

# JAZZ & BLUES

F L O R I D A

FLORIDA'S ONLINE GUIDE TO LIVE JAZZ & BLUES



FEATURE: BLUES ARTIST

## TAS CRU



**JAZZ ARTISTS** MONTY ALEXANDER • MELVIN BUTLER  
ONA KIREI • FRED RADKE  
VERONICA SWIFT & SHELLY BERG TRIO

**BLUES ARTISTS** RANDALL BRAMBLETT • DENNIS GRUENLING  
JT LAURITSEN • VICTOR WAINWRIGHT  
BRETT WELLMAN

THIS ISSUE DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF JIMMY CAVALLO

# TAS CRU'S GONNA D

## Tas Cru returns to the Sunshine State fresh off appearances on Memphis' historic Beale Street.

He and his Band of Tortured Souls take up residence there at the world-famous Rum Boogie Café as they do every January during the International Blues Challenge. For eleven years running, he has hosted the premiere jam at Boogie during the IBC.

**Memphis is just one of the fifteen cities** on his Drive On Tour that brings him and his new album *Drive On* to Florida for the first two weeks of February. He returns again in March to play dates including two of Florida's major festivals: the Bonita Blues Festival and the Blues Bash at the Ranch.

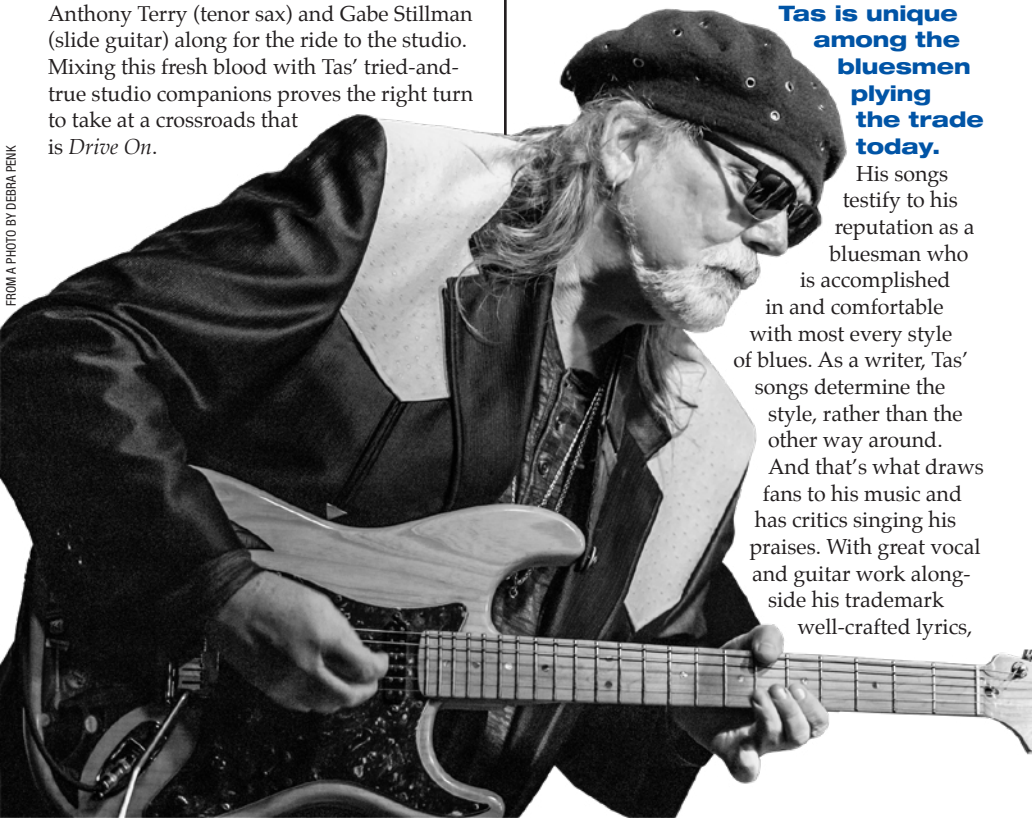
**Drive On is the latest sound-track to the life of a man who,** living the life he chooses, just keeps drivin' on. *Drive On* is Tas Cru's second release on Subcat Records (Syracuse, NY). This new album takes Tas' music down a different path with newcomers Anthony Geraci (keyboards), Anthony Terry (tenor sax) and Gabe Stillman (slide guitar) along for the ride to the studio. Mixing this fresh blood with Tas' tried-and-true studio companions proves the right turn to take at a crossroads that is *Drive On*.

