



JAZZ & BLUES
FLORIDA
FLORIDA'S ONLINE GUIDE TO LIVE JAZZ & BLUES

DECEMBER 2015



FEATURED ARTIST

**Nate
Najar**

PLUS... RICK ESTRIN & THE NIGHTCATS • DAVIS & DOW • NICOLE HENRY
BRUCE KATZ • VICTOR WAINWRIGHT & THE WILDROOTS • MARIA RIVAS
JANIVA MAGNESS • TOMMY Z • TOM LIPPINCOTT • NICHOLAS PAYTON

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Nate Najar: A 'B

An accomplished guitarist-composer and Charlie Byrd devotee, nylon string fingerstyle player Nate Najar has distinguished himself as a talent worthy of recognition with his impressive output over the past fifteen years.

Last year's *Aquarela Do Brasil* is Brazilian in concept and represents a wide cross-section of Brazilian musical influence, a virtual "Water-color of Brazil." On it, Najar is accompanied by long-time Trio members drummer Chuck Redd and bassist Tommy Cecil, plus guests Duduka da Fonseca on drums and saxman Harry Allen.

Of playing with Redd and Cecil, Najar says, "To me, it feels like there's three of us playing together and not me just playing on top of a rhythm section," says Nate. "And when you're playing with guys that good, why would you do it any other way?"

Growing up in St. Petersburg, Nate followed a fairly typical musical path for the time... but not for long. "My first musical interests were in the rhythm and blues vein - Sam and Dave, Wilson Pickett, etc. From there I got into delta blues and would gig around town at 13 years old with these older blues guys. I had a national steel and a dobro and I kept one tuned to open D and one to G. Of course I got into Hendrix, then Coltrane, and then it just trickled down the line of all the great guitarists."

But then Nate began studying guitar under Frank Mullen who, like Charlie Byrd, had been a disciple of renowned D.C. classical guitar teacher Sophocles Papas. "Frank played the classical guitar a lot in our lessons and he had told me to get one. The more I learned how to play with Frank, the more I discovered that fingerstyle playing on the classical guitar is much more piano-like," explains Nate. Byrd became an obvious source of inspiration for him in his developmental years. "Charlie was my guy," says the guitarist, who also cites Gene Bertoncini and Romero Lubambo as influences.

On 2012's *Blues for Night People: The Nate Najar Trio Remembers Charlie Byrd*, the Florida-based guitarist pays tribute to an important role model with a collection of tunes either composed by or associated with the late, great guitarist. Najar also performs on Byrd's own

guitar, a 1974 Ramirez 1a nylon string classical guitar, the same guitar Andres Segovia used.

"I knew Charlie's records, I loved his sound. It was something that was really special to me. There was just this elegant simplicity in his playing; it always seemed like just the right way to do it." While Najar may be coming out of the Charlie Byrd tradition, he's got his own unique place in the lineage of nylon string fingerstyle jazz guitar.

"Tone production is something I'm working on now. And I'm making a big effort to do it as the classical guys do it... because that technique really makes the guitar a piano in your lap, if you've got your fingers really happening properly."

Najar's previous recordings include *Swinging with the Nate Najar Quartet*, *I'm All Smiles*, *Live at the Side Door*, *Until Now* and *Christmas with the Nate Najar Trio*. In a very different context than his nylon string fingerstyle jazz work, he scored a *Billboard* Top 10 hit in 2011 with the R&B tune "Groove Me," featuring vocalist Melba Moore.



Byrd' in the Hand

In 2008 Nate was invited by Dr. Billy Taylor to perform at the prestigious Kennedy Center in an evening celebrating the historic Showboat Lounge, a one-time landmark on the Washington D.C. jazz scene. Najar has performed nationally and abroad with jazz veterans and contemporaries alike, including Ken Peplowski, John Lamb, Bucky Pizzarelli, Eric Darius, Chuck Redd, Buster Cooper, Cindy Bradley, Jessie J, and Jonathan Fritzen.

This determined musical interpreter with an old soul is single-handedly reintroducing the finger-style nylon string classical guitar technique to a new generation of music lovers. Najar's expressive blend of phrasing, groove and rhythmic refrain delivers compositions informed with his passion for all music, from traditional jazz, to blues, gospel, and Brazilian beats.

