

# JAZZ & BLUES



F L O R I D A

FLORIDA'S ONLINE GUIDE TO LIVE JAZZ & BLUES

FEATURE:  
BLUES ARTIST

## PACKRAT'S SMOKEHOUSE



### JAZZ ARTISTS

AVIS BERRY • BON BON VIVANT • CHAMPIAN FULTON

RACHEL HILLMAN • WHITNEY JAMES • MARIA RIVAS • RICHIE SUMMA

### BLUES ARTISTS

BRYAN LEE • BETH MCKEE • BOBBY MESSANO • LAUREN MITCHELL

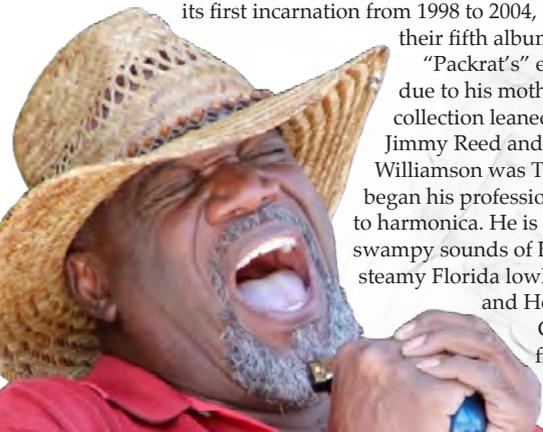
SHEBA THE MISSISSIPPI QUEEN • LAURIE WRIGHT

# PACKRAT'S S

**Welcome to Florida Swamp Blues...** Although they had shared bandstands since the late 1970s, it wasn't until 1988 that Anthony "Packrat" Thompson and Robert "Top" Thomas began to explore their common roots and musical interests. Florida swamp blues band Smokehouse was born, and the name was kept until 1998. Packrat's Smokehouse had its first incarnation from 1998 to 2004, and relaunched in 2015. They're set to release their fifth album, *The Men of the Swamp*, later this year.

"Packrat's" exposure to the blues came at an early age due to his mother's interest in the blues greats. Her record collection leaned heavily on the likes of John Lee Hooker, Jimmy Reed and Howlin' Wolf. But the music of Sonny Boy Williamson was Thompson's greatest influence. Thompson began his professional career as a drummer, but soon switched to harmonica. He is a raw, greasy harmonica player, bringing the swampy sounds of Baton Rouge to spread and take root in the steamy Florida lowlands, with a voice reminiscent of Little Walter and Howlin' Wolf.

Guitarist Robert "Top" Thomas can spit out fiery solos and muscular riffs reworking the deep, swampy groove of New Orleans and Delta blues, evoking the pine flatwoods and



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MAY 29 RHYS BENNETT QUARTET JAZZ  
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# MOKEHOUSE

cypress bottoms of Central Florida. After an early stint with popular Central Florida southern rock band The Payne Brothers, Thomas' formed his own band, Town Crier, in 1987. The group recorded several sides for King Snake Records. He also released a solo CD, *The Town Crier*, in 2013... and then Packrat's Smokehouse came calling again.

Aaron "Pop" Watson began playing drums as a youngster in Daytona Beach, Florida. His professional career can be traced from playing in the officer's club while in the Army to drummin' for recording greats such as Rufus Thomas, The Drifters, The Temptations and others. A member of The American Federation of Musicians, Watson played beachside for many years with The Duke Gainous Quartet, Lawrence "Bird" Burdine, and several other area jazz and pop bands. He joined the band in 1993

New York City native Kenny "The Wizard" Sly started playing guitar at age nine, then switched to trumpet. But after seeing a live funk group at age 15, Sly picked up the bass. His influences range from the blues to funk to heavy metal and even Latin and reggae. Kenny got his professional start with music playing in bands on military bases in Puerto Rico. After years of playing in the Daytona area, he joined Smokehouse in 1995 as the newest member and has been with band ever since.

The group recorded four CDs in the 1990s that defined the genre of Florida Swamp Blues. Their debut release, 1991's *Let's Swamp Awhile*, introduced the band's foot-stompin', back-porch-swingin' style to an eager audience. It was followed the next year by another excellent collection, *Swamp Jive*.



