

Billboard Top 10 Blues Artist, IBC Winner and JUNO Nominee, Canadian singer/guitarist JW-Jones is known for his high-energy shows!

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## JW-JONES - FULL BIO

JW-Jones – Live: Raw, real, and from the heart.

The improv magic you hear on JW-Jones' 10th album, *Live*, is the spark that has awakened new sonic frontiers for the veteran Maple Blues Award-winning Ottawa bluesman.

"I cranked up my overdrive in concert one night for fun, and it opened up this new world of ideas for me," admits the JUNO-nominated Jones, whose searing axemanship has been praised by Blues Revue Magazine as "a fluid amalgam of T-Bone Walker's big, bright chords; Johnny 'Guitar' Watson's slashing leads and Clarence 'Gatemouth' Brown's jazzy sting."

"I felt a new sense of freedom." That sense of freedom resonates through *Live*, an exciting collection of 11 previously-unreleased songs lovingly recorded over two nights at a sold-out Gatineau, QC theatre by producer Zach Allen, fresh off his Best Contemporary Blues Album Grammy Award victory for the Taj Mahal/Keb' Mo collaboration *TajMo*.

"This album is a big departure for me," Jones explains. "Especially on songs like 'I Don't Believe A Word You Say' and 'Moanin' at Midnight:' both of those songs clock in at over six minutes and I'm playing that overdriven guitar in a way I've literally never played on record before."

As he continues to evolve as one of Canada's most versatile bluesmen, with one foot in the terra firma of the traditional blues espoused by the likes of Howlin' Wolf sideman Hubert Sumlin and harmonica legend Charlie Musselwhite (who both guested on Jones' memorable *Midnight Memphis Sun*, recorded at the historic Sun Studio) and blues contemporaries Robert Cray, for whom the JW-Jones band has occasionally opened, he continues to challenge and raise his standards through his recordings and the 130 dates on average yearly that he clocks in on the road.

With the last JW-Jones studio project, the Colin Linden-produced *High Temperature*, capturing the coveted Memphis Blues Foundation's International Blues Challenge honours for Best Self-Released CD, the frequent resident of Billboard's Top 10 Blues charts and Canadian roots radio favourite continues to accelerate his career momentum to new heights, whether it's as a personally-requested sit-in with the likes of blues legend Buddy Guy, opening for blues rock

icons Johnny Winter and George Thorogood or entertaining thrilled audiences in 23 countries and four continents.

“Audiences get excited because it’s all so organic,” notes Jones, who stretches out on Live with his Goldtop Gibson Les Paul. “The blues is such a universal language, and the fact that we never play the same solo twice just adds to that vibrant energy, which I think we really capture on this album.”

Live also embraces Jones’ continuing appreciation of modern days blues music, best illustrated by the album’s opening number, a rendition of Robert Cray’s “A Memo (Nothin’ But Love.)”

“The first time I heard that tune, written by Robert’s bass player, Richard Cousins, I fell in love with it,” says Jones. “It’s a really great contemporary blues song because it doesn’t sound traditional and it’s got a great chorus and harmonies. Robert saw a video of our version and gave us the thumbs-up.” It also represents progress, reflecting Jones’ growing modern tastes.

“When I first started out, I studied old blues records and wanted to be accepted by my heroes. I wanted them to notice that I was staying authentic to the sound. Over the years things have changed, and I want to play and write music that moves me, even if it doesn’t sound like a Chicago blues tune cut in 1956. I feel that I need to play the music that speaks to me personally.”

An additional highlight is the inclusion of the JW-Jones showstopper – the 17-song medley that rifles through snippets of classic guitar riffs backed by the energetic support of 2018 Maple Blues Award Bassist of the Year Laura Greenberg and the inimitable Will Laurin on drums. “It’s been a staple of our live show for years,” says Jones. “People have been asking us to record it forever, so now we’ve finally captured it for everyone to enjoy!”

And everyone will enjoy Live, an album for the ages that captures the JW-Jones lightning in a bottle.

– Nick Krewen

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[Nick Krewen is a freelance contributor for Toronto Star, Globe & Mail, Grammy.com, and Billboard]

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