

## Blues Heaven Festival celebrates 20 years with a star-studded international line-up

### Grammy®-nominated Sugaray Rayford tops the bill as world-class artists gather on 2-3 October.

Denmark's leading blues and soul festival confirms all 14 acts for the anniversary festival at Arena Nord in Frederikshavn.

Blues Heaven Festival returns for its 20th edition, bringing 81 musicians from 13 countries to Arena Nord. With an audience from 15 countries in 2025 and a program packed with Grammy® and Blues Music Award winners and nominees, the festival has cemented its position as one of Europe's most recognized meeting points for blues and soul. The anniversary year places a strong focus on the American blues and soul tradition.

Friday headliner Sugaray Rayford (US) was Grammy®-nominated in 2020 for the album "Somebody Save Me" in the Best Contemporary Blues Album category. At the Blues Music Awards, he was named Soul Blues Male Artist of the Year in both 2019 and 2020, as well as B.B. King Entertainer of the Year in 2020. The album "In Too Deep" won Soul Blues Album of the Year in 2023, and his latest release is 2024's "Human Decency". Rayford is bringing the same line-up as for his 2022 concert, including the horn section from Amy Winehouse's band. This will be his third visit to Blues Heaven, following his debut in 2017 and headlining performance in 2022.

Saturday headliner James Hunter (UK) has been a prominent figure in rhythm & blues and soul for more than 40 years. MOJO Magazine has called him "The United Kingdom's Greatest Soul Singer", and the Grammy® nomination for "People Gonna Talk" cemented his international standing. He has 11 albums to his name and resumed his collaboration with Van Morrison in 2026 on the duet "Ain't That a Trip" - their first recording together in 30 years.

"Sugaray Rayford and James Hunter represent two very different sides of the blues and soul tradition - Sugaray with raw energy and the power of American soul, James Hunter with British elegance and a unique history as Van Morrison's guitarist and backing vocalist. Having them headline on separate nights for our 20th anniversary is truly special," says Peter Astrup, founder and artistic director of Blues Heaven Festival.

### This year's other artists:

Albert Cummings (US), John Németh and The Blue Dreamers (US), Kid Ramos Band feat. Brian Templeton (US/F), Johnny Rawls and the Özdemirs (US/DE), Thornetta Davis and The ZBlues Band (US/IT), Johnny Burgin and The European Blues Aces (US/DE/FI/NL/UK/DK), GA-20 (US), J.T. Lauritsen & The Buckshot Hunters (NO), Frimer & Møller (DK), Joakim Tinderholt & His Band (NO), Mr. Bo's Big Blues Bonanza (SE), Alice Armstrong (UK).

DJ Roan Madsen (DK) keeps the music flowing between concerts with a sharp selection of blues, soul and R&B on vinyl.

Acclaimed American blues promoter Paul Benjamin (US) returns as the festival's regular master of ceremonies for the eighth consecutive year. His immense knowledge and charismatic style bring an authentic sense of continuity to the anniversary program.

In 2026, Blues Heaven Festival marks 20 years of international blues and soul in North Jutland. Since its founding, the festival has presented more than 250 bands, including numerous award-winning artists, and established itself as one of Europe's most respected blues events.

### Practical information

There is music at Arena Nord on both days from 15:00 to 24:00. On Thursday 1 October, the festival opens with Blues at Maskinhallen, a separate club-format event at Skolegade 8, Frederikshavn.

Weekend pass (Friday + Saturday, both stages): DKK 1,295 in advance, DKK 1,395 at the door

Single-day ticket (Friday or Saturday, both stages): DKK 895 in advance, DKK 995 at the door

Blues at Maskinhallen (Thursday, city-center club format): DKK 295 in advance, DKK 345 at the door

Tickets and information: [bluesheaven.dk](https://bluesheaven.dk)

### About Blues Heaven Festival

Blues Heaven Festival is an international, multi-award-winning blues and soul festival celebrating its 20th anniversary this year. In 2018, the French magazine Zicazic named it "International Festival of the Year". The same year, Peter Astrup received "Hoochie Coochie Man of the Year" at the Danish Music Awards - Blues. In 2020, he received the "Keeping the Blues Alive Award" from The Blues Foundation in Memphis, was elected to the foundation's board in 2021, and received the European Blues Union's "Behind the Scenes Award" in 2022.

### Press contact

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