

THE HOLLER

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Editor- Chick Cavallero

Love Those Blues Nicknames

By Chick Cavallero

The Blues have a long colorful list of nicknames associated with the top performers. Many are self-explanatory like "Big", "Little", "Blind", etc... but what about some of the others. I dug up a few that are listed below but believe me there are plenty more out there. Enjoy.

Blind Lemon Jefferson was born Lemon Henry Jefferson. I know, I said "Blind" was an obvious nickname and he was born blind, But I am guessing you didn't know his given name was Lemon.



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Buckwheat Zydeco, born Stanley Dural Jr., had braided hair as a child and was nicknamed after the Buckwheat character in the old Our Gang comedies.



Gatemouth Brown

Clarence "**Gatemouth**" **Brown** was given the nickname "Gatemouth" by a high school teacher who said he had a "voice like a gate".

Muddy Waters born McKinley Morganfield. His nickname came from his grandmother Della Grant who raised him after his mother died. She gave him the nickname "Muddy" because he loved to play in the muddy water of nearby Deer Creek. "Waters" was added years later, as he began to perform locally in his early teens.

Howlin' Wolf, born Chester Arthur Burnett, was named by his parents after Chester Arthur the 21st President of the US. There are several versions of how he got the name. One- it came from Burnett's maternal grandfather who would

scold him for killing his grandmother's chicks from reckless squeezing them, with her warning him that wolves in the area would come and get him, and his family would continue this by calling him "the Wolf". Another story is that an early singer Funny Papa Smith had a song that went "I'm the wolf that digs my tail down in the ground. I want everybody to hear me when I howl," and that Chester liked the song and wanted everyone to call him "The Howlin' Wolf". A third version is that Wolf himself claimed that his idol Jimmie Rogers gave him the nickname.

Catfish Keith, born Keith Daniel Kozachik, was named by a diving friend in the Virgin Islands describing his swimming mannerisms as both "Catfish-Swimming-Around" and "Catfish Steel Guitar Man".

Barbeque Bob born Robert Hicks was a Piedmont blues man in the 20s and early 30s. He worked as a cook in a BBQ restaurant and often played guitar in a full cook's apron and white cook's hat

Dave **Honeyboy Edwards** was nicknamed "Honey" by his mother as a baby and was called that by his close family for years. When he started recording, he altered it slightly to Honeyboy

Homesick James, born John James William Henderson, had an expression he used when travelling, "Call Me Homesick". He was often also called "Lookquick" in his early career.



Barbeque Bob

Mighty Joe Young was born Joseph Young Jr. and took his name from the popular movie going around at the time.

Bukka White was born Booker T. Washington White and “Bukka” was a phonetic spelling of the great educator and civil rights activist Booker T Washington.

Champion Jack Dupree born Jack Dupree got his nickname from an early career as a boxer

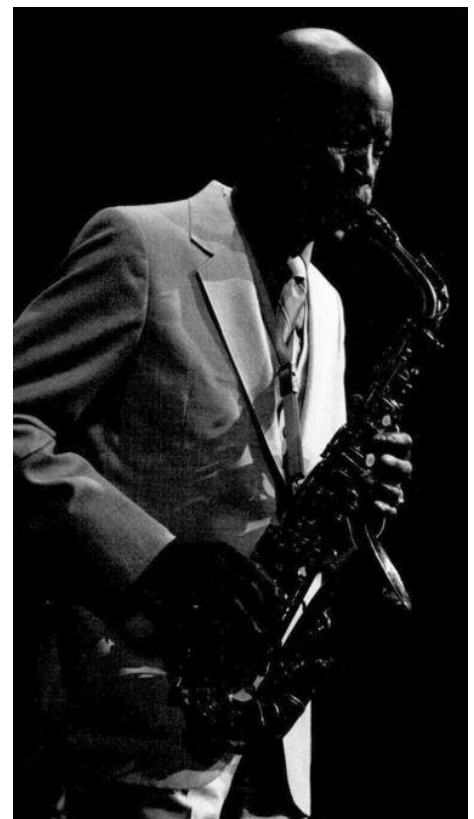
Charles Edward “**Cow Cow**” **Davenport** was named after his best-known tune "Cow Cow Blues". The "Cow Cow" in the title referred to a train's cowcatcher.

Lightnin’ Hopkins was born Samuel Hopkins. He was discovered by Lola Anne Cullum of Aladdin Records,. She convinced Hopkins to travel to Los Angeles, where he accompanied pianist Wilson Smith. The duo recorded twelve tracks in their first sessions in 1946 and an Aladdin executive decided the pair needed more pizzaz in their names and dubbed Hopkins "Lightnin'" and Wilson "Thunder"

Eddie “**Cleanhead**” **Vinson** got his nickname after an incident that accidentally destroyed his hair by the caustic lye contained in a hair straightening product.

Tampa Red was born Hudson Woodbridge and adopted the name "Tampa Red", with reference to his childhood home and his light-colored skin.

B.B. King was born Riley B King. Starting out in Memphis, he worked at WDIA as a singer and disc jockey, where he was given the nickname "Beale Street Blues Boy", later shortened to "Blues Boy", and finally to *B.B.*



Eddie “Cleanhead” Vinson

T-Bone Walker born Aaron Thibeaux Walker and “T-Bone” is a corruption of his middle name.

Taj Mahal born Henry St. Clair Fredericks said his stage name, came to him in dreams he had about Gandhi, India, and social tolerance. He started using it around 1960.

