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North Mississippi Hill Country Blues—with a New York Accent: PORK CHOP WILLIE to Play Nashville April 13

NYC 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 for a series of gigs in Mississippi and Tennessee, beginning with the legendary Juke Joint Festival in Clarksdale and finishing up with a stop in Nashville for the **Sunday Night Juke Joint series, sponsored by the Nashville Blues**

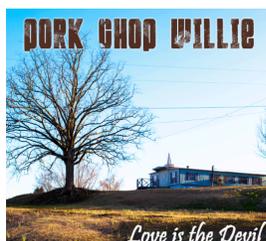
Society, at the **Old Time Pickin' Parlor**, 1200 Clinton Street, **Sunday, April 13, from 7:00 to 9:00 pm**. Also on the bill that night will be Ryan Lee Crosby. And while there is no cover, there will be that Music City staple: a tip jar.

This will be the first time Pork Chop Willie has played in Nashville. They have been performing at the Juke Joint Festival for several years, and it was there they struck up a friendship with Nashville hill country bluesman Ted Drozdowski (of The Scissormen). The two bands have shared the stage a number of times since, and this year, Drozdowski convinced the band that Pork Chop Willie should make a Nashville stop, too.

Guitarist-singer Bill Hammer (the original Pork Chop Willie) looks forward to playing the Juke Joint Festival every year because it gives him an opportunity to connect with people who make the music that is his passion. Hammer became an ardent fan of hill country blues after catching a Jimbo Mathus show in New York—a life-changing event for him. He made his first pilgrimage to Mississippi, played with some of the legends of the genre, then re-constituted 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—Exclusive Nashville Preview at the Show. Pork Chop Willie's national debut album, *Love is the Devil*, is set for release on June 24, but Nashville will be able to preview the album at the April 13 show. 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, New York)

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