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North Mississippi Hill Country Blues—with a New York Accent: PORK CHOP WILLIE to Play Clarksdale's Juke Joint Festival

*NYC Hill Country Group Adds Blues Violin for a Unique Blend of
Down-Home and Up-Town; New CD Releases in June*

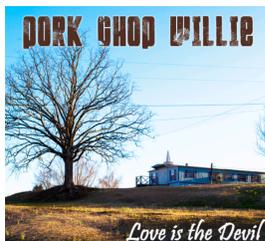
[NASHVILLE, Tenn. - March 11, 2014] New York-based blues band PORK CHOP WILLIE, featuring Bill Hammer on guitar and vocals and Melissa Tong on violin, will travel from their Big Apple home to Clarksdale, MS for the famed [Juke Joint Festival](#) the weekend of April 11 and 12.

In Clarksdale, the band will be joined by their Mississippi rhythm section anchors, drummer Kinny Kimbrough and bassist Eric Deaton, for shows at the Juke Joint Chapel at the Shack Up Inn (Friday, April 11, 5:00pm) and Red's Blues Club (Saturday, April 12, 5:00pm).

This trip will be the fifth time the band has played the legendary festival, and they look forward to it every year because it gives them an opportunity to connect with people who make the music that is their passion. Bill Hammer (the original Pork Chop Willie) became an ardent fan of hill country blues after catching a Jimbo Mathus show in New York—a life-changing event for him. Hammer made his first pilgrimage to Mississippi, played with some of the legends of the genre, then reconstituted his own band back in New York to focus in on the music of the hills of North Mississippi, even hosting a regular Hill Country Music Nights series at Harlem's Shrine World Music Venue. And in a stroke of genius, Hammer brought in the classically trained, musically adventurous, Melissa Tong on violin, adding a whole new dimension to the traditional blues genre.

That inspired sound has given rise to a brand of music that brings fresh heat to the Mississippi hill country blues, blending in elements of Americana, rock, alt-country and even classical. Pork Chop Willie's goal is to spread the deep-soul joy of the blues of the North Mississippi hills to the world.

“Right now there are just a few people playing this style of music,” Hammer says. “It’s so honest and emotional that we can’t help but speak from our hearts when we’re playing. Even when we’re covering a song by one of the style’s masters, the form is so open that we can make it our own. This music changed my life and put me more in touch with myself. To the extent that Pork Chop Willie can, I’d like to expose more people to it and possibly do that for them, too.”



New Album 'Love is the Devil' Releases Nationally in June—In an Exclusive for the Juke Joint Festival, Preview CDs Will Be Available at Clarksdale Shows

Pork Chop Willie's national debut album, *Love is the Devil*, is set for release on June 24, but Juke Joint Festival-goers will be able to preview the album before the general public. Advance copies of the CD will be available at their shows at the Juke Joint Chapel at the Shack Up Inn (Friday, April 11, 5:00 pm) and Red's Blues Club (Saturday, April 12, 5:00 pm). The 13 songs on the album, written mostly by Bill Hammer, were recorded in Water Valley, Mississippi (Black Wings Studio), and Manhattan, New York (Dubway Studios). Media preview tracks and more can be found [here](#).

(Photos at top): Playing at the 2010 Juke Joint Festival, Clarksdale, MS; Bill and Melissa in New York)