



Celebrating Two Special Blues Festivals

Every year, the Blues Foundation presents Keeping the Blues Alive (KBA) awards to both an international and a U.S. blues festival, in recognition of their significant contributions to the blues community. This year, honors went to the Cahors Blues Festival and the Chenango Blues Festival.

CAHORS BLUES FESTIVAL

Founded in 1982 by Gérard Tertre, the Cahors Blues Festival is the oldest blues festival in France. Tens of thousands of people from all over Europe are attracted every July to Cahors, France, for the festival's free afternoon concerts, evening main stage concerts, and "blues in the city" evening in which Cahors' sidewalk cafes and restaurants host blues performances, giving Cahors the look of a town in the Mississippi Delta. Not only does the festival feature renowned Delta bluesmen and Memphis artists, but it also reveals little-known musicians to the public through its talent competition. Organized and implemented by thousands of passionate and enthusiastic volunteers over the past 30+ years, the festival is deeply dedicated to promoting the culture and further development of the blues.

In 2006, Robert Mauriès became the festival's president and CEO to continue Tertre's vision. In 2014, Cahors was granted a Mississippi Trail Marker, the second in Europe. Johnny Winter's last performance was on the Cahors Blues Festival stage in 2014 and a year later, Mauriès inaugurated a street of Cahors in his name to commemorate the artist. In 2015, the European Blues Union awarded Mauriès and the Cahors Blues Festival with the Behind The Stage European Award. And now in 2016, the Cahors Blues Festival is honored to receive the Keeping the Blues Alive award.

This year's festival is July 12th-16th and features artists including Shakura S'Aida, Vintage Trouble, Taj Mahal, Eric Bibb and JJ Milteau, Sugaray Rayford, Gaelle Buswel and The JB's – The Original James Brown Band featuring Martha High. For more information, visit www.cahorsbluesfestival.com or find them on Facebook!



Robert Mauriès (center), President and CEO of the Cahors Blues Festival, celebrates their KBA award, joined here by Blues Foundation's Barbara Newman and Paul Benjamin. Photo by James Vessel

CHENANGO BLUES FESTIVAL

The Chenango Blues Festival in Norwich, NY, is a non-profit event run entirely by a group of volunteers committed to presenting music "by fans, for fans." What began as an afternoon event with four bands has evolved into a two-day festival drawing artists and fans from around the country to the beautiful Chenango valley to enjoy world class musicians, great food and craft vendors, children's activities and on-site camping.

This year, the 24th Annual Chenango Blues Festival kicks off with a free concert on Friday, August 19th. Headliner Davina and the Vagabonds, a show-stopping band playing music rooted in early 20th century blues and jazz, will be preceded by young British guitar slinger, Laurence Jones. Saturday will feature nine bands on two stages with artists such as Canned Heat, Carolyn Wonderland, Curtis Salgado and more.

A unique feature of the festival is their tent stage, where many performers play acoustic style. One act you won't want to miss is the Northwest roots music duo Ben Hunter and Joe Seamons, winners of the 2016 International Blues Challenge Solo/Duo division.

The Chenango Blues Festival is something of a throwback – operating without paid staff or profit motive, it's about as different from the mega music events as you can get. It's friendly, inexpensive and everything about it is comfortable. The family-friendly vibe has helped attract a great group of attendees whose networking has largely fueled the event's growth over the years. "By fans, for fans" is a street that happily runs both ways.

Full information on this year's festival can be found at www.chenangobluesfest.org, or look them up on Facebook. They would love to see you this August to help them celebrate this year's Keeping the Blues Alive Award! 🎵



Fans flock to the beautiful site of the Chenango Blues Festival to enjoy a wide variety of artists. Photo courtesy Chenango Blues Festival