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Steady Rollin' Blues Band, 1 p.m.



Just five weeks after winning the Quad Cities round of the Iowa Blues Challenge, the Steady Rollin' Blues Band emerged victorious from the final round of the state challenge in Des Moines on May 22. The prize package includes studio recording time and a slot at the IH Mississippi Valley Blues Festival for July 3, as well as money to help support the band's trip to Memphis next January, when they will represent Iowa in the International Blues Challenge.

Steady Rollin' is made up of seasoned pros who have been part of the Quad Cities music scene for more than 15 years. The Steady Rollin' Blues Band plays every Thursday night at Rascals in Moline. Their music is good to dance to and features different styles of blues, from jazz to funk to R&B, Memphis to Chicago, with covers of artists such as Tyrone Davis, Bobby Bland, and Marvin Sease. Craig Bentley is on guitar, Perry Hultgren on keyboards, Jimmy VanHyfte on drums, Tom Norman on bass, and Jimmie Lee Adams on vocals.

Five bands from across the state competed in the final round of the Iowa Blues Challenge. Trouble No More, the Bob Pace Band Featuring Steve E. George, Bella Soul Blues Revolution Featuring Tina Haase Findlay, and Stoney Ground were the other performers that gave the Steady Rollin' Blues Band a run for their money. Steady Rollin' follows in a tradition that has seen the Quad Cities entrants in the Iowa Blues Challenge walk away with the top prize, including the Avey Brothers Band in 2008 and 2009. -- *Karen McFarland*

Ana Popović, 2:45 p.m.

AnaPopovic.com



Ana Popović was born on May 13, 1976, in Belgrade in the former Yugoslavia, the first daughter of Milutin and Vesna Popović. Her father is a guitar/bass player, and Ana grew up listening in on many blues and soul jam sessions he hosted. Inevitably Ana was bitten by the guitar bug. Her parents paid for private lessons when her father realized that her natural gift of playing went beyond his own abilities.

In 1995, Ana formed her first band, Hush, and had frequent appearances at festivals and on television in her home country. With the fall of communism, musicians were allowed to travel more freely, and they start playing blues festivals in Greece and Hungary. In 1999, Ana was studying music at The Conservatory in the Netherlands and formed a Dutch band that became popular on the Dutch and German blues scenes.

In October of 2000, Ana traveled to Memphis to record *Hush!*, her first release for Ruf Records. She joined artists such as Bernard Allison, Eric Burdon, Walter Trout, Popa Chubby, Jimmy Thackery, Taj Mahal, and Buddy Miles on a Jimi Hendrix tribute CD titled *Blue Haze*

. In 2001, Ana appeared as a special guest on tour with Bernard Allison, and in 2002 Ana was part of the European Jimi Hendrix tribute tour with Walter Trout.

In 2006 Ana was invited to be on the Legendary Rhythm & Blues Cruise, the first European artist to be offered a spot on the cruise with her own band, and in 2009 she was invited back to the Legendary Rhythm & Blues Cruise again. We feel very honored to have this talented musician on our stage. -- *Steve Heston*

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Written by Administrator
Wednesday, 23 June 2010 05:45

Zac Harmon, 4:30 p.m.

ZacHarmon.com



The Entertainment Committee is made up of members with varying tastes in blues. So it's rare for us to agree when we listen to solicitations for the Fest. But that's what happened -- we agreed! -- when we listened to Zac Harmon.

Born and raised in Jackson, Mississippi, Harmon is a disciple of the Farish Street blues sound. (Farish Street is universally recognized as the home of many great blues legends, including Elmore James.) During the '50s and '60s, Harmon hung out at his father's pharmacy on Farish, soaking up the aura and sounds of the musician customers while developing his skills as a guitarist, organist, and vocalist. Like many, he honed those skills while at church.

Harmon's early years included stints as guitarist for Z.Z. Hill, Dorothy Moore, and Sam Myers. Sam along with Mel Brown played a significant role in Harmon's development, guiding his progress through rock and roll to the true blues.

Moving to Los Angeles in 1980 to pursue a career in music, Harmon worked as a studio musician and began to make a name for himself as a writer/producer, crafting songs for such varied notables as Evelyn "Champagne" King, the Whispers, and the O'Jays. He produced songs on the *Mystical Truth* album for Black Uhuru that received a Grammy nomination in 1994.

In 2002, Harmon decided to pursue his longtime dream of recording his first blues project. The result, *Live at Babe & Ricky's Inn*, was an electrifying testimonial to the blues, featuring eight original songs that truly embody the Mississippi blues sound.

Sponsored by the Southern California Blues Society of Los Angeles, Harmon & the Mid South Blues Revue went on to win the Blues Foundation's 2004 International Blues Challenge as "best

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unsigned blues band." -- adapted from ZacHarmon.com

Vasti Jackson, 6:15 p.m.

