



JAZZ & BLUES

F L O R I D A

FLORIDA'S ONLINE GUIDE TO LIVE JAZZ & BLUES

FEATURE: JAZZ ARTIST

**JACKIEM
JOYNER**

BLUES ARTISTS

GERRY McAVOY • LARKIN POE • SUGARAY RAYFORD
SCOT SUTHERLAND • JIM WEIDER • WESTSIDE ANDY

JAZZ ARTISTS

CHRIS BOTTI • EDMAR CASTANEDA • FOUR FRESHMEN
JOHN HART • VIVIAN SESSOMS • CHUCHO VALDÉS & IRAKERE 45

JACKIEM JOYNER—

APRIL 25
CHARLIE'S SUSHI
CLEARWATER

Born in 1980 in Norfolk, Virginia, saxophonist Jackiem Joyner inherited some of his musical

gifts from his professional bass player father. Growing up in a Christian household influenced Joyner's musical sensibilities as he sang in the church choir and played drums behind uptempo gospel songs. Joyner began playing saxophone in high school, and decided to compete in the NAACP's youth achievement program "ACT-SO" (geared towards African Americans demonstrating academic, artistic and scientific prowess and expertise). He won the state competition three years in a row in three different categories: instrumental contemporary, composition and classical music.

After high school, Bishop Michael Patterson of the World Harvest Outreach Ministries in Newport News made him head of the music department. While sharpening his keyboard and production skills, Joyner also played for audiences in Nigeria, Sudan and Kenya on a missionary trip in 2002. Then, at the age of 21, Joyner became the saxman for keyboardist Marcus Johnson from 2001 to 2004. While performing at the Bermuda Jazz Festival, Joyner met R&B singer Angela Boffill, and she invited him to participate in a 30-city tour with Ronnie Laws, Jean Carne and herself in 2003.

A relocation to Los Angeles led to a contract with

Artizen Music Group, founded by trumpeter Rick Braun and saxophonist Richard Elliott, and in 2007 Artizen released Joyner's debut album, *BabySoul*. The first single, "Stay With Me Tonight," featured guitarist Peter White and reached No. 17 on the *Billboard* Contemporary Jazz Chart. In 2009, Artizen was bought out by Mack Avenue Records, and Joyner released his sophomore album, *Lil Man Soul*. The first single "I'm Waiting For You," went straight to No. 1 on the *Billboard* Contemporary Jazz Chart, where it remained for 12 weeks. It became the No. 2 Song of the Year on the chart, and was named the 2010 Song Of The Year at the American Smooth Jazz Awards. The second single, "Take Me There," also hit No. 1 spot on the *Billboard* Contemporary Jazz Charts and remained there for six weeks. 2010 also saw the release of *Jackiem Joyner*, a funk/pop/groove CD with musician Paul Jackson Jr. and Kayta Matsuno on guitar. The first single, "Dance With Me," reached No. 3 on the *Billboard* Contemporary Jazz Chart, and its followup, "Push," peaked at No. 2.

Revisiting his non-secular roots, Joyner issued the gospel-jazz *Church Boy* in 2012, featuring contributions from Kirk Whalum and Jonathan Butler. Two years later, Joyner released his fifth studio album, and third for Mack Avenue, *Evolve*. An adventurous mix of smooth jazz and gospel, *Evolve* marked the first time Joyner wrote, arranged, and produced every track. *Evolve* also featured appearances from Gerald Albright and Keiko Matsui with Joyner's infectious melodies set amidst futuristic electronic soundscapes.



MAIN STREET BEAT

And Joyner's music isn't his only creative effort that ventured into extraterrestrial territory. In 2016 he authored his first book, the science fiction novel *Zarya: Cydnus Final Hope* (Book 1).

