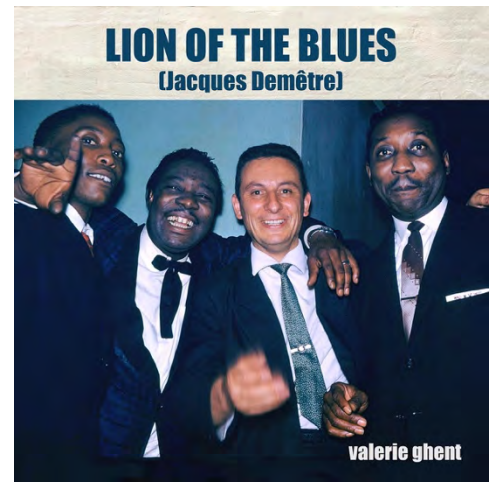


\*\*\* FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE \*\*\*

**NEW SINGLE FROM NYC RECORDING ARTIST  
VALERIE GHENT HONORS RENOWNED BLUES  
HISTORIAN JACQUES DEMÊTRE**

**Multi-Talented Singer-Songwriter  
Releases New Single *Lion of the Blues (Jacques Demêtre)*  
- Release Date June 27, 2025**



(New York, NY) June 17, 2025 - NYC recording artist **Valerie Ghent** releases new single "*Lion of the Blues (Jacques Demêtre)*" an uptempo Chicago blues celebrating the extraordinary life of France's beloved blues historian and Valerie's long-lost cousin, **Jacques Demêtre**.

A catchy blues shuffle driven by the rock-solid musicians Valerie has toured with in France for over 10 years, Valerie sings about her cousin's lifelong passion for the blues and pioneering visit to Chicago, Detroit and New York in 1959 when he met blues greats including **Muddy Waters, Howlin' Wolf, BB King, John Lee Hooker, Sammy Price** and many more.

**Releasing June 27, 2025 on all platforms, *Lion of the Blues (Jacques Demêtre)*** features riveting performances from Valerie and her band: **Pierre Sibille** on harp, piano and Hammond B3, guitarist **Jérôme Buigues** who also recorded and mixed the song, **François Gomez** on bass and **Philippe Jardin** on drums. Ghent's lively production brings together her many talents (singer-songwriter-musician-producer-engineer) shaped by 30+ years working with music luminaries **Ashford & Simpson, Nina Simone, Roberta Flack, Luther Vandross, Debbie Harry & Billy Preston**.

Born in Paris, France in 1924, **Jacques Demêtre** was one of the first historians of the blues, traveling to the USA in 1959, writing for *Jazz Hot* for more than 20 years as well as for *Soul Bag* magazine, and penning liner notes for countless blues collections. One of the earliest to document blues musicians, recordings and blues history, Demêtre's bi-lingual book, *Voyage au pays du blues (Voyage to the Land of the Blues)*, a French/English account of his trip to New York, Detroit and Chicago including dozens of Jacques' classic photos, was first published in 1994, with a new full-color edition published in 2022 by Le Mot et Le Reste.

In 2010 Jacques and Valerie discovered they were cousins, and met in Paris for the first time, a meeting which would deeply influence Valerie's life and music. "Jacques was a true champion of the blues. He truly loved the blues and had a flawless recall of every musician, any recording session, he could tell you which musicians and when the song was released."

"Discovering a blues historian in the family was a huge joy for me," Valerie continues with a big smile. "We spent hours together listening to old blues records from the 20's, 30's and 40's in his apartment in Paris. His total recall of blues singers never ceased to amaze me, and he couldn't believe that he had a cousin who worked with Ashford & Simpson, Nina Simone, Roberta Flack, Luther Vandross, for so many years. To add to this remarkable synchronicity, **Nick Ashford** had just started his weekly "*Ain't Nuttin' Like the Blues*" series at Sugar Bar in New York. And not only that, we realized Jacques' mother, yes his mother, had painted a portrait of my mother, in 1937. Astounding! It felt like destiny when we finally met."

Inspired by Jacques' vast knowledge of the blues, Valerie says "the lyrics to *Lion of the Blues* practically wrote themselves. Jacques gave me stacks of blues CDs and 'introduced me to singers I never knew, like Julia Lee and Georgia White, he said 'I hear their spirit when you sing' as he looked at me and smiled.' The lyrics in the song are exactly what happened!"

