

FLORIDA'S ONLINE GUIDE TO LIVE JAZZ & BLUES

FEATURE: BLUES ARTIST

ROBERT ROSS



JASON RICCI

AUGUST 11 HIGH DIVE GAINESVILLE Once a sideman for Florida's own Nucklebusters Blues Band (1999-2002), Junior Kimbrough and Big Al and the Heavyweights, Jason Ricci has since become one of the most influential performers in blues today. Since 2015, Ricci has been fronting the New Orleans-based Jason Ricci & The Bad Kind.

The newly revamped lineup includes guitarist John Lisi, bassist Andy Kurz and drummer John Perkins. On their brand new release, *My Chops Are Rolling*, vocalist Kaitlin Dibble provides backup throughout and also sings lead on one track. Dibble and Ricci married in 2017.

Originally from Portland, Maine, Ricci's time in Louisiana has had a powerful influence on his music: On the Bad Kind's last album, 2017's *Approved by Snakes*, Big Easy funk and jazz influences are apparent. Of *My Chops*, Ricci explains, "This is the first record I've done that every song isn't about the devil and drugs! So it's a lot happier than anything I've ever recorded... we're definitely in a better mood that I was a few years ago, which is reflective on the record. It's just much more cheerful."

The blues took hold of Ricci as a boy of 14, when his mother took him to see James Cotton.

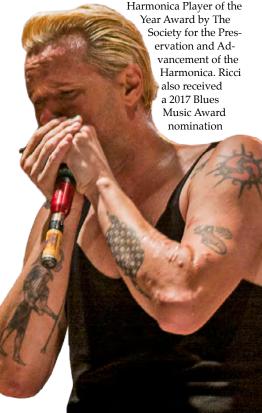
Upon hearing Cotton's encore, the Charles Brown tune "Black Night," Ricci said to himself, "I don't know how, but somehow I want to do that." So Ricci picked up the harp, if only as a way to keep a spot in the punk band he was singing with at the time. By the time he was 20, Ricci was playing, partying and living with members of the Junior Kimbrough and R.L. Burnside families in Memphis. Then a call from Big Al and the Heavyweights turned into a formative experience with his mentor-to-be. Of Al Lauro, Ricci says, "I think he could tell I wasn't going to be long for his band before I tried it on my own. And rather than trying to keep me down, he tried to help me."

After years as a sideman, Ricci launched his first band, Jason Ricci & New Blood, in 2002. In

2005, Ricci was honored with the Muddy Waters Most Promising New Blues Artist award. Alongside 2007's Rocket Number Nine and 2009's Done With The Devil, Ricci won a 2008 Blues Critic Award and a 2010 Blues Music Award for Harmonica Player of the Year. By early 2011, Ricci had

relocated to New Orleans, and assembled a new band, Approved By Snakes, with Lisi. Ricci was also featured on Johnny Winter's Grammy award-winning 2014 CD *Step Back*.

Mere months after forming the Bad Kind in early 2015, when the late Paul Butterfield and his Blues Band were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, Ricci performed with Zac Brown and Tom Morello, televised via HBO to more than 12 million viewers. In 2017, Ricci was awarded the Bernie Bray



STILL ROLLING

for Best Rock Blues Artist, and a win for Best Harmonica Instrumentalist.

Modern Blues Harmonica's Adam Gussow (Satan & Adam) called Ricci "one of the best harmonica players of his generation," adding, "This is what originality, technical mastery, and soulfulness look like on the rock-flavored leading edge in our post-9/11 era." Ricci participates as an Expert Guide instructor in

the Harmonica Collective, an annual conference for harmonica players wishing to improve their skills and collaborate with other musicians, which he co-founded with Winslow Yerxa in 2013.

Ricci is in the beginning stages of working on a jazz-funk record with renowned New Orleans keyboardist Joe Krown (Kenny Wayne Shepherd), that will feature John Fohl (Dr. John) on guitar, and Doug Belote (Jerry Douglas) on drums. The new venture will focus on the organ-based jazz of Grant Green, Herbie Hancock, The Crusaders and Jimmy Smith, with Ricci's harp standing in for a tenor saxophone. Looks like the New Orleans influence is growing ever deeper. "The thing I've learned the most is to be yourself," says

Ricci. "Don't try to be someone or something you're not just because you think or someone told you that's what the blues is. The blues is about honesty, integrity, sincerity, loss and redemption from our human errors. Being cool is not what the blues is about to me. Being real is." More at mooncat.org.







www.niecie.net

AUGUST 21 FAENA THEATER MIAMI BEACH

Matthew Whitaker

At age 13, Matthew Whitaker became the youngest artist to be endorsed by Hammond in its 80+ year history. He was also named a Yamaha Artist at 15,

becoming the youngest musician to join the stellar group of jazz pianists. Whitaker has received the Outstanding Soloist Award from Jazz at Lincoln Center's Charles Mingus High School Competition & Festival and the Essentially Ellington High School Jazz Band Competition & Festival.

