

Saturday 8:05 - 9:35 p.m.



Little Richard

The originator, the emancipator, the architect; all of these things describe one entertainer who means so much to the world of music: Little Richard. Little Richard, born Richard Wayne Penniman in Macon, Georgia, began singing in the church choir. In 1951, he signed with RCA Records after winning a talent contest, and released two forgettable singles for the label. Little Richard wound up returning to his day job as a dishwasher in a Greyhound bus station. Persistent by nature, Richard sent a demo to the fledgling Los Angeles based Specialty Records. By giving birth to a new musical genre with eight nonsense words (“Awop-bop-a-loo-mop-alop-bam boom!”), Little Richard brought Technicolor to millions of teenagers living in the gloom of the

Cold War era. An outburst of timeless, non-stop hits flowed from the keyboard pounding, screaming wildman. “Tutti Frutti,” “Long Tall Sally,” “Rip It Up,” “Lucille,” “Jenny, Jenny,” “Keep a Knockin’,” and “Good Golly, Miss Molly.” With his love for cosmetics, shiny outfits, and trademark mile-high pompadour, this poster boy for rock was a treat for the eyes as well as the ears. But a near plane crash prompted Little Richard to hang up his rock shoes and return to his spiritual beginnings by studying to become a preacher. Richard would spend the next two decades flip-flopping between being rock’s original wildman and a preacher man. Little Richard has not been out of the national spotlight since his triumphant return to music and film in 1985’s hit movie, *Down and Out in Beverly Hills*, a film that launched his first hit single in sixteen years, “Great Gosh A Mighty.” He was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1986, and his flamboyant personality could be found everywhere from television and the big screen to film soundtracks and product endorsements. Other highlights of his career include a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, performing at President Clinton’s inaugural ball, and numerous achievement awards. “Great Gosh a Mighty,” it has been a long time comin,’ but we are proud to welcome Little Richard to the Sixteenth Annual Bayfront Blues Festival!