

*Kenny Chesney returns to Baton Rouge for a second straight year.*



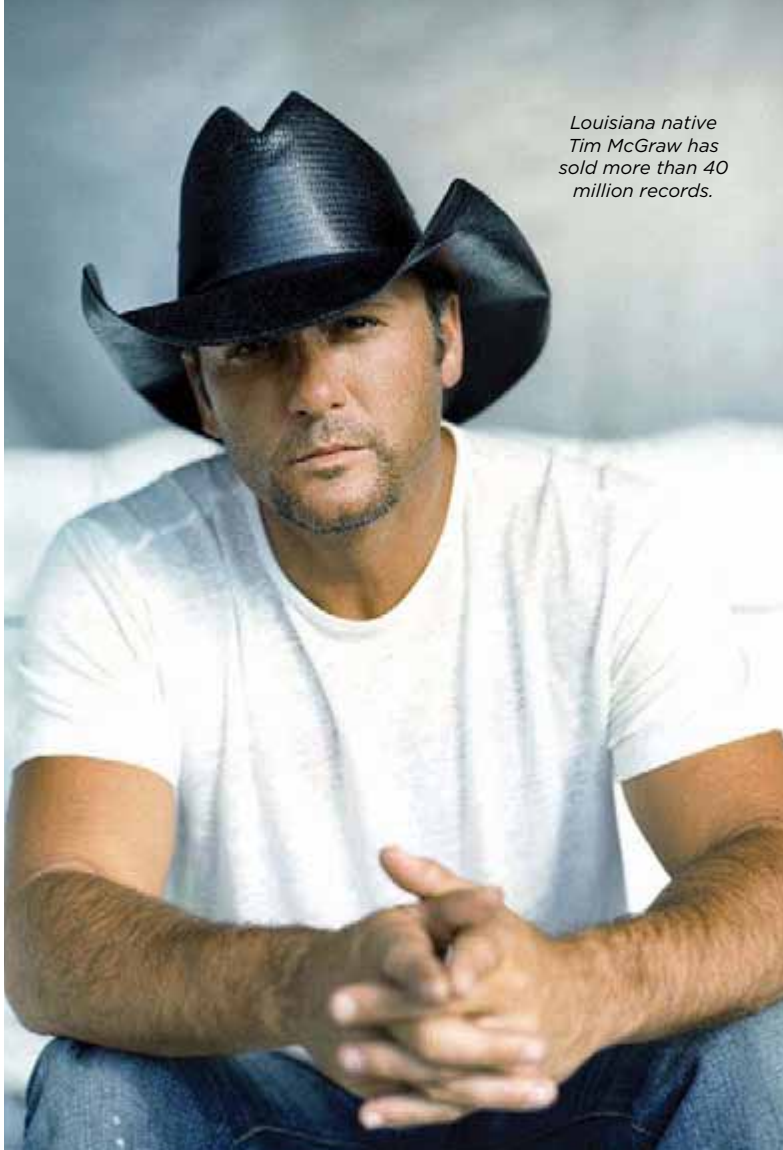
# The MUSIC is here!

See what's new, from country to jazz to opera to blues.

BY BRIGITTE NIELAND



Country heart throb  
Trace Adkins hales  
from Sarepta, La.



Louisiana native  
Tim McGraw has  
sold more than 40  
million records.

Cities with vibrant music scenes just seem to pulsate with a unique rhythm. If you follow the beat to Baton Rouge, you'll discover a city with a rich musical heritage and a deep appreciation for music of every genre. With modern, state-of-the-art performance facilities and a lively club scene, the Red Stick has it all for even the most discerning music aficionado.

Music is part of the fabric of everyday life in Baton Rouge. Events and performances featuring both local and world-renowned entertainers are held year-round, but a phenomenal 2011 music schedule is raising the bar even higher. Fans of every type of music from every state in the U.S. are learning what Baton Rouge citizens have known for some time—that this river city has become a mecca for live music.

### **BAYOU COUNTRY SUPERFEST**

Over the Memorial Day weekend (May 28-29), the Capital City will host the second annual Bayou Country Superfest in Louisiana State University's famed Tiger Stadium. The Bayou Country Superfest will once again bring to Baton Rouge the biggest stars in

country music today. Country music superstar Kenny Chesney will return to headline the event, and fans will be able to welcome home Louisiana natives Tim McGraw and Trace Adkins. Industry giants Sugarland, the Zac Brown Band, Billy Currington, Luke Bryan, Jason Michael Carroll, Josh Thompson and Lee Brice round out the all-star lineup.