The torrid, soulful *Cadillac in the Swamp* reworked the deep, swampy groove of New Orleans and Delta blues, adding the electric energy of Chicago blues. *Living Blues Magazine* said of *Cadillac*: "The year 1995 was a great one for blues recording, but this irrepresible set of updated swamp blues earns this reviewer's vote as the best

of the lot." The band had a song on the 1996 WB Network television show *Savannah*, and their music was used on the soundtrack for the 2004 feature film *The Road to Canyon Lake*. Over the years, the group has opened for a long list of blues acts including Elvin Bishop, Canned Heat, The Fabulous Thunderbirds, Taj Mahal, Kenny Neal and Koko Taylor.

In the words of the late blues producer Bob Greenlee, "With this band, you're seeing the spring itself, not the inlet to the sea." More at [packratssmokehouse.com](http://packratssmokehouse.com).

MAY 3-6  
CHICAGO'S  
PEMBROKE PINES

MAY 11  
THE HUB ON CANAL  
NEW SMYRNA BEACH

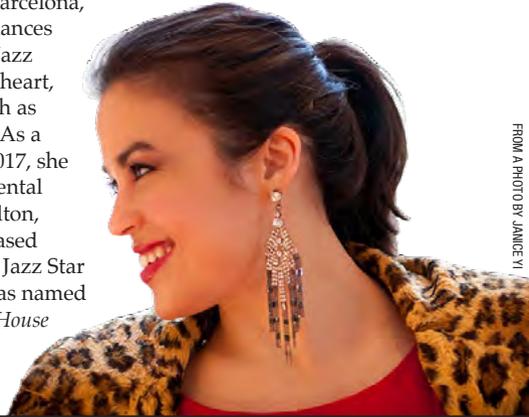
JUNE 3  
RIVERWALK  
STUART



MAY 25  
JACKSONVILLE  
JAZZ FEST  
JACKSONVILLE

# Champion Fulton

Born in Oklahoma, world-class jazz pianist and vocalist Champion Fulton grew up with music in the home. The presence of her father's (jazz trumpeter and educator Stephen Fulton) musician friends, including Clark Terry and Major Holley, inspired her focus on jazz. Fulton's first paid musical engagement was with her own band at Clark Terry's 75th birthday party; she was 10 years old. Since then, her piano and voice skills have been recognized by peers and critics as distinctive and sophisticated. A mainstay on the vibrant New York Jazz scene, she has performed with musical royalty such as Lou Donaldson, Frank Wess, Eric Alexander, Buster Williams, and Louis Hayes. From New York to Barcelona, Fulton's swinging style and charismatic performances have made her a guardian of the legacy of Jazz. Jazz education is a concern near and dear to Fulton's heart, and she is involved in educational programs such as Litchfield Jazz Camp and Rutgers Jazz Institute. As a leader she has nine recordings to her credit. In 2017, she published no less than three albums: an instrumental one, *Speechless*; a duo recording with Scott Hamilton, *The Things We Did Last Summer*; and the self-released *Christmas with Champion*. Recognized as a Rising Jazz Star by the *Downbeat Magazine* Critic's Poll, Fulton was named Female Jazz Vocalist Of The Year at the 2017 *Hot House Jazz Magazine* Fans Decision Award Ceremony. More at [champion.net](http://champion.net).



FROM A PHOTO BY JANICE YI

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MAY 25 **BRYAN LEE**

JUNE 1 **BRIDGET KELLY BAND**

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# Bobby Messano

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SABROSA  
SARASOTA

MAY 12  
BUCKINGHAM  
BLUES BAR  
FT MYERS

MAY 13  
BLUE BAMBOO  
WINTER PARK

MAY 15  
BOSTON'S ON  
THE BEACH  
DELRAY BEACH

MAY 16  
ENGLEWOOD'S  
ON DEARBORN  
ENGLEWOOD

The work of legendary guitarist and Delaware Blues Hall of Fame member Bobby Messano can be heard on seven solo CDs, numerous network and cable television shows, and on more than 50 major label and indie albums. His playing has been heard on everything from MTV jingles to Benny Mardones' smash hit "Into The Night." Messano has performed on records by Clarence Clemons, Franke & The Knockouts, Joe Lynn Turner and Starz, and produced the hit 1960s act The Shadows of Knight. Live he has played and served as music director for Steve

Winwood, Lou Gramm and country artists Jimmy Wayne, Rodney Atkins and Steve Holy. The guitarist's last five CDs have garnered 26 Grammy first round ballots in eight categories and airplay on over 275 blues shows. *Love & Money* was nominated for a Blues Blast Award for Best Rock-Blues Album in 2015. It hit No. 1 on the *Billboard* Blues Chart and spent a total of nine weeks in the Top 10, while also cracking the Top 40 on both the *Billboard* Rock and Indie Charts. Messano's latest CD, 2017's *Bad Movie*, is a collection of 15 incredible songs offering a unique perspective of personal traumas and a country in a state of flux. Late last

year, Messano won a Hollywood Music In Media Award (HMMA) for the Blues Genre. More at [bobbymessano.com](http://bobbymessano.com).