Robert Nighthawk was born Robert Lee McCollum. He was nicknamed “Nighthawk” after he recorded *Prowlin Nighthawk*. He also recorded under the name of Robert Lee McCoy and Lee McCoy...McCoy was his mother’s maiden name.

Memphis Minnie was born Lizzie Douglas. She disliked the name Lizzie and first started performing as Kid Douglas. In 1929, she and her 2nd husband Joe McCoy went

to record in New York City and were given the names Kansas Joe and Memphis Minnie by a Columbia A&R man

Lead Belly born as Huddie William Ledbetter killed a man in 1917 and was found guilty of murder, In prison is probably where he picked up the nickname Lead Belly.

Pinetop Perkins was born Joe Willie Perkins. He gained his nickname from one of his songs *Pinetop's Boogie Woogie* written by Pinetop Smith in 1928

Sunnyland Slim was born Albert Luandrew. He got his nickname from a song he played called *The Sunnyland Blues* about a train line that ran between St. Louis and Memphis.

Magic Sam was born Samuel Gene Maghett. He was calling himself "Good Rocking Sam" at first but that name was in use by another musician too. Sam's bass player and childhood friend Mack Thompson came up with "Magic Sam" as a play on "Maghett Sam"

Beau De Glen "**Mance**" **Lipscomb** took the

nickname from a friend of his brother, it was short for Emancipation,



Slim Harpo



Magic Sam

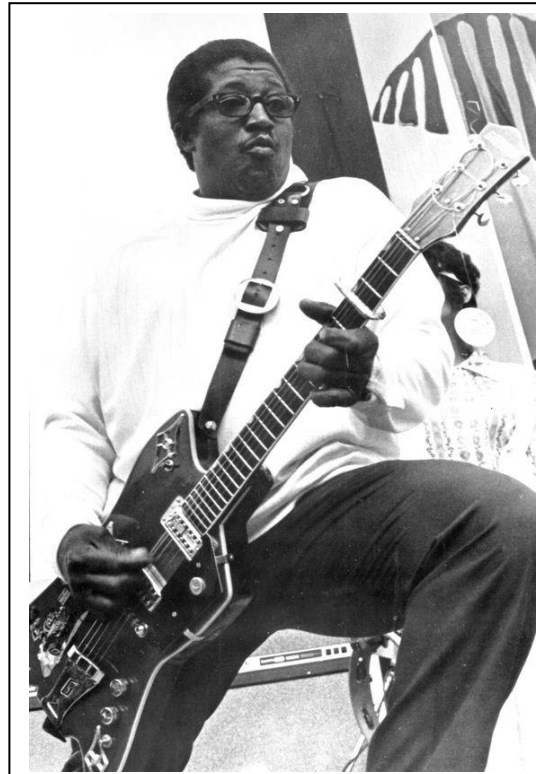
Slim Harpo was born James Isaac Moore. He started performing in Baton Rouge as Harmonica Slim. When he started his recording career in 1957, at his wife's suggestion, he took the name Slim Harpo in order to differentiate himself from another performer calling himself "Harmonica Slim".

Sonny Boy...Now, this one gets confusing. There was John Lee Curtis Williamson, who many call the "Father of the Modern Blues Harp" and most influential harp master of his generation. He became **Sonny Boy Williamson I**. Then Rice Miller came along

afterwards and overshadowed the original, becoming the Sonny Boy most of you know. He is referred to as **Sonny Boy Williamson II**. And to screw things up a little more, in

1940 a jazz pianist/ singer named Enoch Williams recorded for Decca Records under the name Sonny Boy Williams and also in 1947 as Sunny Boy in the Sunny Boy Trio!

Bo Diddley was born Ellas Ortha Bates and raised by his mother's cousin Gussie McDaniel, and some say Bo's name was Ellas McDaniel. The origin of the stage name Bo Diddley is even more unclear. Bo claimed that his peers gave him the name as an insult. He also said that the name was from a singer his adoptive mother knew. His harp player Billy Boy Arnold said that it was a local comedian's name, which Leonard Chess adopted for his stage name and the title of his first single. Bo also said a school classmate in Chicago gave him the nickname. Then there is also a diddley bow a homemade single-string instrument played mainly by the poor in the South. Finally there is an American slang term *bo diddly*, *bo* is added to the *diddly* of *diddly squat*, which means "absolutely nothing".



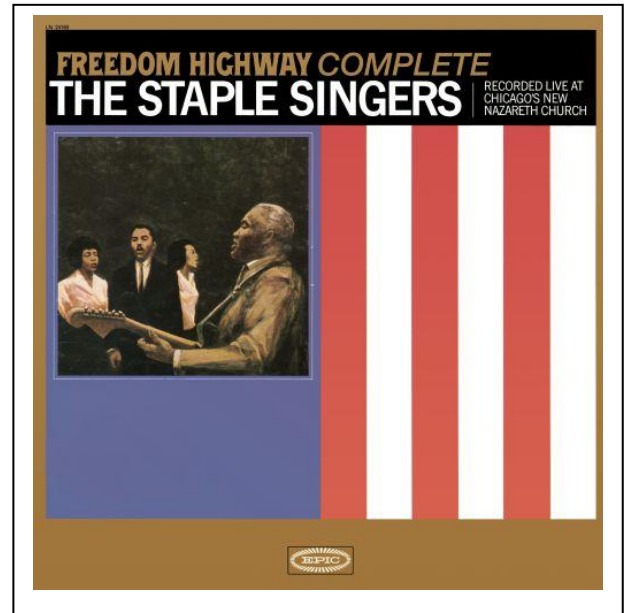
Bo Diddley



Staple Singers “Freedom Highway”

By Chick Cavallero

Gospel music has always been a part of Blues music, but more important a huge part of the continuing fight for Civil Rights and equality for black Americans. Leaders of the Gospel wing of Blues music were the Staple Singers- Roebuck (Pops), and his children- Mavis, Yvonne and Pervis, who was replaced by Cleotha when Pervis left the group around 1970. Pops had become a friend of Martin Luther King Jr. as the Staple Singers worked churches throughout the South during the Civil rights movement of the 1960s, spreading gospel and gospel-inspired protest songs.