Last year's event drew more than 87,000 enthusiastic fans from around the world, and the two-day celebration this year will make getting to the Superfest a memorable experience all its own. "Fan Fest" tailgating will feature music, food and fun. Nobody tailgates better than Louisianans, and organized tailgate activities and a performance stage outside Tiger Stadium will complement the main stage inside the venue.

Kenny Chesney brings his electrifying live show back to Tiger Stadium as he looks to top his epic performance from 2010 that included surprise guest stars and over two hours of "hits, happiness and hollerin'." With album sales over 30 million and 20 No. 1 singles, Chesney's star continues to rise. *Pollstar* magazine cited him as the second biggest live ticket seller of the decade in any genre of music (more than 1 million tickets in each of eight consecutive years).

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Chesney's football anthem "The Boys of Fall" hit No. 1 on the Billboard Country Song chart and his new album *Hemingway's Whiskey* debuted at No. 1 on the Billboard 200 Chart. Chesney is a four-time Country Music Association Entertainer of the Year, and his concerts are known for selling out in less than 10 minutes, making him one of the largest concert draws on tour today.

When Tim McGraw performs on opening night it will be a Louisiana Saturday night at Tiger Stadium like no other, as he is joined by Sugarland and fellow Louisiana country music icon Trace Adkins. Raised in Start, La., located just outside Monroe, McGraw has had 11 consecutive albums debuting at No. 1, sold more than 40 million albums and has had 31 No. 1 songs. McGraw's most recent single, "Felt Good on my Lips" is already on the Top 20 charts.

Bayou Country Superfest is the only place in the nation to see this unrivaled lineup. Even though Tiger Stadium is one of the largest stadiums in the country, seating will be reserved, and individual concerts by these entertainers sell out quickly, so patrons are encouraged to purchase tickets early. Festival-goers should also plan to arrive early for the Bayou Country Superfest Fan Fest & Tailgate Party, located directly outside Tiger Stadium.

"The first Bayou Country Superfest was even greater than we had dreamed, as exciting and powerful as any live concert experience anywhere," said Quint Davis, producer/director of the event. "If you were there—and thousands came from all over America—then you've been waiting to come back. If you missed it, then here's your chance to see an unequalled galaxy of country music superstars to be found only in Baton Rouge, under the skies of Tiger Stadium."

### THE NEW MUSIC CITY

It's not just about blockbuster multi-day festivals—the Capital Region boasts a long lineup of live music venues and a regular schedule of events and festivals, many of them free of charge and family friendly.

It all starts with downtown Baton Rouge, where a growing cluster of bars and nightclubs on or near Third Street provide a nightly menu of local, regional and touring acts. Davis Rhorer, executive director of the Downtown Development District, says the music scene is a perfect fit for downtown, which is enhancing its setting for live music and festivals with a new town square, new courthouse and improved amenities. Nearby, the Manship Theatre and the River Center are also top venues for indoor events, hosting a regular schedule of performances ranging from rock to Broadway to ballet. (See the events calendar on pages 69-71 to find out what's on tap while you're in town.)

One of the most popular downtown music events is the Live After Five concert series, which has become a Baton Rouge phenomenon, drawing hundreds downtown for Friday afternoon music, dancing and fellowship. Many use the outdoor concert as a kickoff to an evening enjoying other dining and entertainment options on and around Third Street. Live After Five takes place on eight consecutive Friday nights

DAVID GALLEN



Live Cajun music and dancing are a hit at Boutin's.



COURTESY IMG ARTISTS

Opera superstar Denyce Graves will perform with the Baton Rouge Symphony Orchestra April 28.

COURTESY LSU OPERA



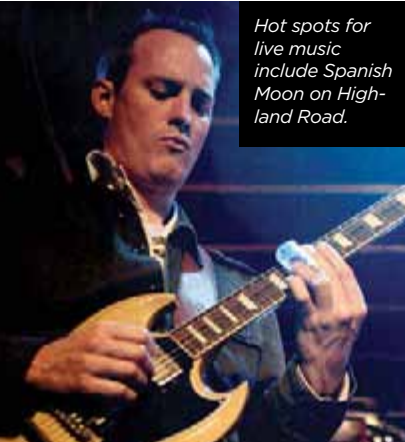
ERIN FOSTER

LSU Opera presents four performances each year.



The popular Broadway in Baton Rouge series brings Mama Mia this spring.

MAMA MIA! NORTH AMERICAN TOUR 2010 BY JOAN MARCUS



Hot spots for live music include Spanish Moon on Highland Road.

LAWLES BOURQUE



Keith Urban fires up the crowd at the 2010 Superfest.

ERIN FOSTER

in the spring and another eight in the fall, with a variety of music ranging from dance mixes to soul to Louisiana roots sounds like zydeco and swamp pop. It's a great way to kick start the weekend, and best of all it's free!

