

Wynton Marsalis to Headline the 30th Annual McTell Festival

The 30th Blind Willie McTell Music Festival lineup has been confirmed with Wynton Marsalis and his septet headlining on September 7, 2024, in Thomson, Georgia.



Augusta-Richmond, Georgia May 6, 2024 ([IssueWire.com](https://www.IssueWire.com)) - The lineup for this year's 30th Anniversary Blind Willie McTell Music Festival has been finalized. The event, featuring an all-day showcase of exceptional American roots music, will take place on Saturday, September 7, 2024, in Thomson, Georgia. In celebration of this significant milestone, we are thrilled to announce Wynton Marsalis and his septet as the headliners for this year.

McTell Fest is an annual event that pays tribute to Thomson's Blind Willie McTell, a groundbreaking guitarist, songwriter, and iconic performer in the early 20th century. Born in the rural outskirts south of Thomson, McTell's exceptional talent in early American music remains unparalleled. His legacy endures as a gifted songwriter and master of the 12-string guitar, influencing various genres of American roots music. From Piedmont Blues to Gospel and Tin Pan Alley, McTell's musical repertoire showcased his diverse abilities across multiple styles.

Along with Marsalis as the headliner, this year's roster includes from Austin Texas, Shinyribs, Lafayette Louisiana's, The Revelers, and the return of two of our most popular performers, Atlanta's Blair Crimmins and the Hookers and, from New York, guitarist Jerron Paxton.

Wynton Marsalis is a world-renowned trumpeter, bandleader, composer, and a leading advocate of American culture. He presently serves as Managing and Artistic Director of Jazz at Lincoln Center, the Director of Jazz Studies at The Juilliard School, and President of the Louis Armstrong Educational Foundation. Born in New Orleans, Louisiana in 1961, he is the son of jazz pianist and music educator Ellis Marsalis, Jr.

Visit <https://wyntonmarsalis.org/about/bio> for more details on Marsalis' life and career.

He annually tours world-wide and will bring the Septet to McTell Fest. This ensemble will include Thomson's own Chris Crenshaw on trombone. Crenshaw has been with the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra since 2006.

Additional details on the musicians included in this year's roster....

Shinyribs defies genres as a sonic melting pot of Texas Blues, New Orleans R&B funk, horn-driven Memphis Soul, country twang, border music, big band swing, and roots-rock. The Austin-based nine-piece (sometimes 10-piece) supergroup is led by Kevin Russell, the charismatic former front man of longtime Austin band The Gourds. Russell never falls short of creating a cinematic experience with on-stage antics backed by Austin's finest ensemble.

McTell Fest has had a great history of presenting Cajun music; the Red Stick Ramblers and the Pine Leaf Boys come to mind. The category is represented this year by The Revelers, headquartered in Lafayette LA, and dedicated to the holy trinity of Cajun Culture.... hot music, all-night dancing, and great food! Some of the band members are no stranger to McTell Fest, and this Grammy-nominated combo comes as close to a Louisiana/Cajun/Zydeco/swamp rock supergroup as you will find.

Blair Crimmins and The Hookers, who will open our show, are making their second appearance at McTell Fest. Crimmins and his band offer an incredible blast of high energy Ragtime and Dixieland music, filtered through a lens of Crimmins originals and rollicking covers from the early 20th century.

Smithsonian Folkways artist Jerron Paxton is making his third trip to McTell Fest and is an absolute audience favorite. A multi-instrumentalist and great vocalist, Paxton's style draws from blues and jazz music from the early 20th Century. Paxton, an "old soul" at the tender age of 35, does it all....playing

guitar, banjo, piano and violin, and probably some other instruments not listed, all with great humor and stage presence. We are happy to bring him back to play solo in the country blues tradition of McTell.

In addition to Saturday's great lineup, the Thomson-McDuffie County Convention & Visitors Bureau will again be hosting a FREE Kick off Concert in downtown Thomson on Friday, September 6, featuring blues guitarist Selwyn Birchwood and his band. This show jump starts a great weekend of incredible music in Thomson. The show will be held on Railroad Street outside of the Thomson Depot from 7-10 pm.

Tickets will be on sale June 15, 2024 at www.blindwillie.com. Prices for tickets are \$40 advance, and \$50 on the day of. There is no charge for children, ages 12 and under. Great regional food will again be featured along the food court. Gates open at 11 in the morning, with music beginning at noon.

Organizers of the festival, the Activities Council of Thomson (ACT) are a non-profit organization founded in 1974. ACT was formed to foster education, appreciation, and promotion of American arts, particularly those that draw from Southern history, culture and the American experience. To this end, its primary purpose over the past two decades has been to expose this area of Georgia to styles of music and musicians that, without our effort, would pass us by. Visit us at www.blindwillie.com.



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