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Realize Bradenton Announces 4th Annual Bradenton Blues Festival

TICKETS SELLING FAST!

December 5, 2015 ▪ 11 a.m.-8 p.m. ▪ Bradenton's Riverwalk

New this year! Legendary blues photojournalist, Joseph Rosen, will sign copies of his new book, "Blues Hands."

(Bradenton, FL) — Tickets are selling out for the 4th annual Bradenton Blues Festival.

According to Johnette Isham, executive director for Realize Bradenton, the festival's producing organization, the festival has become one of the region's renowned live music events. "Blues fans showed up in the thousands for last year's sold-out festival," she says, adding that more than 3,200 people from 30 states, three foreign countries, and 225 different zip codes from within Florida alone attended last year's event. "We advise anyone who wants to guarantee a ticket that they purchase it as soon as possible. We can't guarantee that there will be any available on the day of the event." ***For more information and to buy tickets online, visit www.BradentonBluesFestival.org.***

Isham acknowledges that the festival is the result of a massive, community-wide effort. "It truly takes the community to create this festival," she says, saying that festival coordinators carefully reviewed last year's audience surveys and have refined elements of

the festival to reflect attendees' suggestions." After reading hundreds of comments, we upgraded a few aspects of the festival," says Isham, adding that this year's event will boast more bathrooms, a dance floor by the stage, a wider range of food and beverages, and a second entrance for attendees' convenience.

Isham adds that this year's event will include an exclusive book signing by legendary blues photojournalist, Joseph Rosen, who just released "Blues Hands." The book is a compilation of his compelling photographs of the hands of celebrated blues artists.

"The festival's artistic director, Paul Benjamin, has again assembled a lineup of top-notch artists of national and regional acclaim," says Isham. She adds that Benjamin was recently appointed as chair of the board of directors to the Blues Foundation—a monumental honor. Benjamin, a veteran music festival producer who books acts for blues festivals around the country, says the festival's reputation has spread quickly throughout the music world. "There's a positive buzz out there about this festival—and artists are eager to be part of it," he says. "The 2015 headliners represent a variety of traditional blues styles, as well as many of whom stretch musical boundaries in innovative, new ways."

Realize Bradenton's educational initiatives will again be a major component of the festival. On Friday, December 4, 2015, "**Blues in the Schools**," an outreach program at Manatee High School, will feature an appearance by In Layman Terms, a brother-and-sister duo that has wowed critics. In keeping with the community outreach feature of the festival, Realize Bradenton will again partner with Mojoe Productions to offer a free concert, the **Blues Appetizer**, on Friday, December 4, 2015, 6 p.m.-9 p.m., at the festival site on the Riverwalk. **(For more information on "Make a Weekend of the Blues," see attached release.)**

According to Isham, the community has again shown strong support for the 2015 festival.

“Dozens of Bradenton businesses and organizations that supported this festival last year lined up to be part of it again,” says Isham, adding that BMO Harris Bank, is again the festival's Presenting Sponsor for the fourth year in a row.

“The Bradenton Blues Festival unites some of the nation’s most popular blues artists,” says Isham. “But it also unites area-based businesses and organizations to form common cause. These forward-thinking companies and organizations join us in celebrating the Bradenton area’s cultural distinctiveness. As savvy businesses and people, they understand that the arts and cultural industry is big business and that events like the Bradenton Blues Festival are a major part of how we promote our region to the world.”

The 2015 Bradenton Blues Festival returns to downtown Bradenton's Riverwalk, December 5, 2015, 11 a.m.-8 p.m., with an all-star lineup that includes **Janiva Magness**, hailed by critics as one of the premier blues and R&B singers in the world today; harmonicist and songwriter **Rick Estrin** with his band, **The Nightcats**, thrilling audiences and critics alike with their fresh, original blues injected with a solid dose of gritty roadhouse rock and roll; guitarist and vocalist **Joanna Connor**, who is being called the most exciting new talent on the blues scene; multi-Blues Music Award-winner **Mike Zito** and his acclaimed band, **The Wheel**; Bluesman of the Year, guitarist-songwriter **Larry Garner**; the celebrated Mississippi vocalist and guitarist, **James "Super Chikan" Johnson**; "**Girls With Guitars**," three electrifying musicians who are quickly conquering the blues world; and the teen brother-and-sister duo, Cole and Logan Layman, collectively known as **In Layman Terms**.

