

The Blues ... Texas Style. WHEN HOUSTON HAD THE BLUES Now on Major VOD Streaming Platforms

Soulful Documentary Celebrates the Often-Overlooked Houston Music Community That Left a Unique + Indelible Mark on American Music

LOS ANGELES, CA, UNITED STATES, September 26, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Houston's early and indelible mark on American music and the blues—often overlooked despite its rich history—is celebrated in the soulful, feature-length documentary, "When Houston Had the Blues."

Featuring Dianna Greenleaf, C.J. Chenier, Billy Gibbons, Big Mama Thornton, Bobby "Blue" Bland, Lightnin' Hopkins and more iconic artists, the film is now available on major streaming VOD platforms, including iTunes, Amazon, Apple TV and Tubi.

While Houston may not come to most people's minds as a major "music city" like Memphis, Chicago or New Orleans, it has a legacy that few other cities can match. Years before Elvis hit the charts with "Hound Dog," it was originally recorded by Houston's Big Mama Thornton (arguably the defining version). And long before Motown, Houston was home to one of the most successful Black music empires in the country.

Featuring an extensive collection of photos from the '40s and '50s and vintage/contemporary performances by Bobby "Blue" Bland, Chic "Juke Boy" Bonner, Charles Brown, Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown, Jewel Brown, C.J. Chenier, Arnett Cobb, Albert Collins, Dianna Greenleaf, Lightnin' Hopkins, Albert King, Freddie King, Trudy Lynn, David "Guitar Shorty" Kearney, Willie Mae "Big Mama" Thornton, Katie Webster aka The Swamp Boogie Queen, Don Wilkerson and more.

With a unique timber and flavor unlike any other town in America, even other Texan cities,



When Houston Had the Blues - Poster

Houston's blues scene—ranging from “gut bucket” to highly sophisticated—has long been a melting pot of music, influenced by salsa, tejano, cajun, zydeco (then known as la-la), jazz, country and, later, rock ‘n’ roll.

Houston was home of the influential Duke-Peacock record label and recording studios (1949 - 1973, when it was sold to ABC Dunhill Records) and to dozens of blues clubs located in the Third and Fifth Wards, including The Eldorado Ballroom, The Bronze Peacock, The Big Easy, Club Matinee, Etta's Lounge, The Silver Slipper and The Palladium Ballroom, to name a few ... all “jump for joy” places where the Black community dressed to be seen and the city's high-energy blues performances were noted for dominant guitar riffs (versus the piano-dominated music of other music cities) and big, bold horn sections, led by saxophone.



Hollimon, Gosey & Brown (James Fraher Photography)

“

The filmmakers have given breath to a world that shouldn't be forgotten, in many cases recording some of the final interviews granted by artists who are no longer with us ... lively and ribald.”

Chris Vogner, Houston Chronicle

Peacock Records launched with artist Gatemouth Brown, going on to be the recording label of Little Richard, Big Mama Thornton, Bobby “Blue” Bland and Junior Parker, among many more iconic artists (merging with Duke Records in 1952). Ray Charles, James Brown, and B.B. King came to the city to find band members.

Recollecting the Houston music scene in interviews are: Vocalist Jewel Brown, who sang with Louis Armstrong; C.J. Chenier, the Crown Prince of Zydeco, son of Clifton Chenier; American music historian/preservationist Lizette Cobb, daughter of blues great Arnett Cobb; saxophonist Grady Gaines, leader of the The Texas Upsetters; award-

winning ZZ Top guitarist and vocalist Billy Gibbons; singer/songwriter Dianna Greenleaf, winner of the Koko Taylor Award at the 2014 Blues Music Awards; singer/songwriter and minister Dr. Mable John; David “Guitar Shorty” Kearny, Last of the Traveling Blues Men; singer/songwriter Trudy Lynn, whose most-recent album, Royal Oaks Blues Café, hit #1 on the Billboard charts in

2023; musician, producer and songwriter Carla Olson of The Textones; vintage interviews with the iconic Willie Mae "Big Mama" Thornton; Grammy-winning singer/songwriter Billy Vera; and Betty and Jerry Williams, daughter and son-in-law of Katie Webster.