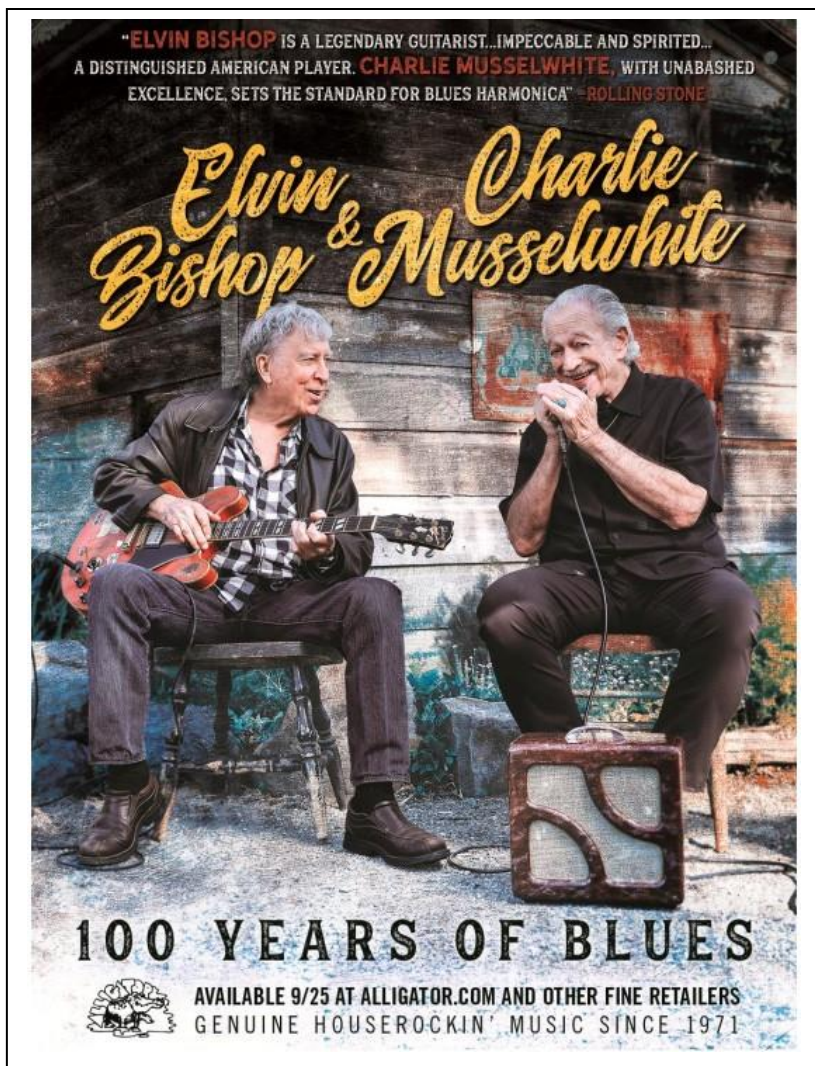
The Staples were in Montgomery, Alabama one Sunday morning in 1965 and Pops called his kids into his hotel room and said this man Martin is here, Martin Luther King. And he took the family to the service and afterwards said, “I like this man's message. I really like his message. And I think that if he can preach it, we can sing it.” And it wasn't long after that The Staple Singers introduced “Freedom Highway” at a gospel meeting at New Nazareth Church in Chicago. A few songs into their set, Pops spoke “A few days ago freedom marchers marched on Selma to Montgomery, Alabama. And from that march, words were revealed and a song was composed. And we wrote a song about the freedom marchers and we call it the ‘Freedom Highway.’ And we dedicate this number to all the freedom marchers, and it goes something like this.”

The song is a powerful tribute, as important today as then, maybe more so.

““Made up my mind and I won't turn around/
There is just one thing/
I can't understand my friend/
Why some folk think freedom/
Was not designed for all men.”

Click https://youtu.be/f7_b_jyRV Rc to hear “Freedom Highway”





THE COLORADO BLUES SOCIETY ON RACISM

The Colorado Blues Society acknowledges that the art form we love and know as 'The Blues' was originally created by and remains an artistic expression of Black artists and musicians as their artistic response to slavery, oppression and injustice. The Colorado Blues Society will not remain silent in the face of the recent and past senseless murders of Black Americans in our communities, whether the cause be overt racism, implicit bias, or systemic racism. We stand with the musicians and members of our communities in expressing our sadness and outrage at prejudice and injustice towards the Black community and the lives that were taken so unjustly. The Colorado Blues Society grieves with the families for their losses.

Exciting NEW Single from Andy Sydow- a FREE Download for CBS Members!

Andy has a new single called "My Friend" and it has a bluesy Gary Clark Jr./Black Keys feel to it. Andy thought it would be cool to give away a free download of it to CBS members before it's released commercially. So click the link below and have a listen!

