



JAZZ & BLUES

F L O R I D A

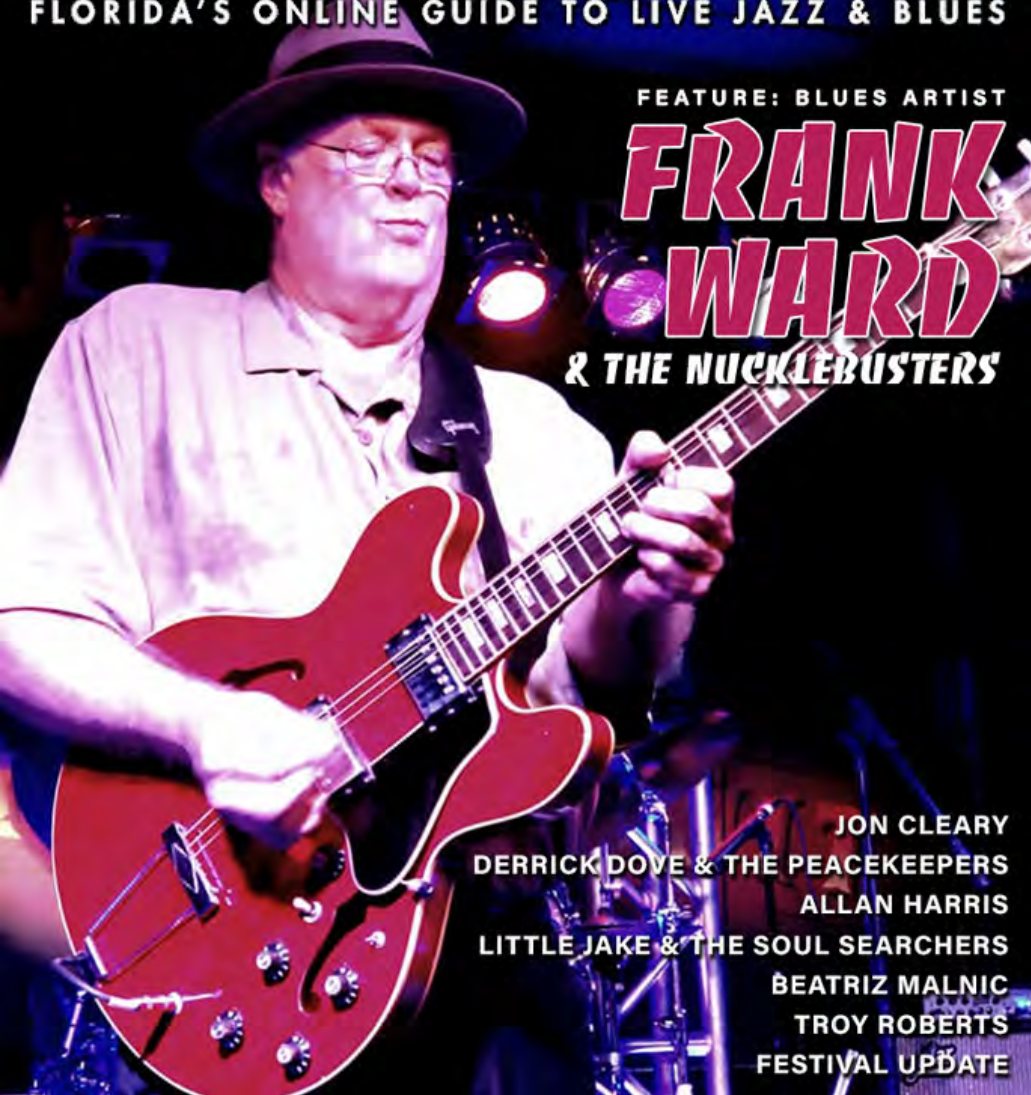
FLORIDA'S ONLINE GUIDE TO LIVE JAZZ & BLUES



FEATURE: BLUES ARTIST

**FRANK
WARD**

& THE NUCKLEBUSTERS



JON CLEARY
DERRICK DOVE & THE PEACEKEEPERS
ALLAN HARRIS
LITTLE JAKE & THE SOUL SEARCHERS
BEATRIZ MALNIC
TROY ROBERTS
FESTIVAL UPDATE

FAMOUS FRANK & THE

by Bill Meredith

When vocalist and guitarist “Famous” Frank Ward takes the stage for reunion shows with his Nuclebusters Blues Band, it’ll be the first time the leader and frontman has assembled the group since February of 2020.

It’s an all-too-familiar tale for long-dormant bandleaders and musicians, like other current Nuclebusters Ken Burkhart (keyboards), Sheldon Voss (bass/vocals) and Tim Kuchta (drums), in the COVID-19 era.

