

“A tour de force of horn-fired blues. So tight and so right.” -Billboard

“A masterful combination of jumping, deeply rooted, horn-driven, hard-edged blues and R&B. Utterly hip-shaking.” -Boston Magazine

“Roll up the carpets and invite a fun-loving crowd over for a dance party they’ll never forget. Roomful of Blues will please them every time.” -Living Blues

“Excellent...marvelous wall-to-wall grooves...between the wicked guitar work and the brassy horn section, things never stop swinging.” -USA TODAY

Roomful of Blues, according to *Down Beat* magazine, “is in a class by themselves.” With their masterful combination of jumping, horn-heavy, hard-edged blues and R&B, it’s no wonder why the great Count Basie called them “the hottest blues band I’ve ever heard.” Since 1967, the group’s deeply rooted blend of swing, rock ‘n’ roll, jump, blues and soul has earned it five Grammy Award nominations and a slew of other accolades, including seven Blues Music Awards (with the nod for Blues Band Of The Year in 2005). The band, with a membership that has continued to change and evolve over the years, has always boasted great musicianship featuring a stellar horn section.

With a non-stop performance schedule for almost 40 years, Roomful of Blues has earned critical, popular and radio success and a legion of fans around the globe. Twice, the prestigious *Down Beat* International Critics Poll selected Roomful of Blues as Best Blues Band. Roomful of Blues joined the Alligator Records family with the Grammy-nominated *That’s Right!* in 2003, followed by *Standing Room Only* in 2005. Both CDs received massive amounts of critical and popular praise and earned them hordes of new fans around the world. *Down Beat* described *Standing Room Only* as “bold, brassy and highly danceable jump blues with contemporary energy and sophistication...swings with a vengeance.” Now they’re back with *Raisin’ A Ruckus*, a foot-stomping CD highlighting the intense vocal and instrumental power of the world’s smallest big band.

Even though Roomful of Blues’ lineup has changed over the years, the band has always been one of the tightest, most joyful blues ensembles in the world. Currently an eight-piece unit led by guitarist Chris Vachon, the band has never sounded fresher or stronger. In 2007, singer Dave Howard took over the vocal duties, bringing his gritty and soulful vocals and adding another bright new dimension to their jazzy, jump-blues musical roots. With new members bassist Dima Gorodetsky and drummer Ephraim Lowell and long-time members keyboardist Travis Colby, baritone and tenor saxophonist Mark Earley, tenor and alto saxophonist Rich Lataille (the longest-standing member of the group) and trumpeter Bob Enos, *Raisin’ A Ruckus* swings with ferocity and rocks with urgency and purpose. Moving effortlessly from originals to carefully chosen covers, the expertly executed songs sizzle from start to finish. Roomful of Blues’ winning combination of jump, swing, blues, R&B and soul remains their calling card, as does their ability to fill the dance floor.

Roomful of Blues was born in Westerly, Rhode Island in 1967 when guitarist Duke Robillard and keyboardist Al Copley started a band that played tough, no-holds-barred Chicago blues. They soon began exploring the swinging, jumping blues, R&B and jazz of the 1940s and 1950s, and added a horn section (including Rich Lataille) in 1970. The band’s ability to ignite a sedate crowd into a dancing frenzy solidified their reputation as the best “little big band” in New England and expanded their following into New York and Washington. In 1974, they performed with Count Basie, and a few years later legendary songwriter Doc Pomus helped them land their first record deal. In 1977, Roomful of Blues’ self-titled debut album on Island Records (recently reissued on Hyena Records) brought them to the attention of fans and critics from coast to coast.

Over the years there have been at least 46 Roomful of Blues members, each bringing his or her own unique talent and vision to the mix. When founding member Duke Robillard left the band in 1980, equally talented guitarist Ronnie Earl replaced him. Singer Lou Ann Barton joined the band at this time, sharing vocals with Greg Piccolo. By now the band was touring nationally and attracting bigger and bigger crowds. Roomful recorded the critically acclaimed *Hot Little Mama* for their own Blue Flame label and two successful albums for the Varrick label during the 1980s. In 1994 they released *Dance All Night*, their first featuring guitarist Chris Vachon (who joined the band in 1990) and harpist/vocalist Sugar Ray Norcia. Radio play was increasing, as was the band's stature. Their 1995 album, the Grammy-nominated *Turn It On! Turn It Up!*, was a remarkable mix of big band swing and rock 'n' roll, bringing the band its greatest radio and sales success to date, and giving them credibility with the rock radio audience.