<https://andysydow.com/cbs-free-download>

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The 1960's American Folk Blues Festivals and Manchester Memories

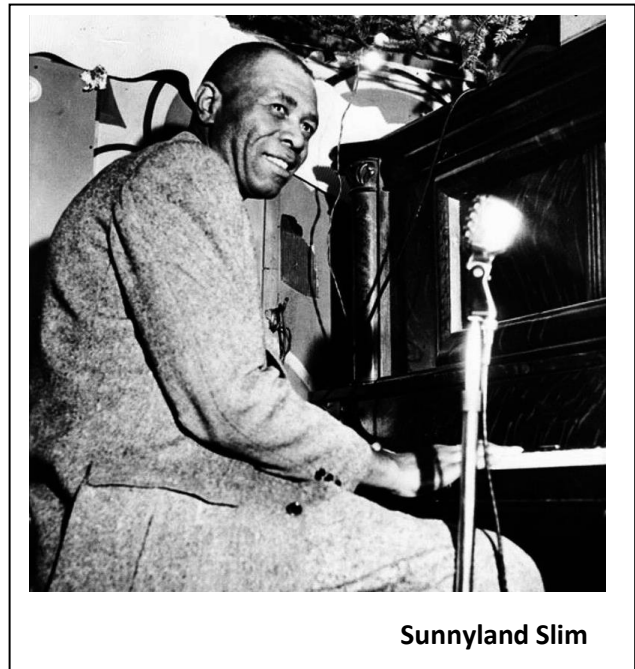
part 2

by David Booker

NOTE: In the 1960s the fame of the Blues giants was starting to wane in the US, and they found themselves getting better gigs and festivals in Europe. Their performances in Europe inspired the British Invasion of the 1960s. David Booker at that time was a teenager in the UK and lived that British Invasion first hand. Here is part 2 of David's remembrance of those amazing times. David Booker has been a fixture in the Denver music scene since the early 1980s.

I left off on part one of this epic in the last issue of the Holler with a scant mention of Sunnyland Slim, and Sugar Pie Desanto who were also on the bill of the 1964 American Folk Blues Festival.

Albert Luandrew, a.k.a., Sunnyland Slim was the house pianist on this tour and a



Sunnyland Slim

veteran of many a recording session at the Chess studio in Chicago. It was he who gave a young Muddy Waters his first break in the biz and was instrumental in getting Muddy his first session.

Sugar Pie was much younger than all of these legends and added a lot of zest and energy to the show. She was riding high with her hit, "Soulful

Dress," and later followed up with, with "Slip In Mules," an answer to Tommy Tucker's big hit, "High Heel Sneakers." She moved to the Bay Area after the hits dried up, and in 2006 her apartment caught fire and killed her husband. Sugar Pie is still active at 84 and from all accounts is struggling financially, as many legends are, due to this



Sugar Pie in 1964

pandemic we find ourselves in during these troubled times [editor's note: Sugar Pie will turn 85 on October 16].



Sugar Pie De Santo in later years, still going strong

Also on this unforgettable bill and whose performance I missed due to all the backstage activity, was the amazing “Sleepy” John Estes and partner Hammie Nixon on jug and harp. I did manage to hear some of their set being piped in backstage while all this hob nobbing was going on and I recall a commotion as I witnessed a fired-up (firewatered?) Estes being helped backstage by several stagehands while loudly and incoherently “testifying” to us all as he was led away and disappeared into a separate area. Estes had been recently “rediscovered” after being thought dead by many—he was blind by this time, which explains why he needed help getting off stage. His big tune was “Drop Down Mama,” he passed in 1977, and was inducted into the Blues Hall of Fame posthumously in 1991.



We move on to memories of the next show I found myself attending, once again at Manchester's Free Trade Hall in December of 1964, a brief 2 months later. The return of Howlin' Wolf and Hubert Sumlin topping the bill with the excellent Chris Barber Band, Guitarist John Slaughter, Long John Baldry, and Barber's wife Otilie Patterson on vocals. Trombonist/bassist Barber was known nationally for his wonderful interpretations of Trad/New Orleans-style Jazz, but his secret weapon was the ability to turn a Dixieland unit into a rockin' Chicago-style band within a band.



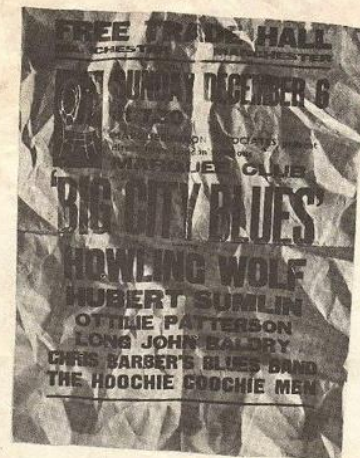
CHRIS BARBER

Chris Barber has probably been the man most responsible for this country's current interest in The Blues and gospel music. For many years now he has featured blues and gospel artistes with the band starting with the late Big Bill Broonzy in 1957. The list goes on with Brother John Sellers, Sister Rosetta Tharpe, Sonny Terry, Brownie McGhee, Muddy Waters, Jimmy Cotton and Louis Jordan. Last year Curtis Jones toured with the band and earlier this year Sonny Boy Williamson and all coloured gospel show "Black Nativity" resulted in the joining forces of the band and Alex Bradford's singers for a broadcast and L. P. Recording. This current tour with Howling Wolf is one that Chris has wanted to do since they both appeared at the Washington Jazz Festival two years ago.



LONG JOHN BALDRY

When Cyril Davies died early this year it seemed natural that Long John, the vocalist with Cyril's group, should take over leadership. Natural because Cyril and John had worked together for many years and John loves and respects the blues as much as Cyril did. Long John and the Hoochie Coochie Men have carried on the famous Thursday nights at the Marquee and recently joined forces with Chris Barber to present special Blues Evenings featuring American artistes. Tonight's concert is an example of one of these special sessions - all the ingredients are here for an evening of Big City Blues.



