

W.C. HANDY MUSIC FESTIVAL HEADLINERS

1982 – Dizzy Gillespie
1983 – Roberta Flack & Manhattan Transfer
1984 – Carrie Smith
1985 – Carrie Smith
1986 – Cleveland Eaton Trio
1987 – Mike Shepherd & Friends
1988 – Nancy Wilson
1989 – Ann Hampton Calloway
1990 – Jimmy Smith
1991 – Ramsey Lewis Trio
1992 – Diane Schuur
1993 – Billy Taylor Trio
1994 – Diane Reeves
1995 – Phil Woods Quintet
1996 – The Great Guitars: Charlie Byrd, Herb Ellis, Mundell Lowe
1997 – Hank Crawford & Jimmy McGriff
1998 – Freddy Cole
1999 – Little Milton
2000 – Percy Sledge
2001 – Bobby “Blue” Bland
2002 – Roy Ayers & the Legends of Jazz with Handy AllStars
2003 – Clarence Carter
2004 – Legends of Jazz with Handy AllStars
2005 – Ellis Marsalis

Note: The Handy Allstars are made up nationally and internationally known artists with a wealth of talent and musical experience who come home to Handy each year from all over the United States to play together in the Shoals area throughout Festival week. When they get together, it is difficult to believe that the only time these artists really have an opportunity to play together is during Festival Week, a wonderful testament to their abilities. Many have played with internationally known stars, and are very well respected in the music arena, both by other artists, and the listeners who enjoy and purchase their music. MPS is honored to present to the Shoals some of the best musicians in the world. We refer to them as our *crème de la crème* musicians. They vary from year to year, but have included Rick Bell, John Blount, James Fowler, Donnie Fritts, Laszlo Gardony, Bill Goodwin, Tim Goodwin, Ike Harris, Sonny Harris, Holly Hofmann, Hilary Jones, Gary Lamb, Howard Lamb, Mundell Lowe, Gary Motley, Johnny O’Neal, Jack Pearson, Chuck Redd, Robert Redd, Mike Shepherd, Denise Thimes, Neal Starkey, Ken Watters, Lloyd Wells, Tom Wolfe.

While this list does not include all of our Allstars, Handy Allstar Bio Briefs give an idea as to the caliber of musicians presented by the W.C. Handy Music Festival.

- Rick Bell (Saxophone) has had a career as a film animator and jazz musician, beginning his career as a member of the Auburn Knights Orchestra and is a charter member of Rod Henley's Hotlanta Jazz Singers.
- Donnie Fritts (Keyboard, Songwriter) was the keyboard player for two decades for Kris Kristofferson, appeared in three Sam Peckinpah movies and will appear in a special tribute to Ray Charles featuring one of the many songs he has written, "We Had It All."
- Bill Goodwin (Drums) has worked with Stan Getz, George Shearing, Gerry Mulligan, Manhattan Transfer, June Christy as well as being a charter member of the Phil Woods Quintet.
- Tim Goodwin (Bass), a member of the faculty of the Jazz Studies Program at the University of Memphis (TN), has performed with the Department of Defense Goodwill Ambassador Program.
- Ike Harris (Bass) has performed professionally with Boots Randolph, Floyd Cramer, Danny Davis and on the General Jackson Riverboat.
- Sonny Harris (Drums) attended Auburn University (AL) and has been playing professionally since he was 15 and began with the Joe Keracher Band in Alabama.
- Holly Hofmann (Flute) is a graduate of the Cleveland Institute of Music and the University of North Colorado and has worked with Mundell Lowe, James Moody, Slide Hampton and others.
- Gary Lamb (Vocal, Trumpet, Flute) has performed as a trumpeter with Johnny Mathis, Four Tops and others, as a vocalist with the US Naval Academy Band, and at the Piccolo Spoleto Festival.
- Howard Lamb (Trombone) was lead trombone for the US Navy's Commodores and has performed with Nancy Wilson, Herb Ellis, and is the leader of the Memphis Jazz Orchestra.
- Mundell Lowe (Guitar, Composer, Arranger) has worked with Billie Holiday, Charlie Parker, Charles Mingus, extensively in film and television and has been inducted into the Mississippi Music Hall of Fame.
- Gary Motley (Keyboard) teaches Jazz Improvisation at Emory University in Atlanta, GA and has been a featured artist on Marian McPartland's NPR series "Piano Jazz".
- Johnny O'Neal (Keyboard) has worked with Dizzy Gillespie, Milt Jackson, Sara Vaughn, Wynton Marsalis, Art Blakey and others
- Jack Pearson (Guitar) has worked with Delbert McClinton, Gregg Allman, Jimmy Hall, Lee Roy Parnell and others, and has worked extensively as a studio musician
- Chuck Redd (Vibraphone) has toured with Dr. Billy Taylor, Marian McPartland, Ray Brown, Mel Torme and others, and works regularly with his brother, pianist Robert Redd.
- Robert Redd (Keyboard) a familiar face amongst artists performing at the White House, performs often with his brother, percussionist Chuck Redd, in the Washington DC area, is on faculty at Montgomery College in Rockville MD and has been a member of the Keter Betts Quartet and the Charlie Byrd Trio.
- Mike Shepherd (Drums, Composer), retired as instructor at the Armed Forces School of Music, Norfolk VA, has performed with the Navy Commodores, Maynard Ferguson, Clark Terry, etc.

- Denise Thimes (Vocal) Actress and vocalist is a regular part of the St. Louis, MO music and theatre scene and has appeared in film and television.
- Neal Starkey (Bass) has recorded with Herbie Hancock, Freddie Hubbard, the CBS Allstars, performed with Barney Kessel, Kenny Barron, and the Georgia State University Faculty Jazztet.
- Ken Watters (Trumpet) studied at the University of North Texas, the Manhattan School of Music, was first place winner of the International Trumpet Guilds Jazz Improvisation Competition, and has performed with Herbie Mann, Frank Sinatra, Clark Terry and others.
- Lloyd Wells (Guitar, Composer, Arranger) was creative director for Opryland USA and was guitarist for Sesame Street, Electric Company, Ed Sullivan and Johnny Carson shows and has been inducted into the Mississippi Music Hall of Fame.
- Tom Wolfe (Guitar) is Director of Jazz Studies at the University of Alabama. He is a teacher and clinician as well as performer throughout the region.