



Jontavious Willis
Artist Information Sheet
All Ages

Artist Biography:
Jontavious Willis

Hailing from Greenville, Georgia, Jontavious grew up singing Gospel music at the Mount Pilgrim Baptist Church with his grandfather. From an early age, Jontavious demonstrated a talent and passion for music. At 14, he became hooked on the Blues as a musical style and sought out blues elders to teach him songs, stories, and techniques. He still resides in Georgia and has a deep connection to the rural way of life from his childhood.

Tradition:
Blues

Blues is a music genre originated from the southern United States starting in the 1860s by African Americans. The musical roots of the Blues stem from African American songs and spirituals incorporating religious music, stories, traditional songs, call-and-responses, shouts, chants and rhymes. One of the most influential styles of American music, The Blues influenced all later American musical styles like hip hop, rock and roll and R & B. The Blues is still alive and well, thanks largely to young artists like Jontavious Willis.

Place:
Greenville, Georgia

Jontavious was born and raised in Greenville, Georgia - a small, tight knit community with a population less than 1,500. Though less than 60 miles from the major metropolitan area of Atlanta, Greenville is a rural community, where neighbors know one another and their families. Jontavious now resides in Atlanta but returns to visit family in Greenville often and has remained deeply rooted in the community there.

Jontavious is the first major blues musician from Greenville, but Atlanta has long been a gathering point for rural Georgia Blues musicians to connect and make a name for themselves. In the 1920s' and 30s', Atlanta arguably boasted one of the most musically fertile blues scenes in the country being home to recording artists such as Blind Willie McTell, Barbecue Bob, Peg leg Howell, and Curley Weaver.