## 2018's Memphis Song followed Tas' breakthrough effort

*You Keep the Money* (2014) and the Blues Music Award-nominated *Simmered and Stewed*. Each of these albums received wide radio play and sat at or near the top of every blues radio chart. Memphis Song earned Tas his second (successive) Syracuse Area Music Award (SAMMY) for best blues album. On the strength of these albums Tas has since performed at several major blues festivals and notable venues. He looks forward to bringing music from these great albums, and especially *Drive On*, to Florida venues.

## Tas is unique among the bluesmen plying the trade today.

His songs testify to his reputation as a bluesman who is accomplished in and comfortable with most every style of blues. As a writer, Tas' songs determine the style, rather than the other way around. And that's what draws fans to his music and has critics singing his praises. With great vocal and guitar work alongside his trademark well-crafted lyrics,



# RIVE ON TO FLORIDA

this music is an interesting and enjoyable listen. Performed live the music is captivating. This man is highly entertaining!

## In addition to his better-known albums is Tas' 2009 release

*Even Bugs Sing the Blues*, an album of original blues music for kids. In 2016 he recorded a blues album for dog lovers called *Doggone Blues* that is now being turned into a three-book series featuring the dog characters from these songs working together to try to form an all-dog blues band. The first of this book series, *Bad Dog Bubba*, is now available.

## Besides performing, this Blues Foundation, Keeping the Blues Alive award recipient (2014) brings

his Blues Education programs and workshops to festivals, schools, and hospitals everywhere he travels. In 2019, Tas began his affiliation with United By Music North America, a program serving differently-challenged young adult musicians. Thus far, Cru has traveled to the Pacific Northwest and Memphis, TN to mentor participants. Tas says, "Working with UBMNA has brought me back to why I began playing music in the first place – for the pure joy of doing so!"

**Tas Cru is currently is based out of upstate New York.** He is a Delaney Guitars (Austin TX) endorsed artist and is signed to Subcat Records, Syracuse NY and managed by Vinny Marini of Barrelhouse Talent. More at [tascru.com](http://tascru.com).

TOO MANY SHOWS TO LIST! SEE COMPLETE CALENDAR AT [TASCRO.COM](http://TASCRO.COM) OR [JAZZBLUESFLORIDA.COM](http://JAZZBLUESFLORIDA.COM)



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2020



## January

- 16 Pittsburgh PA
- 17-18 Indianapolis IN
- 20 Springfield IL
- 21-22 Rockford IL
- 23 Omaha NE
- 24 Topeka KS
- 25 Springfield MO
- 26 -31 Memphis TN

## February

- 02 Birmingham AL
- 03 Pensacola FL
- 04 Englewood FL
- 05 The Villages FL
- 06 Sarasota FL
- 07 Ft. Myers FL
- 08 Goodland FL
- 09 Sebastian FL
- 10 Boca Raton FL
- 12 Ft. Lauderdale FL
- 15 Port Charlotte FL
- 16 W. Palm Beach FL



[tascru.com](http://tascru.com)

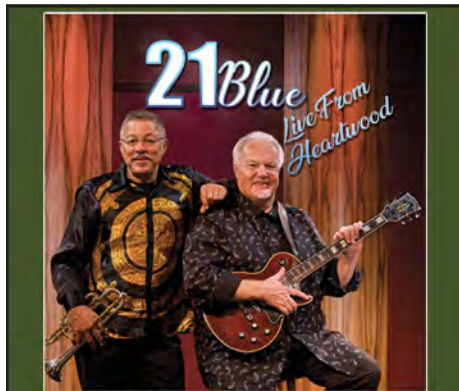
# Ona Kirei

JANUARY 26  
HCC YBOR  
TAMPA

The first-place winner of the International Talavera Jazz Contest, Ona Kirei also took the top spot in *Actúa!*

