

COMMENTARY: MEMPHIS-MUSIC WEB ACTION

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FLYER READERS

It is a good thing no one is expecting anything from the Memphis Music Commission's Web site as they cannot seem to find the extension cord to plug it in. It has been almost two years since self-proclaimed "technology guy" Rey Fleming took over the Commission. It has been almost *three(!)* years since they updated their old site. Fleming promised delivery of a new site by this past January. A new site is still not available.

Meanwhile there are many Web sites created for Memphis musicians, sending Memphis music and music information to the rest of the world. Soulsville has a few relatively new entrants. Let's start with one of the Memphis Horns--Wayne Jackson. Jackson has had his site at www.sweetmedicinemusic.com (or www.wayneljackson.com) for several years. Currently Jackson's site features news about his fantastic autobiography, *In My Wildest Dreams: A Collection of Rock and Roll Tales, Vol.*, covering his forty (or so) year music career. While Jackson, a West Memphis native, is not a major star, he is a major player in the history of Memphis music--from the early days of Stax Records and the Mar-Keys through the '80s playing with Robert Cray and continuing today as a much in demand session star with acts like Sting. Jackson is one of Memphis's few musicians who has had a continuous career through good times and bad, and his perspective as a session musician on many famous recordings is precious. *Wildest Dreams* is an excellent, down-home, up-close look at many of the crazy music scenarios Jackson has encountered. While some of the stories have been told before by other authors, Jackson pulls no punches and provides some of the best laughs in first-hand accounts of Memphis music history. In addition there are many behind-the-scenes anecdotes about Jackson's career never written about previously. Each copy of the book comes personalized with an autograph from Jackson with a total of four volumes promised. If all are as good as this first edition, they will be must reads for any Memphis music fan.

The lovely and talented Hi Records soul singer **Ann Peebles** was recently spotted in Soulsville central at the Stax Museum's Funky Films and Soundtracks exhibit opening. Ms. Peebles has a new Web site at the hard to remember address www.acousticstour.com. The site includes new tour dates as well as a hot, sultry new song (hard to believe it's her first new one in eight years!) called "Chase These Blues Away." Peebles said that it was time for her to tour again as it has been too long since she has been on the road. She feels like there is more demand and appreciation for soul music now than there has been for many years. In addition to being featured at the Barbican Festival in London in April, she has a gig lined up in New York with more dates to come.

Soulsville and the **Stax Museum** itself also have a new Web site at www.soulsvilleusa.com. While I am not a fan of the inappropriately garish color scheme, the slow loading, or the dearth of information about the soul artists (For a better take on the history of Stax as well as current updates on Stax artists, check out <http://staxrecords.free.fr>), the site does contain information about the museum's current programs and a nifty virtual tour. Most exciting is the new Last Mondays in Studio A series at the museum, featuring former LeMoyne Gardens resident and Stax star William Bell later this month. While these parties are expensive for each event (\$20), members get in free! So these events are a great incentive to become a member of the museum at a \$45 membership for a year. In addition, Memphis rarely hosts any events on Monday nights as exciting as this series promises to be.

Finally, one cannot discuss Memphis music and culture without praising the soul food of this city. While not a Web site specifically about music, www.dixiedining.com is one of my favorite new sites, featuring tasty Mom & Pops restaurants all over the South. Gary Saunders, a food nut and Memphis Riverkings's Vice President of Sales, created this fascinating Web site and is the premier eater involved. This summer Saunders will release a book called *Dixie Dining* based on the restaurants featured on his site. Be sure to bookmark this site for your next Southern road trip!

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