He was also recognized by the Harlem International Film Festival, which named him Most Remarkable Young Person on Screen. He's already toured internationally, performing at the United Nations headquarters, and on such stages as Lincoln Center, the Apollo Theater, Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, Monterey Jazz Festival and Newport Jazz Festival. And he has performed with an array of outstanding musicians including Christian McBride, Dr. Lonnie Smith and Jon Batiste. In 2017, he was named 1 of the 17 people to watch in New Jersey by The Record, one of New Jersey's largest newspapers and made Crain's Business New York's breakout list of 20 under 20 as a performing artist. In 2018 was named as 1 of 7 rising stars for 2018 by USA Today network's 201 Magazine, and received the Harlem Stage Emerging Artist Award. With several original compositions, already under his belt, this year, Whitaker won









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AUGUST 17
WITH MAURICE
JOHN VAUGHN
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BLUES CLUB
TALLAHASSEE

Shirley Johnson

After singing gospel throughout her teens, Shirley Johnson turned to pop and R&B music. Her talents quickly made her a go-to opening act for such superstars as Al Green, Aretha Franklin and Dionne Warwick. In the early 1980s, Johnson recorded a few singles for two regional Virginia labels. Those record-

ings caught the attention of a man who was planning to start a label in Chicago. Though she couldn't even afford a session on arrival, the aspiring record man provided her with a plane ticket to the Windy City. Johnson quickly became active on the city's blues circuit, performing both blues and soul, and opening for such top acts as Johnny Christian, Buckwheat Zydeco, Koko Taylor, and Bobby Rush. Johnson recorded two more singles in the late 1980s before meeting Professor Eddie Lusk and joining his tour as his opening act for two years. Johnson formed her own band in 1991, jump-starting her blues career. She also appeared in three feature films: Next of Kin with Patrick Swayze, Father Jim with Robert DeNiro, and V.I. Warshawski with Kathleen Turner. In 1994 Johnson's debut CD Looking for Love boasted the charting single "I'm Gonna Find Me A Lover," and she also appeared on three compilation CDs. Two more CDs, Killer Diller and Blues Attack, were released in 2002 and 2009. A 2003 W.C. Handy Award nominee for Best Female Blues Singer, Johnson is still an in-demand performer all over the world. Find her on Facebook.







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Aaron "Ba-Bro Pop" Watson - percussion/vocals

Kenny "The Wizard" Sly - bass guitar/vocals

Pete Beers - keyboards



JAZZ

AUGUST 8 LAGNIAPPE HOUSE MIAMI

SUNDAYS FIOLA SOUTH MIAMI

SATURDAYS WITH VINYL BLVD SHERWOOD'S BISTRO MIAMI

Tim Jago

Australian guitarist/ composer/educator Tim Jago began performing in jazz ensembles at the age of 21. In 2006 he completed a Bachelor of Music in Jazz Performance, and was awarded

the Melville Toyota Scholarship for the most outstanding final year jazz student at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts. The following year he became an adjunct guitar tutor at the same institution, and was selected as a finalist in the National Jazz Awards to perform at the Wangaratta Jazz Festival. Jago relocated to the United States in 2010 to undertake the Master of Music program in Studio Music and Jazz with a major in jazz guitar performance at The UM Frost School of Music, graduating in 2012 and returning to complete the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in 2015. That year he placed as a semi-finalist in the inaugural Wes Montgomery International Jazz Guitar Competition. Jago has led and co-led groups at jazz festivals on both continents, and he has performed and recorded with a host of world-class musicians including Patti Austin, Terence Blanchard, Chick Corea, , Gloria Estefan, Wycliffe Gordon, Bobby McFerrin, Steve Miller, and Arturo Sandoval, to name a few. To date, Jago has released three albums: 2010's The Grid, 2013's Wear More Headbands, and 2015's The Grid III (featuring four) with his







