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Contact for *Slippin' Through the Cracks: The Bobby Rush Musical*: [Heath Schwartz](#)

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World Premiere Production Announced for ***Slippin' Through the Cracks:*** ***The Bobby Rush Musical***

**A Brand-New Musical Telling the
Blues Journey of Grammy-Winning Living Legend Bobby
Rush**

**New Stage Theatre in Jackson, MS
October 20 – November 1, 2026**

(New York, NY – July DATE, 2026) *Slippin' Through the Cracks: The Bobby Rush Musical*, the new musical based on the life of Grammy Award-winning living legend **Bobby Rush**, will have its world premiere this fall at **New Stage Theatre** in Jackson, Mississippi. The production will play a limited engagement from October 20 through November 1, 2026, only at New Stage's Jane Reid-Petty Theatre Center (1100 Carlisle St., Jackson, MS 39202).

[Click here to download a photo of Bobby Rush by David McClister.](#)

Slippin' Through the Cracks: The Bobby Rush Musical features a score by the iconic **Bobby Rush**, is conceived by **Stephen Lloyd Helper**, and features a book by Rush and Helper. The production is co-directed by Helper and **Matthew Johnson Harris**, who will also choreograph. **Keith Robinson** is music director and co-arranger.

Slippin' Through the Cracks is an electrifying world premiere musical that tells the foot-stomping and funky blues story of Bobby Rush – from a sharecropper boy sneaking into juke joints, through the equally segregated, hot blues scene of Chicago alongside Muddy Waters and B. B. King, to the freedom of the worldwide stage. Blending live music with storytelling, the show traces Rush's journey through American history and the blues, grounded by a message of perseverance, resilience and joy: "If a dirt-poor country boy, with no education, no opportunities, faced with great troubles, can make it through life doing what he loves, so can you."

Casting and additional creative team will be announced soon.

To purchase tickets, visit www.NewStageTheatre.com. For more information on the production, visit www.SlippinThroughTheCracks.com.

To learn more about the man who inspired this new musical, watch *King of the Chitlin' Circuit*, a new documentary on Bobby Rush's seven-decade career. It premieres on Mississippi Public Broadcasting in August 2026 before airing nationally on PBS later in late November. Directed by Al Warren and produced by Taiwo Gaynor, the film offers an intimate look at Rush's life and cements his status as a blues icon.

BIOGRAPHIES

BOBBY RUSH (*Music, Lyrics, Book*). 92-year-old **Bobby Rush** is a three-time Grammy® Award winner for "Best Traditional Blues Album" for *Porcupine Meat*, *Rawer than Raw* and 2024's *All My Love For You*. He is also a 16-time Blues Music Awards winner (with 59 career nominations), and has been inducted into the Blues Hall of Fame, Mississippi Musicians Hall of Fame and Rhythm & Blues Hall of Fame.

Beyond the accolades, Rush is celebrated for his electrifying showmanship, sly, witty storytelling, and unmistakable harmonica work, heard on fan favorites like "Chicken Heads," "Bowlegged Woman, Knockneed Man," and "I Ain't Studdin' Ya." Rush finally told his inspirational life story in his autobiography *I Ain't Studdin' Ya: My American Blues Story*.

The blues legend is having a major career moment with his involvement in the hit film written and directed by Academy Award-nominated filmmaker Ryan Coogler and starring Michael B. Jordan, *Sinners*; the now Grammy Nominated album with multi-platinum artist Kenny Wayne Shepherd titled "Young Fashioned Ways"; his first-ever Grand Ole Opry performance with Shepherd; and a 2025 Austin City Limits performance. Austin City Limits is the longest-running music show on television, airing Saturday nights on PBS.

Sinners went on to break Oscar records with 16 nominations including Best Picture at the 2026 Academy Awards. To celebrate the music, Bobby Rush alongside Buddy Guy, Shaboozey, Brittany Howard, Miles Caton, and Raphael Saadiq among others turned the Oscar stage into a juke joint recreating a key scene in the movie.

Rush has become one of the most prominent advocates for the blues tradition and says, "It's the root of all music, it's the mother of all music. If you don't like the blues, you probably don't like your mama."

Bobby Rush continues to tour internationally and domestically – Including 2026 dates as far as Tokyo and London, U.S. performances throughout the year, and his appearance on October 1 at Radio City Music Hall for *Buddy's Got The Blues: A 90th Birthday Concert Celebration* commemorating Buddy Guy's 90th birthday.

