

RONNIE BAKER BROOKS

BLUES IN MY DNA



“In Ronnie Baker Brooks’ powerhouse hands, blues-rock never sounded so outrageous. Soul never sounded so delicious. And the blues never sounded so profound...one of today’s top live performers.” —BLUES MUSIC MAGAZINE

“A monster guitarist with an ample supply of technique and passion” —ALLMUSIC

“Ronnie Baker Brooks bristles with energy, inspiration and self-confidence.” —LIVING BLUES

Chicago guitarist, vocalist and songwriter Ronnie Baker Brooks is one of the city’s—and the world’s—most undeniably talented and electrifying bluesmen. Ronnie was born into Chicago blues royalty as the son of legendary multiple GRAMMY Award nominee, Blues Hall Of Famer, and longtime Alligator Records recording star Lonnie Brooks. He is among the few contemporary blues artists who learned his craft directly from many of the genre’s icons, including Albert Collins, B.B. King, Willie Dixon, Koko Taylor and, most significantly, his father. “I’m blessed to have played with and learned from the best. I’m carrying them within me,” he says of all the legends he knew growing up and the journey he’s been on.

With his new Alligator Records debut, *Blues In My DNA*, Ronnie delivers an up-to-the-minute, organic masterpiece. The album, the fifth of his career, is firmly rooted in the blues with Ronnie incorporating his own brand of rock, funk and soul to the mix. “I just play what I feel,” he says. “It’s all from the heart.” Produced by famed studio wizard Jim Gaines (who has produced Santana, Stevie Ray Vaughan, Lonnie Brooks, Luther Allison and many others), *Blues In My DNA* is a career-defining statement from Baker Brooks, with each of the 11 original songs its own chapter in his ever-evolving story.

Blues In My DNA effortlessly moves from the funkified rocker *I’m Feeling You* to the not-quite-sanctified, old-school blues *Robbing Peter To Pay Paul* to the deep Memphis soul ballad *Accept My Love* to the epic, crowd-pleasing, guitar-driven *Stuck On Stupid*. The autobiographical title track, a song Ronnie describes as “a bridge between me and my audience,” is the album’s centerpiece, the passionate guitar solos underlining the lyrics’ story of triumphing over racism, poverty and glass ceilings. “I ain’t complaining,” he sings, “I’m just explaining,” before declaring, “I got love in my blood, the blues in my DNA.”



For Ronnie, the process of writing songs for *Blues In My DNA* was as fun and exciting as playing live. “I love writing as much as performing. I love watching an idea become a song, then a song become something people can relate to, and then sing along with. And I always keep it authentic to myself. Everyone can feel it and be familiar with it. I’m here to build bridges, not walls.”

Ronnie Baker Brooks was born in 1967 in Chicago. He received his first guitar from his famous father at age nine and learned the instrument as he got older, sharing his time between playing basketball and focusing on his music. After high school, he joined his father’s band—as a roadie. He earned his way slowly up the ladder, listening, watching and learning. At one show, Koko Taylor pulled him aside as he was loading the gear into the van and told him, “You learn from your daddy everything you can. And one day, it’ll be up to you to carry the blues forward.”

Lonnie eventually allowed Ronnie to play bass with the band before bringing him on as his full-time second guitarist. Ronnie made his recording debut on Lonnie’s *Live From Chicago: Bayou Lightning Strikes* album in 1988. In 1991, he hit the road as part of The Alligator Records 20th Anniversary Tour band, backing Lonnie, Elvin Bishop, and Katie Webster. Each night, he’d join them, along with Koko Taylor and Lil’ Ed Williams, for unforgettable blues jams.

In the summer of 1993, Ronnie joined Lonnie, Koko and Junior Wells for the B.B. King Blues Festival Tour, traveling the country. He watched King perform again and again. One night after the show, King told Ronnie, “Son, I’m watching you watch me. You learn everything you can from all of us, especially your dad. He’s as good as me or better; we just have different styles.” Ronnie performed with his father for

12 years, gaining valuable experience and sharing stages with artists including Taj Mahal, Eric Clapton, Buddy Guy, and many others. During this time, his guitar skills continued to grow along with his songwriting and performing confidence.

