

PIEDMONT BLUZ ACOUSTIC DUO - BIO

The **Piedmont Bluz Acoustic Duo** is dedicated to the preservation of Country Blues and the Piedmont style and their mission is to help keep this rural, east coast tradition alive by educating audiences about this unique aspect of African American culture through musical entertainment. They have been entertaining audiences at venues from Washington State to Jerusalem and are much loved wherever they go. The husband and wife duo feel that "there are stories to tell, people to remember, and things that must be said" so, in addition to tickling your ears with delightful music, they weave a bit of history into the presentation of each song.

When asked about the authenticity of their music, the duo will quickly tell you, "We're not trying to preserve songs note for note or word for word. And we're not trying to sound like the original artists either, because that's already been done! We approach each piece from our own perspective and have no qualms about changing words or melodies to suit ourselves. Music is supposed to evolve and, even though we are helping to preserve it, we think we should also have the freedom to infuse it with our own personalities."



Valerie Turner is a native New Yorker with southern roots in Virginia and Georgia. She plays finger style Country Blues guitar which is a broad genre that includes blues, fiddle tunes, ballads, country and popular songs, ragtime, and gospel. She also dabbles with washboard, spoons, and banjo. Valerie's first Country Blues guitar lessons were with Jack Baker in Greenwich Village and her eclectic repertoire was later influenced by her studies with both John Cephas and Woody Mann. Her specialty is the Piedmont style which is a fingerpicking style, easily recognized by its alternating bass. Valerie's guitar playing is reminiscent of traditional blues greats like Mississippi John Hurt, Etta Baker, and Elizabeth Cotten.



Hailing from Trinidad, **Ben Turner** keeps the beat by blending various washboard techniques into his own unique style. Ben has studied with Washboard Chaz of Louisiana fame as well as with Newman Taylor Baker of the Ebony Hillbillies. Inspired by these two talented percussionists, Ben created his own style using a variety of brushes and thimbles and is a perfect rhythmic accompaniment for Valerie's guitar. Occasionally, he also chimes in on bones or harp for added accents and his subtle touches add just the right amount of texture.

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Instrumentation

Valerie Turner: guitar, banjo, spoons, washboard, lead vocals

Ben Turner: washboard, harmonica, bones, vocals

Discography

Country Blues Selections

Press

Publication	Article	Author	Date
Blues Gr	Piedmont Bluz: Roots Blues Mission	Michael Limnios	December 2015
Jerusalem Post	Blues Festival in Tel Aviv Extends to Jerusalem	Barry Davis	November 2015
Living Blues	True Blues of Valerie and Benedict Turner	Frank Matheis	October 2015
The Network Journal	Duo Keeps Alive Traditional Acoustic Music	Raymond Mora	Summer 2016
thecountryblues.com	Artist Profile	Frank Matheis	

Television

Program	Host	Date
Horses Sing None of It	Ralph Litwin	November 2014
Wes Houston Presents	Wes Houston	March 2014

Teaching

Workshops	Location	Date
Archie Edwards Blues Heritage Foundation	Riverdale Park, MD	October 2014
Blues & Swing Week	Elkins, WV	July 2016
John Cephas Piedmont Blues Festival	Bowling Green, VA	June 2015, 2016
Port Townsend Acoustic Blues Workshop	Port Townsend, WA	July 2015, 2016

Quotes

"Just when people think the old country blues of the Mid-Atlantic has faded away, along come the wonderful husband and wife duo of Valerie and Ben Turner who are the heirs to the Piedmont blues tradition. They are known as the duo 'Piedmont Bluz' and play the truehearted, authentic country blues with love. It'll warm you heart. Keep your ears on Piedmont Bluz." - Frank Matheis, Publisher: www.thecountryblues.com, Writer: Living Blues, Independent Radio Producer

"We have been fortunate to host many great performers. But your insights into the history of the music are fascinating and most entertaining. Your interpretation, lyrics and performances of the songs are deeply steeped in the tradition yet truly original and uniquely your own. Your mastery of your craft is a joy to see and hear. And your love of the music is fully communicated and hypnotic. Ben's understated support vocals, washboard and harp playing are the perfect complement to your lead vocals and guitar work. His beautiful artistry in washboard construction is also remarkable." - Ralph Litwin - Producer and Host: ...Horses Sing None of It!

"Valerie Turner is an extraordinary blues and ragtime guitarist steeped in the rich tradition of the African American communities of the southern U.S. including the Delta, Piedmont, and Chicago Blues styles." - Dutchess County Tourism

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In addition to house parties and other private events, the **Piedmont Bluz Acoustic Duo** have performed at a variety of venues and events including the ones listed below:

International Highlights	Locations	Dates
Dog & Roll Bar	Madrid, Spain	2015
Harvest Time Blues Festival	Monaghan, Ireland	2016
Jacob's Ladder Folk Festival	Sea of Galilee, Israel	2015
Monaghan County Museum	Monaghan, Ireland	2016
Tel Aviv Blues Festival	Tel Aviv, Israel	2015
Wachhaus Café	Berlin, Germany	2016
Yellow Submarine – Hannuka Blues Week	Jerusalem, Israel	2015

Domestic Highlights	Locations	Dates
American Folk Art Museum	New York, NY	2013, 2015, 2016
Archie Edwards Blues Heritage Foundation	Riverdale Park, MD	2014
ArtsWestchester	Westchester, NY	2013, 2015
Blues & Swing Week	Elkins, WV	2016
Brooklyn Folk Festival	Brooklyn, NY	2012, 2014, 2016
Cedar Beach Blues Festival	Mount Sinai, NY	2013, 2014
Clearwater Revival	Croton-on-Hudson, NY	2015
Hampton Acoustic Blues Revival	Hampton, VA	2013
Heart of Virginia Festival	Farmville, VA	2014
Howland Cultural Center	Beacon, NY	2013, 2014, 2015
John Cephas Piedmont Blues Festival	Bowling Green, VA	2015, 2016
Port Townsend Acoustic Blues Festival	Port Townsend, WA	2015, 2016
Richmond Folk Festival (<i>Valerie</i>)	Richmond, VA	2012
Riverside Blues Festival	Elkins, WV	2010, 2012
Sugar Maple Festival	Madison, WI	2016
The Jalopy Theatre	Brooklyn, NY	2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016
The Old Stone House	Brooklyn, NY	2016
Washington Square Park Folk Festival	New York, NY	2012