Becky Byrd, widow of renowned jazz guitarist Charlie Byrd, has publicly spoken of Najar, thus quoted in publications such as *Jazz Times* and also in the liner notes of *Blues for Night People*, comparing Najar to her late husband: "There is no doubt that there is a piece of Charlie's soul in Nate's mind, heart and fingers."

More at natenajar.com.

NATE NAJAR

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Bruce Katz is a four-time nominee for the Blues Music Award Pinetop Perkins Piano Player of the Year. But while blues is a very important part of his music, Bruce's music has more angles and influences, occupying a unique space where blues, soul-jazz, jam-band rock, and all aspects of Americana music collide into a style of original music all his own. In 1992, with a newly-

minted Master's degree in Jazz Performance, Bruce met Ronnie Earl, who invited him to join The Broadcasters. During his five-year stint with the band, Katz toured the world and performed on six albums, writing and co-writing many of the tunes. Their album *Grateful Heart* won the *Downbeat* Critics Poll for Best Blues Album of 1996, the same year Katz debuted his first solo album, *Crescent Crawl*. Just before his third solo release, *Mississippi Moan*, Katz left the Broadcasters to concentrate on a solo career. Over the years, Bruce has played with Duke Robillard, John Hammond, Gregg Allman and many other high-profile performers. He performs regularly with the Delbert McClinton Band, Jaimoe's Jasssz Band, and others, while touring and recording with The Bruce Katz Band. Katz's latest CD, 2014's *Homecoming*, rode the *Living Blues* Radio Chart for four months and The Roots Music Report for 18 weeks. Bruce's band lineup consists of Chris Vitarello on guitar and Ralph Rosen on drums. More at brucekatz.com.







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- Dec 18 Delta Moon**
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Joe Pass, Jimmy Bruno, Django Reinhardt and the modern-day European gypsy jazz virtuosos. He blends be-bop, blues, flamenco and classical styles to create a strong individual sound delivered with sensitivity, power, and creativity. They've toured internationally, composed and performed original music for the TV show *FoodNation with Bobby Flay*, and produced *Great Jazz Divas*, a multimedia show celebrating women, music, and history. Their 2001 CD *Naked* won Best Jazz Album at the Florida Music Awards, and the duo topped numerous Florida year-end lists. The duo were awarded three two-year grants by the Florida Cultural Arts Division to perform in underserved communities. They offer themed concerts as well as school programs, lectures and workshops. Their latest CD, 2009's *Loverly*, featuring Federico Britos on violin with a full ensemble, celebrates their love for gypsy jazz. More at davisanddow.com.



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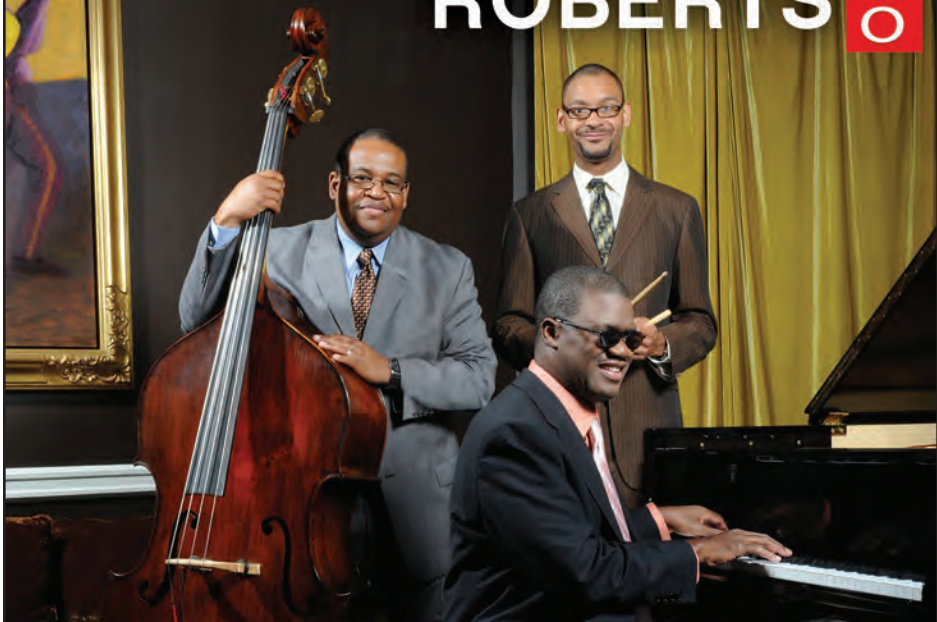
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of an audience of millions and expanding her ever-growing fan base. Her 2010 follow-up, *The Devil Is An Angel Too*, was the No. 1 CD of 2010 on the *Living Blues* radio chart. 2011's *Stronger For It* earned her the 2013 Blues Music Award and Contemporary Blues Female Artist Of The Year (her fourth win in this category). Magness' 11th and latest CD, *Original* (on Fathead Records, her own label, is a collection of 12 original blues, Americana and soul original songs. Live and on record, Magness' level of intimacy and depth of emotion infuses her music with a power impossible to deny. More at janivamagness.com.



