

If you've lived in Jacksonville for any length of time, you've heard the names: Lynyrd Skynyrd, the Allman Brothers, Ray Charles, and brothers John Rosamond and James Weldon Johnson. Their music helped shape American culture, and each has ties to our city. What I didn't realize until I viewed portions of Michael Ray FitzGerald's upcoming documentary, *Cowford Chronicles: The Music*, was just how deep and diverse Jacksonville's musical roots truly are.

The story extends far beyond a handful of famous names. Jacksonville helped launch or nurture artists as varied as Billy Daniels, Johnny Tillotson, Blind Blake, Hoyt Axton, Connie Haines, Molly Hatchet, Marcus Roberts, and many others. Together, they represent a rich musical legacy that deserves to be preserved and shared.

As a former producer of the Jacksonville Jazz Festival, I've had the privilege of meeting many talented musicians. As a professional biographer and ghostwriter, I've spent years researching and documenting history. Those experiences have taught me that projects like this do not happen by accident. They require years of dedication, meticulous research, storytelling skill, and a genuine passion for the subject.

Michael Ray FitzGerald brings all of those qualities to this documentary. His award-winning work, including his book, *Jacksonville and the Roots of Southern Rock*, reflects decades of research, teaching, writing, performing, and preserving the history of Northeast Florida's music scene. *Cowford Chronicles: The Music* is the culmination of that lifelong commitment.

This documentary is more than entertainment. It is an opportunity to preserve an important chapter of Jacksonville's cultural heritage before more of its stories are lost to time. Future generations deserve to know the role this city played in shaping American music.

I encourage you to support Michael's efforts to complete this remarkable project. Visit documentaryfilminstitute.com to learn more and help preserve Jacksonville's musical legacy. With your help, *Cowford Chronicles: The Music* will become the definitive record of Jacksonville's musical heritage.

~ Victor DiGenti – Novelist, Ghostwriter, Publisher