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bradfordvilleblues.com

SPOTLIGHT

Rocky Denney

WEDNESDAYS STRIKERZ PENSACOLA

AUGUST 5 NW FL BLUES SOCIETY SEVILLE QUARTER PENSACOLA Growing up in the Atlanta, GA area, Rocky Denney fell in love with music at an early age. He learned to sing listening to early rock, Motown and Elvis, later learning to harmonize while sing-

ing in his school choir. Denney started writing songs at age 17, and had his first original song debut on local radio when he was 20. Once his high school band Dixie Pride dissolved, Denney quit music for two decades. After a divorce in 1995, he started writing again, and he described the process and both cheaper and more beneficial than therapy. He picked up a harmonica at about the same time and fell in love with the blues. After moving to Louisiana in 2001, he started going to blues jams in and around Baton Rouge and New Orleans, and honed his newfound harmonica skills by sitting in with some of the best musicians in the world. Since then, he has been a part of a number of bands, including Crossfire, Drivin' South, Lagniappe Rhythm & Blues, and now The Rocky Denney Band. Settling into the scene in Pensacola, Denney now runs the jam at Strikerz that draws a solid slate of players weekly. The band will also be showcased this month at the NW Florida Blues Society's

weekly Seville Quarter jam, the longest-running blues jam in Florida. A prolific writer, Denney continues to enjoy local radio play of his original music, and playing harmonica-driven rockin' blues. More at rocky denney.com.

AUGUST 8 DAFNIS PRIETO SÍ O SÍ QUARTET CORAL GABLES CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST **CORAL GABLES**

Dafnis Prieto

The revolutionary drumming techniques and compositions of Cuba's Dafnis Prieto have had a powerful impact on the Latin and jazz music scene around the world. His honors include a 2011 MacArthur Fellowship, a 2018 Grammy Award and Latin Grammy nomination for Best Latin Jazz Album for Dafnis Prieto Big Band Back to the Sunset, a Grammy nomination for Best Latin Jazz Album for Absolute Quintet in 2006, and a Latin Grammy nomination for Best New Artist in 2007. A gifted educator, Prieto has conducted master classes, clinics, and workshops

throughout the world. He was a faculty member of Jazz Studies at NYU from 2005 to 2014, and in 2015 became a faculty member at the Frost School of Music at the University of Miami. In 2016 Prieto published a critically acclaimed drumming instructional book. Since his 1999 arrival in New York, Prieto has worked in bands led by the likes of Henry Threadgill, Steve Coleman, Eddie Palmieri and Chucho Valdés, among others. He has performed at music festivals internationally as a sideman and as a bandleader featuring several of his own projects and music. As a composer, Prieto has created music for dance, film, chamber ensembles, and most notably for his own bands, ranging from duets to big band, and including the distinctively different groups featured on seven acclaimed recordings as a leader. He has received commissions, grants, and fellowships from Chamber Music America, Jazz at Lincoln Center, East Carolina University,

and Meet the Composer. More at dafnisonmusic.com.





AUGUST 31 HARD ROCK STADIUM MIAMI

The Rolling Stones

The legendary Rolling Stones have curated a list of their favorite cuts to create *Confessin' The Blues*. The collection was released late last year, and

features songs from Muddy Waters, Chuck Berry, B.B King, Eddie Taylor, Jimmy Reed and more. The cover art is a painting by bassist Ron Wood, and 10 percent of the receipts for the set go to Willie Dixon's Blues Foundation. The two CDs, two LPs and five 10-inch records that resemble 78s are accompanied by a book with information on all the artists, providing a concise introduction to the first musical genre to arise in the U.S. *Confessin'* follows the Stones' recent trend of going back to their roots. *Blue & Lonesome*, released in late 2016, was the band's first album to feature only cover songs, and their first studio release since 2005's *A Bigger Bang*. Despite its short run time, the album was released as a double LP, with their version of Buddy Johnson's "Just Your Fool" (using Little Walter's arrangement) as the first single. When the Rolling Stones first got started more than

fifty years ago, the band received attention for blending blues and rock into their own signature sound. Even the band name has its roots in the blues genre, coming from the Muddy Waters song "Rollin' Stone." While the Stones have blended other genres into their sound – including country, folk, dance and reggae – the blues has always been the bedrock foundation of the band's sound.