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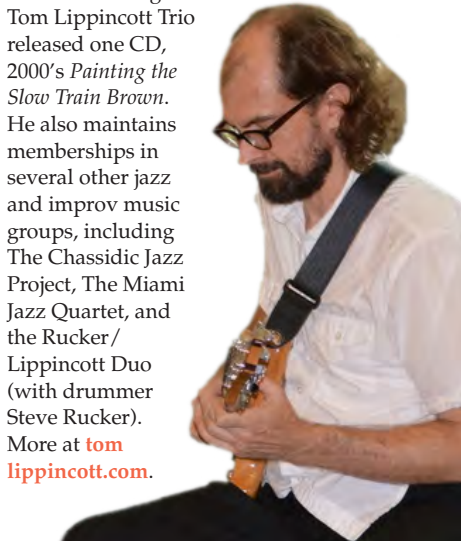


Tom Lippincott

Tom Lippincott began playing trombone in grade school, but after discovering the Beatles as a teenager, he was inspired to take up guitar as well. With his interest in jazz and classical guitar flourishing throughout high school, Tom eventually switched from trombone to guitar in college. As a graduate

teaching assistant at the University of Miami, Tom performed with jazz greats Randy Brecker and Bob Mintzer as a member of the

concert jazz band. Even a master's degree in jazz performance couldn't put a stop to Tom's music education. He continues his studies by giving – and taking – private lesson and serving as an adjunct instructor at Florida colleges. For the past 25 years, Tom has been performing as a freelance guitarist, playing and recording around the country and the world. He has performed and/or recorded with countless jazz luminaries, and was the winner of the jazz category of *Guitar Player Magazine's* 1992 Ultimate Guitar Competition. In addition to performing as a solo jazz and classical guitarist, Tom was co-leader of the group Bluez Imbabwe with vocalist Adriana Samargia. The Tom Lippincott Trio released one CD, 2000's *Painting the Slow Train Brown*. He also maintains memberships in several other jazz and improv music groups, including The Chassidic Jazz Project, The Miami Jazz Quartet, and the Rucker / Lippincott Duo (with drummer Steve Rucker). More at tomlippincott.com.



Dec 1 VICTOR WAINWRIGHT & THE WILDROOTS

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Rick Estrin

RICK ESTRIN

DECEMBER 5
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FESTIVAL

DECEMBER 6
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SEBASTIAN

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MORE DATES

Since their 2009 debut, *Twisted*, Rick Estrin & the Nightcats have toured non-stop, honing their creative synergy to a razor's edge. The results of all of this natural chemistry can be heard on their latest release, *One Wrong Turn*. Here, Rick and

The 'cats (guitarist Chris "Kid" Andersen, singing drummer J. Hansen and multi-instrumentalist Lorenzo Farrell) serve up fresh and modern original blues injected with a solid dose of gritty roadhouse rock 'n' roll. Ranking among the best harp players, singers and songwriters in the blues world, Rick's work is rooted in the tradition of harmonica masters Sonny Boy Williamson II and Little Walter Jacobs, while simultaneously pushing that tradition forward. Critics have compared his original songs to the work of Cab Calloway, Louis Jordan, Willie Dixon and Leiber and Stoller. And his hipster, street-smart vocals are the perfect vehicle for driving those songs home. For more than 30 years and nine albums, Rick fronted the internationally-acclaimed Little Charlie & The Nightcats and toured the world repeatedly. They were nominated four times for the prestigious Blues Music Award for Band Of The Year. When founder/guitarist Charlie Bay retired in 2008, guitarist Andersen's unpredictable, no-holds-barred style meshed perfectly with Estrin's wildly imaginative original songs, and Rick Estrin & The Nightcats was born.

