



CORY SCHWARTZ/GETTY IMAGES FILE

Incubus is touring behind its first album in five years, "If Not Now, When?," including a stop at Merriweather Post Pavilion.

## Incubus offers 'If Not Now, When'

By Nancy Dunham  
Special to The Washington Examiner

Think of Incubus' new album and tour as a rebirth of sorts.

Not only are the band members readjusting to their renewed partnership, they are introducing their fans to the most stripped-down, direct music they've ever released. Now touring behind their first new album in five years, "If Not Now, When?," the band introduced the album with a host of night concerts, online chats, and meet and greets at a temporary Los Angeles storefront.

"The biggest challenge of that was spending so much time apart," said guitarist Mike Einziger. "You get back together and have to figure out how you agree on this, how is this going to work now, how can we [craft music] to a point that we're happy with it? That's a big challenge."

A challenge that the band seems to have readily met, as evidenced by the fan excitement at the Los Angeles events and the sold-out concert dates on this tour. That reception to the band's return has arguably shown that even though it

### ONSTAGE Incubus

- » **When:** 6 p.m. Sunday
- » **Where:** Merriweather Post Pavilion, 10475 Little Patuxent Parkway, Columbia
- » **Info:** \$40 to \$55; ticketfly.com; 877-4FLY-TIX

has once again mixed up its style, its fan base is ready for the ride.

Some 20 years after setting about to emulate their idols, which included the Red Hot Chili Peppers, Incubus is still not one to play it safe. Frontman Brandon Boyd likens the creative path the band took to a wandering stream and, even now, seems a bit surprised by their success.

"There are definitely instances that I look back on with less than fond memories," he said in a past interview. "We were continually struggling, facing one upset after another. But when there was even a

glimmer of hope, that is what kept us going."

That type of musical passion still exists within the band members, said Einziger.

"I don't know what it is people are connecting with in the music," said Einziger, who studied at Harvard University while the band was on break. "People seem to identify with it. Music helped me get through difficult times ... when I was growing up. That inspired me to make my own music. Now I'm able to pay that forward."

Just what they hope fans take away from the music, is what they took from their musical favorites, Einziger said.

"I guess my hope would be that [fans] connect with it in some way that makes them feel good when they are listening to it," he said. "That's really simple, but that's all you can expect from music."



## MUSIC

# Eleanor Ellis sings the blues at Kennedy's Millennium Stage

By Marie Gullard  
Special to The Washington Examiner

### ONSTAGE Eleanor Ellis

- » **Where:** Millennium Stage, Kennedy Center, 2700 F St. NW
- » **When:** 6 p.m. Sunday
- » **Info:** Free; 800-444-1324 or 202-467-4600; kennedy-center.org

Whether she sings or speaks, no one listening to blues artist Eleanor Ellis mistakes it for anything other than pure New Orleans. Her music, performed Sunday at Kennedy Center's Millennium Stage, is an delightful of her Louisiana upbringing.

"I think you absorb the culture that you grew up in," she said. "A lot of the music I grew up with, I found out later was indigenous to Louisiana. I didn't know that back then; I thought everyone listened to this music."

As a product of her blues environment, Ellis was able to transition smoothly to the D.C. scene with a gig back in the early 1980s. She moved soon after to Silver Spring, where she became a founding member of the D.C. Blues Society and the Archie Edwards Blues Heritage Foundation.

Ellis, who was fortunate enough to travel with the late gospel street singer Flora Molton, even sometimes accompanying Delta Blues great Eugene Powell, has developed a distinct and personal approach to the music.

"There are a lot of good old songs that people have done, wonderfully original," she noted. "I like to find the songs I can relate to; to sing and play them and have a good time."

While she often performs solo, Ellis has chosen to play with a

couple of good friends at the Millennium show. She will be using locals Jay Summerour on harmonica and percussionist Eric Selby on the snare drums.

The trio will play a one-hour set list. Ellis expects to do two songs by an early artist that influenced her, Memphis Minnie, whom she considers a "great guitar player, singer, songwriter and roll model for other women singer/guitar players."

She also plans a version of "Kansas City" and some works from her album "Comin' a Time" released on the Patuxent label.

So beloved is she at the recording company, one of Patuxent's assistant executives, Barbara Bamberger Scott, recently said, "For Eleanor Ellis, her musical career was what happened while she was doing what she liked to do. Fortuitously, what she likes to do — creating, recreating, preserving and performing basic American blues — is also what she believes in. And what she does well."



COURTESY PHOTO

Eleanor Ellis' music pays tribute to her Louisiana upbringing.