“I’ve really missed playing, and so look forward to the gigs again,” says Ward. “A friend recently made a great point by telling me, ‘Take a breath, and realize you only have so many of these.’ And it’s true. I had found myself loading in, then suddenly loading out, but forgetting to enjoy everything in-between. We’ll rehearse for the reunions at Shelly’s house, although Tim won’t need it. I can pull out a tune we haven’t played for 25 years, and he’ll remember all the stops, breaks and accents.”

Starting out in 1988, the Nuclebusters became one of South Florida’s most endearing and enduring electric blues acts of the 1990s and into the 21st century. The group was even named “Best Blues Band” in *New Times* magazine’s special “Best of Broward/Palm Beach” issue in 2000, and has carried on with its core members and rotating additional personnel since.

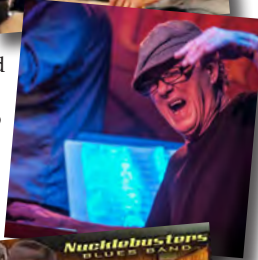
“I’ve really missed playing, and so look forward to gigs again”

“The Nuclebusters has always pretty much been me and whoever I hired at the time,” Ward says. “There have been some stalwarts, like Tim on drums and his primary replacement, Rick Geragi; Shelly on bass, and

Ken on keyboards since 2009, when he replaced Joe Saint.”

Additional mainstays through the band’s tenure were harmonica players Johnny Charles and Jason Ricci, bassists George Romano and Jason Rosner, and drummers Tommy D’Quatro and John Yarling. With Burkhart taking time off, Voss, Saint, Charles and Kuchta will round out the lineup at this month’s reunions. All are well-versed in the Chicago-style blues that Ward specializes in, from the original material on its three CDs — the studio efforts *One More Chance* (1997) and *Somebody Better Have My Money* (2007) and the live CD *Road Rage* (2003) — to covers of Muddy Waters and Howlin’ Wolf.

Ward’s lead vocals, rhythm playing and slide guitar prowess are the real deal, and Saint’s specialty is Hammond organ, the authentic grinding sound of gritty blues bands worldwide. Voss, a former business partner of the iconic late music



E 'BUSTERS ARE BACK!

promoter Don Cohen at Musicians Exchange in Fort Lauderdale, is still adding glue-like bass lines and harmony vocals a quarter-century after Cohen warned Ward he might only last six months with the band. And Kuchta's groove was suitably honed with, among others, the Groove Thangs, the air-tight funky Fort Lauderdale export that started in 1984.

"I was hosting the open jam at the Back Room in Delray Beach in the mid-1990s," Ward says, "and I was using the opportunity to audition bass players and drummers. That's how I initially found Shelly and Timmy. Johnny had played harmonica and sang with the band from 1991 to 1994, when he moved back to Massachusetts. He called and said, 'I'm coming back into town, do you want to do a reunion?' And Ken replaced Joe after he'd moved to New Mexico. He's since moved back to Naples, and he and Johnny are traveling here for the reunions."

A Boca Raton resident who moved to South Florida from his native New Jersey at age 12, Ward's primary occupation throughout the Nuclebusters' tenure has been as co-owner of AMF Tire, the auto repair and tire service shop in Boca. In fact, the humble Ward cites that job as a primary reason that he's "Famous."

"There was a high school buddy of mine named Larry Kelly who gave me that nickname," Ward says. "He said, 'The thing about Frank is that you can be at a formal wedding in Palm Beach or a biker bar in the Keys, but when you walk in, somebody's yelling Frank's name.' I've always been up front and available in the auto business too, so that has a lot to do with the recognition." More at nuclebusters.com.

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JULY 8
 COMMUNITYARTSPROGRAM.ORG/
 2021-VIRTUAL-SUMMER-CONCERT-
 SERIES/

Troy Roberts

Hailing from the remote location of Perth, West Australia, saxophonist Troy Roberts has received numerous accolades including three DownBeat Jazz Soloist Awards, two Grammy nominations, and a semi-finalist spot in the 2008 Thelonious Monk International Jazz Saxophone Competition. Since graduating with a Bachelor of Music at the age of 19, Roberts has performed extensively throughout Europe and the United States with artists such as Jeff 'Tain' Watts, Joey DeFrancesco, James Morrison, Aretha Franklin, Van Morrison, Christian McBride, Sammy Figueroa, Billy Hart, Dave Douglas, Orrin Evans and Kurt Elling. He also pursued and received his Master's Degree from the Frost School of Music at the University of Miami. In 2012, Roberts performed as part an international septet for Herbie Hancock's launch of International Jazz Day at the UN. In 2019 he founded his own jazz label, Toy Robot Music. As an educator, Troy has presented numerous master classes and clinics at prestigious colleges, conservatoriums, and universities around the world. His 2021 CD (his 13th as a leader) is a collaboration with Tim Jago titled *Best Buddies*. The Troy Roberts Trio – with Jago on guitar and Alex Hernandez on bass – will revisit and revamp an assortment of jazz standards in *All That Jazz!*, the opening concert in the Community Arts Program (CAP) 2021 VIRTUAL Summer Concert Series. More at troyroberts.com.