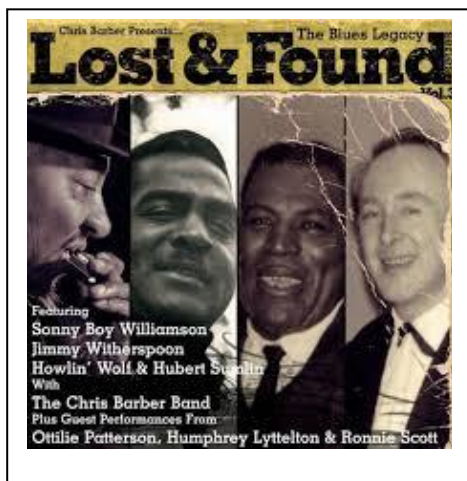
PROGRAMME

Excerpts from The Big City Blues- Howling Wolf/Chris Barber/Long John Baldry Program

Standing at a lofty 6'7", Baldry was resplendent in a beige suit and splendidly emceed and performed on the show. The running order was Barber Band, Barber Band with Otilie on vocals, followed by Baldry ending the first half.

After the interval, Baldry came out clutching John Slaughter's little sunburst Gibson. Chris Barber (who was adept at switching to upright bass) was with him along with the band's drummer (whose name eludes me). I never knew that Baldry was an accomplished guitarist! This little trio delivered some real tasteful country blues to warm us up for The Wolf and Hubert.

After Baldry's introduction, on came the Wolf in that famous dark brown check suit with Hubert Sumlin, John Slaughter on guitar, and the full Barber Band with horn section. They reached "full swing" mode pretty quickly and absolutely killed it. There are 3 live

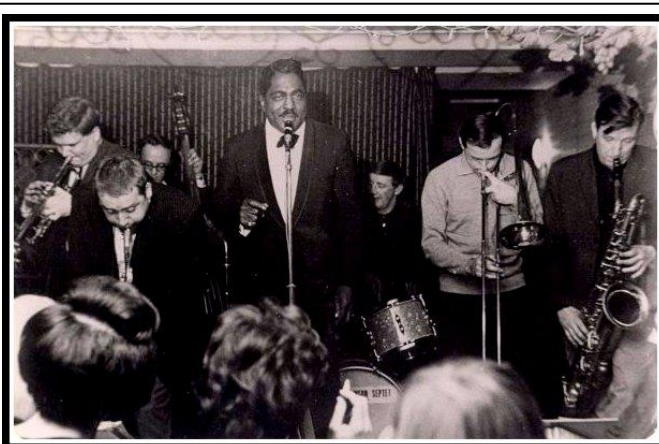


tracks of this show on Vol. 3 of the "Lost & Found" CD series, which capture the moment magnificently.

As 1965 rolled around I had seen Jimmy Witherspoon's set on his first tour of U.K., backed by Manchester's mainstream "jazzers" The Gordon Robinson Septet. As I recall, it was at The Bamboo in Hazel Grove! I was devouring Spoon's LP "Evenin' Blues" (still my "fave" LP of his) ever since I had bought it at Barry's Record Rendezvous—and later on in my writings, I have a couple of Denver stories when I interviewed Spoon on the radio, and hung out in the Points with him. Stay tuned!

On the local music front I was trying to hold down a day job and simultaneously be the bass player for the up-and-coming Manchester band Ivans Meads. The Meads were based in North Manchester, I lived in South Manchester and the combination of work, rehearsals, gigs, grabbing the last train every night, and walking a mile and a half home from the station was taking its toll on me.

One night when I finally got home, I was talking to my mother in the living room and felt my legs buckle and as I was sliding down the wall, I



Jimmy Witherspoon

was literally falling asleep at the same time. I regretfully made the decision to leave the band and take a break for a while.

1965 also brought the latest American Folk Blues festival to town and I wasn't going to miss this one. I don't remember if anyone went with me on this escapade, but I remember seeing J.B. Lenoir, Dr. Ross, Big Mama Thornton, Roosevelt Sykes, Eddie Boyd, bass man Lonesome Jimmy Lee, the legendary Fred Below on drums and bill topper Buddy Guy, who I'd already seen at an all nighter at the Twisted Wheel doing the feedback thing and smashing his guitar around—a full 3 years before Hendrix came on the scene. The accompanying LP (now CD) had tracks by Walter Horton, John Lee Hooker, and Fred McDowell, but I don't recollect seeing them on the Manchester show that night. On the DVD/You Tube show you can see the “Harmonica Blowdown” led by Big Mama, which is a lot of fun—especially seeing Hooker trying to play harp!



The Big City Blues

It wasn't long before I got the itch to get playing again. I found some younger kids (I was 18 and the “old guy”). I named us “The Big City Blues,” after the Howlin' Wolf/Chris Barber/Long John Baldry show I'd recently attended. I got a brilliant 15-year-old Ronnie Walker on guitar, who went on to produce David Byrne and the Talking Heads; another 15-year-old classically trained piano player, Martin Tetlow, who went on to make it big in TV production and the audio /video business; a school mate, Barrie Hawkyard, on bass, who went on to be a police chief (with letters after his name!) and

15-year-old Gordon Thornton, a grammar school kid on drums (R.I.P.). I figured if I just sang lead and did a bit of harp I could spend more time running the band and hustling gigs. It wasn't long before we got a manager ... he had a van! Brian Jackson loved the band and he drove us everywhere; he was a local greengrocer a fruit and veg' guy with a corner shop in my hometown of Wilmslow. Some of the guys would work for him on daytime weekends (me, too) and then we'd all pile in the van and get going to the gig! We carried a full-size upright piano in the van for gigs and we miked it up as best we could—one time as we had been



The Big City Blues

driving for about 12 miles when we realized we had left Gordon behind while we were loading the van! We had to go back and get him; it was one of THOSE kinda bands!