In 2017, he celebrated his tenth year of recording with the release of *Main Street Beat*. Included on the album are covers of Justin Timberlake's "Can't Stop the Feeling," and Bruno Mars' "Treasure." Joyner approached crafting *Main Street Beat* with a three-pronged purpose. "I wanted to create something upbeat, fun to listen to and something to dance to. It originally started off as a straight funk record that eventually became some of that, but a whole lot more as I allowed the creative process to have its way with me," said Joyner. Once again, Joyner had a hit on his hands as *Beat* debuted at No. 1 on the *Billboard* Contemporary Jazz chart last July. This high-

energy set showcases Joyner's impassioned horn play on tenor, soprano and alto sax. He likes to lay down sax tracks layer by layer, creating memorable moods and grooves, and his innate flair for melodies and hooks is on display on the CD's original tracks. Guesting on the album are Chicago hitman Nick Colionne, who strums his electric jazz guitar with trademark panache on "When You Smile," and guitarist Steve Oliver, who appears on the debut single named for the first-time father's daughter, Trinity. According to Joyner, "Having Trinity around during the writing process sparked an enormous font of creativity and really kicked my writing into high gear. The first single, named after her, really captures the excitement and joy of being a dad as well as the exciting little girl that she is." More at JackiemJoyner.com.



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Gerry McAvoy

Born in Belfast, Northern Ireland in 1951, Gerry McAvoy spent his youth listening to his sister's collection of Buddy Holly, Beatles and Rolling Stones records. At 13, he bought a second-hand Muddy Waters album, a moment he later said "changed my life." McAvoy soon began playing in bands, first on rhythm guitar, then switching to

bass. In the late '60s he joined the band Deep Joy, playing Motown and pop covers. Deep Joy moved to London but disbanded in late 1970, at the same time as Rory Gallagher's band, Taste, broke up. Gallagher contacted McAvoy, and the pair teamed up with drummer Wilgar Campbell to become Rory Gallagher's first touring band. McAvoy played, recorded and toured with Gallagher for 20 years, from 1971 to 1991, playing on every album Gallagher ever made. Drummer Ted McKenna played with Rory Gallagher from 1978-81, and later joined McAvoy in forming Band of Friends, along with guitarist/vocalist Marcel Scherpenzeel. As Winners of European Blues Awards Band Of The Year in 2013, Best Musician Ted McKenna 2016, Best Guitarist Marcel Scherpenzeel 2017, and boasting rave reviews from every show, it's clear to see why the band continues to be so popular. In the era of tribute acts who deliver note-perfect renditions of their heroes' catalogs, the Band Of Friends is something different. They can do the notes played by electric blues icon Rory Gallagher. But they can also do the sound, energy and feel – because the band includes people who helped define those essential elements. More at bandoffriends.eu.



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Vivian Sessoms

"It's important to me to mean what I say when I'm writing or singing a song. It can't simply be just a collection of words," explains Vivian Sessoms. Born and raised in Harlem by professional musician parents,

Sessoms was doing TV and radio voice overs by age nine, and by her mid-teens she was composing her own music. A few years later, while on one of her first major tours, performing as a featured vocalist with pianist/composer Ryuichi Sakamoto, Sessoms learned to sing in Japanese, pushing herself tirelessly towards perfection as both a singer and performer. Several years of resume building followed, with Sessoms performing with an array of artists including: P. Diddy, Michael Jackson, Donna Summer, Sinéad O'Connor, and Stevie Wonder. When Sessoms met Chris Parks at a recording session he was producing, the two began merging their talents to write songs for other artists. Sessoms, Parks and a few demo players ended up forming the group Albright, and releasing *Sunny One Day*, a unique mixture of soul, jazz, and rock, coupled with distinctive melodies and lush instrumentation. After a long hiatus, Sessoms is now releasing her followup CD, *Life*, featuring unexpected arrangements of newer compositions, including a few penned by Sessoms herself. It's described as a jazz record, served up with a side of funk, garnished with lush orchestrations, and backed by a lineup of all-star musicians. More at viviansessoms.com.