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# Avis Berry

MAY 19  
BLUE TAVERN  
TALLAHASSEE

The young Avis Berry got her start with a hometown community group called Kids-A-Poppin. They

would rehearse song and dance numbers on the weekends, practicing choreography and developing stage presence. Berry's confidence soared onstage, and she went on to earn her bachelor's degree in vocal performance. She joined the FSU University Singers as a freshman, while performing in the classical, rock and jazz genres at area venues. She worked steadily as a freelance singer and substitute teacher around Tallahassee, eventually returning to school to earn her master's degrees in Elementary Education and Library Information Studies from FSU. Berry works in the Music Library at FSU's College of Music, and also teaches fifth-grade math and science, incorporating music into her lessons. She has recorded with various artists as a background vocalist and as a soloist with the Berlin Radio Choir on the record *True Light: The Berlin Christmas Concert*. Berry has also performed in Vietnam, China, Germany and England under the direction of Dr. Andre Thomas. For the past few years, she's been part of the group Jazz Copeland, and performs regularly around the Tallahassee area. Berry spent 2017 working on her solo debut. "I want the album to be who I am and who I am is so varied because I've done so many different things with different people and types of music," she explains. Find her on Facebook.



FROM A PHOTO BY ELLE BELLE



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# Lauren Mitchell

The year 2016 was one of large-scale and unexpected change for Tampa-area blues/soul vocalist Lauren Mitchell. During a tumultuous time in both her personal and professional life, she was given the opportunity to rise from the challenges she was facing and make the album of her career. Mitchell realized that the blues is a genre that's all about finding a way to transform difficult experiences into something cathartic. *Desire* is her most fully realized musical statement to date. Through a mix of her own original material, hand-picked selections from the repertoires of friends, and covers of tunes first performed by

Etta James, Bettye Lavette, Diana Ross, Aretha Franklin and Betty Davis, Mitchell tells a blues story that's

been a lifetime in the making. The stylistically varied 13-song set was expertly recorded by drummer and Grammy-winning producer Tony Braunagel. Recorded during a ten-day trip to Los Angeles, Braunagel brought out the best in Mitchell, highlighting every nuance in her powerful vocals and helping her craft an emotionally resonant album. Besides Braunagel, the band features guitarists Johnny Lee Schell and Josh Sklair, keyboardist Jim Pugh, bassist Reggie McBride, sax player Joe Sublett, trumpet player Darrell Leonard, and percussionist Lenny Castro. "The blues is a song of victory," Mitchell says. "It's a way to say, 'I'm over it,' and now I'm turning it into this beautiful thing that can help someone else heal. That's what this record is for me." More at [laurenmitchellband.com](http://laurenmitchellband.com).

MAY 05  
BLUE BAMBOO  
WINTER PARK

MAY 08  
BLUE ROOSTER  
SARASOTA

MAY 20  
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QUARTET**  
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Carol Saboya*



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# Maria Rivas

Born in Caracas, Venezuela, Maria Rivas began singing professionally in night clubs starting in 1983, but soon moved to Aruba where, for more than two years, she performed in a nightly

MAY 26  
HEIDI'S JAZZ CLUB  
COCOA BEACH

jazz show named *Sentimental Journey Through Jazz*. Much of its material was in the style of Ella Fitzgerald and other notable divas. Rivas has become a leading voice in the region's environmental movement, and her musical message as a composer often has ecological undertones. Rivas' sound is a unique blend of classic American jazz and Latin music, with Brazilian accents, and highlighted by her signature indigenous, Caribbean, European and African strains. She interprets her music in English, Spanish, Italian and Portuguese. For the last twelve years, Rivas has made regular appearances in Tokyo, where she has found acclaim for her performances of Brazilian and Latin jazz, along with classic American jazz, sharing the summertime stage with the Indigo Trio, a jazz ensemble in Roppongi, Japan. In a musical career spanning 35 years, Rivas has released ten albums while headlining concerts in Latin America, North America, Europe, and Asia, including the world-famous Montreux Jazz

Festival. She has won every prestigious singing award Venezuela and much of Latin America has to offer. Her No. 1 song, "Manduco," remained in the Top 10 on the Latin America charts for more than three years. Now making her home in South Florida, Rivas is also an accomplished painter and visual artist, with a refreshing and distinctive style.

