

Gibson Guitar and Robert Johnson Blues Foundation New Generation Award Contest Accepting Entries

CRYSTAL SPRINGS, MISSISSIPPI -**The Robert Johnson Blues Foundation** is now accepting entries for the **2008 New Generation Award Contest**. The **Gibson Guitar/Robert Johnson New Generation Award** will be presented to the year's most promising young blues musician, as determined by an elite panel of music industry professionals, from the entries received.

The contest is open to all young blues musicians at least 12 years of age, but no older than 18 years of age, as of May 10, 2008. Entries must be on VHS or DVD videotape and be postmarked by March 31, 2008. We must receive the entries by April 4, 2008.

For complete rules and a downloadable application form please visit the Robert Johnson Blues Foundation website at www.robertjohnsonbluesfoundation.org or go to Sonicbids.com.

The winner of the New Generation Award will receive a Gibson "Robert Johnson" edition guitar, a Robert Johnson harmonica, a certificate signed by Claud Johnson (son of Robert Johnson) and an invitation to perform at the **Blues Jam on May 10, 2008** with transportation and lodging for two provided by the Foundation. The Blues Jam is the spring festival sponsored by the Robert Johnson Blues Foundation will be held at Chataugua Park in Crystal Springs, Ms. Scheduled to perform are Honeyboy Edwards, the Muddy Waters Reunion Band and last year's winner, Tyler Bryant.

The family and heirs of blues legend Robert Johnson provide services to all generations of blues artists and to preserve and perpetuate the rich heritage of Delta blues music through the the Robert Johnson Blues Foundation.

The Robert Johnson Blues Festival has provided winners with once in a lifetime performance slots. Past winner, guitar prodigy **Tyler Bryant** of Flowermound, Texas was invited to attend Eric Clapton's Crossroads Guitar Festival. Not only did he have the opportunity to perform, but he got to meet "*Slowhand*" himself. Other past winners have met with award winning industry professionals and been offered key performance slots at a variety of events.

Robert Johnson, "King of the Delta Blues Singers", was born in Hazlehurst, MS in Copeiah County, on May 8, 1911. Crystal Spring, MS is the sister city and host of the Robert Johnson Blues Foundation Spring Festival which commemorates the birth of the Mississippi blues legend. Johnson is one of the most admired and influential Delta blues artists despite his short life and the small number of recordings that he left. His songs, such as "Sweet Home Chicago", "Come on in My Kitchen", and "Crossroad Blues", are blues classics -- played by thousands of blues artists and adapted by rock 'n' roll artists such as the Rolling Stones, Led Zeppelin and Eric Clapton.

Robert Johnson was a gifted singer, guitarist and songwriter whose life story is wrapped in mystery and legend. Only two photographs are known to exist of him and he recorded only 29 songs before his death in 1938 at the age of 27. Many of his contemporaries believed that he met the Devil at a lonely crossroads at midnight and made a deal to sell his soul in return for becoming the greatest blues musician of all time. More likely, he was blessed with enormous talent and spent a lot of time learning from other blues masters and honing his skills. He achieved some success and fame from recordings and performances during his life and was scheduled to perform at the first "Spirituals to Swing" concert at Carnegie Hall when he died. Although his burial place remains uncertain, it is generally accepted that his death was not accidental. Johnson was poisoned by a jealous husband (or girlfriend) while performing at a juke joint near Greenwood, Mississippi and died on August 16, 1938.

Johnson's music lives on through his recordings, which were first released as a compilation by Columbia Records in the 1960's. In 1990 a complete two-CD box set of all his recordings (every take of every song) was released and over a million sets were sold. His music also lives on through the many blues musicians alive today -- old and young, throughout the United States and around the world.

The Robert Johnson Blues Foundation hopes to ensure that Robert Johnson's legacy and the delta blues heritage continue into the future by recognizing and assisting young blues musicians through the New Generation Award.

More information on the foundation and the festivals and events sponsored by the foundation is available at the website: www.robertjohnsonbluesfoundation.org.