

# GREENBELT News Review

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## "The Blues Man" Turner To Play at Blues Festival

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by Shirl Hayes

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Clarence "The Blues Man" Turner will be featured June 18 at the second Annual Café Blues Festival at Roosevelt Center. A musician for the last 30 years, Turner credits his father for getting him started.

"I've been playing music, I guess I started when I was around eight or nine years old. My father is a musician. He plays blues guitar. He and some family members and friends of his played and got me exposed to it early," said Turner.

Being too bashful to sing for many years, Turner started out just playing the guitar with other people but eventually the power of the blues and the encouragement of his family and friends overcame his shyness.

"I do it because other people like it. It took me years to even attempt to start singing. My father used to tell me as a kid growing up - 'Son, as good as you are playing the blues, people wanna hear you scream and shout.'"

Later, a band in which he played bass broke up. A few of the members told Turner that if he ever decided to form his own band, they wanted to be a part of it because they felt he had great potential to be a front man belting out the blues instead of a side man playing the bass.

"You could have bought me for a nickle. It almost brought

tears to my eyes because I didn't like my singing and I still don't sometimes. In 1999 was the first time I even attempted to sing the blues," said Turner.

Other performers scheduled for Saturday include: Zach Sweeney Band, Matt Kelly and Rich Sampson, The Shakers, The Paulverizers, Blue Lou and Friends and Ronnie Ray and The Coolers. The music starts at 12:45 and goes until 8:30 p.m.

Turner looks forward to his first time performing in Greenbelt, seeing it as an opportunity to share the energy and vitality that is the blues.

"The music is an expression of life. For me, music is a way to express myself . . . my thoughts and some of my feelings. It allows me to express beliefs about society. To be able to communicate through an instrument sometimes without having to use words [is great] because words just can't describe what feelings you have inside but music can communicate to the whole world even if you don't know the language. One of my music teachers taught me that music is an international language and you can understand anybody with it. A lot of people misinterpret blues as being some sad, lonely kind of music but in actuality it helped keep me revived, motivated . . . it gave me a lot of pleasure. It's about stories," said Turner.

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