

Mississippi Musicians Hall of Fame

15-Year Anniversary - A short History

Mississippi, Birthplace of America's Music is our slogan.

Mission Statement - Mississippi Musicians Hall of Fame

The mission of the Mississippi Musicians Hall of Fame is to inform, educate, and entertain the public about Mississippi's unique and unusual music history. That history includes the birth of popular music in America. In addition, the Hall of Fame highlights the contributions of Mississippi's many successful musicians of all genres throughout the state's history.

Our Slogan: *Mississippi, birthplace of America's music.* The blues was born in the Delta; country music with the father of country music, Jimmie Rodgers; and rock-n-roll with Ike Turner, Jackie Brenston and Blind Roosevelt Graves All forms of American music came from one of these roots.

Music Heritage Restaurant and Museum at the Jackson-Evers International Airport

For several years, the Mississippi Musicians Hall of Fame had been looking for a platform to showcase this state's musical heritage and musicians.

"It was almost to the point that I was willing to use a restroom wall for a wall of fame," said Dr. Jim Brewer, founder and chairman of the board.

In 1995, Brewer assembled a group of arts and music experts to discuss creating a music hall of fame. They all agreed it should be done. Since then five inductions, several talent searches, many music industry seminars, two CDs, a book, a blues map, and a music sites map have been produced. Attention for these activities has come from as far away as Great Britain, Canada, and Mexico, not to mention from all across the United States. Several magazines and newspapers including Rolling Stone magazine, have mentioned the organization.

The Mississippi Musicians Hall of Fame recently moved into the Jackson-Evers International Airport's main restaurant and features museum-like exhibits of Mississippi musicians. The restaurant houses a stage suitable for live music. Major displays feature Elvis Presley, Robert Johnson, Jimmie Rodgers, William Grant Still, as well as many other great Mississippi musicians.

"What we want to show is the wide range of Mississippi music and musicians from all genres," Brewer said. "We have a great and unique story to tell."

The HMS Host company, a major supplier of food and beverages for airports, spent more than

\$1.4 million on the renovation of the facility and is sponsoring the Mississippi Musicians Hall of Fame in that location. No public funds were used in the project.

"This is almost better than a museum, when you consider that almost 2 million people go through the Jackson-Evers International Airport every year. Few, if any, museums in Mississippi have that kind of exposure," Brewer said.

Inductions

After five very successful induction ceremonies, the Mississippi Musicians Hall of Fame planned an even larger event built on the theme, Mississippi, Birthplace of America's Music. This three-day ceremony took place in Vicksburg in 2007 and included four concerts. Over 100 Mississippi artists performed during that time. In the past, entertainment lineup has included greats such as Marty Stuart, James Blackwood, Mississippi Mass Choir, Guy Hovis, Nanette Workman, the Jackson Southernaires, the Canton Spirituals, Hank Cochran, and the "original" Rolling Stones. Mrs. Pat Fordice, former first lady of Mississippi, also took part on the program. The Jackson State Jazz Ensemble with Dr. Russell Thomas and the USM Jazz Ensemble directed by Larry Panella have entertained and served as house bands. The inductions have even caught the attention of the national press, including Rolling Stone and Guitar magazines.

Leontyne Price said of her induction at the first ceremony, "This award is made more important by the fact that it is from home, where my career started."

Price's brother, General George Price, said, "The event was superb in every way."

James Blackwood said, "I felt highly honored to be allowed a part in the function...It was a great tribute to my deceased brothers and me."

The Mississippi Musicians Hall of Fame is dedicated to honoring this state's great musical heritage and musicians. During recent inductions, 75 great Mississippi musicians were inducted. Five of those have since passed away knowing that their home state loved and recognized their musical contributions. In the future, hundreds more will be inducted. There is no end to the number of talented and successful Mississippi musicians.

More recently, inductions have been held in the hometowns of the inductees. This give an opportunity for local communities to honor their acclaimed artists.

