

BLUES HEAVEN FESTIVAL OPENS WITH SOUL AND BLUES OF THE HIGHEST CALIBRE



Blues Heaven Festival 2026 opens its 20th anniversary year with two international artists in club format - Thursday 1 October at Maskinhallen, Frederikshavn

FREDERIKSHAVN - On Thursday, 1 October 2026, Blues Heaven Festival opens its 20th anniversary year with an evening at Maskinhallen, Skolegade 8 in Frederikshavn - the festival's official juke joint.

Two of the weekend's international artists perform in an intimate club setting before the main festival program at Arena Nord gets underway on Friday and Saturday. Maskinhallen is a former industrial hall with capacity for 250 people, just 200 meters from Tordenskjoldsgade, where most of the city's hotels are located.

Opening concert: Johnny Rawls & The Özdemir's

Thursday 1 October · 20:00-21:15

Johnny Rawls is a master of Mississippi soul-blues. The Mississippi-born singer, guitarist, arranger and songwriter has spent more than five decades helping define the soul-blues genre. The Blues Music Awards have named his releases Soul Blues Album of the Year three times: in 2010 for *Ace of Spades*, in 2019 for *I'm Still Around*, and most recently on 7 May 2026, when *Make Them Dance* won the award, confirming Rawls as one of the genre's foremost living exponents. With more than 20 albums and close to 200 concerts a year, he is one of the blues scene's most active and acclaimed artists. His name is also written into Mississippi blues history with a marker on the Mississippi Blues Trail. Rawls comes to Blues Heaven Festival 2026 with his touring band The Özdemir's - a tight-knit quintet rooted in the German blues scene.

Headliner: John Németh & the Blue Dreamers

Thursday 1 October · 21:30-22:45

John Németh is one of the most decorated artists of his generation. Born in Boise, Idaho, he is now a well-known figure in the international blues and soul world as a harmonica player and vocalist. In 2024, he received Soul Blues Male Artist of the Year at the Blues Music Awards in Memphis - an award he also won in 2014. His music ranges from raw, traditional blues to deep soul feeling and contemporary songwriting. Over the course of his career, he has worked with Elvin Bishop, The Bo-Keys, and producer Scott Bomar. Németh is familiar to Danish audiences - he appeared at Djurs Bluesland in 2011 and Blues Heaven in 2017, returning for an extended Danish tour in 2018.

"These concerts are for the locals and the many visiting guests who arrive early in Frederikshavn. In recent years, Blues Heaven has welcomed audiences from 15-17 countries, and many arrive on Thursday to warm up for the main weekend program at Arena Nord." - Peter Astrup, Blues Heaven Festival

Practical information

Date:	Thursday 1 October 2026
Doors open:	19:00
Music:	20:00-22:45
DJ Roan:	From 19:00 and during the interval
Master of ceremonies:	Paul Benjamin
Capacity:	250
Venue:	Maskinhallen · Skolegade 8 · 9900 Frederikshavn
Ticket:	DKK 275 / €40
Note:	Tickets for Blues at Maskinhallen do not include admission to Blues Heaven Festival at Arena Nord - the two events are ticketed separately.
Info & tickets:	https://bluesheaven.dk/maskinhallen

Press enquiries

Peter Astrup - Blues Heaven Festival / Blues Heaven ApS
Højvangen 13, DK-6950 Ringkøbing
+45 4063 2400 · info@bluesheaven.dk

About Blues Heaven Festival

Blues Heaven Festival was founded by Peter Astrup, who has spent nearly 40 years in the international blues world. The journey began in 1988 with Djurs Bluesland - a festival held at various venues across Djursland until the mid-1990s, presenting legends including Albert King, Albert Collins, Buddy Guy, Koko Taylor, Johnny "Guitar" Watson, John Mayall, Champion Jack Dupree, Dr. John, and Luther Allison. Those experiences and the network they created laid the foundation for Blues Heaven Festival, which Peter Astrup founded in Frederikshavn in 2006 - then under the name Frederikshavn Bluesfestival- before being renamed Blues Heaven in 2017. Today, it is Scandinavia's most dedicated blues festival and celebrates its 20th anniversary at Arena Nord in Frederikshavn in 2026.

The festival has received a wide range of international recognition:

In 2018, the French online magazine Zicazic named the festival "International Festival of the Year".

- ✓ In 2018, organizer Peter Astrup was named "Hoochie Coochie Man of the Year" at the Danish Music Awards.
- ✓ In 2020, Peter Astrup received the "Keeping the Blues Alive" award from The Blues Foundation in Memphis - the highest honor available to a non-musician.
- ✓ In 2021, Peter Astrup joined the board of The Blues Foundation in Memphis - as its only non-American member.
- ✓ In 2022, the European Blues Union presented Peter Astrup with the "Blues Behind the Scenes" award for extraordinary contributions to blues music in Europe.