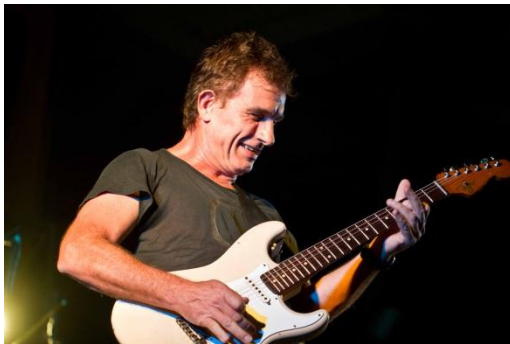


Sunday, May 08, 2011

3RD ANNUAL CAIRNS BLUES FESTIVAL
A MASSIVE DAY OF BLUES FOR MUSIC LOVERS – THE 2011 FESTIVAL IMPRESSES ALL



ERIC BIBB, IAN MOSS, PHIL MANNING, CLAUDE HAY, CHASE THE SUN AND MORE AMAZING BLUES PERFORMERS ROCKED AUDIENCES FOR THE CAIRNS BLUES FESTIVAL ON SATURDAY 7 MAY 2011

With a jam-packed day of entertainment and picture perfect festival weather, the 3rd annual Cairns Blues Festival rocked! The 2011 event, which was held at Fogarty Park on Saturday 7 May, brought some of the biggest names in the national and international blues scene to Far North Queensland, and embraced local talent. The audience built steadily to a 1500-plus strong crowd, with young families taking advantage of the 11am start, and die-hard blues music fans hanging out to the 10pm finish.

Steadily growing year by year, the line-up at the highly anticipated 2011 event included international headliner troubadour Eric Bibb, Australian legend Ian Moss and some of the most promising emerging talent in the likes of Chase the Sun, Claude Hay and Jules Boulton. Mason Rack Band returned after their stunning performance last year, and Phil Manning, who was part of the inaugural event with his band Chain, took to the stage to showcase his solo material. Beloved local legend Johnno reprised his band for the event and other great local acts like Moondog Gypsy Blues, Albatross and The Derringers kicked off the proceedings in style.

Some of the highlights of the 3rd festival included awe-inspiring performances, some phenomenal blues guitar work amongst the talented instrumentalists on the line-up, high energy rockin' performances, and even a reverse strip show. Mason Rack Band, who earned fans with their vibrant performance at last year's festival and 2011 Curtain Raiser, kicked off their set in their underwear, before re-dressing and ramping up the crowd with an exciting onstage percussion battle. Eric Bibb and guest Staffan Astner had audiences eating out of his hand has proved why he is one of the world's most acclaimed blues musicians and Ian Moss finished off the night in true Australian blues-rock style.

Phil Manning was impressed by how the festival had grown in three years and sees a bright future for the event. "It is a great venue, it is a lovely, friendly stress-free festival," Phil says. "I think the thing about this one is that it hasn't got too big, which is really important, however, it has become big enough that it should be able to sustain itself. "



Event manager Pauline Langley agrees and says the festival committee is quick to ensure that the event doesn't expand too quickly and lose the special vibe it has created. "I see it becoming very firmly established," she says. "I don't think it will grow too quickly, and I think that is a good thing, I hope that doesn't happen. I hope that it's gradual. It's a lot of work and it takes a lot of people and we need more people for sure. We certainly need to garner more support, but at the same time, we are hugely grateful for the support that the local Cairns business community does give this festival."

Cairns Blues Festival had already cemented its reputation as a formidable force on the festival scene, and this year was the first instance where the festival was approached by major headline acts who actively applied to be part of the event. Such interest from professional established artists is a credit to the festival organisers and a big indication of the event's longevity. "We do feel that this time the event seems to have established itself – it is a smoother operation, there was a bigger interest from volunteers and fantastic support from the local community," Pauline says. "A program of this calibre in an open air venue doesn't happen that often, and it is great to see people wanting to and continuing to show their support."



This year's line-up was easily the biggest yet, and the committee is already receiving expressions of interest for the 2012 festival, the date of which will be announced in coming weeks. Festival Roadshows for next year's festival will kick off again in the second half of the year and continue through until the 2012 Curtain Raiser.

For more information on Cairns Blues Festival and for future Roadshow event dates, please visit www.cairnsbluefestival.com.au

****** 2011 festival photographs available upon request for media use | Photographs courtesy of Pedlow Photographics [Ryan Pedlow]***