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## Memphis Music Hall of Fame Announces 2019 Class of Legendary Inductees

*Tina Turner, Steve Cropper, Charlie Musselwhite Among Eight Icons Announced at  
Lafayette's Muic Room Press Conference*

**Memphis, TN...** It's the eighth year that the Memphis Music Hall of Fame honors the city's world-changing musical legends and, in doing so, The Hall announced eight new Inductees. The 2019 class, which will bring the current Memphis Music Hall of Fame roster to 84 members, was unveiled today at a press conference held at the iconic Lafayette's Music Room in Overton Square. A full house cheered as each member of the 2019 class was revealed, which included icons of rock, blues, soul, opera and jazz. This year, seven of the eight Inductees announced are living or include living musicians, with many still recording and/or performing.

The 2019 Inductees into the Memphis Music Hall of Fame include the "Queen of Rock 'n' Roll," **Tina Turner**. Turner currently lives in Switzerland and her new Broadway production, "Tina: The Tina Turner Musical" will open in New York City the night before the Memphis Music Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony. Other Inductees include **Steve Cropper**, Stax writer and performer who is considered by many to be the greatest soul guitarist in history, **Charlie Musselwhite**, the blues harmonica wizard with 20 albums, 7 Grammys and 33 Blues Music Awards, and **Dee Dee Bridgewater**, whose four decade jazz and Broadway career includes both Grammy and Tony Awards. Also inducted will be **The Memphis Boys**, the legendary session band of American Sound Studios who helped American produce and release more hit records than any other Memphis studio, joined by Inductee **Dan Penn**, the songwriter and producer who also elevated American with hits written for everyone from Janis Joplin, Conway Twitty and Percy Sledge to The Box Tops, Ronnie Milsap, Dionne Warwick and others. Hi Records' ace songwriter and performer **Don Bryant**, who penned over 150 singles for Hi, will join his wife, Ann Peebles as a Hall of Fame Inductee. "The First Lady of Grand Opera" and "Queen of the Concert Stage," operatic soprano Madame **Florence Cole Talbert McCleave**, whose career began over 100 years ago completes the list of 2019 Memphis Music Hall of Fame Inductees during Memphis' bicentennial year.

The Memphis Music Hall of Fame is administered by the Smithsonian-developed Memphis Rock 'n' Soul Museum. In 2012 it began paying tribute to many of the greatest musical legends of all time who helped make Memphis, Tennessee the most diverse and most significant world-changing city on the planet. Each year, Inductees are selected through a balloting process among a local and nationally recognized Nominating Committee of prestigious music experts. This year's music-packed, star-studded Induction Ceremony will be held on Friday, November 8, 2019 at the Cannon Center for the Performing Arts. Tickets went on sale following the Inductee announcement.

“This is how a music city celebrates its bicentennial, especially when the city’s very backbone is built on its music and its planet-changing musicians,” said John Doyle, Executive Director of the Memphis Rock ‘n’ Soul and Memphis Music Hall of Fame. “Going back well over a century, the city and these Inductees established a road map for modern music around the globe. It’s evident again this year as the Memphis Music Hall of Fame celebrates legends of rock, pop, soul, blues, jazz, even opera.”

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## About The 2019 Inductees

**Dee Dee Bridgewater** ... Over a four decade career, Memphis-born Dee Dee Bridgewater has earned three Grammy awards including Best Jazz Vocal Album and her double-Grammy winning tribute album to Ella Fitzgerald. She’s performed with such jazz greats as Max Roach and Dizzie Gillespie. On the New York stage, she received a “Best Actress” Lawrence Olivier nomination for her lead role as Billy Holiday, and won a Tony Award as Glinda in *The Wiz*. For her latest album, “Memphis... Yes, I’m Ready,” Bridgewater worked with Memphis saxophonist Kirk Whalum, recorded the album at Willie Mitchell’s Royal Studios, and included remakes of Memphis greats including B.B. King, Bobby Blue Bland, Ann Peebles, The Staple Singers, Carla Thomas and Al Green.

**Don Bryant** ... A performer in his own right, Bryant became the ace songwriter at Willie Mitchell’s Hi Records, penning hits for Ann Peebles, Otis Clay, Syl Johnson, O.V. Wright, Al Green and others. Born in Memphis, and performing since age 5, Bryant became leading man of The Four Kings, the front band for Willie Mitchell, while still a teenager. He released a solo album in 1969, but became best known as staff writer for Hi Records. He frequently wrote or co-write hits for Ann Peebles, including “99 Pounds,” “Do I Need You,” and the huge hit “I Can’t Stand the Rain.” In total, Bryant has been credited on over 150 titles. Performing since age 5, Bryant returned to recording, performing and touring at age 75 with the release of his 2017 album, “Don’t Give Up on Love.”