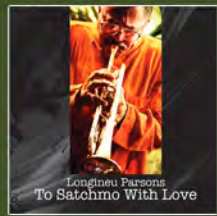
– a music competition as part of the Spanish national radio station Cadena Ser. A vocalist, composer, and arranger from Barcelona Kirei is currently living and working in the Tampa Bay Area. She has performed across Europe, and participated in prestigious festivals including the Getxo Jazz Festival (Spain) and the Jazz Ladies Festival (Bordeaux, France). In Florida, Kirei performs around the Tampa Bay and Orlando areas, fronting groups comprised of some of the most notable musicians on their respective scenes. Kirei has also been known as a bandleader since 2012, with two albums released under her name. *Un Hogar* sold out at the 2016 Heineken Jazzaldia Jazz Festival in San Sebastian. Her latest project *Iberia* is a fusion of jazz with music from the Iberian Peninsula. She sings her arrangements of traditional and popular tunes in Spanish, Catalan, Basque, Portuguese, and English. Compositions of her own are influenced by jazz and neo-soul. With her other projects – such as her duo “Just the Two of Us” with pianist Pablo Arancibia, and duet performances with guitarist Dominic Walker – Kirei welcomes new

influences and experiences into her work. For this Tampa Jazz Club date, she will be appearing with Florida trio La Lucha. More at [onakirei.com](http://onakirei.com).



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FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 14th



### YAMIT & THE VINYL BOULEVARD

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 15th



### RAMIRO AGUIRRE & HIS CHARANGA

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 14th



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To purchase tickets visit [miamiinternationaljazzfest.org](http://miamiinternationaljazzfest.org)



JANUARY 10  
WITH TERRY HANCK  
SEMINOLE CASINO  
COCONUT CREEK

## JT Lauritsen

Hitting the keys from the age of six in his native Norway, Jan Tore "JT" Lauritsen was immediately drawn to the blues upon first hearing B.B. King,

blues pianist Charles Brown and the legendary Ray Charles. His first paying gig at the age of 14 resulted in a steady flow of jobs for him on the organ, but a B3 Hammond was too heavy to drag around from gig to gig, so a few years later he took up the accordion. Since 1989, both accordion and blues harp have been his trademark instruments. In 1991, Lauritsen started the Buckshot Blues Band with guitarist Vidar Busk, and in 1995 The Buckshot Hunters' eponymous debut received solid reviews across the board. The band toured continuously, laying the foundation for their next release, 1999's *My Kind of Blues*, which was released on their own Hunter Records label, and introduced the band's guitarist since 1994 Arnfinn Torrisen. On album number three, 2001's *Make a Better World*, Lauritsen debuted a rawer, harder edge that led to fantastic reviews from the music press and concertgoers alike. Lauritsen describes the music on 2004's *Perfect Moves* as blues, soul and rock'n roll, with a small taste of Tex Mex. 2007's *Squeezeboxing* was followed by a 2009 live CD featuring harmonica virtuoso Billy Gibson. While 2013's *Play by the Rules* was credited to JT Lauritsen and Friends, the liner notes feature and thank many of the same players. The Buckshot Hunters' latest release, 2018's *Blue Eyed Soul Volume 1*, was nominated for Spellemannprisen, often referred to as the Norwegian Grammy Awards. More at [jtlauritsen.com](http://jtlauritsen.com).



