



# JAMES COTTON

★Recorded almost 30 solo albums to date

★Mentored by blues harmonica legend, **Sonny Boy Williamson II**. As a boy, Cotton was at Sonny Boy's side from the age of nine until he was fifteen

★Toured with **Muddy Waters** for a dozen years and became the leader of his backing band

★Has performed on stage with music icons such as **Janis Joplin, The Grateful Dead, Led Zeppelin, B.B. King, Howlin' Wolf, Santana, Steve Miller, Freddie King**, and many others

★2014 **Grammy Nominee** for *Cotton Mouth Man* (Best Blues Album). Cotton is a **5-time Grammy Nominee**, and a **Grammy Winner** for his album, *Deep In The Blues*

★2014 **Blues Music Award Nominee** for 5 separate awards, tying for the most nominations of any artist in 2014. Cotton is a **9-time Blues Music Award Winner**

★2014 Honored with a **Lifetime Achievement Award** by the **Mississippi Governor and Mississippi Arts Commission**

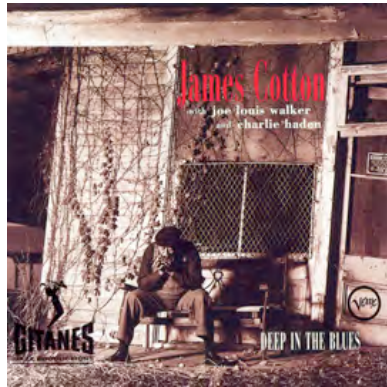
★2013 Featured on the cover of **Living Blues Magazine** with a **ten-page cover story** (April 2013 Issue)

★2010 Honored at New York's **Lincoln Center** where his friends **Hubert Sumlin, Pinetop Perkins, Taj Mahal, Shemekia Copeland** and others paid tribute to him in an all-star concert

★2008 Performed with **Ben Harper and Paul Shaffer (conducting)** and the **CBS Orchestra** at the **Rock And Roll Hall of Fame** induction ceremony for harmonica great, **Little Walter**, broadcast nationally on **VH1 Classic**

★2008 **Living Blues Award Winner** for Most Outstanding Musician (Harmonica) - his second win in the category

★2006 **Blues Hall of Fame Inductee**



THE ROSEBUD AGENCY

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# JAMES COTTON

## Cotton Mouth Man

Alligator Records, May 7, 2013

**GRAMMY NOMINEE**

**BLUES GIANT JAMES COTTON RELEASES NEW ALBUM ON MAY 7**

**GUESTS INCLUDE GREGG ALLMAN, JOE BONAMASSA, RUTHIE FOSTER, WARREN HAYNES, DELBERT McCLINTON AND KEB MO**

*Rolling Stone* says Grammy Award-winning blues harmonica legend James "Mr. Superharp" Cotton is "among the greats of all time....He blazes on harp with brilliant virtuosity." On May 7, 2013 Alligator Records will release *Cotton Mouth Man*, a joyous celebration of Cotton's 69 years as a professional musician (beginning at age nine). Recorded in Nashville and produced by Grammy-winning producer/ songwriter/ drummer Tom Hambridge (Buddy Guy, Joe Louis Walker, Susan Tedeschi), the album is a trip through sounds and scenes from Cotton's long and storied career.

Cotton co-wrote seven of the tracks with Hambridge (who co-wrote five additional tracks). The songs were inspired by Cotton's colorful and sometimes perilous life and his memories of the Mississippi Delta, Sonny Boy Williamson II, Memphis, Sun Records, Chicago, and Muddy Waters. Throughout the CD Cotton's blast-furnace harmonica sound and larger-than-life personality are front and center.

