

# The 2016 New Bedford Whaling Blues Festival

*Photo: Young Quinn Sullivan attending the Blues Festival*

The Zeiterion Performing Arts Center proudly joins with the New Bedford Whaling Blues Festival to bring back this beloved, outdoor music festival to scenic Fort Taber Park overlooking Buzzards Bay and the Elizabeth Islands on Saturday, August 13 from 11:45am-7:45pm. The 2016 New Bedford Whaling Blues Festival features platinum selling axe-man Kenny Wayne Shephard, the “new Queen of the Blues” Shemekia Copeland, Grammy-winning New Orleans funk master Jon Cleary and The Absolute Monster Gentlemen, New Bedford’s blues-guitar wunderkind Quinn Sullivan and Martha’s Vineyard’s Johnny Hoy and the Bluefish. Tickets are \$25 (senior/student), \$55 (general) and \$125 (VIP) and are available at both [www.zeiterion.org](http://www.zeiterion.org) and [www.nbwhalingbluesfest.com](http://www.nbwhalingbluesfest.com), 508-994-2900 or at the Zeiterion box office, 684 Purchase Street, New Bedford.

The Whaling Blues Festival began in 1998 when a few friends decided they wanted present a day of high-quality music on the New Bedford waterfront. Festival founder, Sean Moriarty muses on the festival’s origin, “We created the blues festival in the late 90s because we wanted to do something positive for New Bedford. Our humble beginning on Pier 3 was almost washed away by nine inches of rain, but we knew we were on to something when over 1,200 people braved the elements and showed up with smiles and rain gear ready to hear great music and have a good time.”

The Festival continued for the next eight years and grew to host over 3,000 thousand music fans at beautiful Fort Taber Park , and hosted great blues artists like Susan Tedeschi, Grace Potter, Shemekia Copeland, GE Smith, Dicky Betts,

Roomful of Blues and many others.

Now, after a decade hiatus, the New Bedford Whaling Blues festival has partnered with The Zeiterion to bring the event back bigger and better than ever at Fort Taber Park with a stellar line up of blues greats, including:

**Kenny Wayne Shepherd Band:** Kenny Wayne Shepherd is a Louisiana born guitarist and songsmith known for his genre-defining blues-infused rock n' roll style, who has built an enviable resume as an accomplished recording artist and a riveting live performer. He has sold millions of albums worldwide, received five GRAMMY® nominations, two Billboard Music Awards, the Blues Foundation's 'Keeping The Blues Alive' award and two Blues Music awards. Shepherd had seven #1 blues albums and a string of #1 mainstream rock singles.

**Shemekia Copeland** is an eight-time Blues Music Award winner, 2016 Best Blues Album Nominee and the headliner at this year's Chicago Blues Festival. Her wide-open vision of contemporary blues, roots and soul music showcases the evolution of a passionate artist with a modern musical and lyrical approach. The Chicago Sun Times declared, "Shemekia's a ball-of-fire vocalist with a voice that's part Memphis, part Chicago...devastatingly powerful."

**Jon Cleary** and The Absolute Monster Gentlemen were dubbed by Bonnie Raitt as the "9th wonder of the world." Jon Cleary is a New Orleans funk master, tunesmith, keyboardist, guitarist, and vocalist. He does it all with his hard-driving, soulful brand of rock n' roll and rhythm and blues. His latest album, GoGo Juice, won a 2016 GRAMMY® for Best Regional Roots Music Album, and bursts with the flavors of New Orleans' rich music scene.

**Quinn Sullivan** is a New Bedford native and blues guitar prodigy who displayed such profound talent at an early age that he made his national **debut on the Ellen DeGeneres** show at

the tender age of six. Two years later, he met his soon-to-be mentor Buddy Guy on-stage at The Zeiterion Performing Arts Center. Their “introduction” was a **jam** so magical that it has attracted over 5.5 million views on Youtube. After recording guitar tracks on Guy’s’ 2009 record *Skin Deep*, Quinn was rocketed into the stratosphere before his tenth birthday. He’s had the pleasure of jamming with legendary players like Eric Clapton, Derek Trucks, Los Lobos, and BB King at iconic venues like the Hollywood Bowl, Madison Square Garden, and Red Rocks.

**Johnny Hoy and the Bluefish** are Martha’s Vineyard legends who played the first note at the inaugural New Bedford Whaling Blues Fest in 1998! Theirs is a fiery brand of roadhouse blues, rock and roll, zydeco, and a lot of New Orleans-steeped voodoo. Called “a deep sea spawn of Slim Harpo and Howlin’ Wolf” by the Washington Post, Johnny’s soaring vocals, soulful harp and a killer band have made them a New England institution.

In addition to the main stage artists, The Festival also dedicates a stage to local talent. This year’s artists include Shipyard Wreck, Neal McCarthy and Craig DeMelo.

“The idea of bringing back the Festival has been stoked over the years by many fans who expressed how much they missed the event,” says Moriarty. Rosemary Gill, Executive Director of The Z adds “It’s a natural fit to partner with Sean to produce the Blues Festival. We have expanded our programming beyond the 57 mainstage performances, school-time performances and Creative Classroom Series. This summer, I’m thrilled to say we’re bringing programs outside our walls to produce three festivals, including Viva Portugal, The New Bedford Folk Festival, and the New Bedford Whaling Blues Festival.”

Moriarty concludes, “It’s going to be a very cool day of hot Blues overlooking Buzzards Bay and the Islands. I can’t think of a better way to spend a Saturday in August.”

Tickets for the New Bedford Whaling Blues Festival range from \$25-\$125 and are available for purchase at **[www.zeiterion.org](http://www.zeiterion.org)**, by calling 508-994-2900, or in person at the box office at 684 Purchase Street, New Bedford, MA. Box Office Hours: Tuesday-Friday, 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Saturday 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.