## March 13 - 14th, 2020 14th Annual

### Friday March 13

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**Honey Island**

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**Tennessee Redemption**

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**David Julia Band**

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FESTIVAL

### Saturday March 14

**Little Freddie King**

**James Harman**

**JP Soars'**

**Gypsy Blue Revue**

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*and Anne Harris*

**Tas Cru & His Band**

**of Tortured Souls**

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# Melvin Butler

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 CORAL GABLES

**JANUARY 18**  
 WITH JOHN DAVERSA  
 SMALL BAND  
 SOUTH MIAMI DADE  
 CULTURAL CENTER  
 CUTLER BAY

An internationally acclaimed jazz saxophonist, Butler has performed with Brian Blade and the Fellowship Band for over two decades. He is featured with this ensemble on several albums, including 2014's Grammy-nominated *Landmarks* and 2017's *Body and Shadow*. He has worked with notables including Betty Carter, John Daversa, Joey DeFrancesco, Eric Essix, Christian McBride, Jimmy McGriff, Dr. Lonnie Smith, and Reuben Wilson. He has also toured the U.S., Europe, and the Caribbean with celebrated Haitian band Tabou Combo, with whom he recorded three albums. He earned his bachelor's degree from Berklee College of Music, and an MA and PhD in music from New York University. Now an associate professor in the Department of Musicology of the Frost

School of Music at the University of Miami. Dr. Butler maintains broad interests in music and religion of the African diaspora. His recently-published first book, *Island Gospel: Pentecostal Music and Identity in Jamaica and the United States*, examines the theological and experiential connections between Jamaican and African American Pentecostal music and gospel performance. His awards include a Ford Foundation Pre-Doctoral Fellowship and a Fulbright IIE field research grant. He was the Thurgood Marshall Dissertation Fellow at Dartmouth College 2004-2005, and Secretary of the International Association for the Study of Popular Music (U.S. Branch) 2008-2010. Butler is a featured soloist on the Grammy-winning recording by the John Daversa Big Band, 2018's *American Dreamers: Voices of Hope, Music of Freedom*. More at [melvinbutler.com](http://melvinbutler.com).



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# Dennis Gruenling

WITH NICK MOSS BAND  
JANUARY 17  
THE ALLEY  
SANFORD

JANUARY 30  
BLUE ROOSTER  
SARASOTA

The day he heard his first blues record was the day Dennis Gruenling took up the harmonica. He has shared the stage with many of his heroes (including James Cotton and Kim Wilson), is featured on the Hohner Crossover harmonica box, and is in high demand for his harmonica workshops and performances around the globe with The Nick Moss Band. Growing up as a rocker in New Jersey, Gruenling was always attracted to the bluesy/jazzy side of things, until he discovered the original R&B masters from the '40s, '50s and '60s. He dropped out of high school and was sitting in with local acts within a year. Time in the trenches, along with advice and accolades from the likes of Snooky Pryor, Sam Myers and Cotton, grew his fan base, and Gruenling launched his own jump blues band, Jump Time, in the late '90s. His debut release, *Dennis Gruenling Jump Time*, led to six more albums. He had a 15-year blues radio show in the NYC market, and taught hundreds of private students as well as classes at numerous harmonica camps and workshops around the world. And he maintains a thriving business repairing and rebuilding vintage microphones – hundreds of them – for professional and amateur harmonica players worldwide. Gruenling and Nick Moss have been friends for more than 20 years. They recently joined forces on the road and on their 2018 CD *The High Cost Of Low Living*. More at [badassharmonica.com](http://badassharmonica.com).

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



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# Monty Alexander

JANUARY 18  
SOUTH FLORIDA JAZZ  
BROWARD COLLEGE  
DAVIE

Nearly 60 years after he moved to the United States from his hometown of Kingston, Jamaica, Grammy-nom-

inated pianist Monty Alexander is an American classic, touring the world relentlessly with various projects, delighting a global audience drawn to his vibrant personality and soulful message. Described as "An outrageously good time" (Pia Catton, *The Wall Street Journal*), Alexander is a perennial favorite at jazz festivals and venues worldwide, especially the Montreux Jazz Festival where he has appeared 23 times since 1976. His spirited conception is one informed by the timeless verities: endless melody-making, effervescent grooves, sophisticated voicings, a romantic spirit, and a consistent predisposition, as Alexander accurately states, "to build up the heat and kick up a storm." In the course of any given performance, Alexander applies those aesthetics to a repertoire spanning a broad range of jazz and Jamaican musical expressions—the American songbook and the blues, gospel and bebop, calypso and reggae. Documented on more than 75 recordings and cited as the fifth greatest jazz pianist ever in *The Fifty Greatest Jazz Piano Players of All Time* (Hal Leonard Publishing), the Jamaican government designated Alexander Commander in the Order of Distinction in 2000. In 2018 The University of The West Indies bestowed him with an honorary doctorate degree (DLitt) in recognition of his accomplishments.