More at  
[mariarivasjazz.com](http://mariarivasjazz.com).

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<b>MAY 6 &amp; 8</b>	<b>BON BON VIVANT</b>
<b>MAY 9</b>	<b>PAUL NELSON BAND</b>
<b>MAY 10 &amp; 12</b>	<b>JOHN HART PROJECT</b>
<b>MAY 13-14</b>	<b>BEAUSOLEIL</b>
<b>MAY 15</b>	<b>JP SOARS &amp; THE RED HOTS</b>
<b>MAY 20 &amp; 22</b>	<b>GAL HOLIDAY &amp; THE HONKY TONK REVUE</b>
<b>MAY 23-24</b>	<b>EDDIE SMITH BAND</b>
<b>MAY 25</b>	<b>HONEY ISLAND SWAMP BAND</b>
<b>MAY 27-28</b>	<b>30X90 BLUESWOMEN</b>

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- May 20 Women in Blues Showcase  
Cypress & Grove, Gainesville
- May 31 Englewood's, Englewood
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# Bryan Lee

MAY 25  
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FORT MYERS

Legally blind by the age of eight, the man now known as "Braille Blues Daddy" started out playing for midwest crowds at age 15,

soon opening for Bill Haley & The Comets with his band The Glaciers. By the early 1960s and throughout the 1970s, Lee's musical interest turned to the sound of Chicago blues. Although his acceptance in the Chicago blues scene didn't come until later in his career, Lee has been a fixture of the French Quarter music scene since moving there in the early '80s. He made his stand performing five nights a week for more than 14 years at the Old Absinthe House, contributing to his other nickname "New Orleans Blues Institution," along with more than 25 years of appearances at the NOLA Jazz and Heritage Festival. Starting in the 1990s, Lee's work with his Jump Street Five Band, along with his individual sets, would lead to 13 albums over two decades. Never one to rest, Lee formed a new band and hit the road. With Brent Johnson on guitar and John Perkins on drums, Bryan Lee and The Blues Power Band started touring all over the world. These days, Lee continues to mentor young blues musicians in hopes of keeping the art form alive and true to its original form. On his latest CD, 2013's Play One For Me, Lee is joined by the Severn House

Band and featured guests Kim Wilson and Johnny Moeller of the Fabulous Thunderbirds. More at [braillebluesdaddy.com](http://braillebluesdaddy.com).



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SAT 5/19 **CUENCA Cigar Lounge, Downtown Hollywood Artwalk**  
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SAT 5/20 **MIAMI JAI-ALAI CASINO presents ORIENTÉ!**  
4PM-7PM Club Rio Stage 3500 NW 37th Ave, Miami, FL 33142

SUN 5/27 **SUNSHINE JAZZ Concert Series presents ORIENTÉ!**  
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Thursday **JAZZ JAMM @ Le Chat Noir!**  
2 South Miami Ave., downtown Miami 9PM

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[BradentonBluesFestival.org](http://BradentonBluesFestival.org)

# Bon Bon Vivant

MAY 6 & 8  
PARADISE INN  
PENSACOLA BEACH

Self-described as an Indie-Gypsy / New Orleans band playing original bawdy gypsy swing, dark ballads and uptempo indie rock / dance music, Bon Bon Vivant can be seen playing regularly at clubs all over New Orleans, and were featured at the French Quarter Festival, New Orleans Film Fest and the

Creole Tomato Fest this year. The band sparked in 2013 when Abigail Cosio (singer/songwriter) and Jeremy Kelley (saxophone) were asked to play a drag show during the New Orleans Fringe Festival. With a pack of ferocious jazz musicians in tow, they began booking gigs all over the city. Within weeks they were in the studio cutting their debut EP, *Evangeline*. Cosio's songs were ripe with electrifying melodies, rich story-lines and wild energy. Sister harmonies, rowdy drums, upright bass, and piano round out the sound as BBV pays homage to the New Orleans music tradition with a dollop of modern edge. Recently, the group partnered with the New Orleans Jazz Museum's record label, Gallatin Street Records, for a recorded live performance at the museum. Selections from the band's album *Paint & Pageantry* were showcased, along with a cover of the classic "Shout Sister Shout," famously sung by the Boswell Sisters, and gypsy

jazz favorite "Bei Mir Bist Du Schoen." The first single off the album, "The Jazz Axe Man of New Orleans, was inspired by the true story of the city's most notorious serial killer. More at [bbvband.com](http://bbvband.com).