More at therollingstones.com.







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JAZZ

Nikki Kidd

FRIDAYS IN AUGUST CAFÉ MED RISTORANTE DEERFIELD BEACH

AUGUST 4 LOBSTER BAR SEA GRILL MIAMI

AUGUST 10 ARUBA BEACH CAFE FT LAUDERDALE Jazz vocalist Nikki Kidd's wide-ranging musical palate encompasses jazz, electronic music, reggae, pop, rock, soul and R&B. That taste for influential diversity is evident in her music. While earning her BA at the University of

Miami in Studio Music and Jazz Voice (with a Minor in Music Business, Kidd studied with world-renowned jazz artists such as Kevin Mahogony, Kurt Elling and John Secada. And it was there that Kidd developed an ear for jazz and her own unique stage presence. She was voted Miami New Times' Best Jazz Act in 2018 and Legacy Magazine's 40 Under 40 in 2018. Kidd's commanding stage presence has led to appearances with acclaimed artists such as Gloria Estefan, Michael Bublé and KC and the Sunshine Band. She has also performed with the Florida Grand Opera in their production of the opera Aida and recorded with reggae artist Bruck Up. She sang background vocals for Cory Henry and the Nu Deco Orchestra at The Lighthouse in Miami,

and backed up Thelma Houston and Mary Wilson at The Miami Design District Performance Series Estefan Enterprises Production, as well as performing for Disney's 2018 Christmas Special backing up Aloe Blacc. Kidd continues to make a name for herself

not only in her hometown but also abroad where she has a standing residency at the Mandarin Oriental's Historic Bamboo Bar in Bangkok, Thailand. Meanwhile, The Nikki Kidd Band is currently recording their debut jazz album. More

at nikkikidd.com.





Alex Lopez

AUGUST 2 BONITA SPRINGS ARTS THEATRE BONITA SPRINGS Acclaimed guitarist, nationally-recognized songwriter and emerging performing artist Alex Lopez is quickly

taking the blues/rock scene by storm. Born in Cleveland, Lopez started on keyboards before becoming inspired by British blues/rock bands to master the guitar. Influenced by greats like Eric Clapton, Jimmy Page and Jimi Hendrix, Lopez spent his young adulthood performing in clubs and recording original songs in small studios while polishing his songwriting skills. After moving to Florida to attend college, Lopez spent years as the vocalist and lead guitarist of the popular rock band Reminiscion before striking out on his own. In 2013 Alex released the album Back Bedroom Blues, a collection of original blues and blues / rock songs displaying his formidable skills. A mere two years later Lopez released his followup CD Is it a Lie to excellent reviews. With 2017's Slowdown Lopez achieved a new level of success with international recognition and critical acclaim. The CD tells a story about a person who travels down a path that leads to addiction, and their struggle to find a way back home. Each song serves as a chapter in this saga. His fourth album Yours Truly, Me... is set for release on August 16. The 12-songs collection swings from blues rockers to shuffle stomps, and from gospel-tinged hymns to jazz-flavored grooves For those who can't make the Bonita show this month, Lopez will appear with his touring band, Alex Lopez Xpress, as part of the elite lineup at the Camping with the Blues Festival in Brooksville. More at alexlopez music.com.





BLUES

AUGUST 23 TIM FINNEGAN'S DELRAY BEACH

AUGUST 24 SALTWATER BREWERY DELRAY BEACH

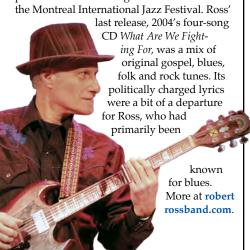
AUGUST 29 VINO'S ON GALT MILE FORT LAUDERDALE

AUGUST 30 HARRY & THE NATIVES HOBE SOUND

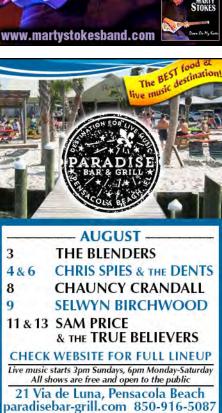
Robert Ross

New York Blues Hall of Fame inductee and two-time winner of the coveted New York Music Award for Best Blues Artist, guitarist Robert Ross plays hard driving boogie, hip grinding soul, burning rock 'n' roll, and low down and dirty blues.