Just a few months back, the Monty Alexander Jazz Festival in Easton, MD marked its tenth year.

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



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# South Florida JAZZ at Bailey Hall

## 2020 SEASON SCHEDULE



**JANUARY 18**  
**MONTY ALEXANDER**



**FEBRUARY 15**  
**NESTOR TORRES**



**MARCH 21**  
**JAZZMEIA HORN**



**APRIL 25**  
**CHARLIE PARKER**  
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**MAY 16**  
**CHRISTIAN SANDS**



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[southfloridajazz.org](https://southfloridajazz.org)

JANUARY 25  
BRADFORDVILLE  
BLUES CLUB  
TALLAHASSEE

## Brett Wellman

While working as a radio station DJ as a teen, Brett Wellman discovered the blues and that was that. These days, he performs as a solo artist, as part of a duo, and as the leader of his Chicago-style band, Brett Wellman & The Stone Cold Blues Band. He has opened for Tab Benoit, Tinsley Ellis, Guitar Shorty and Elle King, and jammed with Albert Castiglia, Les Dudek, The Kat Riggins Band and Joel DaSilva. When Wellman owned Music Lessons Express in Tallahassee, his philosophy was that anyone can learn to play an instrument, no matter what age. Since early 2017, Wellman has hosted a weekly blues jam where people come to perform and learn new songs and techniques. The rule of the jam is "any age, any instrument, any skill level" reflecting Wellman's philosophy of giving back to the community through music. Having just released their third album, *Strings & Reeds*, Brett Wellman and Chris Balding have been performing together for eight years, sharing stages throughout Florida and Georgia as a blues duo with Wellman on guitar and Balding on harmonica. Their original songs have been used by the State of Florida for various PSA videos, and have received radio airplay across the U.S. and Europe. The two, who share vocals and songwriting credits, recently won the Regional Blues Challenge in Gainesville, and they'll be competing in the International Blues Challenge later this month. The Stone Cold Blues Band adds Dave Messler on bass and Jas Sherman on percussion, for a high-energy, musically authentic good time. More at [brettwellman.com](http://brettwellman.com).



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**SUNDAY, JANUARY 12**  
SPACE COAST HARLEY DAVIDSON, PALM BAY  
Full band / 11AM-4PM

**FRIDAY, JANUARY 17**  
MALABAR MO'S BAR & GRILL, MALABAR  
Full band / 7PM

**SUNDAY, JANUARY 19**  
NOTES MUSIC ROOM, STUART  
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PHOTO BY RYANNE BELL

# BLUE TAVERN

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 Jan 19 - **The Brian Stevens Quartet**  
 Feb 16 - **The Joe Breidenshtein Trio**

**1st Friday Blues Dinner** 6:30-9:30pm  
 Jan 10 - **The Rich Brown Blues Band**  
 Feb 7 - **Rick Randlett CD Release Party**

**NCFBS Touring Blues Series** 5:30-8:30pm  
 Mar 1 - **Ruth Wyand & The Tribe of One**

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JANUARY 11  
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PINECREST

## Fred Radke

Still captivating big-band music fans after more than 60 years, Fred Radke won his third Telly Award in 2007, for *Visions of Valor*, recognizing Medal of Honor recipients. He also won Tellys in 2004 as music director for the Museum of Flights' Wings of Heroes, and in 2005 for Apollo 13. A masterful trumpeter, big-band conductor, musical clinician and educator, recording artist, composer, arranger and producer, Radke turned professional at age 15 and performed with big bands. Over the next three years, Fred led the band of a steamship line during ocean crossings of the Pacific, and worked with Marlene Dietrich and Johnny Mathis. The most important musical influence in Radke's early career was that of legendary jazz trumpet player Harry James. In a dream come true, Radke joined the Harry James Orchestra as lead trumpet player and toured with his mentor. In 1989, the Harry James Estate and Columbia Artists asked Radke to lead the Harry James Orchestra for the 50th Anniversary U.S. tour of 71 concerts. In 1994-95, Radke led a Tribute to Harry James in a battle of the Big Bands on an International Tour, and in 1998 Radke once again led the Harry James Orchestra on a 75-date U.S. tour. Radke has also played lead trumpet for the Glenn Miller Orchestra, Ella Fitzgerald, Mel Torme and many more. He has performed for three U.S. Presidents and the King of Norway, and has toured extensively as guest trumpet soloist and lecturer on the art of playing the trumpet and the history of jazz. More at [harryjamesband.com](http://harryjamesband.com).



