



**JAZZ & BLUES**  
F L O R I D A

NOVEMBER  
2012

FLORIDA'S ONLINE GUIDE TO LIVE JAZZ & BLUES

**FEATURED ARTIST**

**MAC ARNOLD & PLATE FULL  
O' BLUES**



**RAY BONNEVILLE • TRIBUTE TO NAT KING COLE • BONERAMA  
CONNIE EVINGSON WITH THE CHARLES LAZARUS QUARTET  
BOOGIE WOOGIE PIANO FESTIVAL • TRIO DA PAZ  
JAMES BLOOD ULMER TRIO • CHUCHO VALDÉS QUINTET  
JUMPIN' JOHNNY SANSONE • GONZALO RUBALCABA TRIO**

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11PM **PIANO BOB'S**  
*After hours jam with  
the guest players*

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 16



8PM **JIM MCKABA**  
*Pure Chicago-Style  
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9PM **TOM WORRELL**  
*New Orleans  
Boogie Blues*



10PM **KELLEY HUNT**  
*Deep South Boogie  
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# MAC ARNOLD

by Bob Weinberg



Mac Arnold & Plate Full o' Blues

## THE SOUNDS OF CHICAGO ROAR LIKE

the el train through Mac Arnold's blues. On half the tracks of his 2011 live recording *Blues Revival*, the veteran singer and guitarist serves up hard-driving, funky grooves with his Plate Full o' Blues band. The other half comprises grinding Windy City jams performed with the allstar Muddy Waters Reunion Band, featuring Bob Margolin, Willie "Big Eyes" Smith and Kim Wilson. Arnold's steely voice certainly recalls Muddy's, although it's also shot through with the fiery soul of a Southern son who shared stages with James Brown and Otis Redding.

Arnold, playing bass at the time, was just 23 years old when he ventured up to Chicago from Pelzer, S.C., where he currently resides. As a boy, he would listen to hits by Muddy Waters, Elmore James and Jimmy Reed being broadcast from WLAC in Nashville. If he wanted to play music with his heroes, he knew he'd have to go where they were. "I went to Chicago specifically to get on stage with everybody that I could," Arnold relates, speaking by phone from the organic vegetable farm he owns and operates. "I had respect for everybody, but I should've had more respect than that!"

Among those who welcomed Arnold's presence on the bandstand was saxophonist A.C. Reed, who hired him in 1965. Muddy lured him away in 1966, and he became part of a band that included George "Harmonica" Smith, guitarists Luther "Georgia Boy Snake" Johnson

and Sammy Lawhorn, and drummer Francis Clay. That unit can be heard on Muddy's *Authorized Bootleg: Live at The Fillmore*, Otis Spann's classic LP *The Blues is Where It's At*, and John Lee Hooker's *Live at Café Au-Go-Go*.

While Chicago may have been blues heaven, its winters were sheer hell. "The wind was like razors," Arnold remembers. "It would cut right through your clothes. I told everyone, 'I'm gonna leave Chicago, because this wind and this temperature is just crazy! I'm goin' to Los Angeles!'"

True to his word, Arnold moved to L.A. in late 1969. He had impressed music impresario Don Cornelius in Chicago, and when Cornelius brought

his groundbreaking *Soul Train* to Hollywood in 1971, he hired Arnold as an associate producer. Arnold also worked in the band of pop-soul great Bill Withers.

In 1990, Arnold returned to Pelzer. Retired from music, he caught up with friends and family — he's the 10th of 13 siblings, most of whom still reside in the area. Arnold took a variety of jobs, including truck driver for Belk Simpson department stores. During that time, he met mechanic Max Hightower, who also played harmonica. "Max found out I used to play with Muddy Waters and John Lee Hooker," Arnold says. "He said, 'Man, you ain't got no business driving no truck! You need to be playin' blues, man!'"

Although Arnold brushed him aside for years, Hightower's persistence finally paid off. They found the right musicians, and Plate Full o' Blues was born. The band's name was no coincidence. "When we would do rehearsals here at the house," Arnold explains, "I would always cook. I'd pick something out of the garden and I'd throw something on the grill, and we'd have a big old layout at the end of the day."