At the famed El Dorado Club

Also sharing personal insights are: Guitarist and singer Jake Andrews; Grady Gaines and Mother Earth guitarist John Andrews; singer, songwriter and musician Marica Ball; Kimberly Callegari and Deidre Handy, granddaughters of Katie Webster; writer-producer Bill Bentley; bassist, vocalist and composer Armando Compean; music historian Jim Dawson; Eric Demmer, bandleader and saxophonist for Gatemouth Brown; The Dells and Patti Labelle drummer Clifton "Fou Fou" Eddie; Rod Evans, co-author, I've Been Out There: On the Road With Legends of Rock 'n' Roll; Howard Harris, director of jazz studies at Texas Southern University; Liberty Hall co-owner Lynda Herrera; guitarist and bandleader Milton Hopkins; renowned harmonica player Steve Krase; guitarist Rick Lee, bandleader of The Night Owls; Grammy-winning Texas legend Augie Meyers; musician/producer Moogstar; guitarist/producer David Murray; Houston DJ/producer James "The Blues Hound" Nagel; KPFT Radio host/producer Nuri Nuri; Al Jarreau and White Trash drummer Willie Ornelas; producer and bass player Guy Schwartz; Hammond Scott, co-founder of Black Top Records; blues harpman Sonny Boy Terry; Grammy-winning producer and vocalist Steve Tyrell; songwriter, singer and producer Jerry Williams aka Swamp Dogg and Roger Wood author of Down in Houston and Texas Zydeco.

Other noted Houston blues artists and local legends celebrated in the film:

Marie Adams, John Andrews, Marcia Ball, Carolyn Blanchard, Tony Braunagel, Charles Brown, Texas Johnny Brown, Pee Wee Crayton (Rockdale, TX), Carol Fran, Henry Hayes, Joe Hinton, Milton Hopkins, Joe Hughes, Illinois Jacquet, Evelyn Johnson, Milt Larkin, Rick Lee and The Night Owls, Trudy Lynn, Joe Medwick, Tom McLendon, Augie Meyers, Amos Milburn, David "Fathead" Newman, Carla Olson, Willie Ornelas, Johnny Otis, Calvin Owens, Junior Parker, Billy Preston, Big Walter Price, Don Robey, Joe Scott, Big Robert Smith, Sly Stone (Denton, TX), Steve Tyrell, Teddy "Cry Cry" Reynolds, T-Bone Walker, The Texas Tenors, Little Joe Washington, Johnny "Guitar" Watson, Don Wilkerson, Hop Wilson and Roger Wood.

From [PhotoBooth Productions](#), "When Houston Had the Blues" is directed by [Alan Swyer](#), award-winning producer and director of "Beisbol," "Spiritual Revolution," "Time of Fear" and "Baywatch." Executive producer is Houston native and eighth generation Texan, [Drew Barnett-Hamilton](#) ("Reversing the Mississippi," "For All Mankind," "The Book of Boba Fett").

LOGLINE: Houston's early and indelible mark on American music and the blues—often overlooked despite its rich history—is celebrated in this soulful, feature-length documentary.

Documentary/Music. Not Rated. Running Time: 157 Minutes.

REVIEW LINK AVAILABLE BY REQUEST.

FULL PHOTO SELECTION, CLIPS & OTHER MEDIA MATERIALS:

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/vi9e5hzqz0dmolmrkdd3b/h?rlkey=k3vbbg9gx485hx1x1wshygmgn&dl=0>

INTERVIEWS AVAILABLE WITH:

Diunna Greenleaf, CJ Chenier, Director Alan Swyer + Producer Drew Barnett-Hamilton

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