

Media Information 18th Blues Festival Basel, April 04 - 09 April, 2017, Volkshaus Basel, www.bluesbasel.ch

From the 4th to the 9th of April 2017, the 18th Blues Festival Basel promises six days of high voltage and concentrated energy with yet another diversified program at the Volkshaus Basel.

As in previous years, in its 18th rendition the Blues Festival Basel once again presents a wide range of blues and related music styles; for example country music, which is known to be based on Bluegrass music. The Bluegrass has its roots in the southern Appalachians; and when a born and bred Appalachian picks up his instrument and begins to sing about the concerns and needs of the poor, rural population of the region, it becomes clear why the bluegrass is sometimes referred to as the Blues of the White Man.

It is therefore only logical to invite country musician Sarah Jory to the Blues Festival (Wednesday, April 5, 2017). The British singer and guitarist not only masters her E-guitar to perfection, she also has made a name for herself by her virtuoso performance on the rarely heard pedal steel guitar with its sonorous and expressive sound.

That same evening, the Boogie Woogie, a special Blues style played exclusively on the piano, will get a chance to make an impact. British pianist Ben Waters as well as German key artist Axel Zwingenberger are considered masters of the Boogie Woogie with its fast and accentuated bass riffs and shifted enhancements of the right hand.

Many consider Soul as the groomed counterpart to the rather down-to-earth Blues. American singer Tasha Taylor feels at home in both worlds. Tasha is the daughter of the great soul singer Johnny Taylor, who has made his career with the legendary Soul-Label Stax Records. Apart from her radiant voice, Tasha has above all inherited her father's emotional fire with which she causes her songs to blaze (Thursday, April 6, 2017).

American singer Dana Fuchs also celebrates the soul, which she skilfully mixes with rock elements. She expresses her talent especially when she interprets ballads, charging them with sultry passion with her dark, smoky voice. Born in 1976 and raised in Florida, teenager Dana collected her first musical experiences in a gospel choir, which left unmistakable traces in her singing, followed by an intensive career, in which she also enjoyed success in musicals and on television (Friday, April 7, 2017).

As in previous years, the Blues Rock is again strongly represented, by British artists Aynsley Lister, Ben Poole, Laurence Jones and Scotsman Stevie Nimmo, each guitarist being an exceptionally gifted soloist in his own right. These four musical personalities together on stage promise a concert of superlatives (Thursday, April 6, 2017).

Born in 1976 in Wales and raised in Toronto, Canada, guitarist, singer and songwriter Philip Sayce is also an uncompromising blues rocker. Still a boy, he came into contact with Jimi Hendrix and Steve Ray Vaughan. He embarked on his career as a 16-year-old on the stages of Toronto, followed by many years

as a professional musician, and touring America and Europe with various bands, at the same time acquiring great musical skills (Friday, April 7, 2017). The last evening of the Festival (Saturday, April 8, 2017) is traditionally dedicated to the Chicago Blues. After last year's Promo Blues Night winner, guitarist and singer Dominic Schoemaker has opened the evening with his new band, Basel born saxophonist Sam Burckhardt, who has been living in Chicago for over thirty years, presents singer and guitarist Oscar Wilson, singer Othella Dallas as well as The Joel Paterson Band. Oscar Wilson grew up on the south side of Chicago and has taught himself to play the guitar as a youth. Wilson's passion is the classic Chicago blues of the 1940s and 1950s. Singer Othella Dallas was born in Memphis 91 years ago and now lives in Binningen near Basel. When the Grand Old Lady of Jazz and Blues enters the stage, she thrives as she did 60 years ago, when she performed with jazz legends like Nat King Cole, and Duke Ellington dedicated two songs to her. In turn, Joel Paterson is one of the busiest guitarists in the Chicago music scene. He and his Trio have proved their skills several times over the past years at the Blues Festival Basel.

Last but not least, there are the five Swiss bands who made it to the Promo Blues Night on Tuesday April 4, 2017: Bluescream from the Aargau region, The Blues Mystery from the Valais, Coffee n' Blues from Basel, Estella Benedetti & Michael Giger Band from Lucerne and Guido Melone & The Down Town Blues Band from Basel-Land. These bands will be presented to the jury of the Swiss Blues Award and the audience, and the winners' band may take part in the main program at the Blues Festival Basel in 2018.

The 18th Blues Festival Basel 2017 is rounded up by the Blues Brunch on Sunday morning with the Festival Allstars. While the audience enjoys tasty food, all the festival musicians still staying in the city will gather on stage for the great final jam session at the Union Hall of the Volkshaus Basel.

BFB, Rolf "Vanny" De Marchi