Helping Cotton tell his stories and showcase his music are guests Gregg Allman, Joe Bonamassa, Ruthie Foster, Warren Haynes, Delbert McClinton, and Keb Mo. Other vocals are handled by Darrell Nulisch, who has been singing in Cotton's band for many years. Members of Cotton's road band -- Jerry Porter, Noel Neal, and Tom Holland -- are also on board for some songs. Forming the core of the backing band on the CD are Hambridge

(drums), Rob McNelley (guitar), Chuck Leavell (keyboards), and Glenn Worf (bass). Tommy MacDonald and Colin Linden each add guitar to one track. Cotton, who after a bout with throat cancer turned the vocal duties over to others, was inspired by the sessions to return to the microphone, singing his own Bonnie Blue (the name of the plantation where he was born), and making

*Cotton Mouth Man* the most personal, celebratory and just plain fun recording of his seven-decade career.

According to Cotton, "I feel so happy about the music in this album. The blues is all about feeling -- if I don't feel it, I can't play it. My hope is that everyone who listens feels it. I know I sure did!" Cotton has recently been signed by the prestigious Rosebud Agency and will be touring the world in support of the album.

Cotton's history is now the stuff of legend. Born on a cotton plantation in Tunica, Mississippi on July 1, 1935, he learned harmonica directly from Sonny Boy Williamson II (Rice Miller) as a small child. He toured with Howlin' Wolf, recorded for Sun Records, and spent 12 years with Muddy Waters before stepping out on his own. Leading his own band, he rose to the very top of the blues and rock scenes, touring non-stop and earning his reputation as one of the most powerful live blues performers in the world, a man who could literally suck the reeds out of the harmonica from the pure force of his playing.

He first recorded under his own name for the *Chicago/The Blues/Today!* series on Vanguard, and along with Otis Spann, cut *The Blues Never Die!* for Prestige. He made his first solo albums -- three for Verve and one for Vanguard -- in the late 1960s, with bands featuring outstanding musicians, including famed guitarist Luther Tucker. With his gale-force sound and fearless boogie band (later featuring Matt "Guitar" Murphy), it wasn't long before he was adopted by the burgeoning hippie audience as one of their own. Cotton shared stages with Janis Joplin, The Grateful Dead, Led Zeppelin, B.B. King, Santana, Steve Miller, Freddie King and many others.

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Cotton was universally renowned as one of the hardest-touring and most popular blues artists of the 1960s and 1970s. His acrobatic showmanship (he often did somersaults on stage) and full-throttle energy kept him in demand at concert halls all over the country. He played the Fillmore East in New York, the Fillmore West in San Francisco and every major rock and blues venue in between. During the 1970s, he cut three albums for Buddah and one for Capitol. He rejoined his old boss Muddy Waters for the series of Muddy albums produced by Johnny Winter, starting with *Hard Again* in 1977. Cotton also guested on recordings by Koko Taylor and many others. He was joined on his own albums by stars like Todd Rundgren, Steve Miller and Johnny Winter.

Cotton signed with Alligator Records in 1984, releasing *High Compression* and *Live From Chicago: Mr. Superharp Himself!!!* (which earned him the first of his four Grammy nominations). In 1990 he joined fellow Chicago harp masters for the all-star release *Harp Attack!*. He won a Grammy Award in 1996 for his Verve album, *Deep In The Blues*, was inducted into the Blues Hall Of Fame in 2006, and was honored by the Smithsonian Institution, which added one of his harmonicas to their permanent collection. During the 2000s Cotton has continued recording and touring relentlessly, playing clubs, concert halls and festivals all over the world, electrifying audiences wherever he performs. Cotton's 2009 return-to-Alligator release, *Giant*, was Grammy-nominated. *USA Today* said, "Since 1966 James Cotton has been carrying the Chicago sound to the world. On *Giant*, he pours 75 years of living into that harmonica and out comes devastating and powerful blasts of notes."

In June 2010, Cotton was honored at New York's Lincoln Center, where his friends **Hubert Sumlin, Pinetop Perkins, Taj Mahal, Shemekia Copeland** and others paid tribute to him in an all-star concert. There James Cotton played to yet another sold-out venue, with fans cheering the man known worldwide as "Mr. Superharp," an undisputed giant of the blues. He continues to tour nationally and internationally with his own band.

*The New York Daily News* calls Cotton "the greatest living blues harmonica player." *The New York Times* adds, "Cotton helped define modern blues harmonica with his moaning, wrenching phrases and his train-whistle wails."

