



JAZZ & BLUES
FLORIDA

OCTOBER
2013

FLORIDA'S ONLINE GUIDE TO LIVE JAZZ & BLUES

**FEATURED
ARTIST**

Gregory Porter

- DR. JOHN & THE NIGHT TRIPPERS • THE MANHATTAN TRANSFER
SAMANTHA FISH • KENNY BARRON'S PLATINUM BAND
ROBERT RANDOLPH & THE FAMILY BAND • KARRIN ALLYSON
VINCE MENDOZA • BILLY CHILDS JAZZ CHAMBER ENSEMBLE
REV. PEYTON'S BIG DAMN BAND • SOUTH FLORIDA BLUES ALL STARS**

This edition is dedicated to the happy and loving musical memories of Billy Mure (1915-2013)

GREGORY PORTER

by Bob Weinberg



Having released a pair of exceptionally well-crafted—and well-received—recordings on the independent Motéma label, vocalist Gregory Porter was tapped earlier this year by the venerable Blue Note imprint. His debut for the iconic jazz label, *Liquid Spirit*, dropped last month and showcases his smoky delivery and powerful, personal songwriting, as well as his synergistic relationship with trusted sidemen. Some of those musicians, including pianist and musical director Chip Crawford, will accompany Porter during his performance this month at the South Miami-Dade Cultural Arts Center, which kicks off the Miami Nice Jazz Festival.

Porter, who turns 42 in November and received a Grammy nomination for his 2010 release *Water*, was hardly cowed by the chance to record for the label of Horace Silver and Art Blakey. "It can be intimidating—if you let it be," says the California native, reached by phone in the Brooklyn neighborhood of Bedford-Stuyvesant, where he's resided for nearly a decade. "But, in speaking with [Blue Note president Don Was] initially, he was like, 'Do what you always do. Be you, and let's capture it and put it out there.' So I really hadn't had any pressure in terms of the Blue Note legacy."

Was' advice was right on-the-money. As he has on previous recordings, Porter wraps his

warm, flexible vocals around engaging original melodies—as well as a couple of standards—fitting naturally into a continuum of singers such as Oscar Brown Jr., Leon Thomas and Bill Withers. Like his predecessors, he embraces his roots in the church and the blues, and adds soul and R&B influences he heard while growing up in Los Angeles and Bakersfield. The seventh of eight children raised by their minister mother, Porter absorbed it all. He listened to his mom's gospel and jazz LPs—Nat "King" Cole was a particular favorite—as well as the voices of transplanted Southerners who'd sing their testimony in church with a hefty helping of blues.

Soul music seeped into his consciousness from an early age. Mom wouldn't allow the kids to watch TV's *Soul Train* on Saturdays until they finished cleaning the house. So they turned on the radio and got busy. "When certain songs come on [the radio], whether it be The Ch-Lites or Curtis Mayfield, it reminds me of the windows being opened and a breeze blowing through and the smell of Windex and bleach and cleaning products," Porter says.

Porter was also a gifted athlete. He earned a football scholarship to San Diego State, but sustained a career-ending shoulder injury. The gridiron's loss was the music world's gain. Making the rounds of area jazz clubs, Porter impressed musician-educators Kamau Kenyatta and George Lewis, who mentored him in and out of the classroom. Flutist Hubert Laws put him on his 1998 CD *Remembers the Unforgettable Nat King Cole*, and Porter won raves for his performances in the stage revue *It Ain't Nothin' but the Blues*. Relocating to Brooklyn in 2004, the singer built audiences at St. Nick's Pub in Harlem and Smoke on the Upper West Side. Then came *Water* and the subsequent Grammy nod.

Porter has never considered jazz and soul as separate entities. The rollicking title track to *Liquid Spirit*, complete with gospel handclaps and Porter's call-down-the-thunder sermonizing, sits easily alongside the tender jazz waltz "Water Under Bridges" and the late-night confessional "Hey Laura," all done, for the most part, in acoustic-jazz settings. And his songs are pointedly personal, whether he's writing about romance, spirituality or the importance

GREGORY PORTER

of cultural roots, as he does on the track "Musical Genocide." This harmonious hybrid of genres —jazz, soul, blues, singer-songwriter —has made Porter an international sensation, increasingly recognized by his signature headwear, a balaclava stocking cap crowned by a soft, snap-brim Kangol hat.