Publications

Book

Mississippi Musicians Hall of Fame - Legendary Musicians Whose Art Has Changed the World

This 176-page, illustrated book contains information on more than 200 great Mississippi musicians. All musical genres are covered from gospel to country and classical to jazz. With cover notes from Leontyne Price, Pat Fordice, and James Blackwood, the Mississippi Musicians Hall of Fame book is filled with information about well-known as well as behind-the-scenes musicians with roots in Mississippi. It contains documentation of the musicians from Mississippi

whose art has changed the world.

Legendary Musicians Whose Art Has Changed the World CD

In addition to the book, a CD is available that offers a sampling of the state's great musical heritage.

Artists include:

Charlie Patton

Jimmie Rodgers

Leake County Revelers

James Blackwood and the Blackwood Brothers

International Sweethearts of Swing

Skeets McWilliams

Mundell Lowe and Lloyd Wells

Little Milton

Dee Barton

Mississippi Mass Choir

Quail Ridge Press published the book, and Malaco Records produced the CD for the Mississippi Musicians Hall of Fame. All proceeds benefit the Mississippi Musicians Hall of Fame, enabling it to continue their salute to the legends and legacy that are Mississippi music.

Free Teachers' Guides Help Teach About Mississippi Music and Musicians

Supplemental teachers' guides are available for the fourth and ninth grades. The guides show in game format how to use the book, map, and CD to teach students about their heritage of Mississippi music. The guides have been used in other grades as high as junior college. Approved by the Mississippi State Department of Education and partially funded by the Mississippi Arts Commission, the guides can also be downloaded from the Hall of Fame's site at www.msmusic.org.

These materials are currently used in more than 60 schools across the state.

Mississippi Blues Musicians Map

A four-color, poster-size (21" x 34") map is available showing more than 300 Mississippi blues artists and their birthplaces. By far the most popular item sold by the Mississippi Musicians Hall of Fame, the map has been ordered from places all across the world.

Talent Searches - Got Talent?

There is an ever-growing movement today for aspiring musicians who want to hit it big in show business. All over the country, in large and small communities, musicians are taking part in talent contests. They want to be discovered by an agent, get a recording contract, and perform professionally. TV programs like American Idol and Street Talent Search have created enormous interest. The Mississippi Musicians Hall of Fame did its part by holding statewide talent searches. Talent show judge Norbert Putnam says, "I continue to be amazed by the broad scope of talent in

Mississippi. In the span of one day we witnessed everything from rock to blues, country to gospel, classical to folk . . .and none without merit. When I looked at my hastily scribbled notes later that night, I counted seven young names that may, in the not-too-distant future, bring even more honor to our already rich musical culture."

Putnam should know because he has performed in more than 10,000 recordings with artists like Elvis, the Beatles, Jimmy Buffett, Chet Atkins, Al Hirt, Henry Mancini, and hundreds more. Talent show judge Marty Gamblin said, "In my 30 years in the entertainment business, I've had numerous discussions with industry friends from throughout the country over which state has made the greatest contribution to music history. While Texas, Oklahoma, Alabama, and others have a lot to brag about, I don't think anyone comes close when you think about the overall contributions to every genre of music that the great state of Mississippi has made. What a great week for the state with the opening of the Mississippi Musicians Hall of Fame at the airport and the talent contest and seminar! The Hall of Fame pays tribute to those who have found their place in musical history and have paved the way for the incredible performers from six to 47 years of age, who we had the opportunity to hear during the talent contest. The talented artists who participated in the contest and seminar serves notice that Mississippi's contributions to the music industry are far from over."

Gamblin managed the Glen Campbell office in Nashville, which signed Alan Jackson, among many others, and had recordings by Charley Pride, Barbara Mandrell, Roger Williams, and Johnny Mathis, to name a few.