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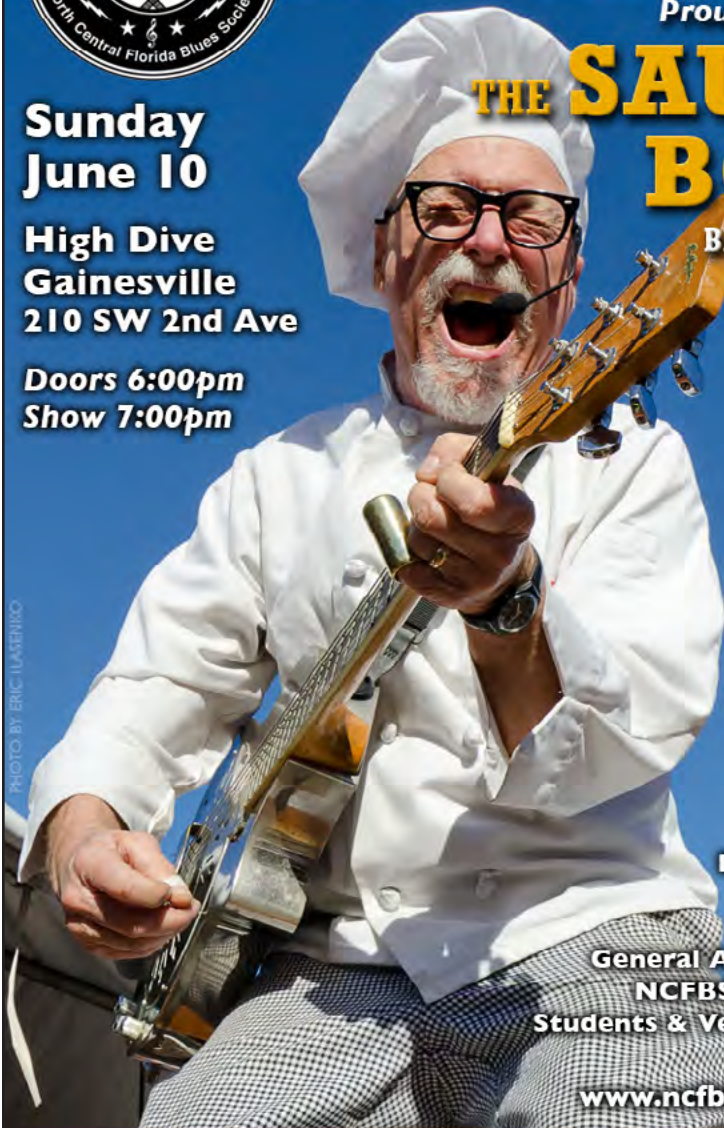
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FUNKY BISCUIT
BOCA RATON

From 2006 to 2012, bassist Scot Sutherland was a member of the Tommy Castro Band, who were named Band of the Year at the 2010 Blues Music Awards, and were nominated again for the 2012 BMAs. The band's album, *Hard Believer*, on which Sutherland played, was also awarded a 2010 BMA for Best Contemporary Blues Album. In 2017, two albums on which Sutherland was the primary bassist were nominated for BMAs for Rock Blues Album of the Year: Mike Zito & the Wheel's *Keep Coming Back*

and Albert Castiglia's *Big Dog*. As a member of the Tommy Castro Band, Sutherland was also the bass player for the Legendary Rhythm and Blues Revue. The LRBR, which is affiliated with the Legendary Rhythm and Blues Cruise, has toured from coast to coast and around the world, backing up some of today's top blues artists, and have released two live CDs. In 2012 Sutherland toured extensively with Anthony Gomes, Deanna Bogart, and Debbie Davies before joining forces with Mike Zito as a member of his band, The Wheel. Their *Gone to Texas* CD was nominated for a 2014 BMA for Best Rock Blues Album. In 2014 Sutherland also joined Samantha Fish's band, and toured with both bands. Since 2016 has been touring with Albert Cummings, including shows in Europe and Brazil, and the current Florida tour. When Sutherland is home, he is very active in the Central Iowa music scene, and has just been inducted into the Iowa Blues Hall of Fame. More at scotsutherland.com.



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Born into a family of musicians, his first teacher was his father, Cuban pianist, composer

and bandleader Ramón "Bebo" Valdés. By age three, Chucho was already playing the melodies he heard on the radio at the piano, using both hands and in any key. At age 15 he formed his first jazz trio and in 1959 he debuted with the famed orchestra Sabor de Cuba. As comfortable in small groups as leading large ensembles, Valdés' most recent projects include Trance, a two-piano duo project with fellow Cuban virtuoso Gonzalo Rubalcaba and an extensive tour celebrating 40 years of his founding of his band Irakere. Not well known outside Cuba, Irakere was discovered by Dizzy Gillespie in 1977. The group's bold fusion of Afro-Cuban styles with jazz and rock marked a 'before and after' in Latin jazz. Fittingly, the celebration culminated in a Grammy for the Best Latin Jazz Album of 2016 for *Tribute to Irakere: Live at Marciac*. Over its rich, long life, Irakere became a rolling university of Afro-Cuban music while also featuring influential musicians, and Valdés stayed with the group until 2005. This multi-Grammy winner's most recent recording is 2017's *Once* with Patricia Sosa. His latest project *Jazz Batá*, looks both forward and back – the trio recorded only one album, in 1972. The batá is an hourglass shaped drum essential in the ritual music of the Yoruba religion,

best known as Santería.

