

SPECIAL GUEST ARTIST, BANDS AND EVENT INFORMATION

Special Guest Artist:

Dave Bennett once again brings his musical talent and virtuosity to Sounds of Mardi Gras. He will play on Thursday night with **Holland & Coots Jazz Quintet**, and he will be joining several bands as a Guest Artist, including **Groovus!**, **Tom Rigney and Flambeau**, **Alpha Rhythm Kings** and **Todd Morgan & the Emblems**, a band that is new this year to our festival. You do not want to miss any of Dave's incredible sets.

Special Sets:

Dave Bennett will perform three special sets, including a **Benny Goodman Set**, a **Gospel Set** and his ever-popular **Jerry Lee Lewis Rock and Roll Set**. The **Jerry Lee Lewis set** was a particular standout in 2026, with several other musicians joining in on the fun. This year's performance is sure to be just as exciting and entertaining.

Carl Sonny Leyland will again perform a special **Boogie Woogie Set** joined by his talented **Boogie Woogie Boys**. Guest Artist **Clint Baker** will be playing in this set as well. **Warning:** It only happens once during our festival, so be sure to make plans to attend.

Clint Baker is also joining the mayhem that is **Groovus!** for a special set and we couldn't be more excited! With Clint adding his own musical flair to the mix, this unique collaboration promises to be a lively and entertaining time.

Finally, some moments are sprinkled with a little extra pixie dust and we have just such a moment happening Friday night. **The Alpha Rhythm Kings**, a band that often plays at Disneyland and at Disney themed events, has agreed to perform a **Disney-related set** on Friday during our "Nursery Rhymes & Fairy Tales" Parade. We can't wait to hear what they come up with to entertain us during this magical event. Here's to making Salon C/D the "Happiest Place on Earth" during this one-time-only event!

New Bands:

While **The Black Market Trust** isn't technically new to our festival, their busy schedule means that they are not able to attend our festival every year. However, they have agreed to return to our 2027 festival. Yay! Since their appearances are a special treat rather than an annual occurrence, we're including them in this category. For those who are not yet in the know, this exceptional jazz ensemble blends the timeless charm of songs from classic American crooners/vocal groups with the fiery, romantic spirit of Django Reinhardt's gypsy jazz. Their distinctive sound seamlessly unites the rustic warmth of a gypsy campfire with the sophisticated glamour of a big-city nightclub. Note that Black Market Trust is only performing on Thursday and Friday so make sure to attend the festival the entire weekend to get your Black Market fix.

We are absolutely thrilled to welcome **Hal Smith's Golden Snake Jasss Band** to our festival! Hal has assembled an outstanding group of musicians from across the country to bring the vibrant spirit of San Francisco-style hot jazz to our festival, carrying on the rich tradition established by Lu Watters' Yerba Buena Jazz Band, the Bay City Jazz Band, and the South Frisco Jazz Band. Trad lovers rejoice!

St. John's Riverboat Jazz Band is a traditional Dixieland jazz ensemble with deep roots in the local music scene. Founded in 1996, the band emerged from the College of the Sequoias' Tule Basin Jazz Band. Founding members Frank Cardoza, Mario Marquez, and Jason Hughes, along with Dennis Mack, Erik Dewhirst, and Buddy Heise, keep the spirit of classic Dixieland jazz alive with their own high-energy sound. They are playing just two sets at our festival, so be sure to check them out.

Todd Morgan & the Emblems perform exciting, up-tempo, danceable Rock 'n' Roll numbers ranging from extremely well known favorites like "Hound Dog", "Johnny B. Goode", "A Hard Day's Night" and "Satisfaction", to more obscure and even original numbers. Whether seated in front of the bandstand, or out on the dance floor, there is always something in a Todd Morgan & the Emblems show for everyone who enjoys good music with a strong beat. We certainly have our dancing shoes ready!

Returning Bands:

Our returning bands include **Alpha Rhythm Kings, Cheryl's Vintage Jazz Band, Dave Stuckey and The Hot House Gang, Groovus, Holland & Coots Jazz Quintet, Okie Weiss & The Zydeco Playboys, San Lyon, Southern Comfort, and Tom Rigney and Flambeau.** We are thrilled to have these outstanding bands returning to the festival and can't wait to enjoy their performances and share their music with all of you once again!

Our returning Youth Bands are **Reedley River Rats, TNT (The New Traditionalists)** sponsored by the **Sacramento Jazz Education Foundation**, and **The Riverboat Rustlers.** We are so honored to be able to support youth band programs in our local community and encourage these possible future band leaders and professional musicians. Make time to enjoy the incredible talent and enthusiasm these amazing musicians bring to our event.

Parades:

Friday Afternoon: The Friday afternoon **Parasol and Pom-Pom Parade** theme is always "**Laissez les bons temps rouler!/Let the Good Times Roll!**" This is the "Sounds of Mardi Gras" festival, after all! Let your imagination take you to the lively streets of New Orleans, where music, camaraderie, and celebration are the order of the day. Grab a parasol provided by the festival or bring your own or, if you prefer, add a little flair with a pom-pom. Join the procession as we parade through our festival venues, spreading joy and plenty of New Orleans-style fun along the way. Come be part of the celebration and let the good times roll!