His 1981 EP Introducing Robert Ross came out of nowhere to take seventh place for Record of the Year in the *Baltimore Sun* newspaper. Since then, Ross has worked with John Lee Hooker, Big Mama Thornton, Otis Rush, Dr. John and many others. He was co-leader of the Dicey Ross Band in the 1970s, and has opened for a staggering list of greats including Bo Diddley, Jerry Lee Lewis, John Lennon, Aretha Franklin, the Allman Brothers and Spencer Davis. Ross has even jammed onstage with the likes of Muddy Waters, Jimi Hendrix and Stevie Ray Vaughan. In 1994 Johnny Winter's version of Ross' "Sittin' In The Jailhouse" was re-released on a compilation CD. The recording originally appeared on Winter's 1980 Raisin' Cain album. The Robert Ross Band has appeared on radio and TV in Europe and the U.S., and they have performed at the Chicago Blues Festival and the Montreal International Jazz Festival. Ross'







Bar Sun-Thur 11-10/Fri-Sat 11-? Grill Sun-Thur 11-9/Fri-Sat 11-10



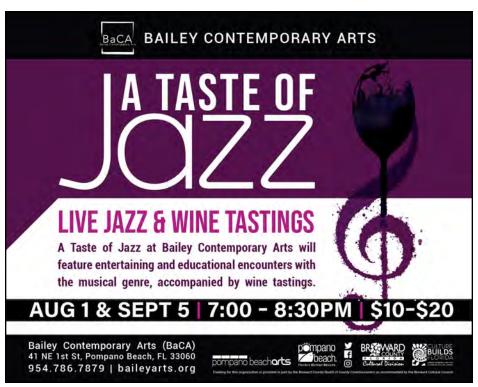
AUGUST 21 & 22 MARK SMALL QUARTET SUNSET TAVERN SOUTH MIAMI

AUGUST 28
WITH LUCAS APOSTOLERIS
THE FISH HOUSE
MIAMI

Mark Small

Soon after moving to New York, saxophonist/woodwind player/composer/arranger Mark Small began working in numerous facets of the city's diverse jazz scene. He performs with his own band and has appeared as a sideman for bands such as the Village Vanguard Orchestra and Darcy James Argue's Secret Society (featured on his Grammy-nominated debut CD). Small can be heard on his co-lead band with saxophon-

ist Walter Smith III, 2008's Bronze, and on recordings including Jason Goldman's Definitive Standard, Michael Feurstein's Mainframe, Damon Grant's Sonidos Nuevos, Jon Urruri's Carahlo's Castle, the soundtrack for Louie C.K.'s TV show Louie and the award-winning short film The Drummer. Rounding out his abilities on the saxophone, he has also been seen performing in the broadway musical Chicago on baritone, tenor, and soprano sax as well as bass clarinet. Small's work with superstar Michael Bublé has taken him on three world tours to more than 35 countries and to appearances on Saturday Night Live, The Today Show and Ellen. Small was a featured soloist on both saxophone and clarinet for the Grammy-winning DVD Michael Buble Meets Madison Square Garden, as well as a live performance for PBS which became the Grammy-nominated DVD Caught in the Act. A passionate educator, Small has taught privately for more than two decades, instructed band, jazz ensemble and woodwind; and served as lecturer, clinician and festival judge. He is currently a saxophone instructor and theory professor at Miami's New World School for the Arts, and a DMA candidate in jazz studies at the UM's Frost School of Music. More at smallmusic.com.



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AUGUST 14 JR'S OLD PACKINGHOUSE CAFE SARASOTA

AUGUST 15 BLUE TAVERN TALLAHASSEE

John Ford

By carefully stirring and mixing the 1920s and '30s blues of Robert Johnson and Son House with a bit of 1940s country and a pinch of gospel rhythm, John Ford comes up with his own brand of roots experience. "People ask if I'm doing all original music. Sometimes I do, but sometimes it's just an old Son House song or a new Chris Smither song that people have never heard, that I consider to

be a great song." Ford has been writing since his early teens, growing up in a small river town 20 miles east of Cincinnati, and his 2016 full-length debut, *The John Ford Blues Society*, features some of the area's best musicians. There's evidence of Ford's

healthy appreciation for the blues everywhere. He recorded his 2014 EP *Songs From Room 414* at The Gunter Hotel in San Antonio Texas – the hallowed ground where Robert Johnson recorded 16 out of his 27 songs in November of 1936. *Songs* was the followup to Ford's first EP, 2011's *Injection of the Blues*, and in 2015, John was nominated for a Cincinnati Entertainment Award. A live EP, recorded at Morehead State University, is in the works. Over the past few years Ford's been busy playing some of the blues trail's finest venues, and has opened for Cedric Burnside, Patrick Sweaney, Damon Fowler and Ruthie Foster. More at johnfordblues.com.