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Derrick Dove & The Peacekeepers

After devoting his life to making music, Derrick Dove and his band released their first album in early 2018. That debut, *Derrick Dove & The Peacekeepers*, debuted at No. 5 on the iTunes blues charts. They've since been featured on SiriusXM BB King's Bluesville and they have shared the stage with Blackberry Smoke, Robert Randolph, Stryper, Drivin' & Cryin' and others. Dove's father was a DJ and played in a band, which exposed the youngster to a wide variety of music. Early favorites like Little Richard and Jimi Hendrix led to Stevie Ray Vaughn, Muddy Waters, Santana and Bob Seger. Dove also names Otis Redding as one of his favorite singers of all time. After playing in other bands for years, Dove put together a cover band with a very eclectic set list, and they spent several years refining their sound and direction playing regular local gigs. Meanwhile Dove had been writing original songs for years, and he and the band had been practicing their own music in their downtime. Honing their sound of blues-influenced southern rock, it took about a year to finish and produce the album. The Peacekeepers are Jamie Richardson/drums, Don Hill III/bass and Johnathan 'JT' Thomas/keyboard. More at derrickdove.com.



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Allan Harris

JULY 17
CULTURAL CENTER
POMPANO BEACH

Since he hit the jazz scene more than 20 years ago, Brooklyn-born, Harlem-based vocalist/

guitarist/bandleader/composer Allan Harris has reigned as one of the most accomplished and exceptional singers of his generation. Described by no less than Tony Bennett as "My favorite singer," there's ample evidence of Harris' artistry on his 14 recordings as a leader, and in performances around the world, from Jazz at Lincoln Center to the 2012 London Olympics. He has performed with or opened for the likes of Tony Bennett, Dionne Warwick, Diana Krall, Natalie Cole, Al Jarreau, Lee Ritenour, Michael Feinstein, Cassandra Wilson, and Wynton Marsalis. In addition, Harris has sung or recorded with big bands and orchestras around the world including The Metropole Orchestra, The Berlin Jazz Orchestra, The Smithsonian Jazz Orchestra, the Moscow Jazz Orchestra, the RTE National Concert Orchestra, The Chicago Jazz Orchestra, The Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, The Turkish TRT Big Band, Latvian Radio Orchestra, and the EFG London Jazz Festival Orchestra. His latest CD is 2021's *Kate's Soulfood*, a spirited, soul-drenched ten-track recording. Showcasing his brisk baritone and deft songwriting, Harris' fourteenth release as a leader paints a vivid portrait of his vibrant hometown Harlem neighborhood. Harris' commitment to education is equally impressive, including his donation of a performance every year to Challenge Aspen/America, along with Vince Gill and Amy Grant. As he says "I'm a storyteller through the genre of jazz." More at allanharris.com.



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JULY 25
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Little Jake & The Soul Searchers

An authentic blues child prodigy, Tampa-born and Florida-raised Little Jake Mitchell works as hard today as he did in his appearances at the Apollo Theater; as hard as he did on tour as “Mr. Excitement” with R&B immortals James Brown, Jackie Wilson, Sam Cooke, and Bobby Blue Bland, or at the Pensacola Blues Festival, when B.B. King encouraged him to stay in show business. Even at the 75-year mark, Mitchell still brings the authenticity and passion of what it means, and has meant historically, to be a black artist in a changing world. Combine Mitchell with The Silver-Sonic Horns and a powerful rhythm section, and you get Little Jake & The Soul Searchers. The band recalls authentic R&B stagecraft in support of a classic repertoire of soulful songs. The band’s roots are deep, featuring sidemen who worked with Ike and Tina Turner, Billy Joe Royal, Hues Corporation, and other pioneers. The rhythm section features keyboardist and vocalist, in addition to the bass and drums, and combines with the Horns to form an entity in its own right – The Soul Searchers. Their last CD, 2016’s *Not A Chance in a Million*, is a musical statement spanning five decades of commitment to the craft. It shows off the chemistry between R&B veterans from the “Chitlin Circuit” whose friendships go back several decades. Don’t miss your chance to experience that rare energy at this North Central Florida Blues Society show. More at littlejakemitchell.com.



