brown
Phillip Walker