

The velveteen voice of Big Walter Smith will once again grace the stage at the Bayfront Blues Festival, as it has every year since its inaugural debut in 1989. He is so popular in Duluth that the mayor proclaimed August 8, 1997, to be ‘Big Walter Smith Day’ in the city and in 1998 the Minneapolis Mayor proclaimed June 11th as ‘Big Walter Smith Day.’ Last year Smith released another CD titled *Running Out of Time* (BWS Productions 2006). This makes the sixth in a series from BWS including other titles: *Big Storm Comin’ Live at the Dugout* (2006 re-issue on CD), *Groovin’ –Live* (2001 BWS), *Midnight Express* – 1998, *Brother to the Blues* – 1994 BWS&GM Music, and *Big Storm Comin’—Live at the Whiskey!* (1991 BWS&GM Music). Whether it’s Resolutions, Proclamations, Certificates, Best-of-everything Awards, or their Hall of Fame induction.... The “Big Brother” of Blues and his Groove Merchants have ‘em all in Minnesota. Smith teams with the big city sound of the Groove Merchants led by the exceptional lead playing of Scott Graves (guitar), Chris Johnson (bass), Patrick Hulme (drums), Tim Wick (keyboards), Jim Kogl (tenor sax), Dan Eikmeier (trumpet), and Nick Ipsen (sound engineer). Big Walter Smith & The Groove Merchants will make their traditional appear-



Big Walter Smith & The Groove Merchants

ance at The Reef in Duluth on Friday and Saturday night, so if you don’t catch them at 11:55 a.m. on the Premium Beer Stage on Saturday, then track them down for some nighttime fun.

[Performer website](#)