



Larry McCray

Time: Friday, July 23rd at 9:45-11:30pm

www.larrymccrayband.com

Larry McCray, the second youngest of nine children, was raised on a small farm in Magnolia, Arkansas. His father played the blues on harmonica and guitar, and his older sister Clara was a guitarist and disciple of Freddie King. The family had records by John Lee Hooker, Howlin' Wolf, Jimmy Reed and Muddy Waters, among others. McCray cites the musical influence of the three blues Kings - B.B., Albert and Freddie - on his guitar playing, as well as Albert Collins, Elmore James and Magic Sam. Larry McCray is one of a handful of talented young blues performers leading the genre across boundaries and into the new century. McCray's savage blues-rock guitar and warm, soulful vocals have drawn attention worldwide.

In the early 1970s, McCray and his family moved to Saginaw, Michigan where he took a job at a General Motors plant while finishing school. His sister Clara taught him some guitar fundamentals and showed him how to play blues classics like Muddy Waters' "Got My Mojo Working" and Freddie King's "Hideaway." He also turned to records for inspiration, especially the popular soul music of the time, such as Gladys Knight and the Pips, Ike and Tina Turner, James Brown, Little Milton, Stevie Wonder and Ray Charles, plus the omnipresent Motown sound. Over the next decade, he worked on the GM assembly line during the day and performed with local blues, rock, country, and jazz-fusion groups at night.

McCray's hard work paid big dividends when he became the first artist signed by Virgin Records' (now defunct) blues division - Pointblank Records. In 1990, they released his debut, "Ambition," which was well received by the U.S. and European press. It included the standout track "Nobody Never Hurt Nobody With The Blues" - a funky blues workout with a sizzling guitar solo. Importantly, the success of Ambition gave McCray the momentum to quit his job at GM and concentrate solely on music.