With an album out on Blue Note, Porter finds himself ever more at home in a jazz world that's quick to dismiss crossover artists. On *Liquid Spirit*, he ponders his acceptance with a cover of Ramsey Lewis' hit "The 'In' Crowd." "[That] was a statement to myself, asking myself, 'Am I in the 'in' crowd?'" he says with a chuckle. "Ramsey Lewis was in between jazz and soul — and I think that's what I am, probably."



Gregory Porter will perform at 8 PM on Oct. 25 at the South Miami-Dade Cultural Arts Center. Call 786-573-5300 or visit smdcac.org.

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DR. JOHN & THE NITE TRIPPERS
GUSMAN HALL, UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI/OCT. 5

Dr. John may be feeling some of his 72 years, but his music remains as vital as ever. Last year, the good doctor (a.k.a. Mac Rebennack) released *Locked Down*, a collaborative recording with guitarist Dan Auerbach of The Black Keys. Auerbach, who played on and produced the session, was determined to return the veteran New Orleans piano master to the chill-raising sonics of his early recordings, such as *Gris-Gris* and *Babylon*. The results include some of the most exciting, intriguing music Mac has made in recent years. Shot through with the spooky juju and street jive of the Crescent City, breezy Ethiopian jazz rhythms and imagery both mystical and sanctified, *Locked Down* earned Dr. John a



Grammy — his sixth — for Best Blues Album, and introduced him to a new generation of listeners. Expect plenty of tunes from the album when Mac and his Nite Trippers visit UM's Festival Miami, and maybe some Dr. John staples such as "Right Place, Wrong Time," "Such a Night" and "I Walk on Guilted Splinters." **BW**

BILLY CHILDS JAZZ/CHAMBER ENSEMBLE
W/DIANNE REEVES AND THE YING QUARTET
PHILLIPS CENTER, UF GAINESVILLE/OCT. 6

Billy Childs may be a pianist, but his primary instrument is actually much larger in scope. The 56-year-old, L.A.-born artist hears the big picture, as evidenced by his 10-piece Jazz/Chamber Ensemble, which mixes a jazz combo with a classical string quartet. In this case, the three-time Grammy-winning composer, musician and conductor blends his jazz band with the Ying Quartet, consisting of violinists Janet Ying and Ayano Ninomiya, violist Phillip Ying and cellist David Ying. Childs then tops it off with four-time Grammy-winning guest vocalist Dianne Reeves. The entire orchestral unit appears in Florida fresh off of a unique performance two nights



earlier of Childs' song cycle *Enlightened Souls*. Commissioned by Duke University, the performance commemorated the moment 50 years earlier when five African-American students first integrated the North Carolina school. Listeners can also look forward to hearing material from Childs' latest releases, the two volumes of *Jazz/Chamber Music*. **BM**

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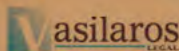
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SAMANTHA FISH

BOSTON'S, DELRAY/OCT. 15
FLORIDA BLUE BLUES FEST, SARASOTA/OCT. 26
LOU'S BLUES, INDIATLANTIC/OCT. 29

In the video for Samantha Fish's bonecrunching blues tune "Lay It Down," the 24-year-old guitarist and singer plays poker in a seedy New Orleans joint, then pops a cap in a no-good cheater. "Just another Saturday night," she sings with a grin. The cut comes from the Kansas City, Mo., prodigy's bar brawl of a new CD, *Black Wind Howlin'*. Fish earned a Best New Artist Debut BMA for her 2011 release *Runaway*, which showcased her versatility in a variety of blues and roots styles. She also joined Cassie Taylor and Dani Wilde for the terrifically entertaining 2011 CD *Girls With Guitars*. With



guitarist Mike Zito and some of his Royal Southern Brotherhood bandmates backing her on *Black Wind*, Fish sounds rougher and less restrained than ever. On tunes such as "Go to Hell" and "Heartbreaker," she wraps the raunch around her brass-knuckle vocals and goes for broke. **BW**

