

Contact:

Barbara Golden, Communications Manager
904-669-8142 (cell)
BGolden@FloridasHistoricCoast.com



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Jazz + Blues Festival Raises Funds for Fort Mose Reconstruction

Discover Fort Mose Jazz + Blues Series featuring artists Common, Keb' Mo' and more

St. Augustine, Fla. (DATE) – The [Discover Fort Mose Jazz and Blues Series](#) returns on February 8, 2024, to Florida's Historic Coast for two weekends of music, community, and history. But this year, it's even more special. The very project that it supports, the Fort Mose Reconstruction Project, will celebrate its groundbreaking just one month before.

The settlement of Garcia Real de Santa Theresa de Mose, now referred to as [Fort Mose Historic State Park](#), was established in 1738 as the first legally-sanctioned free Black settlement in the United States. Fort Mose's inhabitants were mainly slaves of West African origin who escaped from the British colonies of South Carolina and Georgia to Spanish Florida in small groups. The first group arrived in 1687, comprised of eight men, two women, and a nursing child, traveling by dugout canoe. Along their perilous journey to St. Augustine, escaped slaves were often aided by Native Americans, creating an early Underground Railroad that ran south.

By 1738, more than 100 brave men, women, and children had journeyed through swamps and dense tropical forests to Fort Mose. The Spanish government officially designated the settlement as *Gracia Real de Santa Teresa de Mose* or *Royal Grace of Saint Teresa of Mose*. It was established as a military and residential community, guarding the northern boundary of St. Augustine. Almost 250 years later, the site was discovered in 1986 during an archaeological dig led by Dr. Kathleen Deagan of the Florida Museum of Natural History. Fort Mose was nationally acknowledged in 1994 as a U.S. Historic Landmark. It is a key stop on the Florida African American Heritage Trail and a Site of Memory of the UNESCO Slave Route Project. In 2009, the National Park Service named Fort Mose a precursor site on the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom.

Today, Fort Mose Historic State Park is a historical and cultural destination managed by the Florida State Parks Service. Guests can visit the settlement site, but the original Earth and wooden structures that sheltered its inhabitants are gone, lost to the ravages of time. For now, at least. Thanks to the dedication of the Florida State Parks Foundation, in conjunction with partners from the Florida State Parks, the Fort Mose Historical Society, and Drs. Kathleen Deagan and Jane Landers, Fort Mose will soon rise from the ground and have a tangible representation of its magnificent history. The project will celebrate its groundbreaking in January of 2024.

"It's thrilling to see this project approach such a significant milestone," says Susan Phillips, President and Chief Executive Officer for St. Augustine, Ponte Vedra, and The Beaches Visitor and Convention Bureau. "The groundbreaking is just the start for such a critical piece of African-American history. It has taken years of dedicated work and fundraising to get to this point, and the work continues. The Discover Fort

Mose Jazz and Blues Series is a fun and dynamic way to raise funds for the project. It's truly a celebration of the spirit of Fort Mose."

The [Discover Fort Mose Jazz and Blues Series](#) is a confluence of history, community, and music. The music series kicks off on Thursday, February 8, with Academy Award, Emmy, and Grammy-winning artist, actor, author, and activist Common. A truly multifaceted performer, Common is dedicated to improving the world through social justice, advocacy, and youth empowerment. Tickets range from \$52 to \$139. Friday, February 9, features one of New Orleans's classic music institutions, the Preservation Hall Jazz Band. Tickets range from \$22 to \$79. The weekend wraps up on Saturday, February 10, with the world-renowned Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis. An embodiment of jazz history, this band features the finest jazz soloists and ensemble musicians alive today and, under the guidance of Music Director Wynton Marsalis, performs familiar standards and commissioned works by jazz masters. Tickets range from \$52 to \$139.

On Friday, February 16, the series welcomes Grammy-winning guitarist, vocalist and songwriter Christone "Kingfish" Ingram, a genuine tour-de-force on the blues scene. Tickets range from \$42 to \$99. The series finishes in epic fashion on Saturday, February 17 with Keb' Mo'. With five GRAMMYS, 14 Blues Foundation Awards, and over fifty years of performing behind him, Keb' Mo' continues to thrill audiences and work tirelessly as a philanthropist and activist. Tickets range from \$42 to \$99.

All performances begin at 7 p.m. at Fort Mose Historic State Park. Tickets may be purchased [here](#). Proceeds from the Discover Fort Mose Jazz & Blues Series support the reconstruction effort.

Free parking and shuttle service for the Discover Fort Mose Jazz and Blues Series is available at the St. Johns County Health & Human Services Building, one mile north of Fort Mose, at 200 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine. The shuttle service begins at 5 p.m. and runs continuously every ten minutes until one hour after the show ends. On-site parking is not available at Fort Mose Historic State Park

Fort Mose represents the struggle and triumph of a small and mighty group of people. Be a part of its inspiring story by securing your tickets to the Discover Fort Mose Jazz and Blues Series today. To plan your stay, use the Trip Planner at FloridasHistoricCoast.com.

Located midway between Daytona Beach and Jacksonville, Florida's Historic Coast includes historic St. Augustine, the outstanding golf and seaside elegance of Ponte Vedra Beach, and 42 miles of pristine Atlantic beaches. For more information, call 1.800.653.2489 or go to the Visitors and Convention Bureau website at www.FloridasHistoricCoast.com. Check us out on social media Instagram

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