



Matthew Davidson, of Shreveport, has won the 2011 Robert Johnson New Generation Award. MATT DODSON/SPECIAL TO THE TIMES

Teen wins Robert Johnson New Generation Award

By Sherry P. Shephard

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Teen guitarist and vocalist Matthew Davidson, of Shreveport, has won the 2011 Robert Johnson New Generation Award.

Davidson, 13, said it is an honor to be chosen for the award. About 25 young musicians were considered.

"It's an award given out annually to guitarists 12 to 18 years old that helps young kids like myself keep interested in the blues and respect the blues," Davidson said.

Johnson was a blues singer and guitarist who recorded 29 songs between 1936 and 1937 for the American Record Corp. According to the Robert Johnson Blues Foundation website, in the decades after his death in 1938, Johnson has become known as the King of the Delta Blues Singers, with artists such as the Rolling Stones, Bob Dylan, Eric Clapton and the Allman Brothers who have recorded his songs.

"Robert Johnson is one of the greatest blues players. He kind of started it all and paved the way for so many," Davidson said.

Steven Johnson, grand-

UPCOMING PERFORMANCES

» 6 to 6:45 p.m. Jan. 14 — Music City Texas, Linden, Texas.

» 6 to 9 p.m. Feb. 9 — "Artport," Shreveport Regional Airport.

» 5:30 p.m. April 12 — Holiday in Dixie Fun Run, Clyde Fant Parkway, Shreveport.

» 6 to 7:30 p.m. April 21

— Holiday in Dixie.

» 5:15 to 6 p.m. May 5 — New Orleans Jazzfest.

» 7:30 to 8:30 p.m. June 22 — T-Bone Walker Blues Fest, Linden, Texas.

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son of Robert Johnson and vice president of the foundation, said it was Davidson's style and professionalism that set him apart.

"His style was kind of advanced for his age," Johnson said. "It was crisp; it was professional. His style with that electric guitar was amazing."

As winner of the award, Davidson also will receive a Robert Johnson Signature Gibson L-1 guitar and a chance to play at a future foundation event.

Davidson's musical influences include the Beatles, Creedence Clearwater Revival, Stevie Ray Vaughan, ZZ Top and Chuck Berry.

"I've always been a huge fan of the Beatles,"

he said. "In the past couple of years, I've started getting into the blues, and that's been great for me because I've gotten so many opportunities and honors in the blues world. But I still like classic rock and some pop."

Davidson's band, the Matthew Davidson Band, includes 15-year-old drummer Kyle McClanahan; Chris Campisi on bass; and 15-year-old Gregory Walton on keyboard.

"We're playing at Holiday in Dixie in April and then my band and I are really excited to be playing at the New Orleans Jazz Fest on May 5," Davidson said. "That's also an honor to get invited to play there."