Valerie continues, "Every time I visited Jacques asked, "when will you record a blues album?" He encouraged me to expand my blues repertoire and to step out in front of the mic at Nick Ashford's blues night at Sugar Bar. He wanted to hear all my new songs and made suggestions of which blues artists to listen to, even which songs he thought I should sing."

In February 2020 Valerie went to Paris for Jacques' 96th birthday and to sing at a concert which he attended with his daughter. "Jacques' enthusiasm and generosity in sharing his collection of blues albums was so inspiring that I started writing a song for him. During covid Jacques and I stayed in touch via regular phone calls, so I was able to sing the first two verses and chorus to him over the phone. It was a shock when he passed away - I thought he would live forever. I missed him so much that a full year went by before I could finish the third verse: "*The very last song Jacques played for me was "Key to the Highway" - my beloved cousin was 96, still loving Big Bill Broonzy*".

We recorded *Lion of the Blues* in the south of France, with the same great musicians Jacques heard at our concerts in Paris. They all loved when Jacques came to our shows, he was always enthusiastic and excited by the music. One time I gave Jacques the mic during our concert and he regaled the audience with history of the 15eme arrondissement!

*Lion of the Blues* (Jacques Demêtre) is the first single off the blues album Jacques kept asking about, Valerie is planning to release the full album next year. "I am grateful to **Nicolas Teurnier** and **Soul Bag Magazine** for their permission to use a photo from Jacques' archive for the cover, and ever-thankful to Jacques' daughter **Marie** for suggesting this particular photo." The cover photo was taken in 1959 in Chicago, showing **Muddy Waters, Jacques Demêtre, Otis Spann** and **Willie Smith** and is featured in *Voyage au pays du blues* (Le Mot et Le Reste, 2022). Full photo credit: Jacques Demêtre & Marchel Chauvard / Soul Bag archives.

Look for the *Lion of the Blues* video with more classic photos from Jacques' archive.

*There's no goodbye just 'au revoir' when you love someone true,  
Jacques lives on forever more, he's the Lion of the Blues.*

*Lion of the Blues  
Champion of the Blues  
He's a man who understands  
Ain't nothin' as grand like the blues*

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## Biographies:

**Jacques Demêtre** (1924-2020) was born in Paris, France. A renowned historian of American blues, Russian emigrés in Paris and Benois/Cavos family history, Jacques became one of France's primary resources for blues, gospel and jazz history. Jacques wrote for Jazz Hot for more than 20 years, penning liner notes for countless blues collections and wrote for Soul Bag magazine. Jacques' book *"Voyage au pays du blues / Voyage to the Land of the Blues"* - a bilingual French/English account of his trip to Chicago, Detroit and New York in 1959 when Jacques met many famous blues musicians including **Muddy Waters, Howlin' Wolf, BB King, John Lee Hooker, Champion Jack Dupree, Sammy Price** and many more - was published in 1994 including dozens of Jacques' classic photos. A new full-color edition was published in 2022 by Le Mot et Le Reste. Although Jacques passed away in 2020 at the age of 96, his spirit and passion for the blues lives on, his book is now considered an invaluable addition to American blues history.

Jacques Demêtre and Valerie Ghent met in 2010 upon the discovery that they were cousins in the same family. They met in Paris for the first time, a meeting which would deeply influence Valerie's life and music.

**Valerie Ghent** is a singer-songwriter and producer from New York City. Longtime musician, vocalist and recording engineer with R+B legends **Ashford & Simpson**, Valerie has worked with some of the greatest artists of our time including **Nina Simone, Roberta Flack, Luther Vandross, Debbie Harry** and **Billy Preston**. As solo artist Valerie has released five albums with #1 hits on iHeart Radio and Jazz Radio France. Valerie has performed and recorded in France for over ten years with her band of world-class musicians, collaborating with French blues artist **Pierre Sibille**, Italian rap artist **Bumo**, author **Christophe Fourvel** and renowned dan-trahn artist **Tri Ngyuen**. Currently Valerie is recording her sixth album of blues songs inspired by her long-lost cousin, French blues historian **Jacques Demêtre**.