**Cotton Mouth Man** proves James Cotton's high-compression blues harmonica playing is a true force of nature, while his songs and stories are a living history of the blues. As *The San Francisco Examiner* says, "James Cotton is an inimitable blues legend. His wailing harmonica blows them away. His improvisations on the blues are full of fun and good humor. The blues don't get much better."

## JAMES COTTON Cotton Mouth Man PRESS QUOTES

"A world-class harmonica-playing bluesman... An upbeat, warm blues album boasting fine musicianship and the same undeniable spirit Cotton has displayed for close to 60 years now."

- **Rolling Stone**

"Mr. Cotton, with his aggressive, rock-ready blues harp - particularly as recorded in the 1960 Newport Jazz Festival version of 'Got My Mojo Workin' - helped spark electric bluesmania in England... his remarkable instrumental prowess and singular personal saga have continued, and both are the focus of his latest CD, 'Cotton Mouth Man'."

- **Wall Street Journal**

"To work with Mr. Cotton, you're working with a real bluesman, and it's an honor... It's a huge honor and a huge responsibility to sing on a James Cotton track, you know. I felt on that track like I was representing the voice of James Cotton. I was trying to channel his spirit, in the song, and his story. And sing as if I were him."

- **Keb' Mo' on NPR**

"Listen to Cotton's harmonica playing on the album - gritty, gutsy, ferociously uninhibited - and you're hearing what great blues harp work is all about. No wonder they call him 'Superharp.'"

- **Chicago Tribune**

"the living embodiment of the Chicago blues... Cotton is amazing on these cuts, his harp blasts full of passion, power, and enough pure energy to light up the night sky. Cotton may not do somersaults on stage anymore, but his harp lines do, weaving in and out of these songs like a charging Chicago freight train... Cotton may be cruising in on 80 years of age, but he's just released one of the best albums of his career."

- **AllMusic**

"Throughout, Cotton unfurls his legendary multi-octave harmonic prowess (to say nothing of his hurricane-like wind power) with undiminished force."

- **Living Blues**

"He may have lost his voice, but his sound is still as strong as ever. James Cotton's latest Alligator release, Cotton Mouth Man, shows him at the top of his powers, his trademark waaaaa harpblast still a formidable force..."

Cotton Mouth Man is as good as anything he's ever done, proving that despite his vocal hardship, James Cotton is still one of the greatest blues communicators of all times."

- **No Depression**

"Cotton Mouth Man sees him in fine form, his playing still as incendiary as it's ever been, the interplay with his guests fiery and real."

- **Rhythms Magazine Australia**

"Cotton plays with huge power and feeling and, for all the great help, there's never any doubt whose album it is."

- **Mojo Magazine, 4 Star Review**

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## PRESS QUOTES

World renowned harmonica player James Cotton blew up his usual storm on harmonica. His spirit, stamina and sound make for a potent combination. ...he delivers with authority.

- *Washington Post*

Cotton is a key link on the chain of great blues harmonica players – Sonny Boy Williamson, Little Walter, Junior Wells. Sometimes he out-rocks the Rolling Stones.

- *Chicago Tribune*

Inimitable blues-harmonica legend James Cotton conducts a definitive blues seminar. Mr. Superharp's wailing harmonica blows them away with his jazzy improvisations on the blues. Cotton comes on with shrill wails, churning rhythms, mellow little blues riffs....Good humor and fun....The blues don't get much better.

- *San Francisco Examiner*

James Cotton helped define modern blues harmonica with his moaning, wrenching phrases and his train-whistle wails.

- *New York Times*

James Cotton blazes out on harp with remarkable, rocking and brilliant virtuosity....Tough, outstanding, uncanny, gruff, macho, delightful, unexpected, rollicking South Side blues and rock 'n' roll, Cotton deserves to be ranked with Sonny Boy Williamson, Sonny Terry, Junior Wells as among the greats of all time.

- *Rolling Stone*

Since 1966 James Cotton has been carrying the Chicago sound to the world. On *Giant*, he pours 75 years of living into that harmonica and out comes devastating and powerful blasts of notes undiminished by age.