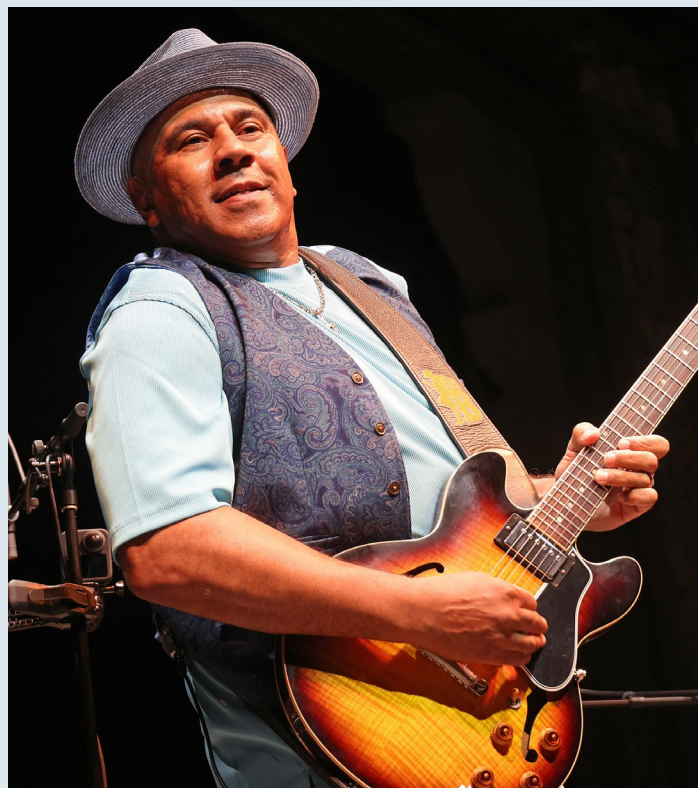
Among the many lessons Ronnie learned growing up was to forge his own identity, to write his own songs, to play his own brand of blues and not to imitate anyone else. Willie Dixon taught him the importance of “delivering” the song, so the people know you believe it. Albert Collins, almost a second father to Ronnie, would say, “Take what you like from what we do and make it you.”

In 1998, when the time was right and with Lonnie’s blessing, Baker Brooks formed his own label, Watchdog Records, and released three solo albums over the next eight years: *Golddigger* in 1998, *Take Me Witcha* in 2001, and *The Torch* in 2006. On all three releases, Ronnie worked with and learned countless studio and production lessons from JellyBean Johnson (Prince, The Time), with positive response to Ronnie’s music coming from Prince himself.

In 2008, Ronnie produced and played on blues legend Eddy Clearwater’s Alligator debut, *West Side Strut*, helping to bring one of his mentors to a new generation of fans. His next solo album, 2017’s, *Times Have Changed*, was produced by drummer Steve Jordan (The Rolling Stones, Robert Cray) and issued on the Provogue label. The UK’s *Record Collector* magazine said, “Baker Brooks plays a heady blend of blues, soul and funk...an upbeat cocktail of guts, groove, stinging guitar work and soulful vocals.” The Blues Foundation has recognized Ronnie’s talent with a total of six Blues Music Award nominations.

Among his many blues and soul mentors and friends, Ronnie has also worked closely with rocker Todd Park Mohr of Big Head Todd & The Monsters. The two friends have written, toured and recorded together, with Mohr and Brooks co-writing *All True Man* for *Blues In My DNA*.

Since he was a teen, Ronnie has toured the world, first with his dad and then leading his own band. He’s built his reputation as a white-hot performer one gig at a time. His eye-popping guitar work, soulful vocals, fireball energy and huge, crowd-pleasing personality keep his fans on the edge of their seats. In addition to performing at both Obama presidential inaugurations, he has played major festivals and concert halls across the U.S., Canada, the UK and Europe, as well as in Brazil and China. He’s appeared at Poland’s Rawa Blues Festival, Spain’s Cazorla Blues Festival, Canada’s Mt. Tremblant Festival, The Tampa Bay Blues Festival, Memphis In May, The North Atlantic Blues Festival, The New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival, and many more. In 2024, Ronnie, along with his friend and label-mate Shemekia Copeland, opened the famous Chicago Blues Festival (the 4th time he’s appeared as a headliner), with a roof-raising performance. Then, four days later, he helped close the festival out—along with Copeland, his guitarist



brother Wayne Baker Brooks and harmonica giant Billy Branch—joining headliner Buddy Guy at Buddy’s request.

Like all the great blues artists before him, Ronnie Baker Brooks has, through hard work, perseverance and gritty determination—along with his prodigious, natural talent and charisma—earned his place in the upper echelons of the blues world. Today, Ronnie Baker Brooks stands tall as a blisteringly innovative guitarist, an endlessly inventive songwriter and an intensely soulful vocalist.

Ronnie Baker Brooks may have been born a blues prince, but he never received any royal treatment. “Dad set me up for today,” Ronnie explains. “He always told me to put the time in, study, practice, get better. I started my music career as his roadie. He wouldn’t let me play onstage with him until I earned it, and until he was certain playing music was what I truly wanted to do. I grew up witnessing and learning from the legends of the blues. I’m excited to continue to create Chicago blues as part of my family legacy and our shared history. I’ll always carry on and represent the blues in everything I do. Dad started the fire, Albert poured the gas on it, and Koko put the grill on.” Now, with *Blues In My DNA*, it’s time to feast.



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