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All-star concert to benefit musicians' families

Legendary acts from Springfield to perform at Shrine.

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An all-star concert in October will bring together some of the most prominent bands from the past 30 years of Springfield's music scene.

Billed as The Concert to Celebrate Their Lives, the Oct. 16 event at the Shrine Mosque will honor Don Shipps and Bill Brown, who died in a house fire in late July.

All proceeds from the event will benefit the musicians' families. Brown has two teenage sons, while Shipps has a grown son and daughter.

Besides surviving members of the Misstakes and the Titanic Blues Band — the groups most closely associated with Shipps and Brown — the lineup will include the Ozark Mountain Daredevils, Fools Face, the Morells and the Pawn Shop.

"It has the capability of just being huge," said Steve Clingan of the Misstakes, who will make an announcement about the concert tonight at the Greater Ozarks Blues Festival.

Details will be given about 8:45 p.m., just before headliner Delbert McClinton performs at the main stage, said Howard Cotner, who is producing the concert.

The Concert to Celebrate Their Lives isn't the first tribute show for Shipps or Brown, but it will be the largest to date. Most of the headline bands play only occasionally, and they have never shared a bill before.

John Dillon, guitarist and singer with the Ozark Mountain Daredevils, said Shipps and Brown epitomized the camaraderie of the Springfield scene.

"The loss of these two people was felt across the entire spectrum of the music scene no matter what kind of music you play or how old you are," said Dillon, who began his career with the Daredevils in the late 1960s. "... It has to do with the power of these two individuals' dedication not only to their craft, but to the place where they lived."

Brown, a guitarist, was a member of the Daredevils for the past 15 years. He was a founding member of the Misstakes, which toured nationally and released three albums in the early 1980s.

Shipps, a bassist, played in the fusion group Granny's Bathwater in the 1970s. The group toured regionally and eventually became the backing band for Martha Reeves of Martha and the Vandellas.

In the early 1990s, Shipps founded the Titanic Blues Band, which was popular across the Midwest. Brown joined the group last year.

The idea for a formal benefit concert was tossed around not long after the musicians' deaths, Cotner said. A committee was formed with the idea that every one involved would donate their time.

Corporate sponsors include Cantrell Barnes Printing, which will print all of the promotional materials, and printable goods manufacturer Alore, which will donate T-shirts for the event.

The Shrine Mosque provided the venue, charging only a \$500 fee for clean-up costs, Cotner said.

Organizers took time to put together the concert so acts with name recognition in the region could sign on, Cotner said.

"We really want to make it a first-class benefit for these guys," he said.

Dillon, who is not one of the show's organizers, called the efforts of those involved inspiring in the face of tragedy.

"Everybody involved, from the people who operate the venues on down, are making such a sacrifice to make sure this is a success," Dillon said. "It says a lot about the community."



Brown



Shipps

For Clingan, who was involved in the planning, the show is about giving back.

"Rarely are (artists) set up monetarily for a tragedy," he said. "The bottom line is they gave so much of themselves to us that we felt like the least we could do would be to give back to them, not only by honoring the musical memories and love we had for each other, but to make sure there was something there for their children."

Fools Face built a loyal following across the Midwest in the 1970s and still get together once a year in December for reunion concerts. The Morells are legendary roots-rock revivalists. The band's only album, 1981's "Shake and Push," shot them to national fame.

The Pawn Shop includes guitarist and singer Norman Jackson and harmonica player Clay Goldstein, who were longtime members of the Titanic Blues Band until forming their own group.

More bands are scheduled, Cotner said, and the complete lineup will be announced tonight.

The concert will be a rare treat for music fans, Clingan said, one not likely to be duplicated.

"You would be hard-pressed to get this type of talent in the same venue again," he said. "It won't happen again. Not like this."