

Minnesota Music Hall of Fame Inductee



Big Walter Smith

Inducted in 1998

Big Walter Smith has personified the blues in Minneapolis and St. Paul for over 25 years.

His music career began long before he landed in Minnesota. Born in Oklahoma, he got his start in show business in the 1950s in a vaudeville show.

In the 1960s he shared stages with B.B. King and Bobby “Blue” Band. While in the Twin Cities, he formed the band the Groove Merchants. He has been a mainstay of the popular Bayfront Blues Festival in Duluth since its inaugural year in 1989. Smith has also been featured at other

regional festivals, including the Fargo Blues Fest, Minnesota Blues Fest in New Ulm and Blues on the Range in Chislm.

Smiths’ philosophy is this “... you don’t have to be great musician. Just working with great musicians, you’ll come up to their standards. It’ll gel.”

