

2013 Blues Fest – Friday, July 5: Bandshell

Written by Administrator
Thursday, 27 June 2013 05:51

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Mississippi Valley Blues Challenge, 3 p.m.

The first Mississippi Valley Blues Challenge final round is being held at the festival this year with three bands vying for a chance to be named the victor. Each of the bands will play for 20 minutes, with the winner of the challenge qualifying for the 30th International Blues Challenge in Memphis, as well as receiving a paid bandshell slot in this year's Mississippi Valley Blues Festival – at 5 p.m. on Saturday, July 6.

The challenge started with three preliminary rounds at the sponsoring venue, The Muddy Waters in Bettendorf, where one band from each round advanced to the finals. The Mississippi Valley Blues Challenge preliminary rounds featured a strong field of competitors, including Harris Collection, the Jared Hughes Band, Mississippi Misfits, and Wheelhouse.

The three bands that advanced to the finals were the Chris Avey Band, Serious Business, and the Rock Island Rollers – playing Friday in that order.



Chris Avey Band. Chris Avey, former lead guitarist and backing vocalist for blues icon Big Pete Pearson, fuels the band with his stinging guitar attack and fiery vocals. Since striking out on his

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own with his band, he has released two CDs – the critically acclaimed *in My Bed*

Devil

and

Preacherman

. Chris's vocals and guitar are reminiscent of a younger, more-fiery Coco Montoya, mixed with a dash of Tab Benoit.

Blues Blast Magazine

says: "Blues with intensity and emotion. More energy than a power plant." The rhythm section is Dave Abdo on bass and Wes Weeber on drums.



Serious Business. In the spring of 2012, local blues band Serious Business took to the stage and won the Iowa Blues Challenge preliminary round at The Muddy Waters, with performance styles in rockin' boogie and soulful blues. This year, drummer Eladio Pena and founder and lead guitarist John Pena decided to create a new lineup that would give Serious Business a whole new sound before entering into the Mississippi Valley Blues Challenge. After John Pena recruited longtime friend and singer Willie "The Mac" McNeil and his son John Pena II on bass guitar, Serious Business has since created a sound featuring a combination of high-energy original material and cover tunes. Keeping it real with blues as the core of their live performances, people will also hear a combination of rock, jazz-fusion, funk, soul, and R&B flavors.



The Rock Island Rollers. From the heart of the heartland – Des Moines, Iowa – comes the Rock Island Rollers. Soulful and funky, their sound will go straight to your gut and move your spirit. Since their founding in January of 2012, the band has quickly become known as one of the best in the Midwest. Since winning the 2012 Iowa Blues Challenge, they've begun work on their first record, to be released this month. The Rock Island Rollers have one simple philosophy: Let the music speak for itself. The Rock Island Rollers consist of Jeff Bands on vocals and guitar, Heath Alan on sax and vocals, Justin Appel on keyboards and vocals, Kip Heaberlin on bass, and George McCutchen on drums. –

Kristy

Bennett

Jimmy Nick & Don't Tell Mama, 5 p.m.

JimmyNick.com

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