Gates open at 10 a.m. The music starts at 11 a.m. and ends at 8 p.m. Tickets for the 2015 Bradenton Blues Festival are the same as 2013 and 2014: \$30 in advance; \$40 at the gate, cash only; \$25 per person for groups of 10 or more; \$20 for students; and \$10 for children, ages 5-12. Children four and under will be admitted free. **A limited number of**

reserved front-of-stage seats are still available for \$75 per person. Tickets are available online and at Keeton's Office & Art Supply, 817 Manatee Ave. West, in Bradenton. ***For more information and to buy tickets online, visit www.BradentonBluesFestival.org.***

2015 BRADENTON BLUES FESTIVAL

ARTIST BIOS

Janiva Magness

Hailed by critics as one of the “premier blues and R&B singers in the world today,” Janiva Magness is an artist of raw power, emotional complexity and seemingly endless technical ability. Blues Revue calls her “a bold and potent artist of the highest order, with a powerful, soulful voice...impossible to forget.” Whether performing her own songs or covering classics from her expansive repertoire, this 2009 B.B. King Entertainer of the Year leaves no stone unturned. Magness is a gutsy and dynamic musical powerhouse who can sing just about anything. With a life story that reads like a Greek tragedy, Magness has channeled her hardscrabble childhood into a decades-long music career that includes 11 critically acclaimed albums, over 23 nominations and numerous awards. Her latest CD, “Original,” has garnered her three more nominations for the Blues Foundation’s 2015 Blues Music Awards, including Best Contemporary Blues Album, Best Song, and Best Contemporary Blues Female Artist, a title she’s won twice before. On the road, Magness and her world-class road band are renowned for charismatic and electrifying performances that deliver “blues and soul with show-stopping authority,” (Los Angeles Daily News). **www.janivamagness.com**

Rick Estrin and the Nightcats

The Philadelphia Inquirer has called harmonicist and songwriter Rick Estrin “one of the great characters in blues – a sharp-dressing, smooth-talking harmonica-playing hep-cat,” who is also “a deceptively subtle writer who can cloak pointed or sobering messages within the band’s good-time vibe.” In 2008, Estrin teamed up with guitarist Chris “Kid” Andersen, drummer/vocalist J. Hansen and multi-faceted instrumentalist Lorenzo Farrell to form The Nightcats. Since then, Estrin and his ensemble have been delighting audiences and critics alike with their fresh and modern original blues injected with a solid dose of gritty roadhouse rock n’ roll. Blues Revue

magazine has called The Nightcats "one of modern blues' most versatile bands," and Living Blues says "Estrin's harp work is masterful" and their music is "intelligently conceived and executed and hugely entertaining." Estrin won the 2013 Blues Music Award for Best Instrumentalist--Harmonica--and, in 1994, won the Blues Music Award for Song Of The Year for his composition "My Next Ex-Wife." Since their inception in 2008, The Nightcats have quickly become a favorite at major blues festivals around the world, including the Lucerne Blues Festival in Switzerland, the Caxias de Soul Festival in Brazil, and the Moulon Blues Festival in the Netherlands. In the United States they've played the North Atlantic Blues Festival, the Magic City Blues Festival and the Bayfront Blues Festival. Estrin also performed at the Chicago Blues Festival in 2011 as part of Alligator Records' 40th anniversary concert. www.rickestrin.com

Joanna Connor

Once she stepped off a greyhound bus in Chicago in October of 1984, it took guitarist and vocalist Joanna Connor only a few months to take the city's highly competitive blues circuit by storm. Chicago magazine hailed her as "the most exciting new talent on the blues scene." The Chicago Sun-Times called her "a powerhouse guitarist with a sense of rock dynamics--her playing has a fire that is free of self-indulgence." Connor and her searing slide guitar work have been raising eyebrows of blues aficionados and critics everywhere ever since. As the Boston Globe noted, "She brings a revved-up rock flavor to the blues with a desire to move the music forward, not just embalm it." The Joanna Connor Band has gone on to become a frequent attraction not only at leading blues nightspots, but also as a featured act at major festivals in the U.S. and Canada. Connor has also developed a strong following in Europe, Brazil, and Japan as a result of many overseas appearances. Connor's latest Blind Pig CD, "Slidetime," displays her maturity as a songwriter, with all 11 original compositions. This recording also features her trademark gritty guitar work and strongest, most impassioned vocals to date.

www.joannaconnorband.com

Mike Zito and The Wheel

Best known as a co-founder of Royal Southern Brotherhood, multi-Blues Music Award-winner Mike Zito is one of those rare talents who can sing like nobody's business, write gripping songs, play a mean Gulf Coast style guitar, and also has the stage presence to draw in any audience. In 2012, Zito debuted his new band The Wheel, featuring Scot Sutherland on bass, drummer Rob Lee, and Jimmy Carpenter on saxophone and went on to record a brand new album for Ruf Records. In 2014, Mike Zito and The Wheel's album, "Gone To Texas," was nominated for a Blues Music Award in the "Rock Blues Album of the Year" category. The band's latest release, "Songs From the Road," is winning critical acclaim with its live version of the crunchy, gritty

truthful performances that have become hallmarks of Zito and his band. American Blues Scene called it "Zito's best solo work to date. His technique, songwriting, and musicianship improves vastly from each album to the next, and 'Gone To Texas' is the culmination of a lifetime of learning and growth." www.mikezito.com