Now, with *One Wrong Turn*, these 'cats continue to reinvent, redefine and revolutionize modern blues. More at rickestrin.com.



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Nicole Henry

NICOLE HENRY

DECEMBER 12
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Since her debut in 2004, Nicole Henry has established herself as one of the jazz world's most acclaimed vocalists. She brings her potent combination of dynamic vocal abilities, impeccable phrasing,

and powerful emotional resonance to a repertoire that includes the American Songbook, classic and contemporary jazz, blues and originals. Nicole's passionate, soulful voice and charisma earned her a 2013 *Soul Train* Award for Best Traditional Jazz Performance, three Top 10 U.S. *Billboard* and HMV Japan jazz albums, and rave reviews from *The New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *The Japan Times*, *El Pais*, *Jazz Times*, *Essence* and more. Nicole's 2004 debut release, *The Nearness of You*, won considerable attention from audiences and critics in the U.S. and in Japan, where she was named Best New Jazz Artist of 2004. The following year, *Teach Me Tonight* reached No. 1 in Japan and was named HMV Japan's Best Vocal Jazz Album of 2005. In 2008, *The Very Thought of You* substantially expanded her American audience, reaching No. 7 on *Billboard*'s jazz chart. The 2011 release of *Embraceable* was a creative triumph, and reached the Top 20 on jazz and smooth U.S. jazz radio charts. Henry demonstrates her diversity and skills as a performer and a peerless interpreter of songs on her 2013 release, *So Good, So Right: Nicole Henry Live*. The 13-track live album showcases renditions of some of her favorite classic '70s hits from iconic artists including Bill Withers, Joni Mitchell and The Commodores. More at nicolehenry.com.



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Victor Wainwright & The Wildroots

With the 2015 release of *Boom Town*, Victor Wainwright and the WildRoots are reigniting blues/roots fans with their infectious brand of blues, roots rock and soul, featuring high-octane boogie piano and soulful vocals. As Victor and producer/writer Stephen Dees celebrate ten years of musical partnership

that began with Wainwright's 2005 solo debut *Pianna' From Savannah*, they've teamed up once again to deliver a blues and American roots tour de force. Over the last decade, Wainwright has broadened his artistic scope to encompass nearly every corner of the blues. He won the coveted Blues Music Awards' "Pinetop Perkins Piano Player of the Year" in 2013 and 2014, and anchors the group Southern Hospitality, whose 2013 CD *Easy Livin'* made the Top 10 on the *Billboard* blues chart. The WildRoots debut CD, 2009's *Beale Street To The Bayou* and its followup, 2011's *Lit Up*, earned stellar reviews and high chart positions.

Now, on *Boom Town*, in addition to Wainwright on lead vocals, piano, and Hammond organ; and Stephen Dees on bass and guitar, there's an outstanding ensemble of musicians: Patricia Ann Dees and Ray Guiser on tenor sax, Nick Black on guitar, Billy Dean on drums, Stephen Kampa on harmonica, and Charlie DeChant on baritone and tenor sax. More at victorwainwright.com.



VICTOR WAINWRIGHT & THE WILDROOTS

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DECEMBER 8
BOSTONS
DELRAY BEACH

DECEMBER 11
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Nicholas Payton

Raised in a musical family, trumpeter/composer/bandleader Nicholas Payton began his professional career at ten years old as a member of James Andrews' All-Star Brass. Working steadily through school, Nicholas then spent the early 1990s touring with Marcus Roberts and Elvin Jones. 1994 brought Payton a recording contract and his first album, *From This Moment*, and he's stayed busy ever since. In 1997 he received a Best Instrumental Solo Grammy for his work on the album *Doc Cheatham & Nicholas Payton*. In 2004, Payton co-founded the SF Jazz Collective. In 2008, Payton joined the Blue Note 7, a septet formed in honor of the 70th anniversary of Blue Note Records. In