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# Randall Bramblett

JANUARY 10  
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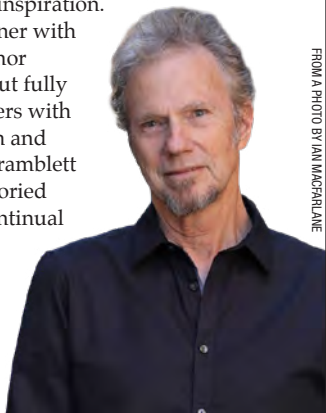
JANUARY 11  
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JANUARY 17-19  
30A SONGWRITER  
FESTIVAL  
SEASIDE

On his eleventh studio release, *Juke Joint at the Edge of the World*, esteemed singer-songwriter and multi-instrumentalist Randall Bramblett aims to recreate the literature of the blues with music about nowhere people in nowhere lands.

Conjuring equal parts Tom Waits, William Burroughs, and hallelujah chorus, his music again comes alive with this new collection of songs. A musician with a career spanning four decades, Bramblett's talent has earned him the respect of his peers and many of rock's finest luminaries. He penned the title track for the Grammy-nominated Blind Boys of Alabama's new album, adding to a long catalog of songs covered by Bonnie Raitt, Gregg Allman, Bonnie Bramlett, Hot Tuna, Delbert McClinton and more. But it's Bramblett's own career as frontman over the course of 11 albums where his artistry is in full display. His solo career began in the 1970s with a pair of albums on Polydor Records. Joining the rock-jazz fusion group Sea Level he wrote/co-wrote a number of the group's songs, including the charting single "That's Your Secret." Bramblett was approached by Traffic co-founder Steve Winwood in 1988 and spent the next 16 years touring in his band. It was on the road that he wrote new material with reinvigorated confidence and inspiration.

Teasing his listener with unexpected humor while fleshing out fully lived-in characters with human ambition and godly stature, Bramblett continued his storied career with a continual pageant of reinvention and true conviction. More at [randallbramblett.com](http://randallbramblett.com).



FROM A PHOTO BY IAN MADFARLANE

## Bridget Kelly Band

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the Jewel Tones

Jam to Follow



SATURDAY,  
MARCH 21:

Guitar Workshop with  
Tas Cru  
Brad Vickers & His  
Vestapolitans  
Tas Cru & His Band  
of Tortured Souls  
Dustin Arbuckle &  
the Damnations  
Bill Wharton the  
Sauce Boss  
Joel DaSilva Band  
Gabe Stillman Band  
Eliza Neals &  
the Narcotics

Jam to Follow

SUNDAY, MARCH 22:

Harmonica Workshop  
with Harper  
Deb Ryder Band  
Harper & Midwest Kind  
James Armstrong Band

Jam to Follow



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# Veronica Swift & the Shelly Berg Trio

**JANUARY 8**  
**GOLD COAST**  
**JAZZ SOCIETY**  
**BROWARD CENTER**  
**FT LAUDERDALE**

At age 25, Veronica Swift is recognized as one of the top young jazz singers on today's jazz scene. A child of the jazz world, Swift grew up on tour

with her parents, renowned jazz pianist Hod O'Brien and celebrated jazz singer Stephanie Nakasian. In 2015 Swift won second place at the prestigious Thelonious Monk Jazz Competition, and in 2016 she was asked to perform a concert at the Tribeca Performing Arts Center in New York City. She appeared with Michael Feinstein at Jazz at Lincoln Center with the Tedd Firth Big Band, Marilyn Maye and Freda Payne. In 2018 Swift began touring with her trio (Emmet Cohen Trio), with the Benny Green Trio, Wynton Marsalis and the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra and with Chris Botti. More at [veronicaswift.com](http://veronicaswift.com).

