

Blues in the Schools Feb. 25 to March 1

Written by MVBS

Friday, 22 February 2013 15:10

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Hal Reed and Kevin Burt: “Generations of Blues”

Blues in the Schools Residency

February 25 – March 1

The Mississippi Valley Blues Society presents Hal Reed and Kevin Burt for its Blues in the Schools Artists in Residency Series for the week of February 25 to March 1, 2013. Hal and Kevin will conduct their “Generations of Blues” workshops at area schools and two Open to the Public performances:

- **Moline Public Library, Gold Room—Tuesday Feb. 26, 7-8:30 p.m. (3210 41st Street, Moline)**
- **River Music Experience, Community Stage—Thursday Feb. 28, 7-9 p.m. (2nd and Main Streets in Davenport IA)**

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Through storytelling, discussions, and musical demonstration, Hal and Kevin will trace blues music's history and culture from its African roots through today's era, showing how and where the blues originated and threaded its way through all cultures in our society. The goal is that students today continue to appreciate, understand and carry their fathers' and mothers' music into the next generation.

Blues harmonica player, guitarist, singer and educator Hal Reed was born in Mississippi just a few miles from the Delta, where he grew up influenced by his grandfather, a talented southern folk-blues artist who in addition to inspiring young Hal's love for the blues taught Hal the need to pass it on from generation to generation.

Besides being a bandleader in the Quad-Cities, Hal is also the owner of The Muddy Waters in Bettendorf, where he brings in blues artists every week. And for the past five years he has been a teacher at the River Music Experience's Winter Blues program. Hal along with Ellis Kell have been the moderators at the Mississippi Valley Blues Festival's BlueSKool, where they have taught and presented the kids from the RME's Winter Blues program.

Hal has brought his "Generations of Blues" program to area schools three times before, to great acclaim. Kevin Burt joins a team that has included Ellis Kell, Donald Kinsey, Chris Avey, and Bret Dale.

For over 20 years, Kevin "B.F." Burt has been electrifying audiences throughout the nation, dispelling the myth that true blues has no roots in Iowa. His soul-inspired presentation is unique, which consistently gets him compared to a range of artists like Bill Withers and Aaron Neville, with the ability to build an audience rapport that has been compared to B.B. King. Kevin is a self-taught musician (vocals, harmonica, and guitar) who has also had some stage acting experience. In the off-Broadway play, *Klub Ka, the Blues Legend*, Kevin played Papa Gee and arranged all of the blues music. The play, which originally ran in Iowa City and then in Washington DC, also had a two week run at LaMama's Experimental Theater in New York City and was sold out each night. Kevin has also had roles in several other plays at the University of Iowa—for example, playing Whining Boy in the acclaimed August Wilson play *The Piano Lesson*.

Kevin was recognized as one of the Midwest's top blues heritage educators by Iowa Governor Chet Culver in 2009, and he has been the MVBS artist in residence for Blues in the Schools

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before. Kevin is a registered artist educator with the State of Iowa Arts Council. He has written and published a classroom harmonica method book called *Just Play It: an Introduction to Blues Harmonica*. Kevin has shared the stage with many greats, including Albert Collins, B. B. King, Buddy Guy, Honeyboy Edwards, Janiva Magnus, Junior Wells, Lonnie Brooks, Luther Allison, Robert Cray, Rod Piazza, Terrance Simien, the Holmes Brothers, the Neville Brothers, and the Blind Boys of Alabama. Besides playing at the Mississippi Valley Blues Festival and other Midwest blues festivals, Kevin has performed at the Smithsonian Festival of American Folklife (Washington, DC).

The Hal Reed and Kevin Burt “Generations of Blues” residency is made possible by major support from the Riverboat Development Authority. Additional support is provided by the Iowa Arts Council, the Moline Foundation, Alcoa, KALA-FM, and The Lodge of Bettendorf.