

JAZZ & BLUES

NOVEMBER
2009

FLORIDA

FLORIDA'S ONLINE GUIDE TO LIVE JAZZ & BLUES



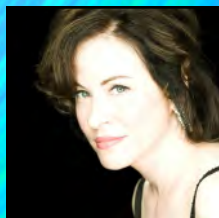
Eliane Elias



Buddy Guy



Dr. John



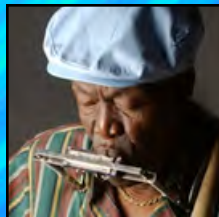
Janiva Magness



Rick Rossano



Miami Saxophone Quartet



Willie Green



Tom Scott



South Florida Jazz Orchestra



Lucky Peterson

WINNING SPINS

By Bob Weinberg

SITUATED BETWEEN GAINESVILLE

and Ocala, Cross Creek draws nature lovers and anglers with its abundance of wildlife and freshwater fishing. The rural town also can lay claim to one of Florida's most-renowned literary figures, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, as well as an acclaimed restaurant named for her masterwork, *The Yearling*. On many weekend nights, the insistent strum of country-blues guitar and the keening wail of harmonica emanate from the rustic eatery, which opened in 1952 and for the past decade has provided a steady gig for another Florida treasure—Willie Green.

Green, who just celebrated his 75th birthday, moved to Florida from his native Alabama more than 50 years ago. A byproduct of his juke-joint experiences, his ability to keep a crowd up and dancing can be heard on his most recent release, *Blues Project*. Unlike previous recordings, *Blues Project* finds Green's emotive vocals and textured harp-blowing out front of a full band on electric and acoustic tracks.

The opening slowburner, "To the End," kicks off the album with a sultry swagger. You can almost picture sweat-slicked bodies grinding on the dance floor to the humid groove, which is expertly provided by a superb rhythm section, and guitarist Rick Levy's heated yet understated leads. Green's sinus-y singing bears a resemblance to Jimmy Reed's, but he's in no way imitative. Likewise, his haunting harmonica calls up blues greats such as the original Sonny Boy Williamson and Little Walter, but remains his own.

Green's mix-and-match approach to established blues lyrics can be maddening. It must have been a nightmare for drummer-manager Rick Ambrose to come up with song titles and attributions on the CD liners, as Green's renditions of classics by Little Walter, Junior Parker and Muddy Waters collage several different tunes. A bit of "Rockin' Robin" strays into Little Walter's "Crazy 'Bout You." Junior Parker's "That's Alright" is renamed "Who Told You Baby?" and the Green original "Tell Me Mama" borrows nothing but the title from Walter's hit record. Often, Green seems to be free-associating. And yet, his delivery is so heartfelt and the music so well-played,



Willie Green

that to argue over song dominion or lyrics misses the point.

The jumping "Crazy 'Bout You" finds the band firing on all cylinders. Green truly seems to be enjoying himself, even letting out a James Brown-like "ow!" inspired by Levy's fiery licks. On the original "Since the Sun Went Down," Green tips his hat to Jimmy Reed, calling up the late blues master's signature groove with stompedown acoustic guitar and chugging harmonica. Acoustic guitar also helps fuel the stop-time funk of "Tell Me Mama," a tune tailor-made for booty-wagging.

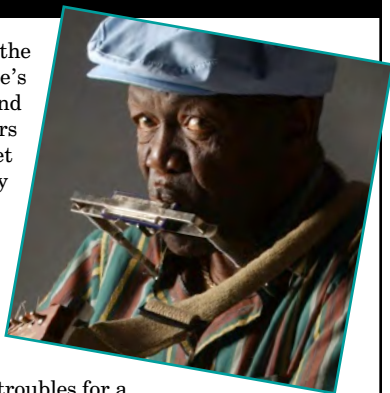
Green is in terrific voice on "Who Told You Baby?" which begins with just his countrified harmonica and vocal. He invests deep feeling in the heartbroken lyric of romantic rejection, which is echoed in his harp playing. Clearly, the distinction between country and city blues has been a blurry one since before Muddy Waters trekked to Chicago from Clarksdale, with influences flowing both ways along the Mississippi.