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Club**

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- May 3 Jason Ricci & Bad Kind**
- May 4 Selwyn Birchwood**
- May 5 Mac Arnold & Plate Full O' Blues**
- May 11 Little G Weevil**
- May 12 JP Soars & The Red Hots**
- May 18 Peter Karp Band**
- May 19 EG Night Trio**
- May 24 Rachel Hillman Band**
- May 25 Albert Castiglia**
- May 26 Frank Jones Band**





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# Beth McKee

Beth McKee is the gestalt of all the places she's settled. From her native Mississippi, where she learned the blues firsthand from Malaco Records session musicians, to her immersion in the scenes of Austin, New Orleans, and now Orlando – all their musical terror is in her sound. But those influences, too, have become less distinct in the distillation of Beth's aesthetic. You'll

recognize the hues if you really wanna parse it. But if you just listen, you'll hear a sound that is quintessentially Southern. It's tapped from the roots and rolls like honey. Her voice is rich and fortified but never has to peacock to show its easy radiance. For *Dreamwood Acres*, Beth's fifth solo album which releases May 16, 2018, the former Evangeline singer/keyboardist has adopted a new region of the South, the fertile musical realm of North Carolina. And the results offer new sonic adventures while adhering to Beth's signature of roots music that rides the idyllic backroads of soul, gospel, blues, folk, pop, and rock. According to Beth, "*Dreamwood Acres* could be any place – from a summer camp to a cemetery, suburb or a sanitarium – and this record runs that gamut. I let the songs go wherever they wanted, so let's call it free-range music." The May 19 event is her 7th Annual

Swamp Sistas La La, featuring an all-female lineup, raising money to help the Second Harvest Food Bank feed hungry area children.

More at [bethmckee.com](http://bethmckee.com).

FROM A PHOTO BY JIM LEATHERMAN




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*Welcome to Florida Swamp Blues*

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May 3–6 Chicago's, Pembroke Pines  
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June 3 Rock'N Riverwalk Series, Stuart  
June 8 Blue Rooster, Sarasota  
June 14 Englewood's on Dearborn, Englewood  
June 15 Little Bar, Goodland  
June 16 Barrel Room, Fort Myers



Anthony "Packrat" Thompson – lead vocals/harmonica  
Aaron "Pop" Watson – drums/vocals  
Robert "Lightning Boy" Thomas – guitar/vocals  
Kenny "The Wizard" Sly – bass guitar/vocals  
[www.packratssmokehouse.com](http://www.packratssmokehouse.com)

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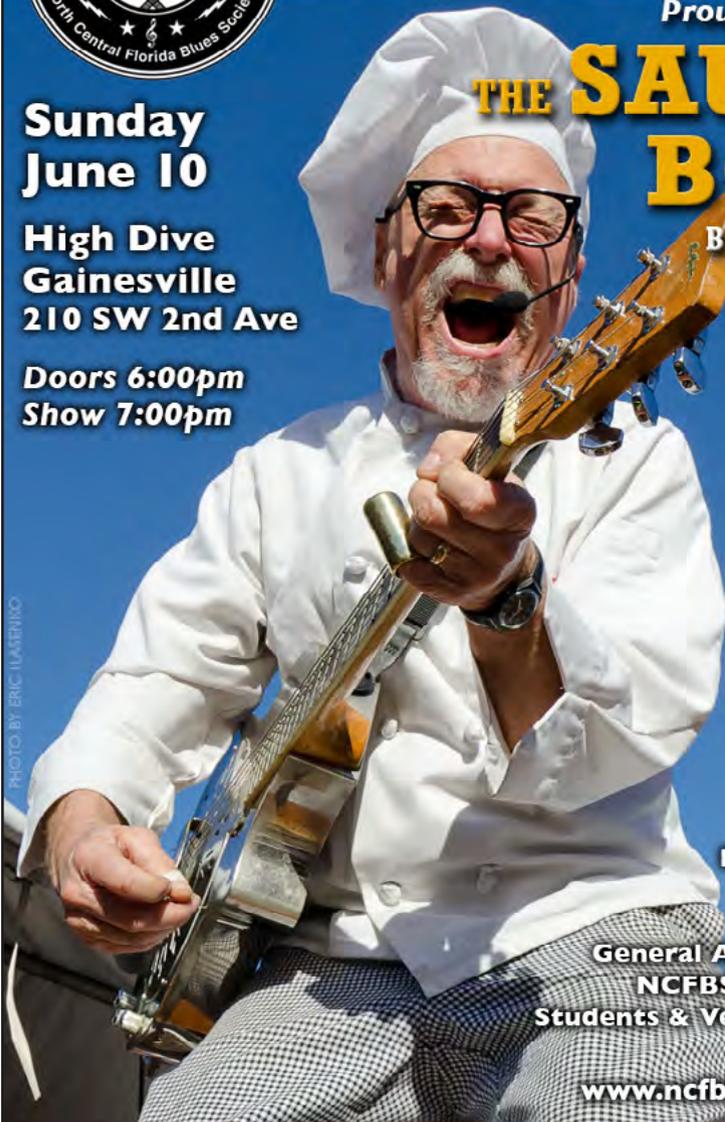
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PHOTO BY ERIC UASEHIKO



