



A Stony Plain Bio:

Kenny 'Blues Boss' Wayne

Inspiration and perspiration. That's what it takes to be a genius. And a blues boss.

Kenny 'Blues Boss' Wayne is living proof. With decades of playing, countless globe-trotting tours and a slate of acclaimed, award-winning albums under the belt of his flamboyant zoot suit, the 74-year-old piano master might be the hardest-working bluesman in show business. And this true original isn't changing his tune on his top-notch 10th album *Inspired By The Blues*.

"I'm not looking for a different path," says the Kelowna-based performer. "I love that jump blues and boogie-woogie. That's where my heart is at. I'm just trying to keep that style alive. That's classic stuff. And I'm at that classic age, so it all works out."

Indeed, it does. *Inspired By The Blues*, out Sept. 28 on Stony Plain Records, finds the Boogie Woogie Hall of Famer applying his deft touch and tremendous talents to another slate of top-notch originals, with the help of special guests like harmonica player Billy Branch, guitarist Duke Robillard and B.B. King's long-time bassist Russell Jackson. With 11 originals — including a tribute to Fats Domino — plus a bonus track of Georgia on My Mind cut live in Mexico, the self-produced set serves as a throwback to '50s rhythm and blues while putting a fresh spin on the genre.

"It's almost like travelling down the same highway over and over," says Wayne of his song writing approach. "What do you see? A lot of it might look familiar, but you can probably find something a little different if you look for it."

If you're looking for variety, *Inspired By The Blues* has plenty to offer. "I Knew I'd Be Playing the Blues" is Wayne's life story set to a 12-bar shuffle. "Start Rockin'" hits the sweet spot between blues, boogie and rock 'n' roll. "How 'Bout That" brings in the funk. The jumping, Louis Jordan-style Jimmy and Johnny is a tale of a love triangle. "Mr. Blueberry Hill" celebrates the slow-rolling style of New Orleans legend Fats Domino. And the harmonica-laced blues of "That Girl Needs Help" was inspired by a news report on troubled youth. "It's kind of a message song," Wayne says. "I usually try to put in a few songs like that. I like to mix it up."

It's an approach he's honed over the course of six decades in music. Born in Spokane but raised in Los Angeles, San Francisco and New Orleans, Wayne was a child prodigy in his minister father's youth choir. Eventually turning from the Lord's work to the Devil's music, he took up the blues, borrowed his nickname from legendary influencer Amos Milburn, got a few fashion tips from Jim Carrey in *The Mask*, and the 'Blues Boss' was born.

He's been large and in charge ever since. Wayne released his first album *Alive & Loose* in 1995. It was followed by *Blues Boss Boogie* in 1998 and four albums for Canadian label Electro-Fi Records: *88th & Jump Street*, the Juno-winning *Let It Loose, Can't Stop Now* and the live *Piano-Rama*. Since joining Stony Plain Records in 2011, Wayne has released *An Old Rock On A Roll*, 2014's *Rollin' With The Blues Boss* and *Jumpin' and Boppin'* in 2016.

In keeping with those energetic titles, Wayne is a man in constant motion. He's built a stellar reputation within Canada and abroad for his colourfully energetic shows, and regularly performs everywhere from Europe and Israel to Russia and South America, selling out 800 to 1,000-seat venues and headlining international festivals.

And the charismatic performer plans to keep boppin' as long as he can. "I'm gonna go until the chariot comes down and opens the door and I jump on," he says. "It's like a friend of mine says: You gotta make the landlord happy."

Spoken like a boss.

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