VastiJackson.com



"Vasti Jackson is the real deal! He plays the blues, he sings the blues, he writes the blues, he produces the blues, and yes, he feels the blues. When you understand the blues, the blues like Vasti has had since his Mississippi childhood, you know that there are no boundaries to the music." -- Art Tipaldi (*Blues Revuemagazine*)

"Vasti is one of the most talented and creative bluesmen of the younger generation. He is a masterful guitarist with a deep knowledge of blues roots, and a terrific live showman." -- Bruce Iglauer (Alligator Records)

If you're ready for some soulful, down-home blues, make sure you catch Vasti Jackson's set! Maybe you've already heard him live: He was the leader of Louisiana pianist Katie Webster's band in the 1980s and early '90s. Vasti grew up in McComb, Mississippi, and he played his first professional gig at 15. In the late '70s he moved to Jackson, Mississippi, where he studied music at Jackson State. Once in town, Jackson began working with gospel groups including the Williams Brothers and the Jackson Southernaires and soul and blues artists Geater Davis, Tommy Tate, and Sam Myers, as well as his own funk and R&B group, Wisdom.

After a short stay in L.A., Jackson returned to Jackson, where he became the musical director for Z.Z. Hill just on the cusp of Hill's huge success with *Down Home* on Malaco. Jackson played guitar on the Malaco records of Latimore, Denise LaSalle, Bobby Rush, and Johnnie Taylor. He also drew on his formal musical training in writing horn and string arrangements for the label, and co-produced Rush's Grammy-nominated CD from 2000,

Hoochie Man

. Jackson recently worked on records by Cassandra Wilson and Michael Burks, as well as New

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Orleans-based Henry Butler and John Cleary.
-- *adapted from VastiJackson.com*

Quad City Symphony Orchestra, 8 p.m.

QCSymphony.com

At first blush, the pairing of the Quad City Symphony Orchestra and the IH Mississippi Valley Blues Festival seems reminiscent of *The Odd Couple*. Neat and pristine, typified by tuxedos and centuries-old compositions, the symphony appears a stark contrast to blues -- a genre derived from African- American work songs, spirituals, and field hollers. But passion, with all its infectious qualities, has a way of smoothing out the differences.

Quad City Symphony Orchestra musicians travel from Denver, the Twin Cities, and throughout the Midwest to perform. If a 1,600-mile round trip doesn't speak to dedication, then the countless hours of rehearsal and years of practice required to reach this caliber of musicianship do. In the same vein, the IH Mississippi Valley Blues Festival is the longest-running volunteer-produced festival in the country. For the core group of organizers who make up the Mississippi Valley Blues Society, this isn't a day job but rather one they do on nights, weekends, and holidays. They've survived floods, rain, sweltering heat, and budget constraints to produce one of the most highly respected blues festivals in the nation.

Both the symphony and the Mississippi Valley Blues Society strive to enrich people's cultural lives through performance, education, and enhanced appreciation of their respective art forms. "This is a great opportunity for us to introduce new fans to the blues," said blues-society President Bob Covemaker. "For us, the fest has always been about diversity, and what better way to diversify than to include the symphony?"

The symphony, led by Conductor and Music Director Mark Russell Smith, will include in its blues-inspired Patriot Pops set "St. Louis Blues," composed by W.C. Handy -- the "Father of the Blues" and among the most influential American songwriters.

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The Quad City Symphony performance is presented by Red, White, & Boom! and its sponsors: Genesis Health System, the Riverboat Development Authority, and IH Mississippi Valley Credit Union. -- *Laura Ernzen*

Rosie Ledet & the Zydeco Playboys, 10:30 p.m.

RosieLedet.net



Rosie Ledet is definitely worth waiting for, so be at the Bandshell at 10:30 for the Saturday-night finale and wear your dancin' shoes! I have been a huge Rosie Ledet fan for many years, since the first time I saw her perform at Gumbo Ya Ya. Rosie's show was hot! She had the entire crowd dancing and partying to her zydeco beat. What a party band! Those of you who saw Rosie Ledet on the Tent Stage at our festival a few years ago know what I mean. She had the Tent crowd worked into a frenzy that night!

At the age of 16 Rosie Ledet heard Boozoo Chavis play at a zydeco dance, and her fate was sealed. She taught herself to play the accordion, began writing music, and started playing around Louisiana and Texas. Soon Rosie's accomplished accordion playing and her sultry, bluesy voice combined to make her a rare gem in the zydeco world. Affectionately referred to as the "Zydeco Sweetheart," Rosie fronts the Zydeco Playboys: Andre Nizzari on guitar, Pernell Babineaux on bass, Kevin Stelly on drums, and Damon Dugas on rubboard.

Rosie's dance-friendly tunes, like all authentic zydeco, are rhythm-oriented and continue the zydeco-party-music tradition of Clifton Chenier and Queen Ida. Rosie has said that she thinks of zydeco as "sped-up blues," and bluesy heartfelt zydeco music is what this singer and accordion player knows best. She is one of the few younger zydeco musicians today who still writes and sings much of her own material in Creole French. One of only a handful of women in zydeco, Rosie Ledet's warm stage presence combined with her infectious zydeco beat make her irresistible to audiences everywhere.

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At 4 p.m. on Saturday, you can see Rosie at a free workshop, where she'll demonstrate zydeco accordion. -- *Ellen Clow*