The Arts Council of Baton Rouge has also charged up Baton Rouge's music landscape by organizing a series of premier music events. On April 30-May 1, Baton Rouge will once again host FestForAll, our unique celebration of arts, crafts and music, held downtown on North Boulevard. In October and November, over seven weeks, the Council will sponsor its sixth year of Sunday in the Park concerts, where Louisiana bands play and show visitors how to party Louisiana-style. Held in Lafayette Park, the concerts feature a casual style, food and drink vendors, and lots of families who come to sun, dance and watch the kids play in the neighboring Shaw Center's interactive fountains.

The Arts Council is also bringing exciting artists to Baton Rouge in 2011 as part of its River City Jazz Masters series. On March 31, Baton Rouge will welcome premier vocalist Dianne Reeves. A Blue Note recording artist, Reeves is a four-time Grammy winner who recorded the soundtrack to the 2005 film *Good Night, and Good Luck*. And what better way to celebrate Cinco de Mayo than to attend Brazilian artist Eliane Elias' May 5 performance at the Manship Theatre! A pianist, singer, composer and arranger, Elias' 2008 album *Bossa Nova Stories* dominated international music charts.

## DELBERT McCLINTON HEADLINES BLUES WEEK

**BATON ROUGE HAS** played a major role in the legacy of blues music. The Red Stick's blues history and tradition have influenced the music's style and helped to develop many great artists. The city's love for and support of the blues keep the music timeless, preserving it for future generations and exposing it to an ever broader audience.

Local music promoter Johnny Palazzotto says most people believe that Memphis or Chicago is the birthplace of the blues, but blues musicians migrated to those cities from the Deep South, bringing their music with them. The impact of Baton Rouge bluesmen on the genre is enormous. It's the home of blues legends Tabby Thomas, Henry Gray, Rudy Richard, Lonesome Sundown, James Johnson, Silas Hogan, Whisperin' Smith, Vance "Guitar" Kelly, Robert Pete Wil-

liams, Raful Neal and Slim Harpo.

If you love hearing the blues played live, you're in the right place. From jukebox classics to modern compositions, blues can always be heard in Baton Rouge. Next generation blues musicians such as Chris Thomas King, "Lil Ray" Neal, Kenny Neal, Elvin Killerbee, Kenny Acosta, Luther Kent and Tyree Neal are regulars in local clubs.

Palazzotto, also the executive director of the Baton Rouge Blues Foundation, is committed to promoting and preserving Baton Rouge's blues culture. Each year, the foundation sponsors Blues Week to promote local talent and bring international blues artists to Baton Rouge. The 2011 dates are April 30-May 8; the

One of the biggest draws for the downtown music scene is The Manship Theatre, one of the nation's finest performance venues. Modeled after classical European opera houses, the Manship offers 325 front-row seats. It's been the site of world-class performances, from international guitar superstars to jazz, a Louisiana Crossroads series that showcases Louisiana artists, and a myriad of stars, from the B-52s to Lyle Lovett. This year's highlights include Ladysmith Black Mambazo, Randy Newman, George Winston, Leo Kottke, the Blind Boys of Alabama and Mavis Staples. Acts are frequently added to the events calendar, so check the Manship Web site often for updates.

Something new this year at The Manship is a newly renovated space that sports a casual, café-like atmosphere. It's called the Studio Theatre, but it's more of a club than theatre, where patrons can sit at tables to listen to music or dance if the mood takes them. This space will focus on bringing in Louisiana artists and will also offer an "all ages" music series to provide a venue for young artists.

### CLASSICAL TO BALLET

For those whose musical tastes include a classical bent, Baton Rouge has established itself as a regular site for visiting global stars. In the past decade, the Baton Rouge Symphony Orchestra has performed with Itzhak Perlman, Yo-Yo Ma, Van Cliburn and other international talents. The BRSO's Masterworks and



Local blues legend Lil' Ray Neal rocks downtown at a Live After Five concert.

RACHAEL UPTON

premier event is the Blues Festival, held May 7. This year's lineup showcases legendary artists Delbert McClinton and Jimmie Vaughan, along with Louisiana native Henry Gray. Held in historic downtown Baton Rouge in Repentance Park, other venues around the city (Chelsea's, Teddy's Juke Joint, and Boudreaux and Thibodeaux's) will also be showcasing Louisiana blues during Blues Week. Additionally, Live After Five and Sunday in the Park will participate in Blues Week.

For a complete Blues Week schedule, go to [www.batonrougebluesfestival.org](http://www.batonrougebluesfestival.org).

Chamber series provide regular performances, and special treats such as Mozart on the Lake and the Brass Band performances during the holidays enrich Baton Rouge's culture as well.