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# Rachel Hillman

MAY 3  
BACKWOODS CROSSING  
TALLAHASSEE

MAY 10  
LAKE ELLA  
TALLAHASSEE

Inspired by musicians and groups such as the Tedeschi Trucks Band, the Kinks, and Amy Winehouse, Rachel Hillman's music crosses between jazz, swing, soul and southern rock.

The Pompano Beach native picked up the guitar upon moving to Tallahassee in 2007, began studying music in high school, and has been songwriting ever since. Her style is influenced by artists such as Kimbra, Michael Jackson, Jack Johnson, Ingrid Michaelson, and John Mayer... and also by Beethoven, Bach, and Britten. "I was influenced by the classical music I learned in lessons as well as the exciting orchestrations I heard in musicals," she explains. "I really want to bring that excitement to my performances." A student of FSU's college of music, she embraces both the vocal jazz she studied at school and the native Southern blues found so frequently in Tallahassee's music culture. She enjoys performing a wide variety of genres and specializes in quick finger picking and jazz chords. A true music lover, Hillman spent the four years following her 2013 CD release, Lions & Lambs (as Rachi Ru), teaching voice, guitar, piano and music theory. She is currently performing in support of her 2017 debut release, Bonfire. Find her on Facebook.



FROM A PHOTO BY BOB OLNEY

**NATE NAJAR**

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Winter Park

June 17  
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[natenajar.com](http://natenajar.com)

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**GYPSY BLUE REVUE**

**MAY 8 FRANK BANG &  
THE COOK COUNTY KINGS**

**MAY 15 BOBBY MESSANO**

**MAY 22 ALBERT  
CASTIGLIA**

**MAY 29 BLUE TUESDAY  
ALL STARS**

**8:30-11:30PM**  
**NO COVER**



PHONE: 5612783364  
BOSTONSONTHEBEACH/BLUETUESDAYS

40 S. OCEAN BLVD  
DELRAY BEACH, FL 33483

# Sheba - The Mississippi Queen

MAY 20  
FLORIDA WOMEN  
IN BLUES SHOWCASE  
CYPRESS & GROVE  
GAINESVILLE

Born in Sunflower, Mississippi, Sheba the Mississippi Queen's father was a gospel singer who traveled the South. Sheba's career has taken her to New York City and Miami, where as the star of Sheba and The Rhythm Kings, she gained fame as a uniquely talented singer and performer. Now making Ocala her home, she regularly delights North Florida audiences with her powerful and passionate voice, and the ability to thrill and chill equally. Much like the Holmes Brothers and Alexis P. Suter, Sheba can straddle the line between blues and gospel music, but when singing a Billie Holiday song it's clear that her immense range includes jazz as well. Currently performing with guitarist Tim Gant (The Jacoby Brothers Band, Little Mike & the Tornados), Sheba is proving to be one of the most captivating performers in the area. She has recently played numerous blues festivals in Florida and New York, getting rave reviews at all of them. When you hear Sheba sing, you may hear the influences of Koko Taylor, Etta James, Tina Turner, Aretha Franklin, and Big Mama Thornton. But she writes her own songs as well, and her albums are almost entirely made up of original material, written from years of pain and hard times, but also about transcending those experiences. Her latest CD, 2017's *A Real Good Woman*, offers a modern take on the classic blues sound. More at [sheba.cc](http://sheba.cc).




