

## BOBB 2009

ATTENTION ALL BLUES BAND! If you want a shot at the big time, then I have got an offer for you. We are looking for the best Blues bands in Alabama to compete in the 2009 Battle of Blues Bands contest. This event will be held at Rogue Tavern on Sunday, July 26<sup>th</sup> at 2pm. There will be two first place winners that day; one in the band category and there will also be a solo/duo winner. These winners will be eligible to compete in the Blues Foundation's International Blues Challenge in Memphis in early 2010. This showcase includes artists from the 150+ Blues societies around the world. The winner of the IBC will get a lot of sponsorship opportunities and will be booked for some of the most prestigious Blues festivals around the country. Many of these artists have used this to hit the national Blues scene.

The winners will be booked for paying gigs, playing for MCBS events. They will also receive a stipend from the MCBS to help offset traveling costs to Memphis. The first place winner of the band competition this year will headline one of the Phelan Park shows in the fall. The second place winner will open up for Blues Ball in December. The third place winner will play for our birthday party in January. The fourth place winner will play for the Alabama Jazz & Blues Federation Labor Day show in Montgomery. The solo/duo winner and second place finisher will each play at a future MCBS gigs in the next year.

Now that we know what the Holy Grail is, let's talk about the rules and eligibility. Here are the rules:

- At least 1 member of your band MUST be a member of the MCBS. The best value you will get is to join the MCBS with a band membership.
- Bands must have all members from the state of Alabama.
- You will be required to play a 20-minute set and will be penalized for going over your allotted time. You will not be penalized for playing less than 20 minutes. There will be a timekeeper present that will give you a 1-minute warning.
- You must check your equipment in to the stage manager before the competition begins.
- We will supply a high quality drum kit and bass rig for you. You can change out the snare, kick pedal and cymbals.

The Blues Foundation has changed their scoring criteria this year and we are going to follow in their footsteps to make our competition as close to their model as possible. Below are the rules from the Blues Foundation regarding how each act is judged.

1. Blues Content: Everyone has his or her own interpretation of what is and is not Blues. Thus, any given five-judge panel will include members with varying opinions of Blues, covering the spectrum of Blues whenever possible, from the most traditional to soul/blues and rock/blues. Bands should pick material carefully. At the Memphis semi-finals and finals, the judges are Blues professionals, not a bar crowd, and are likely to be

unimpressed with song selections that are uninspired. (Call this--with all due respect to Sir Mack Rice and Wilson Pickett--the "no Mustang Sally rule.")

2. Vocals: The act's vocal skills.

3. Talent: The act's instrumental skills.

4. Originality: Original work is encouraged. Cover tunes are allowed but playing the recorded rendition lick by lick is discouraged; will not be looked upon favorably by the judges; and will be reflected in scoring.

5. Stage Presence: Over the years, the quality of talent has risen so dramatically that we no longer consider this an "amateur" competition. Most contestants have performed on stage enough to know that they are not simply playing music, but putting on a show. This category rates how "sellable" a band may be.

To reflect the relative importance of each category in the success of a band, a band's score in each category is weighted. Raw scores for Blues Content is multiplied by four, Talent and Vocals by three and Originality and Stage Presence are multiplied by two. The total in each category represents the Weighted Score for that category. Total possible weighted score is 140.

#### Penalty Points

A Band is penalized one point from its Total Weighted Score (see below) for each ten seconds that it runs overtime. There is no penalty for using less than the allotted time. At the producing organization's discretion, a policy of penalty for excessive time loading-in and out will also be applied.

The weighted multipliers will be Blues content (4); talent (3); vocals (3); originality (2) and stage presence (2).

### **SCORING SYSTEM FOR JUDGES**

Here is the scoring procedure for Battle of Blue Bands and the 2010 IBC.

1. All categories and weightings are as previously stated.

2. Each judge will indicate his or her Raw Score (a whole number between 1 and 10) in each category and turn that information over to the scorekeeper.

-1-3 Typical of a beginning blues band.

-4-5 Typical of a local weekend band.

-6-7 Typical of an advanced local band but not yet ready to headline a major blues club.

-8-9 Typical of the quality of blues artists who headline major clubs.

-10 Typical of those who play the main stage at major festivals such as Chicago or Arkansas Blues and Heritage.

3. The scorekeeper will multiply the Raw Score in each category by the established multiplier to get each judge's Weighted Score in each category for each act.
4. The Weighted Scores from each category for an act are added together to determine the acts' Total Weighted Score for each judge.
5. Any penalty points will then be deducted to obtain the act's Net Weighted Score for each judge.

It is at this point that we determine our winner. The act with the highest number of points is the wins the competition. The IBC uses an advanced scoring system from here that we are not going to employ. We feel that the system we are using will suffice to pick the best act.

I mentioned earlier at least one member of your band must be a member of the MCBS. I want to point out that a full band membership is a great deal for you. It costs \$50 to join with up to 5 members and everybody will get the PDF version of Blues news every month for the next year. You also get a quarter page ad in the newsletter (\$50 value) to promote your band, whether it be advertising a gig or just doing a bio article to tell people who you are. You have 12 months to use it before the offer expires. Also, if you are a member, the entry fee for BOBB is \$50. It is \$75 for non-member bands to compete. What are you waiting for? It is a great bargain just to join plus you have the opportunity to further your Blues career.

We are excited to hold the event at a new venue called Rogue Tavern, which has just opened up on the North side. One of the owners is Rick Carter, who is a well-established musician in the 'Ham. He said the sound system at the club is very high end, so the sound for the contest will be awesome. This will be the first event we have ever produced at this fine establishment, which is located at 2312 2nd Ave North? Come on down and see the best Blues this state has to offer.

The cost to see this great competition is only \$5. I promise it will be the best President Lincoln you have spent in a long time.

Let the Battle begin! Please contact Paul Walters at [MCBSPREZ@BELLSOUTH.NET](mailto:MCBSPREZ@BELLSOUTH.NET) or call me at 205-968-9155 for complete details and to answer any questions you may have. The Battle of Blues Bands application can also be found on our web site at [www.magiccityblues.org](http://www.magiccityblues.org).