

STEVE EINZIG ALWAYS HAD THE IDEA TO PUT TOGETHER A BLUES SHOW WITH ALL THE OLD GREATS, "I must have pitched it 50 times - Buddy Guy, the Howlin' Wolf Band, Robert Lockwood, Jr., literally, the living legends," he said. Einzig's company, Booking Entertainment.com, primarily books and produces big name acts for corporate and private events, and Steve had been dreaming of doing this kind of concert for years.

Finally, in September of 2004, Einzig found himself having lunch at Appleby's with Bernie Furshpan and Marguerite Deitch of Big Fish Productions, which had just booked Lincoln Center's Avery Fisher Hall, in New York, for January 28, 2005.

Big Fish, which had produced a Russian concert at Avery Fisher, had snapped up the January date without having a specific show to plug into it. Lincoln Center has an upscale clientele tuned into classical concerts and jazz. Furshpan and Deitch wanted to do unique concerts, and something very special for the Lincoln Center venue.

"We were brainstorming," Deitch said of their lunch conversation. "We wanted to do something really unique, and Steve came up with the concept, spanning the generations and featuring these music legends. My boss Bernie is a visionary, full of energy and excitement, and he loved Steve's idea." Actually, January 28 was the perfect date: a Friday just far enough in advance to plan, and after the holidays.

Big Fish acted as the promoter, doing the advertising, and the marketing and promotion, and in addition sought backing for the show. Einzig devised the concept of show, contracted the talent, and stage-managed the event. Later, J.W. Entertainment, which books Little Milton and others, became involved.

It was important that "Legends" be representative of the evolution of the blues, and not just a lineup of convenience. Often shows are put together based more on managements' client list than how well they really fit together. "The 'It's fine to do as long as they are from our roster' method of booking wasn't going to work here," said Einzig. We wanted this to be authentic, to include the people who deserved to be recognized."

Shortly after the Appleby's lunch, Big Fish Productions put money in escrow. According to Einzig, only then did he say to himself, "Uh-oh. It's happening." When he called the artists and told them the >>>



(Above, left to right) Bernie Furshpan, Larry Altschul, Sam Lay, Jody Williams, Freddie Robinson (Abu Talib), Henry Gray; Ken Dashow; Sam Lay; Bob Stroger, Eddie Shaw, George "Mojo" Buford, Bob "Steady Rollin'" Margolin; Suzanne Cadgené, Robert Lockwood Jr.; (Below, left to right) Buddy Fox; James Cotton, Little Milton; Jeff Wiener, Little Milton, Warren Haynes, Willie "Big Eyes" Smith