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May 18 George & Wendy's, Sanibel  
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[longineu.com](http://longineu.com)
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## Richie Summa

MAY 4  
BLUE TAVERN  
TALLAHASSEE

Tallahassee jazz aficionados will recognize Richie Summa's guitar artistry from several regular

appearances around town. Summa hails from Stamford, Connecticut, where he studied guitar with jazz great Sal Salvador. Summa continued his studies with Salvador at the University of Bridgeport, where he received his music degree. Salvador's influence, along with that of jazz guitarist Mundell Lowe, can be heard on his 1998 debut, *Alone Together*. The album marked Summa's return to jazz after a three-year hiatus to earn a law degree from the Florida State University School of Law and work as a public defender in Tallahassee. On his sophomore release *Tear It Down*, Summa leaves the vocal responsibilities he handled on the first album to showcase his solo guitar artistry in a quartet setting with piano, bass and drums. The song list pays tribute to a few of Summa's favorite guitarists, with personal interpretations of tunes written or recorded

by Wes Montgomery, George Benson, and Pat Martino.

Four Summa originals demonstrate his unique style, one highlight

being "Blues

for

Sal," dedicated to his mentor.

During the course of his career, Summa has worked with such notable performers as Englebert Humperdinck, Julie Andrews, The Fifth Dimension, Della Reese, Connie Francis, Bobby Vinton, The Drifters, and Bob Hope. He played in pit bands for the productions of *La Cage Aux Folles*, *A Chorus Line* and *Zorba*. Find him on Facebook.



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## BLUES

# Laurie Wright

Laurie LaCross-Wright describes herself as a singer who plays guitar and a woman with the soul of a gypsy and the heart of a homebody. Since 2004 she has been co-fronting the Rusty Wright Band with her husband Rusty, but the lure of a musical life grabbed hold long before the couple met. "Music has been the driving force in my life since I was 10. I loved to sing and learned to play guitar so I could accompany myself." The years of music training that followed were a bit schizophrenic: bluegrass, classical guitar, choral music, country, show tunes, singer-songwriter and Americana. Rufus Thomas' "Walkin' the Dog" was her introduction to the blues, and she was hooked. Wright spent years touring as a solo entertainer, and while

albums by SRV, LouAnn Barton and Bonnie Raitt were mainstays of her music collection, it would be 20 years before she and Rusty put together the original music act they both had dreamed of. Their second show was opening for Lynyrd Skynyrd. More recent credits include a syndicated PBS concert program, tours across three continents and five acclaimed albums of original works, with a sixth to be released later this year. The band's 2015 album *Wonder Man* reached #8 on the *Billboard* Blues Chart and was nominated for Album of the Year in *Vintage Guitar Magazine's* Reader's Choice Awards. More at [rustywrightband.com](http://rustywrightband.com).



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Tickets/Info

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MAY 4  
PALLADIUM  
ST. PETERSBURG

## Whitney James



On her stunning debut album, 2010's *The Nature of Love*, vocalist Whitney James blended a singer's sensitivity to lyrics with an instrumentalist's command of phrasing, melody, and timbre. James doesn't just sing a tune—she creatively engages it. Every time she approaches a melody and a lyric, she finds a new way to phrase them, shape them, highlight a word or a few notes that shade the meaning and make the music richer. Her sense of time and pacing make her a consummate musician's singer—she knows how to work with a band, instead of asking it to merely back her. Her supple alto voice wraps itself around a song like a sheer silk scarf. She sings with a bright clarity of tone, yet she colors her sound with earthy inflections, subtle squeezed notes, dark growls, and notes of soaring purity. The album's ambitious program of material includes classics from the Great American Songbook along with challenging jazz tunes such as Benny Golson's "Whisper Not" and Jimmy Rowles's "The Peacocks." Her polished musicianship helps her interpret this impressively wide range of selections. The upper edge of her voice gently caresses "Tenderly," then she matches the trumpet tone for tone with an instrumentalist's full sound. She subjects "Long Ago and Far Away" to playful transformations, and negotiates the transitions between Latin and swing beats on "How Deep Is the Ocean" with elegance. For this show she'll be joined by jazz trumpeter James Suggs. More at [whitneyjames.com](http://whitneyjames.com).

