

MUSIC

Blues artists bring 'songs everybody loves' to festival stage

By [Jada Ojii](#), Daily Memphian

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J-Wonn performs at the 2022 Memphis Tri-State Blues Festival. (Credit: Landers Center)

A local blues music event will celebrate a major milestone.

The 20th Tri-State Blues Festival will take place at the Landers Center in Southaven on Saturday, Aug. 19.

This year's festival is also part of the "Blues Is Alright Tour," which has stops in Tallahassee, Florida; Raleigh, North Carolina; Baltimore; and Tupelo.

Music Fest blues tent back on Beale, where it began

Calvin Richardson, J-Wonn, Bobby Rush, Tucka, King George and Chick Rodgers are among the blues musicians who will take the Tri-State Blues Festival stage.

Kim Terrell, director of DeSoto County Tourism, said the event is an “excellent” draw to the city, with visitors coming from Memphis, as well as surrounding and outside areas.

“People really look forward to it, and they know it’s going to be happening in the middle of August. So, they look for it,” she said, adding that attendees also contribute to economic impact via spending with hotels, restaurants and local shopping venues.

About 5,000 attendees are expected at this year’s Tri-State Blues Festival.

“We’d love for the crowd to escape reality for the hours they are attending the concert because they are dancing, singing and just enjoying the performers on stage,” said Patricia Butler, senior vice president of marketing for the Blues Is Alright Tour.

Memphis in May is looking for a new location

The festival isn’t just entertainment, according to Terrell. It’s also part of the area’s history.

“(The Tri-State Blues Festival) honors all of our blues history that we have going on here, those who were born here, those who are buried here and those that we have blues markers for,” Terrell said.

The state celebrates dozens of musicians with its Mississippi Blues Trail, which has markers recognizing a range of artists who got their start there, including Bo Diddley, Elvis Presley, Muddy Waters and Howlin’ Wolf.

Baton Rouge, Louisiana-based performer Pokey Bear is among the festival performers.

2023 Memphis Tri-State Blues Festival lineup. (Credit: Landers Center)

On what attendees can expect from his set, Pokey Bear said, “I’m bringing a lot of new stuff ... I got some new songs that’s coming out now, and my album drops next month. So I’m going to start doing some of the new stuff ... But, of course, I’m still going to do the songs everybody loves. I just want to show them another image of me.”

“I enjoy myself every time I go to Southaven. We always enjoy ourselves,” he said about visiting the “top of Mississippi.”

Doors will open for the Tri-State Blues Festival at Saturday, Aug. 19 at 5:30 p.m., with performances starting at 6:30 p.m. Tickets can be purchased online via the [Ticketmaster](#), with prices starting at \$51.

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