Ray Monroig



One of the most sought-after drummers in Miami, Rey Monroig is the drummer for the popular Latin jazz group Oriente, Grammywinner Nestor Torres, jazz legend Othello Molineaux, and the Miami Jazz Project Band with Dave Liebman. He also teaches drums

at Miami Music Ministries. Monroig began drumming at age of nine, playing along to trash metal records. His father was a percussionist, and music was a powerful presence in his childhood home. After discovering jazz fusion artists such as Allan Holdsworth, Gary Husband, and the great Tony Williams, onroig began formal training with professor Tony Sanchez at the Conservatory of Music in Puerto Rico. Other notable teachers included Leobadis Gonzalez, Raul Rivera and Edgar Velez. Monroig also attended the "Berklee in Puerto Rico" program where he had the chance to study privately with John Ramsay, Ron Savage and Casey Scheurell. Having toured Europe, Africa, Asia, The Caribbean, and North and South America, Monroig has gained experience in styles including pop, rock, gospel, Latin jazz and swing. An official Paiste Cymbals and Innovative Percussion, Inc. (drum sticks) Artist, Monroig has worked





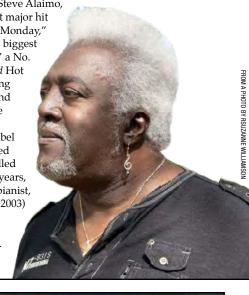


AUGUST 17 PALLADIUM ST. PETERSBURG

Latimore

Born in Charleston, Tennessee, Latimore was influenced by country music, his Baptist church choir, and the blues. After spending some time working as a

pianist for various Florida-based groups including Steve Alaimo, Latimore began recording in the mid-1960s. His first major hit was a jazzy reworking of T-Bone Walker's "Stormy Monday," which reached No. 27 on the R&B chart in 1973. His biggest success came in 1974, with "Let's Straighten It Out," a No. 1 R&B hit which also reached No. 31 on the Billboard Hot 100 chart. He followed it up with more hits, including "Keep The Home Fire Burnin" (No. 5 R&B, 1975) and "Somethin' 'Bout 'Cha" (No. 7 R&B, 1976). Latimore switched labels in 1982, releasing eight albums of modern blues music on Malaco Records. Another label switch led to Latt Is Back, Later, Latimore collaborated with Miami's Henry Stone on a new record label called LatStone; which released his first new album in six years, Back 'Atcha. He has continued to work as a session pianist, appearing on Joss Stone's albums The Soul Sessions (2003) and Mind Body & Soul (2004), and appeared on The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon in 2014. In 2017, Latimore was inducted in to the Blues Hall of Fame. More at latimoremusic.com.







J A Z Z

Jalen Baker

AUGUST 29 BLUE TAVERN TALLAHASSEF Vibraphonist, percussionist, educator, and composer Jalen Baker received his BA in Jazz Studies from Columbia College Chicago,

studying with percussionist Jarrett Hicks, just two short years ago. He has distinguished himself as a jazz vibraphonist and received several accolades including Outstanding Soloist at both the Notre Dame and Elmhurst Jazz Festivals, and was one of two students chosen to represent Columbia at the Arcevia Jazz Festival in Arcevia, Italy. While in Chicago, Baker also performed regularly with the Jarrard Harris Quartet, The Dod Kalm Quartet, Human Bloom and his own group Musiki Tano. He was also chosen to be a member of the Chicago Next Gen Allstars by the Chicago Jazz institute. Just a few months ago, Baker received his MM in Jazz Studies from FSU. While there, Baker was chosen as a Ravinia Jazz Fellow in 2018. He has been an active performer with the Leon Anderson Quartet, The Ulysses Owens Trio and Quartet, all while leading Musiki Tano in venues in and around Georgia and Northern Florida. Baker was recently a featured guest with the Savannah Jazz Orchestra. He continues to compose and perform his unique blend of original modern jazz compositions





