

Kenny Wayne Shepherd to Headline Blues Festival

Written by Karen McFarland
Wednesday, 29 May 2013 12:49

The Kenny Wayne Shepherd Band will close out the 29th Mississippi Valley Blues Festival on Saturday July 6 on the Bandshell in Davenport's LeClaire Park. Sponsored in part by Wieblers Harley-Davidson of Davenport, Shepherd's set will show why Guitar World named him the world's #3 blues guitarist—right after B. B. King and Eric Clapton.

Still barely in his 30s, the Louisiana-born axeman and songsmith has been selling millions of albums, throwing singles into the Top 10, shining a light on the rich blues of the past and forging ahead with his own modern twist on a classic sound he has embodied since his teens. He met Stevie Ray Vaughn at 7 and shared the stage with New Orleans legend Bryan Lee at 13.

From 1995 on, Shepherd took seven [singles](#) into the Top 10, and holds the record for the longest-running album on the Billboard Blues Charts with Trouble Is. Shepherd has been nominated for five [Grammy Awards](#), and has received two

[Billboard Music Awards](#)

, and two

[Blues Music Awards](#)

.

In 2007, he released a critically-acclaimed and two-time [Grammy](#) -nominated DVD–CD project, [10 Days Out: Blues from the Backroads](#).

The film and album document Kenny Wayne Shepherd as he travels the country to [jam](#)

with and interview the last of the authentic blues musicians, many of them now gone. As they tour the backroads, Shepherd, with members of the Double Trouble Band, play with a host of blues greats including

[Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown](#)

, blues harp master

[Jerry "Boogie" McCain](#)

,

[Cootie Stark](#)

,

[John Dee Holeman](#)

,

[Etta Baker](#)

, and

[Henry Townsend](#)

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with

[Honeyboy Edwards](#)

. There's also a concert session with the surviving members of Muddy Waters' and

[Howlin' Wolf](#)

's bands, including luminaries such as

[Hubert Sumlin](#)

,

[Willie "Big Eyes" Smith](#)

, and

[Pinetop Perkins](#)

.

"It's exciting to have such a name and talent as Kenny Wayne Shepherd at the BluesFest," said Bob Covemaker, co-chair of the committee that books acts for the festival. "His energy is perfect for drawing in more young people, the future of the blues."

Kenny Wayne Shepherd is one of 27 acts on two stages at the Blues Festival, which begins at 3:00 p.m. on Thursday July 4 and runs through July 6. Free workshops by festival artists are scheduled for all three days, and BlueSKool for the kids runs Friday and Saturday.

Discount advance tickets are available until June 30 from Hy-Vee stores in the Quad-Cities, Clinton, and Muscatine, by calling the Mississippi Valley Blues Society at 563-32-BLUES, or online at www.mvbs.org. Gate admission is \$20 per day, with children 14 and under free if accompanied by a paying adult.

Besides the Kenny Wayne Shepherd Band, this year's artists include, Mighty Sam McClain, Walter Trout, Southern Hospitality, John Primer (who will receive the RiverRoad Lifetime Achievement Award), C. J. Chenier, W. C. Clark, The 44s, Anthony Gomes, Samantha Fish, and Davina & the Vagabonds—among a total of 27 acts on two stages.

Also this year the festival will see the first-ever Mississippi Valley Blues Challenge. Three bands from within a 175-mile radius of the Quad-Cities will compete in the final round on July 5, with the winner playing a full set on July 6 at the festival and representing the Mississippi Valley Blues Society at the International Blues Challenge in Memphis in January 2014.