In addition to their band recordings, Roomful of Blues often backed legendary musicians like Jimmy Witherspoon, Jimmy McCracklin, Roy Brown, Joe Turner, Eddie "Cleanhead" Vinson and Earl King—stars of the 1940s and 1950s blues scene, and the very people who created the music that Roomful still keeps vital and alive. Roomful recorded albums with Turner, Vinson and King during the 1980s, and all three recordings received Grammy nominations. They played with rocker Pat Benatar on her 1991 album *True Love*, further establishing Roomful of Blues' reputation as one of the best blues bands in the country. The Roomful Horns backed many other artists as well, including Canadian star Colin James on his double platinum album (in Canada), *Colin James and the Little Big Band*, and Stevie Ray Vaughan on his 1984 *Live At Carnegie Hall* album on Epic.

Over the years Roomful of Blues has played countless gigs and many major festivals, including The San Francisco Blues Festival, The King Biscuit Blues Festival, The Beale Street Music Festival, Blues On The Fox, Illinois Blues Festival, Kansas City Blues Festival, Monterey Blues Festival, Santa Cruz Blues Festival, and overseas at The North Sea Jazz Festival, The Stockholm Jazz Festival, The Montreux Jazz Festival, Notodden Festival and the Belgian Peer Festival. They've gigged with blues stars ranging from B.B. King, Otis Rush and Stevie Ray Vaughan to rockers Eric Clapton and Carlos Santana. The band has toured—as they always have—virtually non-stop, hitting cities from coast to coast, and traveling abroad to Spain, Italy, France, Portugal, Switzerland, Turkey and Russia.

In 2008, Roomful of Blues will once again hit the road hard, bringing their horn—and guitar—fueled music to fans around the world. With their non-stop touring schedule, long-time fans and new converts alike can see for themselves why *The Chicago Sun-Times* said, "This is a band on top of its game, sliding easily from big-band jazz-blues to guitar-drenched urban blues....let the party begin." With *Raisin' A Ruckus*, the party has clearly already started.

DISCOGRAPHY

- 1977 *Roomful of Blues* (Island)
- 1979 *Let's Have A Party* (Antilles)
- 1981 *Hot Little Mama* (Blue Flame)
- 1984 *Dressed Up To Get Messed Up* (Varrick)
- 1987 *Live At Lupo's Heartbreak Hotel* (Varrick)
- 1994 *Dance All Night* (Bullseye Blues)
- 1995 *Turn It On! Turn It Up!* (Bullseye Blues)
- 1997 *Under One Roof* (Bullseye Blues)
- 1997 *Roomful of Christmas* (Bullseye Blues)
- 1998 *There Goes The Neighborhood* (Bullseye Blues)
- 2001 *Watch You When You Go* (Rounder)
- 2002 *Live At The Wolftrap* (Roomtone Records)
- 2003 *That's Right!* (Alligator)
- 2004 *Standing Room Only* (Alligator)

2008 *Raisin' A Ruckus* (Alligator)

COMPILATIONS/REISSUES

1992 *The First Album* (Varrick)

1995 *Hot Little Mama* (Varrick)

1997 *Two Classic Albums*

(reissue of Turner & Vinson albums) (32 Jazz)

1999 *Swingin' & Jumpin'* (32 Jazz)

2000 *The Blues'll Make You Happy, Too* (Rounder)

2002 *Roomful of Blues: The First Album* (Hyena)

WITH OTHERS

1982 *Eddie "Cleanhead" Vinson & Roomful of Blues* (Varrick)

1983 *Big Joe Turner & Roomful of Blues* (Varrick)

1988 Earl King with Roomful of Blues, *Glazed* (Black Top)