Changes were made pretty fast and we got Henry Quick, a workmate at my advertising agency, to play drums; and on bass the good-looking one, Johnny Burrows! We also added a leading Manchester jazzman on sax, Dave Moss (R.I.P.)

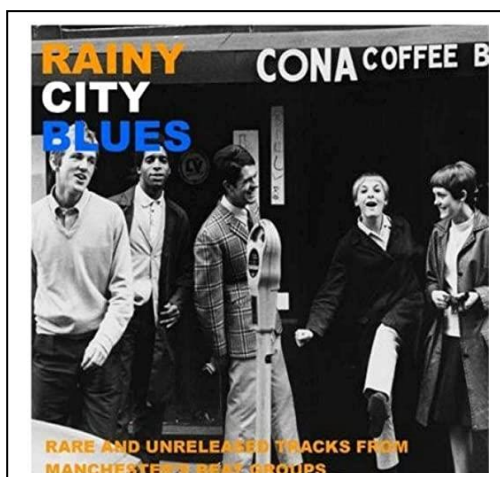


It was time to go into the studio and cut a record. We decided to go to Nield & Hardy's Studio (later to become the famous Strawberry Studio) and we cut 2 tunes under the supervision of Eric Stewart of the Mindbenders (Wayne Fontana's band). Eric was later in 10CC, who charted with "He's Not in Love" and a few other hits. This was my first time singing in a real studio. We did James Brown's "Tell Me Whatcha' Gonna Do" and Don Covay's "See Saw" on the other side. A few years ago I was contacted by a small Manchester label looking for unreleased material and both those tracks are available on a CD called "Rainy City Blues."



After many late nights out gigging, Brian said he'd have to stop driving us around and relinquish his managerial duties. He had a wife and a baby

and she said, "if you don't stop, there's gonna be a divorce," so we managed to invest in a blue VW van of our own, which broke down on the Pennines on our first time out, en route to the Mojo Club in Sheffield.



The Pennines are a row of mountains between Lancashire and Yorkshire. We almost froze to death and to this day I cannot remember how we got off that mountain! We had to ditch the VW and invested in a death-trap of a van which actually got us to a few gigs, and back.

I had been persistently calling Ivor Abadi, the owner of the Twisted Wheel Club, for an opportunity to play. Eventually he gave us a gig—how little he paid us has long faded from memory but shortly after that he called me and asked me if we'd be interested in backing Champion Jack Dupree at both Twisted Wheels—the newly opened one in Blackpool (a lovely seaside town) and the main one in Manchester. Oh, yes!

The Blackpool Wheel was first and that's where Jack made his



Champion Jack Dupree at the Twisted Wheel 1965



Champion Jack Dupree at Twisted Wheel

entrance while we were setting up the gear. The club was on the 2nd floor and he emerged from the doorway, a short guy with a smiling face. He was clad in a camel coat, a Russian hat on his head and he was wearing an earring in 1965! I was blown away. I'd never seen a guy with an earring before!

He ambled over to the piano and said, "how ya' doing boys? I play in Eb, Bb, Ab—all flats!" I thought "shit I don't have harps in those keys "(I wasn't bad on harp at that time—I was getting pretty good!) Compromises were made, the piano was out of tune anyway, we got through the gig and decided to meet up at The Manchester Wheel the next night, which we did.

November in Manchester is pretty darn cold and the moisture in the air can rip into you like a knife. Arriving to set up, we found Jack in the dressing room, wearing a tan-colored suit and huddled over a single-bar electric heater. I was wearing my ripped up long johns under my pants (I'd had them while I was in Connecticut several years back, and they still worked on cold English winter nights). The band started laughing when they saw my old shredded long johns while we were changing into our stage clothes and I said, "hey, don't laugh, I've had these for 8 years." Jack looked up and said, "Ain't it about time YA CHANGED EM, YET?" We all cracked up and, needless to say, pulled off a great gig with Jack that night.

Round about this time I got a call. The voice on the line said, "Rod Stewart and The Steampacket can't make it to the Tower Ballroom in Blackpool. Can you get there with the Big City Blues? Graham Bond is headlining, along with The Cymarons (pop group)." I scrambled the guys together, hit Blackpool and the Tower Ballroom, got set up and ran into sax genius Dick Heckstall Smith (my hero from Graham Bond Organization) whom I'd seen many times live, but now I was on the same bill and rubbing shoulders with these guys. I remember saying, "Man you should be playin' with James Brown!" He said, "I wish I was." We both had a laugh and he said, "Let



The Graham Bond Organization



Graham Bond (in the Spanish hat)

me buy you a beer." Off we went to the bar, where I had a brown ale with Dick Heckstall Smith! By that time Ginger Baker was with Cream, Jack Bruce had left, too, and had been with Mayall, and Manfred Mann before joining Cream with Baker.

The Bond line-up that night was Jon Hiseman on drums, Dick on sax, Bond on Hammond C3 organ (with bass pedals), and vocals. At that time they

had added Nigerian trumpet player Mike Falana (1941–1995) but I don't recall seeing him on this gig.