THE MANHATTAN TRANSFER

JAZZIZ NIGHTLIFE, BOCA RATON/OCT. 8-10

Vocal quartet The Manhattan Transfer is one of the most enduring jazz acts, with its original lineup dating back to 1969, and the current personnel of Tim Hauser, Janis Siegel, Alan Paul and Cheryl Bentyne to 1978. The quartet is also a Grammy Award crossover act, having become the first group ever to win in both the jazz and pop categories in the same year in 1981. They'd won Grammys before, and would win several more—their 1985 smash *Vocalese* received 12 nominations, a jazz Grammy record. The foursome has slowed its output since, but still releases potent offerings like 2009's *The Chick Corea Songbook*. Part of the slowdown is due to successful solo careers the



quartet spawned by Bentyne and Siegel. Bentyne has a new release with singer Mark Winkler, *West Coast Cool*; Siegel's latest is the recent *Night Songs*. Fans can expect a variety of selections during this three-night stand, including the Grammy-winning version of Joe Zawinul's "Birdland," Corea arrangements, and solo material. **BM**

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**SOUTH FLORIDA BLUES ALL STARS
FORT LAUDERDALE AIRPORT HILTON,
DANIA BEACH/OCT. 17**

The South Florida Blues Society hosts their annual party for those embarking on the Legendary Rhythm & Blues Cruise, which departs the next day. Landlubbers are welcome, too, and they may be enticed by a superb lineup of area blues talent. Under the banner of the South Florida Blues All Stars, performers include the Joey Gilmore Band, Albert Castiglia, Joel DaSilva, Josh Rowand and David Shelley. Ocala-born bluesman Gilmore has been entertaining South Florida audiences for decades with his powerful soul-blues vocals and clean-burning guitar licks. An international star, he toured Europe and parts of the U.S. this summer. The Miami-raised Castiglia has also expanded his audience beyond state lines. His latest CD, *Living the Dream*, was



nominated for a Blues Blast Music Award. DaSilva, Rowand and Shelley round out the roster of blues-guitar masters, each more than capable of keeping the dance floor filled and sending Blues Cruisers up the gangplank with a grin. **BW**

**REVEREND PEYTON'S BIG DAMN BAND
VINYL MUSIC HALL, PENSACOLA/OCT. 17
MAGNOLIA MUSIC FEST, LIVE OAK/OCT. 19-20**

Boasting a steel-bending vibrato vocal and remarkable slide-guitar chops on electric and acoustic axes, Josh "The Reverend" Peyton does indeed have a big damn sound. His voice recalls blues legends such as Blind Willie Johnson and Charley Patton; in fact, he recorded a tribute album to the latter. But the Rev.'s no throwback, and the energy and attitude of his music draw on punk and alt-country, as well as Mississippi Hill Country blues. On tunes such as "We'll Get Through" and "Shake 'em off Like Fleas"—both from the exceptional 2012 CD *Between the Ditches*—his lyrics deal with economic woes and dishonest



politicians in ways that are at once timely and timeless. The Rev. receives solid support from his wife, Breezy Peyton, on washboard and backup vocals, and Ben "Bird Dog" Bussell on drums. Hailing from the foothills of southern Indiana, the band has scored space on *Billboard's* blues, rock and indie albums charts. **BW**

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S P O T L I G H T

KENNY BARRON'S PLATINUM BAND PHILLIPS CENTER, UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA, GAINESVILLE/OCT. 24

Pianist and New York City institution Kenny Barron turned 70 on June 9, and celebrated with appearances at the iconic Big Apple venue the Village Vanguard. But Barron, named a National Endowment for the Arts Jazz Master in 2010 for a career's worth of solo recording gems, plus work with the likes of Dizzy Gillespie, Freddie Hubbard, Stan Getz and Chet Baker, knows how to continue a career in style. Barron's current tour with his self-titled Platinum Band features a rising star in saxophonist Marcus Strickland, the inventive rhythm section of bassist Kiyoshi Kitagawa and drummer Lee Pearson, and West African guitar and vocal sensation



Lionel Loueke—whose own burgeoning solo career is cresting after he was hand-picked for recording and touring by other jazz stars like Herbie Hancock, Terence Blanchard, and Charlie Haden. You can expect Barron to play several of his lyrical compositions, plus select standards that he helped record, in this seasonal birthday tour stop. **BM**

