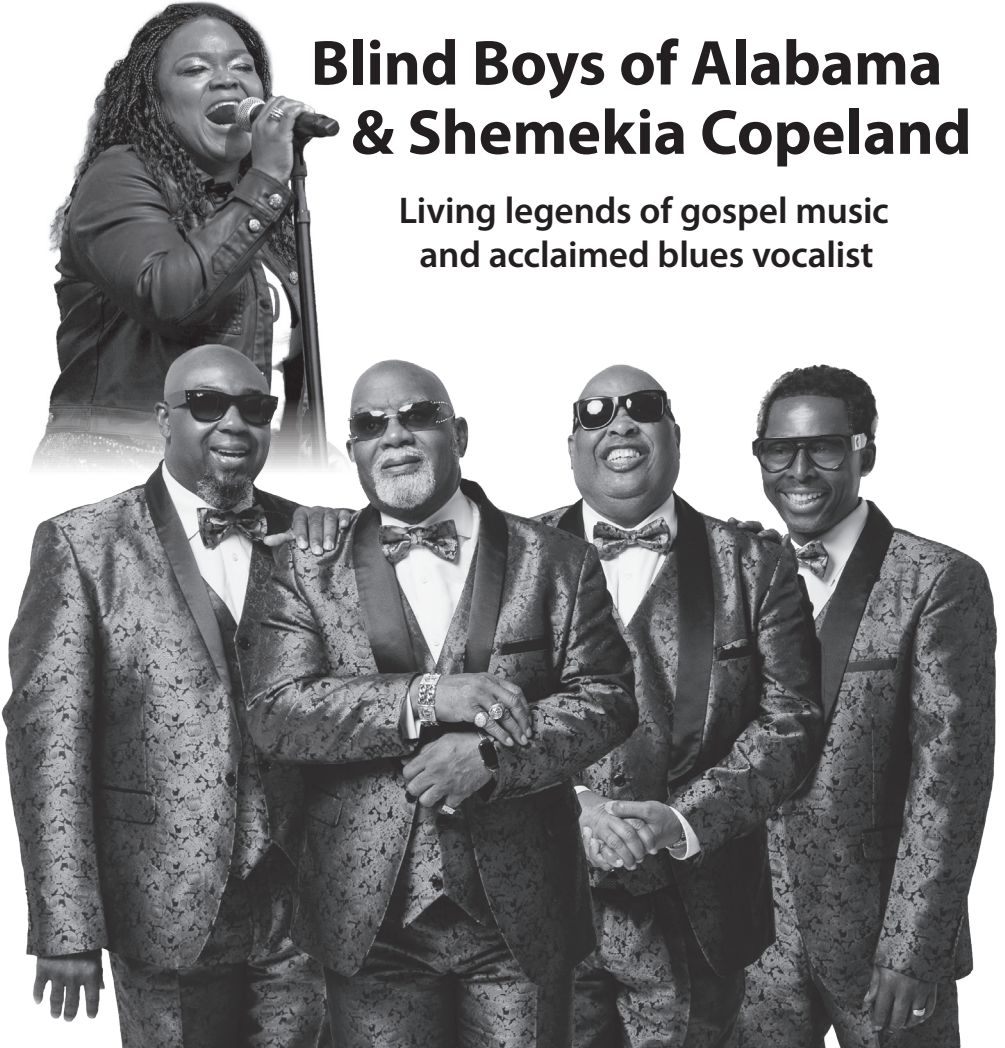


Friday  
**APR 4**  
7:30 pm

# Blind Boys of Alabama & Shemekia Copeland

Living legends of gospel music  
and acclaimed blues vocalist



This event is made possible through the generous support of Dick and Kathleen Raney.



*Expect rock-concert sound levels at this performance. To accommodate individual listening needs, ear plugs are available at the Audience Services Desk in the lobby before and during the show.*

**There will be a 20-minute intermission during this performance in between artists.**

### **Shemekia Copeland**

Shemekia Copeland possesses one of the most instantly recognizable and deeply soulful roots music voices of our time. The multi-Grammy nominee is beloved and honored worldwide for the fearlessness, honesty and humor of her revelatory songs, as well as for her winning, engaging personality. The *Chicago Tribune* says, "Copeland is the greatest female blues vocalist working today. There's no mistaking the majesty of her instrument, nor the ferocity of her delivery."