I made a point of catching their set after we had finished. The place was jammed especially with mod chicks, who were everywhere! Bond was wearing a Spanish-style black hat and a red striped shirt. He played organ (including bass pedals with his bare feet) and alto sax simultaneously and sang. A genius.

Imagine John Coltrane or Charlie Parker playing “outside-the-box” country blues and R&B with vocals—that’s the only way I can describe it, nothing like it before or since. Even with a major heroin habit, Bond delivered every time. In Dick’s book, *Blowing the Blues*, he describes countless times where Bond would be paid and blow all the money on drugs and weird expensive outfits before the band members could get their share (see picture!)

On this night some girls who were close to Bond at the edge of the stage were reaching out and tickling his feet while he was playing. He had a speech impediment and always had problems pronouncing his Rs they always came out as Ws, so when these girls started tickling his feet he stopped the band and on the mike said, “If you girls don't stop that I’m gonna come down there and “wape” (rape) you. Hilarious!

Despite all my efforts at keeping the band together, it was falling apart due to the lack of work. I figured the word “Blues” in our name was a put-off for booking and I was right—the times were changing, Motown and Stax and bands with horns were in vogue. Dave Moss had whipped up my interest in learning sax by playing me his Sonny Rollins records. I was digging Roland Kirk, the aforementioned Dick Heckstall Smith, The James Brown Band, King Curtis, Georgie Fame, Zoot Money—all horn bands. I figured I needed to start playing the sax and do some singin’ like Junior Walker.

I disbanded the Big City Blues, got a deal on a Selmer Mk6 tenor sax, bought some books, secluded myself away with Jr.

Walker, James Brown and Otis Redding records and started practicing my embouchure and playing by ear and putting all those licks to memory. I remember learning high harmonics from the Ted Nash book, like Walker and King Curtis—don't ask me to do that today! After about 8 months of driving my mother crazy and going to the woods in



A young David Bowker on Sax

nearby Alderley Edge to practice, I was confident enough to look for a working band. I didn't want the responsibility of booking anymore, I needed to play! I had a head full of horn licks memorized ("You want 'Mr. Pitiful'?—what key?") and I found a band called Gin House who were looking for a 2nd horn player. Perfect—one audition and I was in!

Next Issue: Adventures with The Gin House (and slowly getting my talented Big City Blues guys in the band). We morph into The Milton James Band and wow the northern soul circuit (briefly). Another break—I join The Richard Kent Style, Manchester's top band, go to Germany and come back to UK to tour with Del Shannon, Paul Jones (Manfred Mann) and hit maker Dave Berry.

A chance meeting with Kirk St James and I'm off to Beirut Lebanon for 6 months.

Gone but Not Forgotten: Luther Allison

by Todd Beebe Reprinted from January 23, 2013 Todd Beebe

The great Muddy Waters once said, "The Blues had a baby, and they named it Rock &



Roll!" No quote may ever ring as true as this. Rock & Roll spawned and grew from the mighty root of the Blues. In it's infancy, many people, unfamiliar with the Blues, assumed Rock & Roll came from a planet all it's own. But as the genre grew, more people started to point to the Blues as Rock's definite source of power. By the mid 1960's, audiences were looking for players with the Soul of the Blues, and a Rock edge to add plenty of fire. Many of these players by fate, coincidence, or simply the need to play anywhere they could, seemed to be continuously found on Chicago's West Side. Buddy Guy, Freddy King, Otis Rush and Magic Sam were players that all came to be associated with Chicago's "West Side Sound." Another player with a massive Rock edge and plenty of fire also joined that list of new players: Luther Allison.

Luther Allison was born in Widener, Arkansas on August 17, 1939. Luther was fascinated by the Guitar at an early age, and strung a wire to the wall

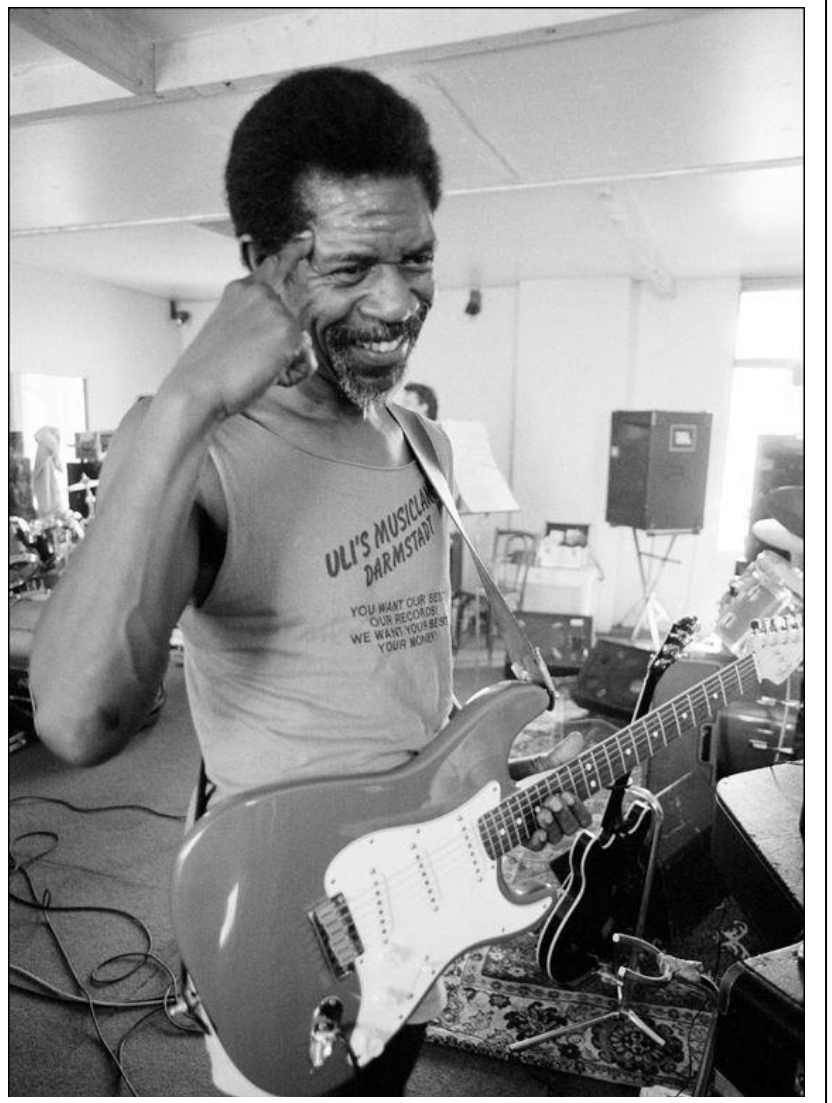
to form a Diddley Bow. His love for the Blues soon blossomed, so when his family moved to Chicago in 1951, Luther found himself in the perfect place! The Blues was everywhere in Chicago, and he basked in the sounds of Howlin' Wolf, Muddy Waters and Sonny Boy Williamson. Legend has it that Luther didn't start playing on a real guitar until he turned 18.