Larry Garner

The Long Island Blues Society called Larry Garner "an undiscovered treasure lurking in the bayous," and Real Blues has labeled him "perhaps the most talented blues songwriter alive today." Garner's blues career began when a detour on his evening commute home landed him at a blues jam at that legendary Baton Rouge hotbed of blues, Tabby's Blues Box. Garner, who had dabbled in guitar since boyhood, began moonlighting at the Box and the rest is history. Garner and his Boogaloo Blues Band won the 5th Annual International Blues Challenge in 1988, and they have toured extensively ever since, winning over legions of fans worldwide who have come to appreciate Garner's brand of imminently listenable blues akin to those of B.B. King. Garner was inducted into the Louisiana Blues Hall of Fame in 2002 and the BBC has honored Garner as its Bluesman of the Year and named him its Blues Songwriter of the Year three times. Garner was also twice named Real Blues Magazine's Bluesman of the Year. As Big City Blues says, "If you haven't discovered the blues brilliance of Larry Garner, then you should jump on this bandwagon. These are blues for today, good to the last note stuff."

www.larrygarnerbluesman.com

Super Chikan and the Fighting Cocks

In his hometown of Clarksdale, Mississippi, James "Super Chikan" Johnson is probably best known for his regular gigs at Morgan Freeman's Ground Zero Blues Club, and for being Freeman's favorite blues artist. Hal Horowitz of the Blues Revue says Super Chikan is "fun, frisky, sexy, danceable, and as loopy as you'd expect from a guy who plays instruments fashioned from discarded metal and who grew up chatting to poultry." The nephew of fellow blues musician Big Jack Johnson, Johnson spent his childhood working on his family's farms in the Mississippi Delta and twiddling around on his first musical instrument, a rudimentary "diddle bow." Johnson's fondness for the chickens on the family farms earned him the nickname "Chikan Boy." As an adult, Super Chikan began driving trucks for a living, composing songs during the long stretches on the road. He released his first of several albums in 1997 and in 1998 was nominated for the Blues Music Award for Best New Artist. Super Chikan has since toured and performed at festivals around the globe. He has been nominated multiple times for various Blues Music Awards and, in 2010, his album "Chikadelic" won the Blues Music Award for Best Traditional Blues Album. Super Chikan, who Juke Joint Soul calls a "chronic blues

party,” also received five Living Blues Critics Awards and in 2004 received the Mississippi Governor’s Award for Excellence in the Arts. www.superchikan.com

Girls with Guitars 2015:

Girls with Guitars- Eliana Cargnelutti-Sadie Johnson-Heather Crosse

Girls with Guitars act is back with three new dynamic musicians ready to conquer the blues world. Hailing from northern Italy, Eliana Cargnelutti is an award-winning singer and guitarist who can do it all. She has already shared the stage with the crème de la crème of the Italian blues scene and has also collaborated with renowned American jazz and blues guitarist Scott Henderson. Heather Crosse, a respected bassist from Clarksdale, Mississippi, provides the earthy foundation. Her band, Heavy Suga’ & the SweeTones, has appeared frequently at Clarksdale’s renowned Ground Zero Blues Club and has performed at major festivals, opening for such big names as B.B. King, Robert Plant and others. As a singer, Crosse looks to soul and blues icons like Etta James, Koko Taylor and Big Mama Thornton for inspiration. Sadie Johnson may be the youngest musician, but this 18-year-old wunderkind has already made a name for herself playing classic old-school country blues like Robert Johnson and the modern-day blues-rock of her hero Eric Clapton. Johnson released her first EP with her band project Sad Sam Blues Jam in 2013. www.rufrecords.de

In Layman Terms

Anyone who has ever seen the duo of Cole and Logan Layman, collectively known as In Layman Terms, knows that they are a musical force to be reckoned with, and that they’ve got a bright future ahead of them. Still in their teens, this brother and sister duo has already wowed critics and audiences alike with their own brand of gritty, soulful and foot-stomping blues. The duo won their division at last year’s Richmond River City Society’s Blues Challenge, making them eligible once again for the International Blues Challenge in Memphis. They are also both inductees into the prestigious Brotherhood of the Guitar. Logan’s big bass lines and vocals that sound like a “cross between Janis Joplin and Tina Turner,” earned her Veer Magazine’s 2015 award for Best Emerging Artist.

About Realize Bradenton

Realize Bradenton is a non-profit organization that brings people together to create a vibrant and prosperous Bradenton area. **For more information, visit: www.RealizeBradenton.com.**