Joining Swift for this Jazz in the Key of Swing program will be the Shelly Berg Trio with David Chiverton on drums and Dion Kerr on bass. A Steinway piano artist and five-time Grammy-nominated arranger, orchestrator and producer, Berg earned three nominations in the Best Arrangement Accompanying Vocal(s) category with jazz singer-lyricist Lorraine Feather and international superstar Gloria Estefan, and a fourth Grammy nomination as co-producer of *Gloria Estefan: The Standards*. He hosts a monthly radio show on Sirius XM, is music director of The Jazz Cruise, artistic advisor for the Jazz Roots series at Miami's Adrienne Arsht Center, and Dean of the Frost School of Music at the University of Miami. More at [shellyberg.com](http://shellyberg.com).



BERG FROM A PHOTO BY DANIEL AZOULAN

**NATE NAJJAR**  
 natenajar.com

Touring nationally with DANIELA SOLEDADE in support of her new release, *A Moment of You*. As the CD's producer and guitarist, Nate helped curate this set of Brazilian-ized standards, Bossa Nova gems, and originals.

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Jan 25-Feb 1: Super Bowl LIVE!  
 Free @ Bayfront Park!  
 1/25: Ike & Val Woods 6pm  
 1/26: Iko Iko 3pm  
 Guerra Grooves 4:30pm  
 1/27: ORIENTE Sextet 5pm  
 1/28: Mustafa on Sax 7:30pm  
 1/31: Jesse Jones Jr. 3:30pm

More @ [www.miasbliv.com/events](http://www.miasbliv.com/events)

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



# Victor Wainwright

One of the most dynamic and exciting keyboard performers on the roots music scene, Victor Wainwright is known for his high-octane boogie piano, big soul sounds, powerhouse blues, roots rock 'n' roll, and a voice that recalls Dr. John and Leon Russell. While attending college in Daytona Beach, Wainwright met bassist Stephen Dees, who produced and co-wrote Wainwright's debut album, 2005's *Piana from Savannah*. The two joined forces as Victor Wainwright & the WildRoots before a 2007 relocation to Memphis. 2009's *Beale*

*Street to the Bayou* was released on their own WildRoots Records to critical acclaim, and rode high on charts across the country and overseas. 2011's *Lit Up!* crested similar waves, and helped grow the group's fan base. Wainwright was nominated for his first Blues Music Award in 2012, released the double live CD *Family Roots* in 2013, then *Boom Town* in 2015. The group won the 2016 BMA Band of the Year and B.B. King Entertainer of the Year, as well as the 2016 Blues Blast Contemporary Blues Album of the Year. In 2011, Damon Fowler, J.P. Soars and Wainwright teamed up to form Southern Hospitality. Their debut, 2013's *Easy Livin'*, produced by Tab Benoit, peaked at No. 9 on the U.S. *Billboard* Top Blues Album chart, and received the 2013 Blues Blast Award for Best New Artist Debut. The 2013, 2014 and 2017 BMA Pinetop Piano Player of the Year then formed Victor Wainwright and the Train, with Billy Dean, Terrence Grayson and Pat Harrington. The group's self-titled debut was released in 2018. More at [victorwainwright.com](http://victorwainwright.com).





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<p>Jan 3 Jan 4 Jan 10 Jan 11 Jan 17 Jan 18 Jan 24 Jan 25 Jan 31</p>	<p><b>Packrat's Smokehouse</b></p> <p><b>Bobby Rush</b></p> <p><b>Randall Bramblett Band</b></p> <p><b>Frank Jones Band</b></p> <p><b>Mac Arnold &amp; Plate Full O' Blues</b></p> <p><b>EG Kight</b> BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION</p> <p><b>Joe "Survival" Caruso</b> with <b>Bootsy Taylor</b></p> <p><b>Steady Rollin' Bob Margolin</b> - OPENING ACT / IBC FUNDRAISER <b>Brett Wellman &amp; Chris Balding</b></p> <p><b>Nick Moss Band</b> featuring <b>Dennis Gruenling</b></p>	    
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