Born and raised in Harlem in 1979, Shemekia Copeland first stepped on stage with her famous father at New York's Cotton Club when she was eight. Upon release of her Alligator Records debut, *Turn The Heat Up*, in 1998 when she was only 18, Copeland instantly became a blues and R&B force to be reckoned with. *The New York Times* and CNN, among many others, praised her talent, larger-than-life personality, dynamic, authoritative voice and true star power. With each subsequent release, Copeland's music continued to evolve. From her debut through 2005's *The Soul Truth*, Copeland earned eight Blues Music Awards and a host of *Living Blues Awards*. 2000's *Wicked* received the first of her five Grammy nominations—with 2012's *33 1/3* and 2015's *Outskirts Of Love* to follow suit with nominations for Best Blues Album.

With 2018's *America's Child*, Copeland brought out the first of her celebrated trilogy concerning the state of the world, sung from her perspective as a young, Black woman and new mother. *MOJO* magazine named *America's Child* the #1 blues release of 2018. It won both the Blues Music Award and the *Living Blues Award* for Album of the Year. In addition to earning a Grammy Award nomination, Copeland's groundbreaking 2020 follow-up, *Uncivil War*, was named the 2020 Blues Album of the Year by *DownBeat*, *MOJO* and *Living Blues* magazines. "Shemekia Copeland is a powerhouse," said *Rolling Stone*. "She can do no wrong." She received her fifth Grammy nomination for *Done Come Too Far* (2022), which closed the trilogy with a searing set of truth-to-power, rock and Hill country blues-fueled songs. On Copeland's new album, the Grammy-nominated *Blame It On Eve* (2024), the songs all hit hard, with jaw-dropping performances that instantly take hold and command repeated listening.

Copeland has performed thousands of gigs at clubs, festivals and concert halls all over the world, and has appeared in films, on national television, NPR, and has been the subject of major feature stories in hundreds of magazines, newspapers and internet publications. She's sung with Bonnie Raitt, Keith Richards, Carlos Santana, Dr. John, James Cotton and many others, and has shared a bill with The Rolling Stones.

## Blind Boys of Alabama

The Blind Boys of Alabama are recognized worldwide as living legends of gospel music. Celebrated by The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and The Recording Academy/Grammys with Lifetime Achievement Awards, inducted into the Gospel Music Hall of Fame, and winners of six Grammy Awards, they have attained the highest levels of achievement in a career that spans over 70 years. The Blind Boys are known for crossing multiple musical boundaries, with their remarkable interpretations of everything from traditional gospel favorites to contemporary spiritual material by songwriters such as Eric Clapton, Prince and Tom Waits. They have appeared on recordings with many artists, including Lou Reed, Peter Gabriel, Bonnie Raitt, Willie Nelson, Aaron Neville, Susan Tedeschi, Ben Harper, Patty Griffin and Taj Mahal.

The group released *Echoes of the South* in 2023, which finds the Gospel Music Hall of Fame inductees coming home to honor those they've lost, in a bold declaration of how far they still plan to go. The 11-song collection is a portrait of perseverance from a group well-versed in overcoming incredible odds—from singing for pocket change in the Jim Crow South, to performing for three different American presidents, soundtracking the Civil Rights Movement and helping define modern gospel music as we know it. Recently, their decades-long mission of spreading light and love has taken on an even deeper context, as they've reckoned with the loss of two of their own, Paul Beasley and Benjamin Moore, both longtime members of the Blind Boys tight-knit family. *Echoes of the South* is released in their honor, as well as for the group's recently retired leader Jimmy Carter, and keeps the Blind Boys' long-held mission statement at its core: "As long as everybody gives all that they have to give and we sing songs that touch the heart, we'll live on forever."

In 2022, their collaborative recording with Béla Fleck was nominated for a Grammy. The collaboration, "I Wish I Knew How It Would Feel to Be Free," powerfully reimagines the anthem of the Civil Rights Movement originally made famous by Nina Simone. They also have had collaborative recordings and coinciding tours with both Marc Cohn and the afro-pop duo Amadou & Mariam. In 2023, they garnered another Grammy nomination for Best Americana Single for "The Message," featuring Black Violin.

2024 started off with a return to the Grammy Awards with three nominations and one win for Best Roots Gospel Album—*Echoes of the South*. This was followed by a sold-out tour in Australia and a sizzling performance with Sir Tom Jones during the Bluesfest Byron Bay (Australia), where video of their rehearsal reached 750K+ views in 48 hours on social platforms. The definitive book, titled *Spirit of the Century*, was released in March 2024. It's an insider history of the Blind Boys of Alabama, the longest-running group in American music, and the untold story of their world, written with band members and key musical colleagues.