Since 2005, Arnold's released a quartet of recordings with the band. He's also received Blues Music Award nominations three years in a row for Best Traditional Blues Male Artist, while a documentary about him, 2011's *Nothing to Prove*, was nominated for best DVD. He's equally proud of his annual Cornbread and

# MAC ARNOLD

Collard Greens Festival. The event benefits his I Can Do Anything Foundation, which fosters the preservation of music and arts education.

While he cut his teeth on urban blues, Arnold, 70, still has plenty of country in his DNA. He says his next recording will likely be stripped-down country blues. Arnold's roots run deep, and he continues to perform on homemade "gas-can" guitars, instruments he used to steal from his older brother Leroy when he was just a boy. "Leroy still goes around to the gigs," Arnold says. "And my baby brother, Isaac, he comes with him. Well, I tell everybody when I'm on stage, 'Ya'll watch these cans, because my brothers are here, and they normally go out after dark and take the gasoline out of ya'll's cars and put it in mine.' We would always crack up about that."



Mac Arnold and Plate Full o' Blues perform Nov. 10-11 at Paradise Bar & Grille in Pensacola; Nov. 14 at Guanabanas in Jupiter; Nov. 15-16 at Bayside Grille in Key Largo; Nov. 17 at the Southwest Florida German American Social Club in Cape Coral (Southwest Florida Blues Festival); Dec. 14 at Bradfordville Blues in Tallahassee; and Dec. 15 at the Arts Garage in Delray. Visit [Macarnold.com](http://Macarnold.com).

A photograph of two pianists, Aldo López-Gavilán and Harold López-Nussa, performing on stage. The image is overlaid with text: "2 PIANISTS OS", "ALDO LÓPEZ-GAVILÁN &amp; HAROLD LÓPEZ-NUSSA", and "IN CONCERT". At the bottom, it says "FUNDarte ON STAGE BLACK BOX THEATER @ MIAMI DADE COUNTY AUDITORIUM Saturday, November 24th / 8:00 p.m. / 2901 W Flagler Street, Miami / 305.547.5414".





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**RAY BONNEVILLE**  
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 VENICE ART CENTER, VENICE/NOV. 10

With his deft fingerpicking, shivery harmonica and image-laden lyrics, Ray Bonneville crafts wry and poignant portraits steeped in Americana. The Austin-based singer-songwriter vocally resembles Dylan and Prine, while Mississippi John Hurt and Rev. Gary Davis can be detected in his rolling guitar style. Last year's *Bad Man's Blood* provides a sterling showcase for Bonneville's evocative songs. The stark title track wouldn't sound out of place on Springsteen's *Nebraska*,



whereas "Mississippi" is an inventive twist on the familiar blues subject of rising flood waters: "Forget about the dirty dishes, pretty mama, little sister keep your head/Stand on your toes, baby brother, don't bother to make your bed." Bonneville's 2009 ode to New Orleans, "I am the Big Easy," was named Song of the Year by the International Folk Alliance. **BW**

**BONERAMA**  
 PLAZA LIVE, ORLANDO/NOV. 8  
 THE STAGE, MIAMI/NOV. 9  
 FUNKY BISCUIT, BOCA/NOV. 10

Started by a couple of refugees from Harry Connick's band, the trombone-fueled Bonerama is infamous for funky covers of rock tunes, including Edgar Winter's "Frankenstein" and Black Sabbath's "War Pigs." Founding member Mark Mullins often plays his trombone through a guitar amp and manipulates his sound with a wah-wah pedal. Such brash sensibilities earned Bonerama a 2007 Big Easy Award for Best Rock Band, a rare honor for a horn band. And yet, with their three-bone frontline plus sousaphone, guitar and drums, Bonerama always retain their Crescent City



flavor. Recorded live at Tipitina's, 2007's *Bringing it Home* provides a taste of the band doing what they do best. Namely, they inject funky brass into tunes by everyone from George Porter and Art Neville to Led Zeppelin and The Beatles. They even display their jazz roots with a read of Monk's "Epistrophy." **BW**



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## BOOGIE WOOGIE PIANO FEST ARTS GARAGE, DELRAY/NOV. 15-16

For the third edition of his annual blues-piano summit, Piano Bob Wilder rounds up another roster of rollicking keyboard crashers. From the old-school New Orleans styles of English Bob Andrews, Lee Pons and Tom Worrell, to the rippling Chicago muscle of Jim McKaba, to the rockin' Southern-fried blues of Victor Wainwright and Kelley Hunt, the emphasis remains squarely on the keys. (Speaking of which, Key West's Barry Cuda will also be part of the party.) Of course, Wilder, a South Florida institution, will not only host, but he'll join his guests each night for after-hour jams.