This month marks the group's revival, with a recording session due later this year. More at chuchovaldes.com.



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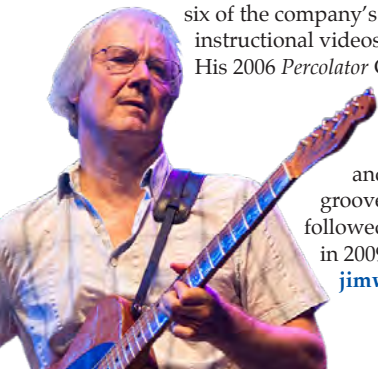
Jim Weider

A master of classic telecaster guitar, Jim Weider is renowned for his rock and blues-based signature sound. He is among a select group of musicians with an endorsement from Fender. Weider received great acclaim during his tenure (1985-2000) as lead guitarist (replacing Robbie Robertson)

for Rock 'n Roll Hall of Fame inductees, The Band. During 15 years of international touring with original members Levon Helm, Garth Hudson and Rick Danko, Weider was featured on numerous albums, films, videos and television appearances. He furthered his reputation as a versatile and talented guitarist in performances and recordings with Keith Richards, Los Lobos, Graham Parker, Taj Mahal, Mavis Staples, Hot Tuna, Bob Weir/Rat Dog and Paul Butterfield, among many others. Since 1997, Weider has devoted much of his time to his current band and touring extensively throughout the northeastern US. His first CD, 2000's *Big Foot*, was praised by *Vintage Guitar Magazine* as "the highest-quality recording we've heard in a very long time. Any guitar purist will be impressed with Weider's varied styles — rock, rockabilly, slide, good old blues, and even some 'chicken-pickin' country. This is a celebration of guitar at its best." *Remedy*, Weider's second recording with his band, features eight of his originals. His distinctive guitar tone, improvisational talents and powerful solos, and prowess as a songwriter are evident throughout. For

Homespun Video, Jim has produced six of the company's best selling instructional videos/DVDs.

His 2006 *Percolator* CD blended rock and blues with funk and jazz grooves. It was followed by *Pulse* in 2009. More at jimweider.com.



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TALLAHASSEE

At a young age, Georgia sisters Rebecca and Megan Lovell of Larkin Poe were classically trained on violin and piano, while being exposed to such classic rock icons as Fleetwood Mac and Pink Floyd. After experimenting with an array of musical styles, they found a way to blend together a sound that channels their distinct voice. The duo has hit the road as opening and backing bands for Conor Oberst, Kristian Bush (Sugarland) and Elvis Costello who praises that "they have a head start on the rest of us with the unique power and beauty of sibling harmony." Now Larkin Poe are carrying on the American roots tradition with their innovative blend of blues, Americana, rock, and beats on their latest CD, 2017's *Peach*. Lead singer / guitarist Rebecca states "We have a very colorful family history," referencing the sisters' familial connection to tortured artist

and creative genius Edgar Allan Poe. "There have been a lot of creative, hotheaded, mentally unstable branches in our family tree. Growing up in the midst of their crazy stories has definitely shaded our perception of normal." Megan, who contributes lapsteel and harmony vocals to the lineup, adds "We wanted to pick a band name that had familial significance... our great-great-great-grandfather, Larkin Poe." The sisters' identity was echoed by a recent *Huffington Post* tagline: "These Gals Like Their Gritty Southern Heritage with a Cosmopolitan Twist." Even their sometimes-surprising covers demonstrate reverence for the originals - with their own distinctive imprint. More at larkinpoe.com.



