

19TH ANNUAL BLUES FESTIVAL GUIDE 2021

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Blues Women Rock Grammys & Billboard



By Lynn Orman Weiss

For the first time ever, all of the nominees for the 63rd GRAMMY Awards Best Rock Performance category are women and woman-fronted bands including Brittany Howard who is nominated for four Grammys and will perform live on the major broadcast. Nominations for Best Contemporary Blues Album include Ruthie Foster Big Band (*Live at the Paramount*) and Bettye LaVette (*Blackbirds*).

Brittany, who made a name for herself as Alabama Shakes frontwoman, has been nominated for 16 Grammy nominations and won four. This year she's also nominated Best Rock Song ("Stay High"), Best Alternative Music Album, (*Jaime*) and Best R&B Performance ("Goat Head"). Brittany shreds a Gibson SG.

Chicago's renowned Queen of Blues Rock Guitar, Joanna (Jo) Connor is #1 on Billboard Blues Chart this week. Joanna's *4801 South Indiana Avenue* also made #15 Top New Artist Albums, #34 Current Rock Albums and #35 on the Indie Albums Chart. The album title holds a lot of weight in Chicago and for blues lovers around the world who loved this sacred space, Theresa's Lounge, which was located at that address. It's where the greatest blues masters like Muddy Waters, Son Seals, Junior Wells, Buddy Guy, and Big Walter Horton performed and jammed. Joanna's freshly minted album, produced by Joe Bonamassa and co-produced by Josh Smith, is an homage. "We want the listener to open that door, walk in and feel to their core some of the magic that a place like that brought night after night," says Joanna.

Joanna started out in the trenches at 19 years old playing with the masters where her immeasurable talent, grit, fierce and fiery slide guitar seared and continued to dominate. Joanna fit right in and was ready for residencies at Buddy Guy's Checkerboard Lounge, The Cuddle Inn on the south side and Theresa's. Her residency for the past 28 years has been the historic Kingston Mines. In the year of Covid19 Joanna has performed livestream broadcasts from Rosa's Lounge. Her new album features 13 eyebrow-arching tracks with an official video track, "Destination." *[featured in [last week's e-Guide](#)]*

[Brittany Howard](#) and [Joanna Connor](#) are featured images in the Women of the Blues: A Coast To Coast Collection exhibit at [Delmark Records Gallery](#).