When it comes to the pre-War blues of Big Maceo Merriweather and Leroy Carr, Wilder is a master, although he's also deeply rooted in jump-swing and Crescent City styles. In the '90s, Wilder's duo, Piano Bob and the Snowman, won the B.B. King Lucille Award at the W.C. Handy Awards. BW

## JAMES BLOOD ULMER TRIO COLONY THEATER, MIAMI BEACH, NOV. 17

James Blood Ulmer built his reputation as an uncompromising avant-garde jazz artist, adapting Ornette Coleman's harmolodic concepts to the electric guitar. However, during the past decade, Ulmer has delved into various forms of blues, bringing his sensibilities — and powerful vocals — to the genre. Whether dipping into blues standards by Muddy Waters, Howlin' Wolf and John Lee Hooker; exploring the emotional resonances of a Son House classic; or pushing the sonic possibilities of Junior Kimbrough's Hill Country blues, Ulmer offers a deeply personal vision. The South Carolina native explored Delta blues styles on the 2005, stripped-down solo recording



*Birthright*, although he returned to full-band mayhem on 2007's *Piety Street Sessions*. Recorded at the venerable New Orleans studio of the title, the latter album also reflects Ulmer's anger and sadness over the treatment of Katrina survivors. With his trio, Ulmer can get quietly intimate or raise a ruckus, as the mood strikes him. BW

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Michael Kaeshammer, Pianist/Vocalist



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BLUES & JAZZ

photo: calvin o'neill/artist

**JUMPIN' JOHNNY SANSONE**  
 PARADISE BAR & GRILL, PENSACOLA BEACH/NOV. 29  
 MCWELLS, ORLANDO/NOV. 30  
**BRADENTON BLUES FEST/DEC. 1**

Jumpin' Johnny Sansone's hung his hat in New Orleans for more than 20 years, and the Crescent City and its outlying areas have become part of his DNA. Sansone, a masterful harmonica player and singer who also plays accordion, has often combined swamp-pop and New Orleans sensibilities with Chicago blues roots. But Sansone put aside his squeezebox — and much of his lighthearted “fiyo on the bayou” attitude — on his dark and atmospheric 2011 recording *The Lord is Waiting and the Devil is Too*. With Anders Osborne providing textured guitar leads, the album is several shades grungier than



earlier efforts, and among Sansone's best. The album's title track was named Song of the Year at this year's Blues Music Awards, and Sansone was nominated in four other categories, as well. And no question, Sansone still can “jump” with the best of 'em: Cue up his instrumental “Corn Whiskey” for a primer on cutting blues harp. **BW**

**GEORGE BENSON AND FREDDY COLE**  
 UNFORGETTABLE: A TRIBUTE TO NAT KING COLE  
 ARSHT CENTER, MIAMI/NOV. 2

Vocalist/pianist Freddy Cole was initially more interested in playing football than following in the footsteps of older brother Nat King Cole. He started out recording singles in the 1950s, but didn't get serious about a sustained musical career until his statement-making 1990 album *I'm Not My Brother, I'm Me*. From that point through his latest offering, last year's *Talk to Me*, Cole has displayed wit and wisdom through a voice slightly deeper and darker than his late brother's. Vocalist/guitarist George Benson was once the rising-star jazz guitarist of the '60s, and his instrumental albums *It's Uptown* and *The George Benson Cookbook* have become classics. But Benson reinvented himself as a soaring vocalist in the late '70s and early '80s with hits like “On Broadway” and “Give Me the Night.” For their salute to Nat, Benson and Cole will certainly cover chestnuts like “Unforgettable,” and “Mona Lisa” while backed by the UM Frost School of Music's Henry Mancini Institute Orchestra. **BM**



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# S P O T L I G H T

CONNIE EVINGSON w/CHARLES LAZARUS QUARTET  
FLY ME TO THE MOON: BIG BAND LOVE SONGS  
PALLADIUM THEATER, ST. PETERSBURG  
COLLEGE/NOV. 7

VILLAGE AUDITORIUM, FORT MYERS/NOV. 8  
Born in 1962 in Hibbing, Minn. — the same town where Bob Dylan was raised — jazz vocalist Connie Evingson couldn't have chosen a more disparate musical path from the folk hero. Influenced by Peggy Lee and Shirley Horn, Joe Williams and Duke Ellington, Brazilian music and pop tunes, Evingson remains headquartered in Minneapolis. There she's headlined clubs and performed with the Minnesota Orchestra (in an Ellington salute conducted by Doc Severinsen) and on Garrison Keillor's *A Prairie Home Companion* radio show.



