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Oxford Blues Festival Highlights Local, Regional Talent

UM Professors, Local and National Artists to Perform at Blues Festival

OCTOBER 3, 2022 BY CLARA TURNAGE



OXFORD, Miss. – When office hours are over, some professors don't hit the books – they hit the stage.

Four such **University of Mississippi** professors are among the 18 bands scheduled to play during the **11th Oxford Blues Festival**, which runs Oct. 6-8 at Harrison's near the Oxford Square.

Headlining the event this year are two Grammy-nominated artists, John Primer, Trent Ayers and R.L. Boyce, as well as Bill "Howlin Madd" Perry. Ole Miss faculty members Steve Brewer, professor of biology; Ricky Burkhead, professor of music; Wendy Garrison, professor emeritus of biology, Alan Gross, professor emeritus of psychology; and Adam Gussow, professor of English and Southern studies, will be performing throughout the three-day event.



Tickets for the festival, which also will feature Effie Burt, Lady Trucker, Lightnin' Malcolm, are available at <https://oxfordbluesfest.com/tickets>. Students can purchase tickets at a discount.

Darryl Parker, an Oxford native and producer of the festival, said he created the event back in 2011 after several years of volunteering with different festivals around Chicago.

"It all started here. We have a rich culture that's influenced the whole world here," Parker said. "We want to introduce people to blues. You don't have to like it, but if you're exposed to it, you might. It's everybody's music."

Gussow, author of a number of books on Southern culture and blues music, will play with the trio Sir Rod and The Blues Doctors and lead a workshop on playing the harmonica. Tickets for the Blues Harmonica Workshop are available **online**, and the first five people between the ages of 12 and 16 who sign up get a free harmonica, Gussow said.

The 11th Oxford Blues Festival, set for Oct. 6-8, features two Grammy-nominated artists and four Ole Miss faculty members, as well as several other regional and national artists.

Gussow said the festival will be the first time his trio has played in Oxford, though they toured up and down the East Coast over the summer. Gussow has been playing blues since 1986 and has toured on multiple occasions, notably as a part of the blues duo Satan and Adam, which was later featured in a Netflix documentary.

"There are an extraordinary number of truly important blues musicians from Mississippi," he said. "We have that reputation that we can be proud of. Mississippi is best known around the world for its blues players."

Though the field of blues and several surrounding genres are dominated by men, female musicians are out there, too. Slide guitarist Wendy Garrison, who has been playing folk and blues-inspired music for more than 30 years across Oxford and north Mississippi, said Parker has always sought out female musicians as he seeks to showcase Mississippi's talent.

"I've found that the blues musicians of the South are totally accepting of me," Garrison said. "Some folks in the music industry are gatekeepers – they certainly are not. I think it's important to keep raising your hand and saying 'Hey, we're here.'"

Oxford has a place within the Mississippi blues tradition, though the city is more often associated with "Southern-fried Americana with a little bit of country and a little bit of jazz," Gussow said. The festival highlights north Mississippi's contributions to the genre, he said.

"It's a chance for people in Oxford and surrounding area to come and see a lot of great music," Gussow said. "As a blues scholar and performer, I think it's the best lineup that Darryl's ever put together."

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OXFORD, Miss. – The University of Mississippi is asking the community to help spread a little joy this holiday season by donating to the 25th annual Books and Bears program. Donations such as toys, books, dolls, bicycles and other children's play items are being accepted through Dec. 14. All donations will be collected and sorted

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“James Meredith: Breaking the Barrier,” a collection of essays edited by UM professor of journalism Kathleen Wickham, honors this historic milestone with

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