Friday Evening: Later on Friday step into a world of imagination and whimsy at the **Nursery Rhymes & Fairy Tales Parade.** Bring your favorite storybook character to life by dressing up as a beloved nursery rhyme figure, fairy tale princess, or magical creature. Unleash your imagination and join a whimsical parade bursting with fantasy, laughter, and playful mischief.

Whether your costume is elaborate or simple, everyone is invited to join the fun.

Saturday Afternoon: Step back into the dazzling era of the Roaring Twenties with **The Jazz Age Jubilee Parade**, a celebration of vintage glamour, exuberant style, and pure fun. Elegant, colorful flappers and dapper gentlemen will be everywhere as we bring the spirit of the Jazz Age to life in a lively parade filled with art deco details, feathered headpieces, fabulous hats, and colorful parasols. Whether you embrace Gatsby-inspired sophistication or let your imagination run wild with a delightfully quirky ensemble, this is your chance to dress up, show off your style, and join the festivities. So get ready to strut your stuff in a parade where every participant adds a little extra pizzazz!

Saturday Evening: The **Masquerade and Costume Parade** is the **grand finale** of our Festival Parades, showcasing a spectacular celebration of creativity, imagination, and over-the-top costumes. Each year, we are absolutely amazed by the incredible ensembles our participants dream up. Clearly, when it comes to having fun, there are no limits. Life is always a little more magical when you embrace your playful side, so unleash your creativity and get ready to celebrate in style. No rules, just fabulous costumes, joyful revelry, and a whole lot of fun for both those in the parade and the spectators taking it all in.

Dance Parties:

Friday Evening: The **Friday Night Swing Dance** features **San Lyon, Black Market Trust** and **The Alpha Rhythm Kings**. Put on your dancing shoes and let loose! Come enjoy toe-tapping tunes and infectious rhythms as we swing the the evening away. Whether you dance or prefer to listen to these incredible bands, there is room for everyone.

Saturday Evening: Get ready for an unforgettable evening of music, dancing, and revelry at our fabulous **Mardi Gras Party**. **Okie Weiss & The Zydeco Playboys, Tom Rigney and Flambeau (with Dave Bennett), Todd Morgan & the Emblems, and Dave Bennett's Jerry Lee Lewis set** will keep the energy high and the dance floor hopping with an irresistible mix of Zydeco, Cajun, Swing, and Rockabilly. Expect toe-tapping rhythms, infectious beats, and plenty of reasons to dance the night away. It's going to be a rollicking celebration so grab your beads, bring your dancing shoes, put on a festive outfit featuring the Mardi Gras colors of purple, gold and green and get ready to let the good times roll—*Laissez les bons temps rouler!*

Room Reservations

2027 SOMG DoubleTree Reservations are available. **Make your reservations now while rooms are still available.** Go to **FresnoDixie.com** and click on the **2027 DoubleTree Reservation** link for discounted room rates. Can't wait to see each and every one of you in Fresno.

For those seeking more affordable accommodations, two nearby hotels offer lower room rates than the DoubleTree. These include **SureStay by Best Western**, located across the street from

the DoubleTree parking lot and a nearby **La Quinta**, just a short drive or shuttle ride away. Additionally, another option with relatively comparable rates to the DoubleTree is the newly opened **Courtyard by Marriott Fresno Downtown**, also across the street from the DoubleTree. As a further benefit, breakfast may be included in the room rate at all three hotels.

Badge Sales, Band Links, Band Schedule, Dance Lessons

Sounds of Mardi Gras 2027 Online Badge Sales: Tickets are available for purchase via our website with a credit card. If you prefer to avoid the 4% convenience fee, please print out the Order Form available on the website, fill in the requested information and mail the form and your check per the instructions. The deadline to purchase tickets by mail is **January 20, 2026**. Of course, you can buy your badge or wrist band, and even make a sponsorship donation at the festival.

From FresnoDixie.com you can link to the [2027 Invited Bands and Jammers](#). Watch and listen to band videos and get to know the invited bands' music.

The [2027 Band Schedule](#) is now available on our website and can be easily accessed and printed out from our home page www.fresnodixie.com. Please note that the schedule is subject to change. Updates will be posted online, so check back before the festival to view the latest schedule. For easy access at the festival, you can also view the schedule on your smartphone by visiting our homepage at www.fresnodixie.com. Thank you for your continued support. We look forward to seeing everyone soon for another wonderful festival!

Dance Lessons will once again be offered as they are a wonderful opportunity to learn new moves, meet new friends, and perhaps even discover your next favorite dance partner. Whether you are an experienced dancer or just getting started, our fantastic lineup of returning teachers and fresh new faces offer something for everyone. So come learn, connect, and get ready to hit the dance floor.

Bob and Dawn return to provide their popular **Savoy-style Swing** classes on both Friday and Saturday mornings. We are also excited to welcome back our favorite local dance instructors, **Chris and Veronica**, who will once again teach **Balboa** on Saturday morning. Joining us this year is a new instructor, **Nora McKenna**, who, along with her teaching partner, **Erin Ellis**, will lead us in some playful **group Charleston** steps. No partner required! After each day's Charleston lessons, the participants will put on a short demonstration dance showing off what they have learned. Make sure to dress in your fringe/1920s attire and get ready to "shake that thing"!

Please consult the Band Schedule for times and locations of these classes and events.