

Art & Soul/AfroComicCon 2023

Sunday, September 17, 2023 ▪ Downtown Oakland

ARTISTS BIOS – Victor McElhaney Memorial Clay Street Stage

Located on the south end of Clay @ 12th Street, the Victor McElhaney Memorial Stage is dedicated to the son of former Oakland City Councilmember Lynette Gibson McElhaney and her husband Clarence. Victor was tragically killed at age 21 during a robbery in Los Angeles where he was a senior at the University of Southern California's Thornton School of Music.

West Coast Blues Society

The West Coast Blues Society recognizes blues music and its cultural value as an Indigenous American art form. WCBS is dedicated to the preservation and promotion of Blues, Jazz, Rhythm and Blues and Gospel music as American folk music. WCBS raises awareness and ensures these art forms will not be lost through workshops, lectures, public performances and educational programs and activities.

The West Coast Blue Society **Caravan of All Stars** is a powerhouse revue put together to showcase some of the unsung heroes of West Coast Blues. The Caravan has a loyal following due to their high-profile performances at Bill Graham Presents New Orleans by the Bay, California Music Awards, AT&T San Jose Jazz Festival, Portland Waterfront Blues Festival, Monterey Bay Blues Festival, command performance for President Bill Clinton. The Caravan has opened for and performed with Bobby Rush, Betty Wright, Etta James, Gladys Knight, The O'Jays, Robert Cray, Al Green, Bonnie Raitt, The Whispers, BB King, Latimore, Buddy Guy, Booker T and the MG's, Willie Nelson, and Chaka Khan just to name a few. The Caravan of Allstars were the first artists to perform and raise funds in Thailand for the tsunami survivors. The Caravan has released two CDs on 50/50 Records. The band consists of Ronnie Stewart, lead guitar; Robert "Hollywood" Jenkins, rhythm guitar; Dalhart Johnson, bass guitar; Johnny Ramos, keyboards; David "Stix" Boyette and Danielle Wamsley on drums; Carl Green, Phillip Reynolds, and James Nelson, the "Sweet Meat Horn Section." Featured vocalists include Wylie Trass, Terrible Tom Bowden, Willie G, Tommy Nunnally, and Karl Bracy.

WCBS FEATURED VOCALISTS:

At the age of 14, **Wylie Trass** started singing doo wop in Berkeley on street corners, recreation centers and singing gospel in church. In 1957 he sang with groups such as The Holidays, The Five Warriors, and a Gospel group called The Five Disciples who the group changed their name to "The Four Rivers" and started singing rock and roll. They recorded for Septor Records of New York City, recording their biggest song "I Confess". The group worked with various artists including The Olympics, Ike and Tina Turner, Jimmy McCracklin, Johnny Taylor, Johnny Morissette, The Sharelles, Gary U.S. Bond, Bobby Bland, Marvin Gaye, T Bone Walker, Lowell Folsom, ZZ Hill, and local Bay Area artists. Wylie has tour and/or appeared at different venues with such people as The Isley Brothers, Joe Simon, The Stylistics, The Five Star Steps, Gene Knight, Harold Melvin and The Blue Notes, Junior Walker, The Ohio Players, B.B. King, Billy Paul, The Detroit Emeralds, and Vernon Garrett to name a few. Wylie is one of the true R&B crooners and his vocals leave the audience spellbound.

"Terrible Tom" Bowden comes from a very popular musical family. Tom started his music career in Oakland, CA in 1948 at the Lincoln Theatre on 7th Street as a singer in a talent show. He performed Mule Train by Frankie Lane. By the early 50's, Tom was harmonizing with vocal groups singing doo wop. By the 60's he was singing in some of the top clubs in California. He has worked at Big Al's, and The Condor Club working with Mr. Swim, Bobby Freeman, and Wally Cox. Tom soon moved to the Los Angeles music scene and was an instant hit. Tom was the first black to perform on La Cienega Blvd. at the Apartment Club with his band, LTD

with Jeffrey Osborne on drums. The Whiskey a Go-Go loved Otis Redding and after his death, asked Terrible Tom to perform. Tom is the only person alive who can sing like the late great Otis Redding. Tom has the energy, the look, the style, and the soulful voice. Tom shared the stage with Ray Charles, Count Bassie, the Four Tops, Etta James, Aretha Franklin, B.B. King, Temptations, Marvin Gaye, Wilson Pickett, Jackie Wilson, and Sam & Dave. Terrible Tom sat in for Dave, so it was Sam & Tom at the Sportsman Club where they sang When Something Is Wrong with My Baby. At one point Tom's backup band was a group of singers who became known as Bloodstone. Tom was Stevie Wonder's driver and bodyguard and worked with Shorty Long who made the hit Function at the Junction.