Helping make that point, a few Muddy footprints appear on *Blues Project*. Full of swampy menace, an outstanding acoustic rendition of "Don't Say You Don't Love Me" (actually, "Don't Say I Don't Love You") features some subdued slide guitar and beautifully showcases Green's sinuous harp. The album concludes

WINNING SPINS

with a live version of Muddy's "Hoochie Coochie Man," the full band captured earlier this year at St. Augustine's Bluzfest. Adding Hammond organ to the mix, Green and company perform an extended jam that allows listeners to enjoy the band's instrumental prowess—or just to get up and do the butt dance with someone they know really well or would like to.

From start to finish, *Blues Project*, which Green dedicates to Florida author and folklorist Stetson Kennedy, is a celebration of life from a man who has seen his share of hard times. Fortunately, his legacy has been documented on some fine recordings, and Green sounds like there's nothing he'd rather do than play music to make people dance and forget their troubles for a while. That he continues to do so at an advanced age is a gift to Florida blues fans.



Willie Green performs Nov. 6-7 at the 29th annual Lincolnville Festival, Francis Events Field, St. Augustine. Call 904-540-0645 or 904-501-8299 or visit Myspace.com/lincolnvillefest for more information. For more information on Green, visit Williegrenblues or Myspace.com/Williegrenbluesman.

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**BUDDY GUY, DR. JOHN
ARSHT CENTER, MIAMI/NOV. 6**

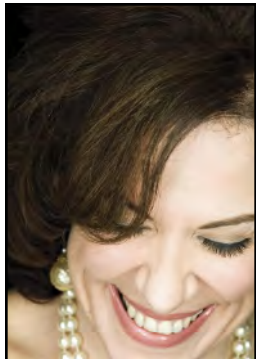
Blues icons Buddy Guy and Dr. John kick off the second season of Larry Rosen's Jazz and Roots series. Both Guy and the good doctor, who was born Mac Rebennack, hail from Louisiana. Guy trekked to Chicago in 1957 and made a name for himself as a dynamic performer and innovator. A pioneer of the West Side sound, Guy cut classic recordings for the Chess label and lent icepick leads to the work of Koko Taylor and Junior Wells. In the late '80s, Guy's career soared with the release of *Damn Right, I've Got the Blues*, which proved he was still one of the most incendiary vocalists and instrumentalists in the genre. Dr. John is as synonymous with New Orleans as Guy is with Chicago. His bourbon-



and-gravel vocals and rollicking piano conjure up images of French Quarter revels and the dark, hoodoo elements that lie beneath the glittering façades. This duality is at the heart of his Nite Tripper persona, which he developed in the late '60s. In recent years, he's been a spokesman for the revitalization of New Orleans. For this performance, he'll be accompanied by his Lower 911 Band. **BW**

**JANIVA MAGNESS
MOJO KITCHEN, JACKSONVILLE BEACH/NOV. 6
B.B. KING'S BLUES CLUB, ORLANDO/NOV. 7
ACE'S, BRADENTON/NOV. 8**

**BOSTON'S, DELRAY BEACH/NOV. 10
SUNRISE THEATER, FORT PIERCE/NOV. 12
DOWNTOWN BLUES FEST, GAINESVILLE/NOV. 12
BRADFORDVILLE BLUES, TALLAHASSEE/NOV. 14**
Just how beloved is Janiva Magness? Consider that the singer's trophy case bulges with Blues Music Awards for Contemporary Blues Female Artist of the Year for 2006, 2007 and 2009, and the B.B. King Entertainer of the Year Award, which she collected this year, as well. Magness has earned every accolade with her soulful vocals and leave-it-all-on-stage performances, and



first-rate assistance from bandmates like guitarist Zach Zunis and keyboardist Benny Yee. On her latest, *What Love Will Do*, she concentrates on funk and soul. Mixing self-determined grit with unabashed lust and vulnerability, Magness gives the sense that she's lived the life she sings about. The L.A.-based singer continues a life on the road with this whirlwind Florida schedule. **BW**

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**ELIANE ELIAS QUARTET
MINIACI PAC, FT LAUDERDALE/NOV. 21**

Brazilian Eliane Elias became such an accomplished pianist at an early age that she didn't add her other talent to the mix until a decade later. But her intimate vocals on the 1989 release *Eliane Elias Plays Jobim* made for a double-threat that's continued through her recent hit recording *Bossa Nova Stories* (Blue Note). Elias' mother was a classical pianist, which obviously left an imprint on her daughter as she grew up in Sao Paulo. Elias' technique, sense of harmony and speed have blurred any lines between jazz and classical music ever since. The pianist moved to New York City in 1981 and joined the group Steps Ahead the following year, appearing on its debut release. Her



debut as a leader was the 1986 CD *Illusions*, and recordings like *On the Classical Side* have since displayed her instrumental prowess in nonpopular form. Elias also won critical acclaim with 2008's *Something for You—Eliane Elias Sings and Plays Bill Evans*. Her quartet is featured in the South Florida Jazz organization's 18th anniversary concert. **BM**