According to Boyce Christopher, manager of the talent search, one winner has recorded three demos and is working with a Nashville producer to find two songs for an audition with a major record company, RCA. Another contestant, who was not even in the winner's circle, has performed and recorded in Nashville. Yet another contestant recorded a single with Junction Records Studio and sang at the Nashville Palace. Promoters who attended the tryouts are approaching other winning and non-winning contestants.

Music Industry Seminars

For several years, the Hall of Fame held music industry seminars in connection with its induction ceremonies. A nationally recognized panel addressed such issues as contracts, agents, song selection, business realities, and how to get started in the music business.

The panel members helped in the careers of such great musicians as Reba McEntire, Roger Miller, Jerry Lee Lewis, *NSYNC, Ray Charles, Michael Jackson, Willie Nelson, Barbara Streisand, Glen Campbell, Alan Jackson, and the list goes on and on.

Who was the panel? Marty Gamblin, Joe Mansfield, Lance Bass, Shelby Kennedy, Jerry Mannery, Norbert Putnam, and Jerry Fuller. This group of distinguished experts, through the Hall of Fame's Music Industry Seminar, has helped musicians get auditions with record companies, understand what is expected from aspiring musicians, gain knowledge of the legal aspects of

recording contracts, and know specific performance requirements.

Gamblin, was the host of the panel of experts, has an extensive background in the music industry. He worked with the Glen Campbell Enterprises for 20 years and opened the Glen Campbell Music office in Nashville in 1983. There he signed Alan Jackson. Gamblin worked with such greats as Barbara Mandrell, Charley Pride, Dionne Warwick and Andy Williams. Under his leadership, GC Music had over 16 #1 records in 10 years including ASCAP's Song of the Year awards for Don't Rock the Jukebox and Chattahoochee.

Kennedy has had songs recorded by Ray Charles, Mel McDaniel and Reba McEntire with the hit single, "I'm A Survivor." Kennedy worked for Millhouse and Sheddhouse Music, ASCAP, and became director of A&R at Lyric Street Records in 1997. He brings artist to the label and helps them select material for their projects.

Mansfield's career includes vice-president of merchandising at CBS in New York, vice-president of marketing for Columbia Records, vice-president for RCA Records in New York, and Capitol Records. He worked with such stars as Tanya Tucker, Lee Greenwood, Garth Brooks, Kenny Rogers, Willie Nelson, Billy Joel, Barbara Streisand, Neil Diamond, Paul McCartney, and many others.

Fuller has written hits for Ricky Nelson, Gary Puckett & The Union Gap, Reba McEntire, John Conlee, Al Wilson, Tom Jones, and many others. As a producer, he has been responsible for such chart successes as O.C. Smith's "Little Green Apples," Gary Puckett & The Union Gap's "Young Girl," Mark Lindsay's "Arizona," The Knickerbockers' "Lies," and Collin Raye's "Love Me," to name a few. He has had over 40 top-10 hits with 28 going Gold/Platinum.

Bass of *NSYNC is a world-renown performer and youth talent judge. Recently he has judged several talent contests on national TV. He has had personal experience in producing young talent. He was born in Laurel and grew up Clinton, MS.

Putnam, who performed with over 10,000 great musicians including Elvis and The Beatles, gave advice to participants.

Mannery, executive director of the Mississippi Mass Choir and associated with Malaco, gave his views on what record companies want from artists.

Mississippi Music Sites Map for Cultural Tourism

The Hall of Fame produced the Mississippi Music Sites Map, which lists more than 130 of the state's historic music-related sites. Tourists, travelers, and school children can use the map to visit places that depict Mississippi's rich music heritage. Partly funded by the Department of Tourism, the map covers sites including all genres of music statewide. From Leontyne Price's home in Laurel to the alleged grave sites of Robert Johnson, the official state map gives directions to the world of music in Mississippi.

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The Mississippi Musicians Hall of Fame is a 501-c-3 (non-profit) corporation and charity

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