

## A Stony Plain artist's biography



### **Eric Bibb: award-winning roots music artist Eric Bibb sings about *Blues People* on new Stony Plain Records CD, with special guests Taj Mahal, Guy Davis, The Blind Boys of Alabama and Ruthie Foster**

Eric Bibb, one of the highest profile international roots music artists, was raised in New York City by a musical family; his father is noted folk singer Leon Bibb and his uncle was world-famous jazz pianist John Lewis, founding member of the Modern Jazz Quartet. Legendary actor/singer/activist Paul Robeson was Eric's godfather, and other music icons such as Peter Seeger, Odetta and Bob Dylan were known to regularly visit the Bibb household.

Eric was given his first guitar at age seven, and by the time he'd reached 16 was asked by his father to play guitar in the house band for the elder Bibb's local New York City TV talent show. In 1970, Eric Bibb left New York City for Paris, meeting legendary guitarist Mickey Baker, and began to concentrate on playing blues guitar. He later moved to Europe and is now based in Finland, from which he tours extensively both in the U.S. and overseas.

His breakthrough album, *Good Stuff*, was released in 1997 and led to Eric signing to a British label, which in turn released *Me to You*, featuring appearances from some of his personal heroes, among them Pops and Mavis Staples and Taj Mahal.

The album furthered Bibb's international reputation and was followed by tours of the UK, the United States, Canada, France, Sweden and Germany. And so it went through the 90s and the first decade of the new century — he made consistently good records, and built audiences from Stockholm to Sydney, Vancouver to Vienna, Paris to Peoria, New Orleans to Newcastle, and from B.B. King's club in New York to the Bluebird Café in Nashville.

During the course of many album releases over the intervening years, Eric Bibb has won the Blues Music Award as "Acoustic Artist of the Year" and been nominated for a Grammy, as well as multiple additional blues Music Award nominations. In addition to the Grammy-nominated *Shakin' a Tailfeather* children's album (with Taj Mahal, Linda Tillery and the Cultural Heritage Choir), other noted albums included *Friends*, which featured Odetta, Charlie Musselwhite, Guy Davis and Mahal as special guests. Two collaborations with his father (who lives in Vancouver) were *A Family Affair* and *Praising Peace: a Tribute to Paul Robeson*, which Stony Plain released in 2006. More recent was his 2010 *Booker's Guitar*, a tribute to blues pioneer Bukka White, on which he played White's steel-bodied National guitar.

Eric's latest album for Stony Plain Records, one of the world's foremost roots music labels, is *Blues People*, produced by Glen Scott, who also plays several instruments throughout. *Blues People* includes special guest performances by Taj Mahal, Guy Davis, The Blind Boys of Alabama, Ruthie Foster (who Eric has been touring with in recent years), Popa Chubby and a number of other musicians from around the world.

The 15 tracks on *Blues People* include a number of Eric Bibb originals, as well as collaborations with other songwriters, plus songs written by Guy Davis ("Chocolate Man"), Rev. Gary Davis ("I Heard the Angels Singin'") and the traditional, "Needed Time," arranged by Taj Mahal, Eric Bibb and Glen Scott.

The concept of *Blues People* came to Eric Bibb when he was surrounded by his musical friends at the Blues Foundation Awards in Memphis a few years back. It inspired him to create a collection of songs about change and hope, in collaboration with many of his friends in the blues and roots music realm.

"In the introduction to his classic book, *Blues People*, Amiri Baraka (who published it as LeRoi Jones) wrote: 'The path the slave took to 'citizenship' is what I want to look at,'" writes Eric Bibb in the album's liner notes. "That same path, along with its continuation, provided much inspiration for this album called *Blues People*. This record is also a tribute to the tribe of blues troubadours that I'm grateful to be a member of and it features the talents of several friends and heroes of mine. We, who traverse the highways and skyways of the planet playing the music known as blues, have become a rainbow tribe. We hail from many lands and cultures, bonded by our love of this music and the challenge of making it our own. What began in the fields of the southern United States, became a universal treasure, cherished by music lovers the world over.

"My intention with these songs is to focus on some of the history of African Americans, the original blues people, as a reminder of what we've been through and where the music is coming from. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. is one of my greatest heroes. The Civil Rights movement that he is synonymous with is referred to in several songs on this album. I hope these songs will remind us that Dr. King's dream is still a work in progress – we are still not home. May the New Year bring us closer to living that dream."

A four-decade career, 36 albums, countless radio and television shows and non-stop touring have given Eric Bibb a world view that's tempered by curiosity and compassion, and the ability to see himself in other peoples' shoes.

To watch a special video Eric Bibb created to explain the backstory about *Blues People*, visit:  
<http://bit.ly/BluesPeopleVideo>

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