

Press Release: Uptown Music Collective to present the 9th Annual Blues-A-Thon

Who: The Uptown Music Collective w/ Special Guest Bob Margolin

What: 9th Annual Blues-A-Thon

When: June 2nd at 6pm through June 3rd at 7pm, 2017

Where: June First Friday (420 Pine St.), Uptown Music Collective, Mid-Town Landing, Michael Ross Event Center (144 West Third St.), & Pine Square (343 Pine Street)

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The Uptown Music Collective's yearly Blues-A-Thon is coming up quick, and it promises to be the best yet. The 9th annual event will take place on June 2nd & 3rd 2017 and feature performances by the one and only "Steady Rollin'" Bob Margolin, former guitarist with Muddy Waters.

This is also the first Blues -A-Thon event to take place at the Uptown Music Collective's new home in Downtown Williamsport. In celebration of this fresh start, the Collective staff is revamping the traditional event by adding performances at the Pine Square Stage in front of the Brickyard Restaurant and Ale House, and ending the event with a special concert in the Michael Ross Event Center on the 3rd floor of the school's new facility in the Trade and Transit II building. The event will begin at 6pm on Friday, June 2nd on Pine Street as part of Williamsport's First Friday festivities, then move to the Pine Square Stage until 10pm, finishing off day one with overnight jams inside the Uptown Music Collective. On Saturday, June 3rd the festivities will bounce between the Mid-Town Landing stage (behind the Collective) and Pine Square starting at noon. The event will wrap up with a ticketed concert on the Michael Ross Event Center stage.

"We have had the idea of revamping the Blues-A-Thon for a while," says Jared Mondell, Assistant Director of the Uptown Music Collective. "Since our move to downtown, the pieces have started to fall into place. Being able to add the Mid-Town Landing and the Michael Ross Event Center to the event will afford the Collective new opportunities like the concert which will now close out the event. Plus, partnering with our new neighbors at The Brickyard in Pine Square adds another dynamic to bring a really great Blues driven event to Downtown Williamsport."

The Blues-A-Thon, sponsored in part by the Billtown Blues Association and the Brickyard Restaurant and Ale House, is a unique fundraiser that has been held annually since 2009, and is intended to raise money to support the Uptown Music Collective, a nonprofit school of music. "The idea is similar to relay for life, however instead of walking, participants pledge to play the blues for a certain portion of the 24-hour event," says Dave Brumbaugh, Executive Director of the Uptown Music Collective. All participants need to find sponsors to support their efforts with all funds raised from the event going directly to support Uptown Music Collective programs and operations with the greatest need. This year's goal is to raise \$5,000.00 for the Uptown Music Collective.

Through the course of the event, participants explore different styles of blues, from Chicago blues to the rocking blues of Hendrix and Led Zeppelin, with many of the hour or two hour overnight slots acting as workshops on individual playing styles of artists like Stevie Ray Vaughan, Albert King, Muddy Waters, and Howlin' Wolf along the way.

Over the years a key ingredient to the Blues - A - Thon has become the guest artist, sponsored each year by the Billtown Blues Association, to open and close the event. Previous guest performers have included celebrated blues musicians like Kelly Richey (2016), Shawn Holt (2014), Taylor Scott (2013), Dave Keyes (2012), Bob Margolin (2011), and Tas Cru (2010 & 2015). "I am blown away and totally inspired by the energy and talent of the young blues people of the future that I have met here [at the Uptown Music Collective]," said 2012 Blues-A-Thon guest artist, Dave Keyes. "This is the future of blues, right here! The Blues - A - Thon is a concept that belongs in every blues society and community throughout the country."

This year the Collective is excited to welcome back very special guest, Bob Margolin. Margolin will be kicking off the event on Pine St on Friday, as well being featured during the closing event on Saturday. Margolin started playing guitar at the age of 15 and immediately started performing in local rock and blues bands. He was hired by Muddy Waters in 1973. In '76, Muddy brought Margolin with him to San Francisco to perform at The Band's "Last Waltz" concert. Martin Scorsese filmed the concert for the classic film. "As it happened, only one camera was operating during our performance, zooming in or out, and since I was standing right next to Muddy, I was in every shot while he sang a powerful 'Mannish Boy,'" says Margolin. He left Muddy's band in 1980 and formed his own band. Since then Margolin forged his own path though the blues world, playing with greats like Stevie Ray Vaughan, George Thorogood, Johnny Winter, B.B. King, Dr. John, and more. Recently he won two Blues Blast Magazine Awards, one as Best Male Blues Artist, and one for Best Traditional Blues Album for his new album, "My Road."

In addition to Bob Margolin, the event will feature some special guest musicians from the area including Doug McMinn, The River City Blues Band, Gabe Stillman & The Billtown Giants, and more to be announced.

The Uptown Music Collective is committed to providing comprehensive music education to dedicated music students in the Williamsport community and surrounding areas. The school feels strongly about the role of music in creating well-rounded, thoughtful young people, and works to establish characteristics such as self-discipline and personal responsibility in each of its students through healthy habits such as practice and self-control. Uptown Music Collective students consistently perform at high levels not only musically, but also in their respective schools and as valuable members of other community organizations.

In the weeks leading up to the Blues-A-Thon, Uptown Music Collective teachers will be working to prepare their students and instill in them a healthy respect and appreciation for this essential American music form. "The Blues is so important to the evolution of modern music, it is one of the seminal styles from which so much of what is played today comes from," said Brumbaugh.

This year's Blues-A-Thon is sponsored by the Billtown Blues Association and the Brickyard Restaurant and Ale House. Media sponsors include Lamar Advertising, NorthcentralPA.com, as well as WZXR and all of Backyard Broadcasting. The Blues-A-Thon is open to the public throughout the 24 hours. Donations in support of the school from the public will be accepted during the event and on the school's web page via PayPal. For more information on Bob Margolin, visit www.bobmargolin.com. For more information, and the full schedule of Blues-A-Thon events, visit www.uptownmusic.org.