**Steve Cropper** ... “The Colonel,” Steve Cropper is probably the best soul guitarist in the world. He co-founded the band, The Royal Spades which became The Mar-Keys. He became A&R man for Stax Records, as well as house guitarist and a founding member of the Stax house band, Booker T. & The MGs. He also became songwriter for many of Stax Records’ biggest hits, including co-writing “Knock On Wood,” “Soul Man,” and “(Sitting On) The Dock of the Bay.” John Lennon and Paul McCartney once planned to work with Cropper and record in Memphis, but manager Brian Epstein cancelled the session. Steve Cropper was named “One of the Greatest Guitarists of All Time” by Rolling Stone Magazine and, by Britain’s Mojo Magazine, “The Greatest Living Guitar Player” ... earned throughout a career which spans over a half century.

**Florence Cole Talbert McCleave** ... Madame Florence Cole Talbert McCleave, the operatic soprano titled “The First Lady of Grand Opera” by the National Negro Opera Guild, paved a path in the classical world for black musicians like Marian Anderson and Leontyne Price. She was one of the first African-American women and opera singer to perform abroad and receive critical acclaim, being the first black woman in Europe to play the title role in Verdi’s *Aida* in 1927. Known as “The Queen of the Concert Stage,” she operated an operatic studio in Memphis, co-founded the Memphis Music Association, and brought world-famous operatic icons to perform for students at LeMoyné Owen College. Opera Memphis recently announced the McCleave Project, which includes the McCleave Fellowship for singers, directors, and coaches of color, and to better engage with communities of color in Memphis and to diversify their audience.

**The Memphis Boys** ... Gene Chrisman, Tommy Cogbill, Reggie Young, Bobby Wood and Bobby Emmons served as the legendary house band at Memphis’ American Sound Studio. Between 1964 to 1972, they worked with legendary producer Lincoln “Chips” Moman and charted in various different genres, jazz, R&B, soul, country and pop. They recorded 122 hits with some of the greatest artists of any generation... Aretha, Neil Diamond,

Dusty Springfield, Elvis Presley and many others. Hits included “The Letter,” “Dark End of the Street,” “Do Right Woman,” “Breakfast in Bed,” “You Were Always on My Mind,” and many others. At one time, 25 slots on the Billboard Top 100 charts featured American’s iconic Memphis Boys! Today, Gene Chrisman and Bobby Wood are the only remaining members, but continue to perform.

**Charlie Musselwhite** ... He moved with his musical family to Memphis at age 3, and grew to experience rockabilly, western swing, electric blues and the birth of rock ‘n’ roll. He eventually earned the nickname Memphis Charlie. He played for tips around Memphis’ blues bars and forged a lifelong friendship with John Lee Hooker. He cut his musical teeth alongside Muddy Waters, Howlin’ Wolf, Hooker and many other legends during the blues revival of the 1960s. Throughout fifty years of non-stop touring and the recording of 20 albums, the harmonica wizard, Charlie Musselwhite also served as guest performer on many other albums, including those for Bonnie Raitt, INXS, Tom Waits and many others. The winner of seven Grammy Awards and 33 Blues Music Awards, Musselwhite creates trailblazing music while remaining firmly rooted in the blues.

**Dan Penn** ... Songwriter, producer and performer who has been a force behind Southern soul music for over 30 years, churning out hits for both Memphis’ American Sound Studios and Muscle Shoals’ Fame Studios. His first hit song was “Is a Bluebird Blue?” written for Conway Twitty, followed by hits, many written at American Sound, for The Box Tops, Aretha, Solomon Burke, Ronnie Milsap, James Carr, Janis Joplin, Dionne Warwick, Percy Sledge, Bobby Blue Bland, and on and on and on. Many of Penn’s early co-writing collaborations were with iconic songwriter Spooner Oldham. After leaving American Studio, Penn opened his own studio, Beautiful Sounds, in Memphis and recorded his solo debut Nobody’s Fool in 1972. Today he lives in Nashville, and continues to perform and produce.

**Tina Turner** ... “The Queen of Rock ‘n’ Roll,” emerged from Nutbush, Tennessee as Anna Mae Bullock, the daughter of sharecroppers, raised by grandparents, and rose to prominence with Ike Turner’s Kings of Rhythm before recording hits with Ike like “River Deep, Mountain High,” “Proud Mary,” and her self-penned hit “Nutbush City Limits.” Following a turbulent marriage to Ike, she fled the marriage in 1976 with just 36 cents and a Mobile gasoline credit card. She rose to become one of the biggest solo musical icons of American music. After over 60 years in the entertainment business, Tina Turner has sold 200 million records worldwide, received the Kennedy Center Honors, won 12 Grammy Awards in rock, pop and R&B, and has sold more concert tickets than any other female performer in history. On November 7, the night before the 2019 Induction Ceremony, her musical, “Tina: The Tina Turner Musical” opens on Broadway in New York City.