

New International Award for Danish promoter, Peter Astrup

Danish blues festival organizer and booking agent Peter Kempel Astrup received another International Blues Award at the European Blues Challenge at Hotel Clarion in Malmö, Sweden. The European Blues Union presented Peter Astrup with the "Blues Behind The Scenes" award in recognition of a person who has devoted their life to or worked actively, making significant contributions to advance and support blues music in Europe.

The panel's choice for Peter was in the "Production" category because, for 35 years, he has carried out extensive and unique work in promoting blues music through digital media and events. This unique prize was not previously awarded to a Scandinavian person or festival.

Peter Kempel Astrup is the organizer of Denmark's most significant and multi-award-winning blues and soul festival, Blues Heaven. Each year in November, it attracts audiences to Arena Nord in Frederikshavn from more than a dozen countries. This year, on the 11th & 12th of November, it will be the 16th year of Blues Heaven.

In 2018, Blues Heaven was named "International Festival of the Year" by the French online magazine Zicazic, and the readers of Polish music magazine Twój Blues voted it "2nd Best Festival In The World". Also, in 2018, Blues Heaven's organizer, Peter Astrup, won "Hoochie Coochie Man of the Year" at the Danish Music Awards, in recognition of outstanding contributions to the Blues music scene in Denmark. A person without whose efforts the blues and roots music scene in Denmark would have been of a lesser experience.

In 2019, Peter Astrup received the "Toneværksprisen" award from Royal Unibrew, Det Musiske Hus, and the North Jutland music industry.

In 2020, Peter Astrup received the "Keeping the Blues Alive" award from the prestigious worldwide organization The Blues Foundation in Memphis. Known to thousands of musicians in Europe & the United States, Peter Astrup has dedicated his life to establishing and expanding the blues music scene in his native Denmark and throughout Europe. The award is considered the highest that can be achieved by a non-musician and has only been awarded three times previously to a person outside of the United States. In further recognition, Peter Astrup was invited in 2022 to join the "Board of Directors" for The Blues Foundation in Memphis and is the only non-American serving board member.

Over the past ten years, the European Blues Union has organized the annual "European Blues Challenge," a competition for blues-based bands from 23 countries, all vying to be named the best band of the year in Europe. This year, the winners were "Harlem Lake" from the Netherlands, with "Justina Lee Brown" from Switzerland winning 2nd place and Spanish "Mingo, Sanpa & Bárez Bros." in 3rd.

In addition to the "Production" category, the EBU also presented a "Media" category, which went to Italian Marino Grandi from Il Blues Magazine, and the "Promotion" award went to Belgian Filip Le Roy from Swing Wespelaar.

After numerous years of blues harp playing, in 1988, Peter Astrup arranged the festival Djurs Bluesland, which ran successfully for many years. The blues festival attracted approximately 5,000 guests and was considered "the Mothership of all Danish Blues events." So, 35 years ago, this fiery soul began his work of booking and arranging blues and soul music events across Europe, and he's still loving every second of it!