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- April 27 Hub Stacey, Pensacola
- April 28 Paradise Inn, Pensacola Beach
- April 29 Blues & BarBQ Fest, Pensacola

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John Hart

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As the head of the Jazz Guitar Department at the at the University of Miami's Frost School of

Music, John Hart teaches applied lessons, ensembles, and vocal accompaniment. He is one of the most sought-after and prolific guitarists on the jazz scene today, and has played with the Maria Schneider Orchestra for the last 20 years. A fixture on the New York music scene for 30 years, Professor Hart has distinguished himself on ten CDs as a bandleader, and as a first-call sideman to the stars. A prolific recording artist, Hart has performed on more than 100 CDs. Hart's resume includes associations with numerous jazz greats from earlier generations, along with cutting edge contemporary artists. He may be best known for a 16-year tenure with organist Jack McDuff, a gig which proved to be a proving ground for many of the great jazz guitar innovators. Hart's recording career began in the early 1990s. His John Hart Quartet featured young star Chris Potter, and would run for seven years, during which time they toured extensively, were featured on NPR's Jazzset, and recorded an album. In 2001 he formed the John Hart trio, which recorded three CDs. He has also headlined at the Montreux, Edinburgh, Vancouver and other Jazz Festivals. From 2011 – 2014, he was the musical director of the Birdland Jazz

Quartet, the house band at Manhattan's famed Birdland jazz club. His acclaimed 2016 release, *Exit from Brooklyn*, is a straight ahead jazz guitar trio affair. More at people.miami.edu.




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Sugaray Rayford

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APRIL 5
BRADFORDVILLE
BLUES CLUB
TALLAHASSEE

APRIL 7
SPRINGIN'
THE BLUES
JACKSONVILLE
BEACH

APRIL 8
TAMPA BAY
BLUES FEST
VINOY PARK
ST. PETERSBURG

With FOUR nominations for the 39th annual Blues Music Awards in May, Sugaray Rayford is on a roll. He's been fronting his own band since 2010, but that's only one of his projects. In 2011, Sugaray became one of the lead vocalists for the Mannish Boys. He sang lead vocals on nine songs on *Double Dynamite*, the Mannish Boys CD that won Best Traditional Blues Album at the 2013 BMAs. His first solo CD, 2010's self-released *Blind Alley*, which garnered critical acclaim,

was followed by 2013's *Dangerous*, which debuted in the top ten of numerous blues charts. The early musical influence of the church is still present in Texas-born Caron "Sugaray" Rayford's music. His phrasing is intimate and conversational, and the soulful gravel in his voice hints at his firsthand experience with hardship. His vocal style carries echoes of Muddy Waters, Otis Redding and Teddy Pendergrass. He also travels the world singing with other bands, and has done studio vocals on several movie and television projects. In 2012 he made his stage debut starring in the Tony award winning play *Ain't Nuthin' But The Blues* in Portland, OR, joining members of the Broadway cast. In 2017 Rayford released his debut soul project, *The World That We Live In*. This collection of ten originals carries the universal appeal

of 1960s-'70s soul, complemented by a full band with horns, strings and backup vocals. It is nominated for a 2018 Best Soul Album BMA. More at

sugarayblues.com.



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Edmar Castaneda

APRIL 7
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Since arriving in the U.S. in the mid-1990s, Colombian-born harp virtuoso Edmar Castaneda has forged his own distinctive musical path in. His wide-ranging career has helped create a brilliant role for the harp in jazz, and

continues to innovate and spark creativity from a wealth of collaborations. His latest CD, 2017's *Live in Montreal*, features the latest in an ever-growing history of thrilling partnerships, a duo with the electrifying Japanese pianist Hiromi. The release follows four acclaimed albums as a leader. He's also shared stages with such iconic artists as Sting, Ricki Lee Jones, The Yellowjackets and Paco De Lucia. Castaneda took up the harp as a teen, and discovered jazz shortly after moving to New York City in 1994. With no real precedent for the harp in the jazz world, Castaneda studied trumpet by day while trying out his newfound knowledge on the harp at a restaurant gig by night. He was ushered into the jazz community by Paquito D'Rivera, who recognized Castaneda's passion and took Castaneda under his wing. Since then, Castaneda has taken the world stage by storm, making his debut as a leader in 2007 with *Cuartos de Colores*. He followed that with 2009's *Entre Cuerdas*, a trio date with trombonist Marshall Gilkes and drummer Dave Silliman. 2012's *Double Portion* was divided into solo and duo pieces, while 2015's *Live at the Jazz Standard* showcased Castaneda's World Ensemble. On these dates Castaneda is joined by harmonica player Gregoire Maret. More at edmarcastaneda.com.