On April 28, the Pennington Foundation Great Performers in Concert series is presenting "Two Perfect Voices—One Perfect Night," a concert benefiting the BRSO. Opera superstars mezzo-soprano Denyce Graves and tenor Salvatore Licitra guarantee to thrill the audience with this first-ever joint concert appearance. Promising a "brilliant evening of popular operatic favorites," this rare appearance is an unparalleled treat for music lovers.

With the long-running LSU Opera program and the newer organization Opéra Louisiane, opera fans can also find outstanding events to enjoy throughout the year. Opéra Louisiane has helped bring stars of New York's Metropolitan Opera to Baton Rouge, as well as showcasing local and regional talent. LSU Opera, meanwhile, is widely respected as among the top 10 university opera companies in the nation and recently celebrated its 75th anniversary. Finally, the Baton Rouge Ballet Theater annually presents "The Nutcracker: A Tale from the Bayou," a local interpretation of the much beloved Christmas ballet. The Bayou Nutcracker has become a Baton Rouge holiday tradition.

Plenty of Broadway will also be part of the downtown scene. The River Center stage will feature

*Mamma Mia!* and *A Chorus Line* in 2011, and Salt-n-Pepa's *Legends of Hip Hop* is sure to get the crowd moving.

For an up-to-date live music events calendar, check out the Baton Rouge Convention and Visitors Bureau website at [www.visitbatonrouge.com](http://www.visitbatonrouge.com) and click the "Live Music" link. The schedule is updated often.

Music is ingrained in Baton Rouge's culture, and our rich sounds will no doubt draw you back again and again. We know no better way to welcome you to Baton Rouge than to share our music with you!

## INFO ONLINE

Bayou Country Superfest  
[www.bayoucountrysuperfest.com](http://www.bayoucountrysuperfest.com)

Live After Five  
[www.liveafterfiveonline.com](http://www.liveafterfiveonline.com)

Arts Council  
[www.artsbr.org](http://www.artsbr.org)

Manship Theatre  
[www.manshiptheatre.org](http://www.manshiptheatre.org)

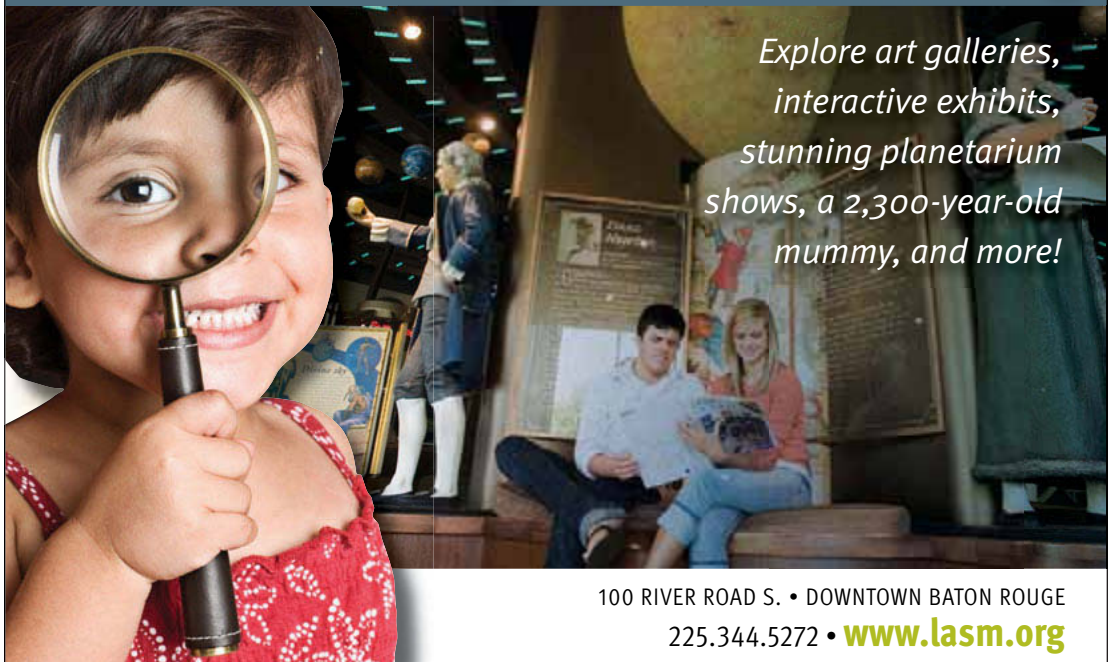
Broadway in Baton Rouge  
[www.brrivercenter.com](http://www.brrivercenter.com)

Baton Rouge Symphony Orchestra  
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