**LUCKY PETERSON WITH JAMES PETERSON
BRADFORDVILLE BLUES, TALLAHASSEE/NOV. 6
ACE'S LOUNGE, BRADENTON/NOV. 7**

Blues runs in Lucky Peterson's veins. His dad, James, grew up in his father's Alabama juke joint, and established himself as an exciting blues guitarist and vocalist when he moved to Buffalo in the 1950s. In turn, Lucky grew up in the blues club James opened, which hosted giants such as Muddy Waters, Howlin' Wolf, John Lee Hooker and Jimmy Reed. Papa Peterson eventually relocated to Florida, where he continued to run his club and perform his fiery style of blues. The younger Peterson, a wizard on Hammond B3 and guitar, toured with Little Milton and Bobby "Blue" Bland before his own solo career took flight. Personal demons derailed



PHOTO BY VINCENT FLOURET

a promising career, but Lucky battled back and has three new discs of Hammond music out under the heading *Organ Soul Sessions*. James has recorded some excellent albums over the past decade or so, showcasing his flamethrower guitar licks, gasoline-throated roar and vivid songwriting. The father/son pairing can generate sparks, judging by the 2004 recording *If You Can't Fix It*. **BW**

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TOM SCOTT
HIMMEL THEATER, WEST PALM BEACH/NOV. 16
UM GUSMAN CONCERT HALL, MIAMI/NOV. 5

Veteran saxophonist Tom Scott is one of those artists who's been heard by almost everyone. His 450 session recording credits include Thelonious Monk, Joni Mitchell, Barbra Streisand, Frank Sinatra, Steely Dan and Aretha Franklin. He's also appeared on the soundtracks to the movies *Taxi Driver* and *Blade Runner*, and the TV shows *Family Ties* and *Starsky & Hutch*. The three-time Grammy winner, who helmed the popular L.A. Express in the '70s, has also released 29 solo recordings, the latest of which is *Canon Re-Loaded—A Tribute to Cannonball Adderley* (Concord). In town before and after the Jazz Cruise, which departs from Ft. Lauderdale, Scott performs



at the University of Miami with the South Florida Jazz Orchestra (see right), plus UM Frost School of Music dean and pianist Shelly Berg and violinist Mark O'Connor. (O'Connor also headlines shows Nov. 19-20 at the Atlantic Music Center in Melbourne). Scott's Himmel show kicks off the 10th anniversary season for the Jazz Arts Music Society of Palm Beach. **BM**

SOUTH FLORIDA JAZZ ORCHESTRA
LINCOLN ROAD STAGE, MIAMI BEACH/NOV. 7
AMATURO THEATER, FT LAUDERDALE/NOV. 11
 Jazz orchestras made up of instructors often play all jazz classics and American songbook tunes. Not so the South Florida Jazz Orchestra, which is led by bassist and University of Miami instructor Chuck Bergeron. On the SFJO's self-titled debut CD, Bergeron and alto saxophonist Gary Lindsay, also on the faculty of UM, contribute compositions. Even some of the standards the band selects, such as John Fedchock's "Touch & Go" and Joe Zawinul's gem "Midnight Mood," aren't obvious choices. The orch boasts a deep bench, with talents such as pianist Brian Murphy, saxmen Gary Keller and Mike Brignola, trombonist Dante Luciani and drummer



John Yarling. Guest vocalists on the disc include Dana Paul on a hard-charging variation of Rodgers & Hart's "This Can't Be Love," Kevin Mahogany on the sultry "Nature Boy" and Nicole Yarling on the soaring "Blame It on My Youth." Singer Lisanne Lyons will guest at the Amaturo Theater performance. The band also will perform with sax star Tom Scott at UM (see left). **BM**

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An Evening to Remember

Tribute to Eddie Higgins featuring Dick Hyman, Jazz Pianist
Wednesday • December 9, 2009 • 7:45 pm • Amatur Theater

Eddie Higgins, jazz pianist, performed or recorded with just about every jazz luminary imaginable. To celebrate Eddie's life, Dick Hyman, renowned jazz pianist/arranger/composer/music director, pays tribute to his long-time friend and fellow jazz legend



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Cyrus Chestnut Trio

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Cyrus Chestnut is called one of the top jazz pianists of his generation. This dynamic performer, inspired by the likes of the jazz greats from Fats Waller to Thelonius Monk, has an "exuberant feeling of musical joy," according to the *LA Times*.

