

# They're singing the blues ...and lovin' it

## It's the Bull Durham Blues Festival

By CHARLES MARSHALL  
Assistant Editor

**F**or two years, St. Joseph's Historic Foundation has hosted an annual blues festival which has quickly drawn national attention and earned a reputation as an extraordinary display of proven blues stars with a hearty dose of local and regional talents.

The Third Annual Bull Durham Blues Festival, co-presented by the Durham Bulls, gets underway Friday, September 14, at the Durham Athletic Park and will run through Saturday, September 15. Sponsors this year include the Music Loft, the Flying Burrito and the city of Durham, as well as media sponsors such as FOX 107.1 and The Independent Weekly.

Durham, the blues capital of North Carolina, has patented its own guitar-oriented brand of Carolina folk, riding both the foot-stomping and the sad and sentimental sides of blues. The first festival, in 1988, drew more than 3,000 people, despite rainy weather, proving its instant popularity and the region's thirst for big-time blues.

Some of the growing regional tal-

ents appearing at this year's festival include Charlotte native Nappy Brown and Johnston County female blues fab, Algia Mae Brown. Another area favorite is the talented Carter Minor and the Scott Sawyer Blues Band, a regular attraction at Pyewacket Cafe in Chapel Hill.

Some of the bigger names performing this year are Lonnie Brooks, Johnny Copeland, Hank Crawford and Saffire — the Uppity Blues Women.

Lonnie Brooks, touted as "one of the most exciting talents in blues" by The Washington Post, is noted for his high-powered, energetic stage shows and his eclectic blend of blues. He twists Chicago- and New Orleans-style blues with sizzling old-fashioned rock'n'roll for an uncanny combination of swamp boogie and heavily-charged, rock-based blues. New Orleans-style blues is a distinctively Southern, swamp-boogie type of blues that originated in the bayou and helped propel the more popular zydeco, cajun blues. Chicago R&B is a harder, more soulful type of jazz-oriented blues that has a more urban backstreet sound. Don't miss Brooks dancing the night away. He performs

Friday night from 11-12 p.m.

Johnny Copeland is a smoother performer who prefers longer solos as he delivers a southwestern, Texas-style blues rhythms. Copeland has also made his mark internationally as the first blues musician ever to venture into Africa, as well as penetrate into Eastern Europe. Copeland, with fellow blues greats Robert Cray and Albert Collins, was awarded a Grammy in 1986 for the *Showdown!* album, which sold more than 100,000 copies. This effort put Copeland in the national spotlight and he has been embraced by the blues scene inside and outside of the U.S. Copeland's showtime is 11 p.m. on Saturday.

Saffire, the Uppity Blues Women, is a trio whose acoustic performances have been known to whet the appetites of many fans outside of the blues circuit. Hailing from Virginia, these women quit previous jobs to entertain on the road using saucy, spicy blues pumped with big vocals. Their self-titled debut release is on Alligator records and explores various themes from a more feminine point of view. These Uppity Women will go on stage at 8:45 p.m. Saturday night. Hank Crawford sports a jazz slant

with a brassier sound, composed especially of horns. His rhythm'n'blues talents have enabled him to bring his unique repertoire to the aid of others in the studio, delivering his sound on recordings by the likes of B.B. King and Lou Rawls. In 1958, Crawford hit the big-time R&B circuit when Ray Charles recruited him. Crawford remained on-board Charles' band until 1963. Throughout the 1960s Crawford released a dozen albums. He returned to his traditional horns and R&B sound on "Midnight Rambler" in 1983. Crawford performs at 9:45 p.m. Saturday.

Very rarely do renowned talents in music get together for a weekend "jam." Durham is fortunate to host such a high-powered event and deserves thanks for bringing it to the ears of the Piedmont.

Tickets for the event are \$12 for one day (\$15 at the gate) and \$20 for both days. Both shows last from 7-12 p.m. Children under 12 are admitted free. Advance tickets are available at Record Bar/Tracks at Northgate and South Square Malls, Poindexter Records, the Durham Bulls Box Office, and Schoolkids Records. More info? Call the Blues Festival Hotline at (919) 560-2721.



Hank Crawford does the blues thing Saturday at 9:45 pm



## They know

By RANDY BASINGER  
Arts Coordinator

**T**he blues are back in town. At least that's what Nappy Brown, one of the blues performers who will bring his soulful blues style to Durham Athletic Park for the Third Annual Bull Durham Blues Festival this Friday and Saturday, would say.

"Blues is a wonderful thing," Brown said in a phone interview with the Daily Tar Heel. "Blues can make you happy or blues can make you sad. It tells a story, and if you listen to it, it may distract you from your problems."

Brown, born in Charlotte, N.C., began singing gospel with the Golden Bells as a child and later joined the Selah Jubilee Singers, who also recorded rhythm'n'blues as The Larks. But he made his big breakthrough with the Heavenly Lights, when he landed a recording contract with the Savoy label. It was there he wrote and performed "Night Time is The Right Time," which went on to become a major hit for Ray Charles in 1959.

"It felt good — especially in my pocket," Brown said with a laugh. "It meant a lot to me that he (Ray Charles) would record it."

The blues have started to pick up around the Triangle area, said Brown. "Blues never dies," he said. "It is always understanding. Teenagers are getting into the blues because they didn't get to hear it. Many people are rediscovering the blues."

"Whites didn't get into the clubs to hear the blues in the past," Brown

said. "The blues are all truth."

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## Culture and education blues

**P**art of the money raised at the Bull Durham Blues Festival this year will provide additional funding for the development of a historic Durham church as a cultural institute promoting understanding of the African-American experience in the U.S.

St. Joseph's Historic Foundation, Inc., is in the process of developing the Hayti Heritage Center as a facility for both cultural and educational programs in areas such as theater, music, dance, literacy, community economics and African-American history.

Located in the St. Joseph's AME (African Methodist Episcopal) Church building on Fayetteville Street, the center's first phase of restoration is scheduled for completion by January, 1991. Money from this year's blues festival will be used in the second phase of restoration and development.

"We are in the process of finishing the educational part of the center," said Fred Williams, a member of the foundation's board of directors. "Part of the funds from the blues festival will be used for the sanctuary [of the church building], which will be developed as a performance space for dance, music... whatever."

The foundation is aiming for a 1991 completion date in honor of the church building's 100th anniversary, Williams said.

Wyatt Closs, the project's director of development, said the completed education wing will house classrooms, two art galleries and both dance and art studios, as well as the administrative offices for the foundation.

"The second phase, we hope, will be done during 1991 for the 100th anniversary," Closs said. "We're currently trying to raise about two million dollars for capital purposes... Our plans are definitely contingent on whether we're able to raise the money."

Both Williams and Closs said this is the first year of the blues festival that the Durham Arts Council has not been a co-presenter.

"The Arts Council has decided to bow out because of its own financial woes," Closs said. "That places the financial onus on us."

Williams said: "I think that we were a part of a multi-group effort when the festival began. Since that time, I think we are the only body that has continued our association with the blues festival." The foundation has been a co-presenter of the festival the three years it has been presented.

The Durham Bulls are replacing the Arts Council as co-presenters this year.

Closs said, "It [the blues festival] is an excellent example of the kind of program we'd like to be doing on a regular basis and can do, once we get the center."

—Alisa DeMao



Saffire — the Uppity Blues Women, play Saturday at 8:45 pm