

Chronology

1960s: Early Beginnings and Band Formations

1964: Forrest makes his paid performance debut on New Year's Eve at Harrisville Civic Center with Seagram's 7, a pickup band featuring John Holscher (rhythm guitar), Bob Wiegand (piano), Ed Riccio (drums), and Paul "Tiny" Lister (vocals). In April, he forms The Ox Bow Incidents with the same lineup, establishing his early roots in rock and blues.

1965-1968: The Ox Bow Incidents evolve with new members, including Chip Tucker (vocals/bass), Jim Carr (bass), Jack Ryan (vocals), and Tod Urbonas (Hammond B3). By 1969, the band disbands, leading Forrest to join the Boston Rock Symphony with blues harmonica legend James Montgomery.

1969: Forrest forms Pale Ryder with Steve Blodgett (rhythm guitar), Dave Hayes (bass), Charley Flannery (drums), and Linda McCone (vocals), marking a shift toward a heavier rock sound.

1970s: National Tours and Iconic Recordings

1970: Forrest joins Wadsworth Mansion, embarking on a 35-state tour opening for Alice Cooper and Edgar Winter, fueled by their Top 20 hit "Sweet Mary I'm Coming Home." The band disbands in 1971 after Hurricane Agnes and a troubled Southern tour.

1972-1973: Forrest forms Choker with Charley Flannery, John Poole, and Wiley Crawford, focusing on the vibrant New England scene. Internal strife dissolves the band, leading Forrest to move to Hollywood, CA, where he forms Slingshot with Steve Jablecki (piano/guitar/vocals), Bobby Zamora (drums), and Skip Perkins (bass). After recording with Ron Bushy (Iron Butterfly) and securing drummer Rob Robertie, Slingshot signs with GRC Records, only for the deal to collapse due to label owner Michael Thevis' legal troubles.

1975: Forrest tours Asia with The Bookends on a USO tour, performing 42 shows in 38 days across seven countries. He also records soulful singles with Jimmy Read Jr. and Marie Franklin, showcasing his blues versatility. Additionally, he collaborates with Steve Perry, recording "It's Over" and "Hold on to Your Dreams," tracks later featured on his debut album *I Need You*.

1976: Forrest contributes the iconic guitar solo to Bob Seger's "Old Time Rock & Roll" at Muscle Shoals Sound, a multi-platinum hit named CNN's Song of the Decade. He also joins Silver, Platinum, and Gold, whose single "I Got a Thing" reaches #27 on the R&B charts. Meanwhile, he forms The Force with Bob Zinner, Ty Grimes, and Ariel Daily, recording a passionate LP at Dennis Dragon's Malibu studio.

1980s: Regional Success and New Ventures

1979-1980: Returning to Rhode Island, Forrest forms The Spies with Dave Brooks (drums), Jocko Safford (bass), Jack Armitage (rhythm guitar), and Jim Mitchell (vocals). Raymond Victor and Rob Robertie later join, but the band dissolves as members pursue other paths. Forrest joins Sundance, New England's top money-making band, known for its tight rock sound.

1982-1983: After a challenging stint in Muscle Shoals, Forrest relocates to Memphis, producing the Al Bradley project at Ardent Studios and forming The Fabulous Mustangs with Joey Hadley, performing oldies at Memphis Memories.

1984-1990: Forrest founds Valhalla with Mark Caplan and Scott Murphy in Richmond, VA, blending rock and historical storytelling. Simultaneously, he joins The First Class Band, a top-earning act booked by East Coast Entertainment, balancing creative and commercial pursuits.

1990s: World Talent Records and Blues Breakthroughs

1991-1994: Drawn to his blues roots, Forrest moves to Atlanta and joins the Atlanta Blues Society. In 1994, he founds World Talent Records, an independent label empowering artists with creative control.

1995-1997: Forrest releases his debut album *I Need You* on World Talent Records, featuring early collaborations like "It's Over" with Steve Perry. He reunites with Raymond Victor for

Forrest on Fire, a fiery showcase of their musical chemistry.

1998-1999: Forrest, Raymond Victor, and the 3D Blues Band release *Under the Gun and Spirit of the Blues*, the latter earning the Just Plain Folks Music Award for Best Blues Album of 1999. The band is voted "Best Southern Blues Band" by Real Blues Magazine (1999-2001).

2000s: Festival Headliners and Critical Acclaim

2000-2001: *What's It Gonna Take?* and *Finger Lickin' Blues* (featuring a chilling remake of "Ode to Billy Joe" with Bob Margolin) solidify Forrest's reputation, with the latter named Best Southern Blues Release of 2001 by Real Blues Magazine. Tragically, saxophonist Dave Parnell passes away, and Andrew Black joins on guitar and vocals.

2002-2004: *Forrest McDonald Live* captures the energy of the Melbourne Art Festival, while *Colorblind* (with Tony Carey) earns glowing reviews. "Riding on The Blues Train" becomes the opening track for WRFG's blues radio show for seven years.

2005-2009: After a devastating house fire, the Atlanta Blues Society's benefit concert aids Forrest's recovery. He opens Birdsong Studios in Virginia and releases *Nothing Wrong* with *Dreaming* with Kaylon Ward. *A Decade of Blues* compiles 18 standout tracks, earning global praise. A 2009 birthday bash for Raymond Victor at Capital Ale House in Richmond draws massive crowds.

2010s: Chart-Topping Success and International Stages

2010-2014: *Certified Blue* reaches the Top 5 Blues Power Rankings, fueling a successful New England tour. *Turnaround Blues* (2014) features three Top 50 tracks and collaborations with Tony Carey and Becky Wright. The band wins the River City International Blues Challenge (2015), advancing to the Memphis finals in 2016.

2016-2018: Forrest performs in Europe with Tony Carey and records *Stand My Ground* with Becky Wright. The band headlines the W.C. Handy Blues Festival, where Forrest reconnects with Muscle Shoals Swamper Jimmy Johnson. *Turnaround Blues* is nominated for Best Blues Album by Just Plain Folks (2017). In 2018, Forrest pens "Blue Morning Sun" in memory of his late brother Steve.

2020s: Resilience and New Horizons

2020-2022: Despite the pandemic halting tours, Forrest launches YouTube channels (@ForrestMcD) like "The Adventures of the Old Time Rock and Roller," sharing music and stories with fans worldwide. Regional performances continue with safety measures.

2023: Post-pandemic, Forrest resumes live shows with Becky Wright and Kaylon McDonald, balancing vocals for a dynamic stage presence. He begins writing for a new solo acoustic album, *Songs from My Soul*.

2024-2025: Forrest focuses on his solo acoustic act and *Songs from My Soul*, set for release on July 1, 2025, promoted by Betsie Brown at Blind Raccoon (betsie@blindraccoon.com, 901.268.6065). His lifelong passion for blues and soul continues to inspire, building on a legacy that includes collaborations with Bob Seger, Steve Perry, and the Muscle Shoals Rhythm Section.

Career Highlights

Contributed guitar to Bob Seger's multi-platinum "Old Time Rock & Roll," named CNN's Song of the Decade.

Headlined festivals like Atlanta Blues Festival, King Biscuit Blues Festival, and Melbourne Art Festival, reaching 15.8 million listeners worldwide.

Voted Best Southern Blues Guitarist (Modern) by Real Blues Magazine (2002) and Best Southern Blues Band (1999-2001).

Founded World Talent Records, releasing 15 critically acclaimed albums, including award-winning *Spirit of the Blues* (1999) and *Finger Lickin' Blues* (2001).