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April 5 Sugaray Rayford
April 6 Mississippi Heat
April 7 Tad Robinson
April 8 Janiva Magness
CD Release Show



April 14 Rev. Raven & The
Chain Smokin' Altar
Boys w/Westside Andy



April 15 Katie Skene
April 20 Vanessa Collier
April 21 Bryan Lee &
Six String Therapy
April 27 Brett Wellman & The
Stone Cold Blues Band



April 28 Eric Culberson

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Westside Andy

Born in 1952, Andy Linderman caught the music bug young, and picked up his first harmonica at age 11 in Madison, WI, which he still calls home. Listening to AM radio late at night, he heard early Muddy Waters, Little Walter, James Cotton, Sonny Boy Williamson, Howlin' Wolf, and Big Walter Horton. At that time, the nearby Chicago area was teeming with great players and teachers such as Junior Wells, Charlie Musselwhite and Paul Butterfield. Linderman has played over 10,000 gigs over almost five decades, working with a Who's Who of the Blues: Luther Allison, Ben E. King, James Cotton, Pinetop Perkins, Barrelhouse Chuck, Hubert Sumlin, Tab Benoit, Gary Primich, Mel Ford, Billy Flynn, Glenn Davis, Paul Black & the Flipkings, Reverend Raven, Jon Nicholson, Corky Siegel, Jim Schwall, Ben Sidran, Tino Gonzales, Clyde Stubblefield, The Doobie Brothers, Richie Havens, and The University of Wisconsin 250-piece band(!). The blues is the center, yet Andy plays the harmonica with no genre limitation. His drive to push the envelope has led to numerous R&B, jazz, and country sessions. He also makes sure to take time to share his love and appreciation for his craft, by playing for and teaching school kids, via the K-12 Blues in the Schools program. His 2015 live CD, *Blues Just Happen*, celebrates his then-45 years of performing. He's currently on tour with Rev. Raven and the Chain Smokin' Altar Boys. More at westsideandy.com.



APRIL 14
BRADFORD
BLUES CLUB
TALLAHASSEE

APRIL 17
ENGLEWOODS ON
DEARBORN
ENGLEWOOD

APRIL 18
THE LITTLE BAR
GOODLAND

APRIL 19
BLUE ROOSTER
SARASOTA

APRIL 20
THE BARREL ROOM
FORT MYERS

APRIL 21
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april 17 Englewoods on Dearborn, Englewood
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april 20 The Barrell Room, Fort Myers
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april 22 Rock N' Riverwalk, Stuart
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Chris Botti

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JACKSONVILLE

APRIL 14
CAPITOL THEATRE
CLEARWATER

APRIL 15
VAN WEZEL HALL
SARASOTA

APRIL 16
ARTIS-NAPLES
NAPLES

APRIL 17
PARKER PLAYHOUSE
FT. LAUDERDALE

APRIL 18
KRAVIS CENTER
WEST PALM BEACH

APRIL 19
SUNRISE THEATRE
FORT PIERCE

Over the past three decades, Chris Botti has recorded and performed with the best in music, including Sting, Barbra Streisand, Tony Bennett, Lady Gaga, Josh Groban, Yo-Yo Ma, and Michael Bublé. Since his selection for the McDonald's 1981 All American High School Jazz Band, Botti hasn't let up. His studies at the prestigious Indiana University music program preceded a relocation to New York, where he served with saxophonist George Coleman and trumpet great Woody Shaw. In 1990, Botti was asked to join Paul Simon's band, where he remained

for the next five years. Then in 1995, he recorded his solo debut, *First Wish*. Hitting the road for up to 300 days per year, Botti's success has crossed over to pop audiences, and his ongoing association with PBS has led to four No. 1 jazz albums, as well as multiple Grammys. His latest album, *Impressions*, won the 2013 Grammy for Best Pop Instrumental Album. Playing with his uniquely expressive sound and soaring musical imagination, Botti is joined on *Impressions* by featured artists Andrea Bocelli, Vince Gill, Herbie Hancock, Mark Knopfler, and David Foster in a warm, intimate celebration of melodic balladry.

Performing worldwide and selling more than four million albums, he has found a form of creative expression that begins in jazz and expands beyond the limits of any single genre. More at chrisbotti.com.



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