- *USA TODAY*

The finest blues harmonica player alive.

- *Boston Herald*

Legendary master of the blues harmonica. Wowed, you will be.

- *Time Out NY*

Sweat and grit ...Cotton can blow down doors with Chicago style blues.

- *Austin Chronicle*

Cotton can blow like hell...dazzling.

- *Chicago Sun-Times*

A living musical legend, Cotton is at the top of his game. *Giant* is the work of a master...Essential, fiery and propulsive. Cotton brings the heat with his true mastery of the harmonica.

Magnificent, poignant and beautiful.

- *Blurt*

Distinctive wail...fat-toned style. Sheer propulsive power...Cotton can drive a song with his harp, squeezing out a flurry of notes. His true genius is his ability to select the perfect note. Cotton is a virtuoso of the blues. *Giant* is one of the best albums of the year.

- *Blues Revue*

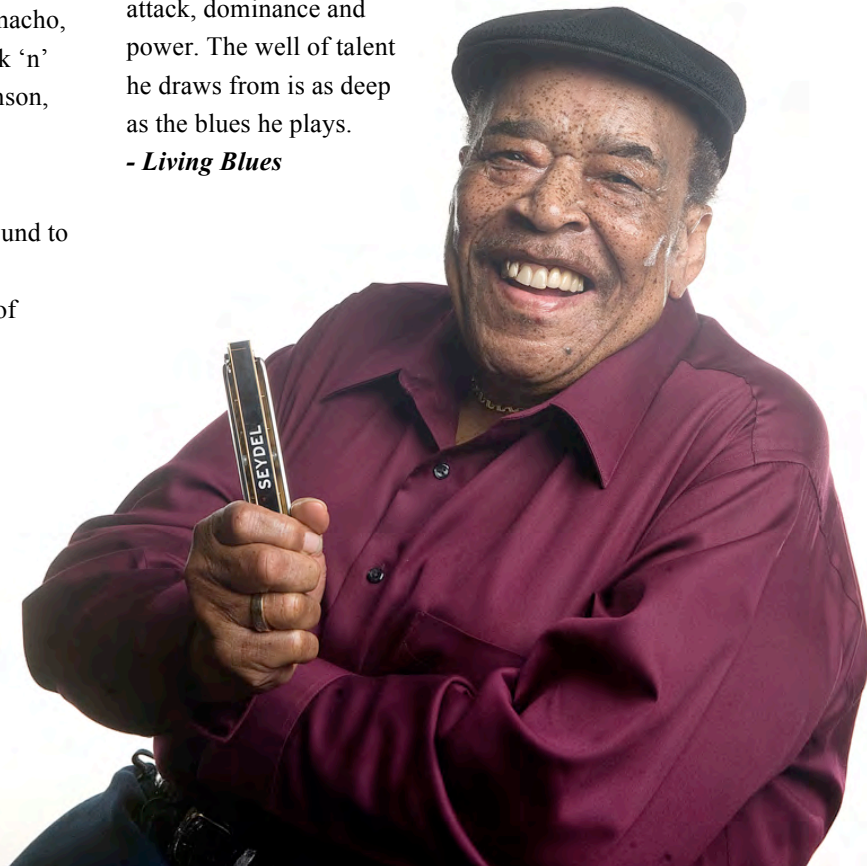
Cotton's solos are forceful, squarely stabbing the notes and chords. His phrases are full of tonal variety, summoning a steamship, a train whistle, a saxophone, a hurricane and an octave-jumping bird. Cotton's not through creating by a long shot.

- *DownBeat*

Cotton's long, fabled career is unrivaled in terms of its historic import...a name that is mentioned alongside some of the very best performers ever to play the instrument. Cotton's playing has cemented his place in the top tier of blues harmonica masters: that muscular tone, those brawny wails, the stinging high note bends.

...sends a shiver down the spine. Fiery, inimitable, ferocious attack, dominance and power. The well of talent he draws from is as deep as the blues he plays.

- *Living Blues*



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