STEPHEN LLOYD HELPER (*Book, Co-Director*) is a playwright, librettist, director, producer and educator best known for co-conceiving the Broadway smash hit *Smokey Joe's Café*, Broadway's longest running musical revue in history. He began his career on Broadway assisting such legendary directors as Jerome Robbins, Arthur Laurents, and Richard Maltby Jr. on five Broadway shows including *West Side Story*, *Song and Dance* and *Baby*. After supervising Jerome Robbins's national tour of *Fiddler on the Roof*, Robbins tapped him to remount it and direct it for Broadway where it was Tony-nominated. Subsequently, he directed it for Opera Australia at the Sydney Opera House. Steve also directed the first revival of Sondheim and Lucas's *Marry Me a Little* for the York Theatre Company. At the Sydney Opera House, his credits include *Follies* in Concert with the Sydney Symphony, *Cafe Rebetika!*, *Love Letters*, their New Year's Eve Gala *You're Gonna Love Tomorrow* (Sondheim), as well as their commission *Simply Weill – A Kurt Weill Cabaret*. Along with the national tour of *Cafe Rebetika!*, he produced and directed Allan Knee's *Syncopation* and created *What the World Needs Now*, the songbook of Burt Bacharach and Hal David. at Sydney's Theatre Royal. Steve also had collaborations with Aboriginal theatre-makers throughout Australia with productions including *The New Black*, *Blak Electric*, *Soul Music*, and *The Adventures of Namakili*. His play *A Sign of the Times* was first seen at the National Institute of Dramatic Art in Australia, opening to rave reviews, and had a short-lived run at Ars Nova before being shut down by the pandemic. Other current work includes the new musical *H is for Happiness* with award-winning songwriter Sara Storer and *Up and Down*, which goes into workshop in 2027. He also creating a new opera with London composer Dom Bouffard called *The Common Good*, based on the 14th century frescos *The Allegories of Good and Bad Government* by Ambrogio Lorenzetti in the Palazzo Pubblico in Siena, Italy. Steve has been a writer-in-residence including Yaddo, Mahler and Lewitt Studios in Spoleto, Italy, Bogliasco Foundation in Genoa, Italy, and the LaMama Spoleto Playwrighting Symposium. A graduate of Yale, Steve is a member of SDC and The Dramatists Guild.

MATTHEW JOHNSON HARRIS (*Co-Director, Choreographer*) is a New York-based director, choreographer, writer, and educator whose artistic practice centers movement-driven storytelling across theater, concerts, music videos, and live performance. He is a Core Faculty member at The Alvin Ailey Extension and a Dance & Culture Resident Artist at The Public Theater. Most recently, Harris directed and wrote "Broadway Celebrates Juneteenth" in Times Square, presented by The Broadway League in partnership with Black Theatre Coalition and Black Theatre United, honoring legendary artist Debbie Allen. His recent work also includes serving as Associate Director and Cultural Dramaturg for the Tony Award-winning Broadway revival of *Parade*; Associate Director for the world premiere of *The Hippest Trip – The Soul Train Musical* at American Conservatory Theater; and choreographer of the world premiere of *The Preacher's Wife* at Alliance Theatre. In 2020, he choreographed *Take Me to the World: A Tribute to Stephen Sondheim* at Carnegie Hall, conceived by and starring Tituss Burgess. In 2024, he directed the touring production of *Did Anybody Have an Imaginary Friend or Just Me?*, written by and starring Jay Ellis and now in further development. Harris previously was a Black Theatre Coalition Directing Apprentice on the Tony Award-nominated Broadway production of *Hangmen*.

KEITH ROBINSON (*Musical Director, Co-Arranger*) is an acclaimed guitarist whose career spans Soul, Funk, Pop, R&B, Gospel, Jazz, and Blues. A Berklee College of Music alumnus, he has performed and recorded with many of the world's most celebrated artists, including James Brown, Earth, Wind & Fire, Beyoncé, Stevie Wonder, John Legend, Bruce Springsteen, Lenny Kravitz, Buddy Guy, Jeff Beck, Bonnie Raitt, Herbie Hancock, Vanessa Williams, Mary J. Blige, Jennifer Hudson, Garth Brooks, Willie Nelson, and many more. Robinson has recorded for EMI/Capitol Records, Orpheus Records, and Brajo Records, contributing to platinum-selling and Grammy-nominated projects. His distinguished career includes performing at the 2009 presidential inaugural celebration for President Barack Obama and the 2012 Kennedy Center Honors tribute to Led Zeppelin, earning recognition as part of the Emmy Award-winning production. His honors include a Certificate of Merit from the Mayor of New Orleans, recognizing his contributions to the arts, and the Starr Award from Jackson State University for artistic achievement. Robinson also performed in the Tony Award-winning Broadway production *Ain't Too Proud: The Life and Times of The Temptations*. A longtime member of Vanessa Williams' band for more than 25 years, Keith Robinson is currently recording his debut blues album, *Innerssippi Blues*, featuring Bobby Rush, Christone 'Kingfish' Ingram, and other acclaimed artists

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www.BobbyRushBluesman.com

www.SlippinThroughTheCracks.com

www.NewStageTheatre.com

www.AperturePR.com