On her latest CD, *Sweet Happy Life*, Evingson interprets songs with Norman Gimbel-penned lyrics ranging from the samba-tinged title track and the Brazilian classic "The Girl From Ipanema" to the Roberta Flack pop hit "Killing Me Softly With His Song." Trumpeter Charles Lazarus' quartet will join Evingson for this presentation of big band love songs. **BM**

TRIO DA PAZ  
MIAMI JAZZ FEST, BAYFRONT PARK,  
MIAMI/NOV. 17

Unlike most jazz-guitar trios, which are often known for power, Trio da Paz succeeds primarily through finesse. That's largely because its guitarist, Romero Lubambo, eschews the electric guitar in favor of a traditional, fingerpicked nylon-stringed instrument. Born in Rio de Janeiro, and a graduate of the city's Villa-Lobos School of Music, Lubambo has also become a favorite sideman for high-profile vocalists from Astrud Gilberto and Luciana Souza to Dianne Reeves and Kathleen Battle. Bassist Nilson Matta studied at the nearby Federal University of Rio de Janeiro before joining Lubambo in New York City in 1985. Drummer Duduka Da Fonseca



had already been in the Big Apple for 15 years when the three musicians formed their expatriate Brazilian trio in 1990 and recorded the first of their five CDs. Expect telepathic improvisations, rhythms and harmonies on material from their daring 1994 concept album *Black Orpheus*, plus tunes from the trio's latest release, *Somewhere*. **BM**

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**GONZALO RUBALCABA TRIO  
MINIACI PERFORMING ARTS CENTER,  
DAVIE/NOV. 24**

Havana-born pianist Gonzalo Rubalcaba's uncanny prowess blossomed within the burgeoning music scene of post-revolutionary Cuba. The mentoring of bassist Charlie Haden then led the pianist to his first recording contract and worldwide acclaim. Rubalcaba's virtuosity was evident from the start, and a string of recordings for the Blue Note label revealed a mature, confident and sensitive player and composer. Now releasing albums on his own 5 Passion imprint, the longtime Coral Springs resident presented a deeply personal disc of solo piano with 2011's *Fé — Faith*. That album's followup, *XXI Century*, places Rubalcaba in the company of



trio partners Matt Brewer and Marcus Gilmore, on bass and drums respectively, as well as guests such as guitarist Lionel Loueke, drummer Ignacio Berroa and percussionist Pedrito Martinez. The 49-year-old pianist has earned 15 Grammy nominations, winning two to go along with his two Latin Grammys. **BM**

**CHUCHO VALDES QUINTET  
UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA, GAINESVILLE/NOV. 23**

Cuban pianist Chucho Valdés recently turned 71, and the five-time Grammy winner and three-time Latin Grammy honoree remains equal parts enigma and force of nature. Unlike many successful Cuban jazz musicians, Valdés has remained in his homeland rather than moving to the U.S. Inspired by his father, pianist Bebo Valdés, as well as Thelonious Monk and Art Tatum, Valdés graduated from the Municipal Music Conservatory of Havana as a 14-year-old prodigy. After leading several of the country's top small groups and performing with big bands like the Cuban Modern Music Orchestra, Valdés founded the influential Cuban group Irakere in 1973, bringing in fellow native stars



like Arturo Sandoval and Paquito d'Rivera. The pianist's solo recording career didn't start until he was in his 40s, yet it's been both decorated and fruitful. His Grammy-winning 2010 offering, *Chucho's Steps*, features thematic gems from "New Orleans" to "Zawinul's Mambo," dedicated to the late Weather Report keyboardist Joe Zawinul. **BM**



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- Nov 9 Beth McKee
- Nov 10 Harper & Midwest Kind
- Nov 11 Pyramid Blues Lab Fundraiser
- Nov 15 Flannel Church
- Nov 16 J.B.'s Zydeco Zoo
- Nov 17 Jimmy Thackery & The Drivers
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- Nov 24 Selwyn Birchwood
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