2011, he formed a 21-piece big band ensemble called the Television Studio Orchestra. From 2011 to 2013, Nicholas was a Distinguished Artist and Visiting Lecturer at Tulane University. In 2012 the Czech National Symphony Orchestra commissioned and debuted his first full orchestral work, *The Black American Symphony*. And in 2013, Payton formed his own record label, Paytone Records, which has to date released three albums: *#BAM Live at Bohemian Caverns*, where he plays both trumpet and Fender Rhodes, often at once; *Sketches of Spain*, which he recorded with the Basel Symphony Orchestra in Switzerland; and *Numbers*, with a group of musicians from Richmond, VA known as Butcher Brown. Catch this very busy New Orleans native on a rare Florida stop this month. More at nicholaspayton.com.



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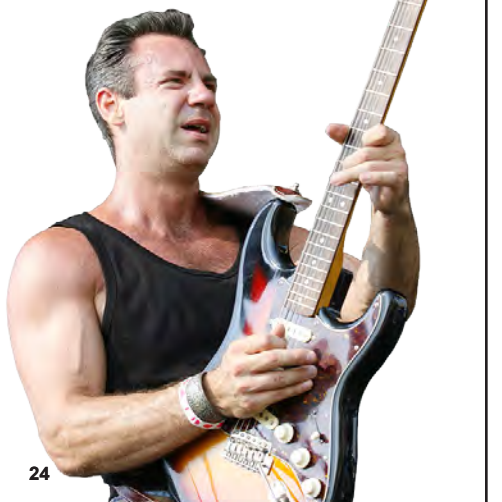
Tommy Z

TOMMY Z

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WITH THE JEFF
JENSEN BAND

Though he is a guitar-driven electric blues-based stylist onstage, in the studio Tommy Z composes a variety of music, all while infusing a soulful blues feeling into the different styles he plays. Adding to his

pile of awards, in 2007 Tommy was inducted into the Buffalo Music Hall of Fame, and has enjoyed the opportunity to perform with some of the worlds' top blues/rock artists from B.B. King and Buddy Guy to Joe Bonamassa and Robert Randolph, including a tour backing up Grammy-winning blues legend Pinetop Perkins. He has been performing for U.S. troops overseas since 2003 with tours in the middle east, Japan, south Korea, Europe and other distant locales on behalf of USO/AFE. 2013's *Sometimes* made both the Roots Report Top Blues FM and Internet Airplay charts for US blues/roots stations, overseas blues charts in France, etc. and made the first round of voting for Best Blues Album at the Grammys. His next release, *Blizzard of Blues*, is due out later this year. This year Tommy and band headlined the Cali Blues and Folk Festival in Colombia, South America for nearly two weeks of concerts and master classes. In addition to his performance schedule, Tommy serves as composer/producer for film, sports and television projects. More at tommyzband.com.



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Maria Rivas

MARIA RIVAS

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Maria Rivas' unique sound is an intoxicating combination of classic American jazz and Latin music, stirred together with

her signature blend of Brazilian, Caribbean, European, and African influences. She then performs her unique blend of standards and originals in English, Spanish, Italian and Portuguese. During her musical career of over 30 years, Maria has released ten CDs while headlining concerts across the U.S., Latin America, Europe and Asia, including the Montreux Jazz Festival. Her melodious voice and dynamic stage presence really shine on her 'scat' improvisations, which have been favorably compared with those of Ella Fitzgerald. Maria has won every singing award Venezuela and much of Latin America have to offer. Her hit song, "Manduco," remained in the No. 1 position on the Latin American charts for many months, in the Top 10 for over three years, and turned her into a cultural icon. Rivas is well known for her 20-year collaboration with Venezuela's most prominent and beloved composer of the 20th century, Maestro Aldemaro Romero. An innovative and accomplished visual artist,

Maria's works grace galleries around the world, and she frequently exhibits her art during her musical performances. Her latest paintings comprise the "American Jazz Greats" Series. A renowned environmentalist and humanitarian in her native Venezuela, Maria has been instrumental in popularizing the recycling movement there. Maria currently calls South Florida home. More

at maria.rivas.net.



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