ROBERT RANDOLPH & THE FAMILY BAND FREEBIRD LIVE, JACKSONVILLE BEACH/OCT. 26 VINYL MUSIC HALL, PENSACOLA/OCT. 27

Pedal-steel wizard Robert Randolph dazzles audiences with his brushfire-swift sliding and picking. Since he emerged from the sacred-steel tradition, on which he was raised at the Pentecostal church in New Jersey, Randolph has toured and recorded with Clapton and Santana and was listed as one of *Rolling Stone's* 100 Greatest Guitarists. Appealing to blues, rock and jam fans, Randolph, who also boasts a strong singing voice, has appeared at many major music fests with his Family Band, which includes his cousins, Danyel Morgan on bass and Marcus Randolph on drums, sister Leneshia Randolph on backing vocals, and guitarist



Brett Haas. The band's latest CD, the party-hearty *Lickety Split!*, is their first studio release in three years and marks their debut for Blue Note. Randolph throws sparks once again with his steel, adding knife-edge textures to joyful cuts such as "Born Again," "Lickety Split" and even the funk classic "Love Rollercoaster." **BW**

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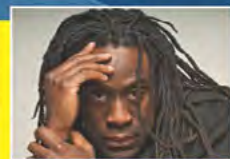
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- Oct 18 The Plaza, Thomasville, GA
- Oct 19 Bradfordville Blues Club, Tallahassee
- Oct 23* Barnacle Bill's, Tallahassee
- Oct 25* Po Boys, Tallahassee
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- 10 Grady Champion
- 11 Posi Tones
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- 20 NW FL "Road to Memphis" IBC Fundraiser

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Tutto Fresco Italian Grill - 1180 SE Pt. St. Lucie Blvd., Port St. Lucie - Cash bar

KARRIN ALLYSON

GUSMAN HALL, UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI/OCT. 24
Versatile vocalist Karrin Allyson is capable of putting on a jazz clinic—from slow torch ballads to rapid-fire improvisational scat-singing—and she'll prove it during an Oct. 23 master class at the University of Miami. But that will surely prove a tune-up to this well-traveled singer's subsequent concert with the university's Frost Jazz Vocal 1 Ensemble, under the direction of Kate Reid. The Kansas-born Allyson's list of residences, including Nebraska, San Francisco, Minneapolis, Kansas City and now New York City, sounds like a tour itinerary. She's indeed appeared throughout the U.S. and abroad in support of her 13 CD releases since 1992, and has specialized in themed tributes like *Ballads: Remembering*



John Coltrane (2001), the Wayne Shorter nod *Footprints* (2006), and *Imagina: Songs of Brazil* (2008). Allyson's latest effort is 2011's *'Round Midnight*, a collection of standards like "Smile," "Sophisticated Lady," and the title track. The vocal fireworks will be anything but standard in this University of Miami "In Harmony with JVI" production. **BM**

VINCE MENDOZA

GUSMAN HALL, UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI/OCT. 25
Musicians who choose to become arrangers, and specialize in reinterpreting other composers' material, often do so to stay off the road and spend more time at home. Vince Mendoza, on the other hand, has become too popular *not* to tour. A multi-instrumentalist who's thus become gifted at hearing a large ensemble's separate components within its whole, Mendoza is also a stellar composer, plus the preeminent arranger of his generation—as evidenced by his writing and arranging for both jazz icons (Pat Metheny, Kurt Elling, Gary Burton) and pop stars (Joni Mitchell, Sting, Elvis Costello). The 51-year-old's latest CD, 2011's *Nights on Earth*, only features all-star saxophonists Joe Lovano



and Bob Mintzer, guitarists John Scofield and John Abercrombie, bassist Christian McBride, keyboardist Alan Pasqua, and drummer Peter Erskine as well as the heralded Metropole Orkest from Holland. Mendoza's vehicles for this show are two of UM's finest: its Frost Concert Jazz Band and Henry Mancini Institute Orchestra. **BM**

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<p>January 8 Tony DeSare Quartet <i>An Evening with Tony DeSare</i></p>	<p>May 14 GCJS Band featuring Billy Ross on sax <i>Tribute to Stan Getz</i></p>
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Demaria, Vince Mendoza by Pamela Fong

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