Tribute to Benny Goodman

Terry Myers Orchestra

Wednesday • February 10, 2010 • 7:45 pm • Amatur Theater

Benny Goodman was known as the "King of Swing", "Patriarch of the Clarinet" and "Swing's Senior Statesman." 2009 marked the centennial of the birth of this great jazz musician. Join clarinetist and big band leader Terry Myers in this special big band tribute concert to the legendary "King of Swing."



Moon River, Mercer and Me

Tony DeSare, Jazz Vocalist

Wednesday • March 10, 2010 • 7:45 pm • Amatur Theater

Tony DeSare belongs with "neo-traditional upstarts stretching from Harry Connick Jr. to Michael Bubl  and Jamie Cullum" says *USA Today*. His take on classic standards and sophisticated original compositions have earned him a reputation as "one of the most promising young male performers," says the *NY Times*.

South Florida Jazz Divas

Gold Coast Jazz Society Band with Brenda Alford, Rose Max
Wendy Pedersen & Nicole Yarling

Wednesday • April 14, 2010 • 7:45 pm • Amatur Theater

These women are among South Florida's most popular jazz singers. Join Brenda Alford, Rose Max Wendy Pedersen and Nicole Yarling, the local jazz "divas," as they jazz it up a notch with Eric Allison and members of the Gold Coast Jazz Society Band.



Jazz on the Latin Side

Negroni's Trio

Wednesday • May 12, 2010 • 7:45 pm • Amatur Theater

Pianist/composer Jos  Negroni, drummer Nomar Negroni and bassist Marco Panascia are one of Miami's hottest jazz ensembles. Their "straight ahead" jazz weaves dramatic lyricism punctuated by explosive rhythmic play. Negroni blazes "a percussive trail and dares his audience to keep up," says *All About Jazz*.

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**MIAMI SAXOPHONE QUARTET
CHRIST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
PALMETTO BAY/NOV. 7**

Comprising some of South Florida's top horn players, the Miami Saxophone Quartet combines jazz and chamber music for a bright, sophisticated sound all its own. Gary Keller, Gary Lindsay, Ed Calle and Mike Brignola are the principals, combining their voices on their individual saxes, as well as their compositional gifts, talents for intriguing arrangements and varying backgrounds. The MSQ's most recent recording, *Fourtified*, finds the group digging in on a set that includes nods to Dave Brubeck and Paquito d'Rivera, as well as spotlighting originals by Calle and Lindsay, the latter of which includes the three-part "Jazz Suite for Double



Quartet," played alongside the Bergonzi String Quartet. As usual, the foursome calls on first-rate South Florida colleagues such as bassist Chuck Bergeron and pianist Jim Gasior, and kicks off the CD with keyboardist Ron Miller's "Seventh Sign." Keller, Lindsay and Calle are now back in the classroom, the first two at UM's Frost School of Music, the latter at Miami Dade College. **BW**

**RICK ROSSANO
THE ORANGE DOOR, LAKE PARK/NOV. 7**

This show is titled "Rick Rossano Plays the Blues," and anyone who's heard the longtime South Florida guitarist and vocalist knows he can play anything blues-based. He's done just that for nearly 20 years with his group The Dillengers, mixing humorous originals with covers ranging from rockabilly, surf and George Jones to jazz standards, movie themes and the Ramones. In 2000, Rossano was named one of "America's 10 Best Unknown Guitarists" by *Guitar One* magazine, largely based on his work on The Dillengers' 1996 CD *Live at Elwood's*. The trio's self-produced release *Instro-Mania* caught the attention of label-head and former Frank Zappa guitarist Steve Vai, who



reissued it on his Favored Nations imprint in 2001. Rossano even has an instructional book/CD combo, *Roots-Style Rhythm Tracks*, available through Mel Bay. His blues playing is steeped in Albert King, Stevie Ray Vaughan and Jimi Hendrix. Expect elements of all three, with twists, from this master of musical unpredictability. **BM**

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