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Beatriz Malnic

FRIDAYS
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Brazilian-American vocalist, vocal arranger, classical pianist and Director of Brazilian Voices Beatriz Malnic arrived in the U.S. in 1996. She is a highly respected interpreter of bossa nova and samba, and has performed and recorded with luminaries such as Al Di Meola, Nestor Torres, Toquinho, Chico Buarque, Duduka da Fonseca, Mike Orta, Harry Allen, Don Wilner and many others. Malnic received the Brazilian Press Award for Best Brazilian Singer Living in the U.S. in 2009 and 2017. Two of her CDs, *Chico Buarque* by Beatriz Malnic and *Bossa and Blues*, were awarded Best Brazilian CD Released in the U.S. in 2012 and 2010. Her last tour found her performing at Maduro, the renowned jazz club at the Grand Hyatt in Tokyo, and performing her piano compositions with Geraldo Vandré at two different venues in Brazil. Malnic also teaches vocal master classes, coaching vocalists at the Brazilian Music Institute from University of Florida at Gainesville, the L'auditori in Barcelona, Spain, the Conservatory of Music in São Paulo, Ignacio de Loyolla Church in the Vatican, in Haiti during the Jazz Festival in 2011, and at a Brazilian Music Workshop with Antonio Aldolfo in Hollywood, Florida. She is the Co-Director and Co-Founder of the 50-voice all-female vocal group Brazilian Voices, a non-profit organization that performs and records in the South Florida area and internationally. Malnic is responsible for almost all of the vocal arrangements performed by Brazilian Voices. More at beatrizmalnic.com.



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August 27
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JULY 23 Calixto Oviedo Trio
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Jon Cleary

JULY 15
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JULY 16
FUNKY BISCUIT
BOCA RATON

JULY 17
KEY WEST THEATER
KEY WEST

Raised in a musical family in a rural British village, Jon Cleary grew increasingly interested in funk-infused music as a teen. He discovered that three of his favorites – LaBelle’s “Lady Marmalade,” Robert Palmer’s version of “Sneakin’ Sally Through the Alley,” and Frankie Miller’s rendition

of “Brickyard Blues” – were attributed to Allen Toussaint as songwriter, producer, or both... and the die was cast. In 1981 Cleary flew to New Orleans and went straight to the storied Maple Leaf Bar, working there first as a painter before graduating to pianist. Word of Cleary’s burgeoning talent began to spread, and he started working with local legends such as Snooks Eaglin, Earl “Trick Bag” King, Johnny Adams, and Jessie “Ooh Poo Pah Doo” Hill. Today, Cleary’s work pays obvious homage to the classic Crescent City keyboard repertoire created by such icons as Jelly Roll Morton, Fats Domino, Professor Longhair and Dr. John – while also using it as a launching pad for a style that incorporates such other diverse influences as ’70s soul and R&B, gospel music, funk, and Afro-Caribbean and Afro-Cuban rhythms. Cleary recorded his first album, of nine to date, in 1989. His ever-elevating profile led to global touring work in the bands of Taj Mahal, John Scofield, Dr. John, and Bonnie Raitt. Cleary has led his own group, the Absolute Monster Gentlemen, for over two decades now, but he still collaborates frequently with old friends. The

2015 AMG album *Go Juice* won a Grammy for Best Regional Roots Music Album. More at joncleary.com.



JULY 2 THE FLAVORS
JULY 3 THE NEW CAHOOTS
JULY 4 THE BLENDERS
JULY 7-8 JON RONIGER & THE GOOD FOR NOTHING BAND

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"DEEP DOWN IN FLORIDA," - MUDDY WATERS

The North Central Florida Blues Society

PROUDLY PRESENTS A LIVE AND STREAMING BLUES SHOW

LITTLE JAKE & THE SOUL SEARCHERS

Sunday, July 25

High Dive

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Doors/Livestream 5:30PM

Show 6:00PM

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Frankie Gearing



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JAZZ & BLUES FLORIDA

FESTIVAL UPDATE

AUGUST 13 • BROOKSVILLE
Spirit of Woodstock

SEPTEMBER 3 • SEBASTIAN
Earl's Labor Day Weekend Party

SEPTEMBER 23-25 • NEW SMYRNA BEACH
New Smyrna Beach Jazz Fest

SEPTEMBER 29 • JACKSONVILLE
Jacksonville Jazz Fest

OCTOBER 4 • AMELIA ISLAND
Amelia Island Jazz Fest

OCTOBER 7 • BARBADOS
Barbados Jazz Excursion

OCTOBER 8 • CLERMONT
BBQ & Blues Fest

OCTOBER 14 • CLEARWATER
Clearwater Jazz Holiday

OCTOBER 15 • BROOKSVILLE
Camping with the Blues

NOVEMBER 6 • GAINESVILLE
Downtown Fest & Art Show

NOVEMBER 12 • CASSELBERRY
Craft Beer & Blues Fest

DECEMBER 3 • BRADENTON
Bradenton Blues Fest

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INFORMATION WAS CORRECT AT TIME OF POSTING

Send updates to

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