

**BILLY BRANCH**  
**3 TIME GRAMMY NOMINEE**  
**RETIRED 2 TERM GRAMMY GOVERNOR**



Billy Branch was discovered by Willie Dixon, the "father of modern Chicago Blues," while Billy was still in college. Willie encouraged Billy to finish his college education, which he did, but instead of going to law school after receiving his political science degree, Billy began touring with the Willie Dixon Chicago All-Stars. This gave Billy the unique opportunity to travel and work as an under study for the legendary Carey Bell who was planning to leave the All-Stars and form his own band. When Carey took his leave, the young Billy Branch took his place, touring with Willie Dixon for 6 years.

Since those early days, Billy has played on over 150 different recordings, including 12 under his own name. He's recorded with Willie Dixon, Johnny Winter, Lou Rawls, Koko Taylor, Eddy Clearwater, Honeyboy Edwards, Syl Johnson, Lurrie Bell, Ronnie Baker Brooks, John Primer, and Taj Mahal, just to name a few. In addition, he has received three Grammy nominations (losing one nomination to BB King and Eric Clapton). He served two consecutive terms on the Grammy Board of Governors, and founded the Grammy Blues Committee. In addition, he has won multiple W.C. Handy Awards from the Blues Foundation, an Emmy Award, an Addy Award (this is like an Oscar for TV ads), two Chicago Music Awards, and numerous humanitarian achievement awards. Billy Branch has become the ambassador of the Chicago Blues. During his 6 week tour of Turkey, he represented the USA in Turkey's Parliament, teaching political party leaders to play harmonica! Thousands of fans showed up every night of the week to experience the authentic Chicago Blues! He and his band, the **Sons of Blues** have delivered this cultural legacy around the world, having made over 70 international tours. The 2007 Chicago Blues Festival honored the thirtieth anniversary of Billy Branch and the Sons of Blues with a 3 hour performance. In fact, they also headlined the 2011 Chicago Blues Festival.

Billy is a Blues education pioneer. He was one of the first artists to develop a Blues in the Schools curriculum. Since 1978, in addition to recording and performing, he's taught thousands of children around the world. His internationally recognized "**Blues in Schools Program**," is committed to teaching both young and old about the Blues as the roots of America's music. He has brought his interdisciplinary program to Europe, South America, Asia, and most recently to Mexico where he taught his two week program in Spanish. In addition he teaches in the Grammy Museum Music Revolution Project.

Responses to Billy's Music are passionate:

**"Branch has the chops to indulge in showy barrages of clustered notes, but prefers to let tradition and taste dictate his sets."**  
The Chicago Reader

**"He leans into the mic like Joshua before the walls of Jericho. A sound comes out of his cupped hands, a sound like a train, a wolf, a grieving heart, a cyclone of wailing notes that escape from between the gold rings on his fingers like steam through a boiler plate. It blows through the bar and through the listeners, until all other distractions crumble, and the only thing left standing is the Blues."**  
[www.Berghoff.com](http://www.Berghoff.com)

**"Billy Branch has become a beacon, and model for his times; as an artist, and social/cultural activist... Billy Branch is a Bluesman; Billy Branch is the Blues."**

Blues Producer, Chicago Beau

## THE SONS OF BLUES



**Nick Charles** was given his first bass guitar and bass amp by Howlin' Wolf. In addition, the young Nick was brought to Chicago by Howlin' Wolf and Eddie Shaw. Early on Nick made his mark as the undeniable **bass player extraordinaire**. He's played with Howlin' Wolf, B.B. King, Tina Turner, Eddie Shaw, Valerie Wellington and the Rolling Stones, just to name a few. In fact, you can see Nick on the DVD entitled, ***Muddy Waters & the Rolling Stones Live at the Checkerboard***"

**Mose Rutues Jr**, has been the drummer for the Sons of Blues for over 25 years. He previously played with such legendary greats as Major Lance, McKinley Mitchell and Joe Tex. His intense energy and unique rhythmic style is the engine that powers the stylistic diversity of the Sons of Blues



Sumito Ariyoshi, aka **Ariyo** is internationally recognized for his vigorous innovative piano style. He's an accomplished arranger and sought after studio musician. He's shared the stage and toured the world with such legends as Otis Rush, Jimmy Rogers, Robert Jr. Lockwood, Eddie Shaw, Valerie Wellington, B.B.King, Albert King and Stevie Ray Vaughan.

**Dan Carelli**, the newest and youngest S.O.B. plays a mean slide guitar and his soulful vocals show are warmly received by audiences. He previously played with A.C. Reed, Byther Smith, Aaron Burton, Sammy Fender, and Nigel Mack. He's emerging as a player with the depth and maturity of a seasoned Chicago Blues man.