Tommy Nunnely started his singing career in the clubs on Black Diamond Street in Pittsburg, California. Black Diamond Street's entertainment district was equal to Oakland's 7th Street's entertainment district. Tommy has opened for Lowell Folsom, The Whispers, Bobby Blue Bland, and a host of other great blues legends. He sang with Rosie Gaines whose claim to fame came from performing with Prince. He was the lead singer with Pacific Brass & Electric, a successful 1970s R&B band. His recording debut came while performing with Hot Ice. Rage Records Label, a subsidiary of Columbia Records, recorded the album where he sang most of the songs. In 1976 he recorded with Total Eclipse on Shelter Records. Shelter Records artists also include Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers, Leon Russell, The Gap Band and Joe Cocker. Tommy went on to do other studio work and is currently singing with the Caravan of Allstars.

Willie G is from Hallsville, Texas and has been on the music scene for over 40 years. When in the U.S. Air Force he helped put together a group that was called The Capitols who made one of the most popular dance songs of R&B ever. Cool Jerk is still being played on the air. Willie G is known for his stage show, his dancing and bringing the audience to their feet dancing to his show. He also possesses a great mid-range baritone voice that is made for the blues. His show is a don't miss!

Karl Bracy has been singing for forty years and is most proud of the time he performed with Otis Williams and Melvin Franklin of the Temptations in 1990. During that time he toured with them in Reno, Vegas, and Japan. Karl has performed at numerous festivals and fairs around the state and also shared the stage with Chaka Kahn. He is one of the most dynamic vocalists in recent years and possesses the ability to sing any style of blues, R&B, or love ballads with ease. There is nothing he can't do on the mike. If you love high energy and dancing to music, then don't miss Mr. Karl Bracy. His talent was noticed by the West Coast Blues Society, and he was voted the R&B Vocalist of the Year by the West Coast Blues Hall & Fame & Awards Show in 2012. Karl has spent a lot of time in the studio, recording over 10 CD's. Karl was born and raised in Vallejo, California; a blues town that has produced some of the most outstanding blues, R&B and soul bands over the years. Karl is carrying on Vallejo's musical tradition of Sly & the Family Stone, ConFunkShun, and E-40 just to name a few.

Gospel Hour

Produced by Sandra Hunter

Hosted by Dr. Pastor Bo Jackson and J-Red

LB & Friends – Bay Area native Leonard Bailey began his music career at an early age, singing and directing local choirs. He has performed with the legendary Edwin "Oh Happy Day" Hawkins, Bishop Walter Hawkins, and Lady Tramaine Hawkins. Leonard started LB & Friends six years ago and has performed all over the Bay Area. As a recording artist, Leonard has a few CDs topping both the R&B and gospel charts.

Joshua Carter is a Gospel/Soul singer with a multi-octave range. He began singing at the tender age of three in his church choir (Evangelistic Outreach Church) and honed his skills in his early teens traveling with the Encinal Voices of Gospel. Through his calling in ministry, Joshua has shared his gift at several churches, performed for

the Golden State Warriors, and accompanied Grammy®- nominated artists such as Goapele, Dave Hollister of the hit R&B Group Blackstreet, Syleena Johnson, and Ledisi.

Mary Williams – Oakland native Mary Williams was born into a musical family. Her singing started at the young age of 3. Over the years she has directed choirs, and performed features, background vocals, and stage plays. She currently attends Word Assembly and is a worship leader at churches across the Bay Area. Stay tuned for more music coming soon from Mary Williams!

Oakland Public Conservatory of Music presents Black Girls Play & Afterschool Jazz Ensemble (an OPC/SFJAZZ Education partnership)

Black Girls Play (BGP) is a holistic program combining music education, intergenerational mentorship, entrepreneurship, and leadership development for Black girls, gender-expansive youth, and young women ages 11 - 24 who aspire to have careers as professional musicians or other occupations in the music industry. The BGP curriculum exposes participants to the ecosystem in which a musical artist thrives. It includes an array of activities that support the development of the skills and self-confidence needed to excel as creative and innovative leaders in the field of music performance, leadership, and entrepreneurship.

SEE IT. BE IT. <https://opcclasses.squarespace.com/black-girls-play>

OPC-SFJAZZ Afterschool Jazz

SFJAZZ Education and the Oakland Public Conservatory of Music (OPC) identify, and address goals related to issues of ethnic and gender equity and access to jazz education. This partnership serves to strengthen and sustain educational opportunities for middle and high school musicians of color in the Oakland community and provide essential training for these students to excel in jazz. <https://www.sfjazz.org/education/schools-and-partnerships/>