Freddy King became his good friend and encouraged him to emphasize his strong voice along side his guitar playing.

King's success soon took off and he began to play nationally. Luther jumped right in and took over Freddy's old band, and also King's weekly shows on the West side. It was during this time that Luther stormed Chicago and made a name for himself. 1969 saw Luther Allison play a barn storming set at the Ann Arbor Blues Festival. To say Luther turned heads is an understatement. "He literally grabbed heads and turned them if they weren't paying attention!" "Chicago's Delmark Records soon took notice and released Allison's debut "Love Me Mama" in 1969.

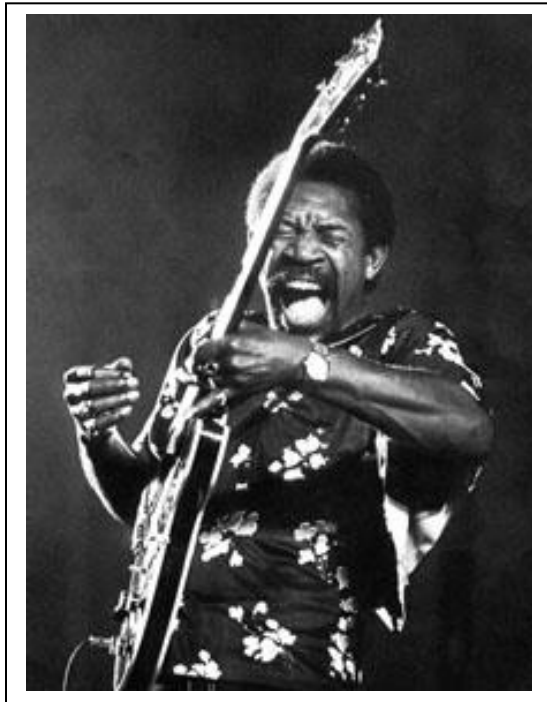
In 1972 Luther signed with Motown Records. He was the only Blues artist on the label at the time. This opened doors for him to tour more nationally and internationally as well. Luther noticed that the Blues scene was not exactly thriving in the States at the time. But in Europe, audiences couldn't get enough. By 1977 he decided to move to

Paris, where he was rightfully treated as a real artist and master of his craft. He enjoyed many years there, playing for appreciative audiences in large venues everywhere he went. As the years went by, Luther started to set his sights on conquering his homeland.



In 1994, Chicago's Alligator Records released "Soul Fixin' Man." This album is a Blues Masterpiece, and signaled that Luther Allison was ready to show America that he was indeed still carrying the torch of the Blues and all of its power. On June 3, 1995, Allison

took the stage at the Chicago Blues Festival. He was well aware that many in the audience were unfamiliar with his name. He had something to prove, and prove it he



did! Much like his amazing, energetic show in Ann Arbor in '69, at the '95 Chicago Blues Fest, Luther pulled out all the stops! I was there that day to witness this amazing show, and I can tell you the experience was unreal. I'll never forget hearing a man behind me, obviously not at all familiar with Luther Allison, screaming over and over "Maaaaan!! Who is this guy???!! He jams!!" By the time Luther left the stage that day, everyone knew his name. Several months later, I found myself at Buddy Guy's Legends. It was November 4, 1995. I had heard stories of Luther's amazing, marathon long shows. On that night I witnessed it first hand. Allison played close to 4 hours! Walking through the crowd and taking showmanship to a new level, he once again left myself, and everyone in attendance stunned with his Blues power. Check out the amazing "Live In Chicago" 2 Disc set that captures Luther's '95 Blues Fest performance and also features selections from

that '95 show at Legends. It's absolutely essential listening!

Alligator released "Blue Streak" in 1995 and "Reckless" in 1997. Both are outstanding examples of the man and all his power. With the release of "Reckless" came more marathon shows. Luther burned across the globe and more importantly, the States. He was on a mission to win back his homeland, and he was doing just that- one amazing show after another- night after night, city after city. W.C. Handy and Living Blues Awards started to pour in. Luther Allison seemed unstoppable. So in July of 1997, Blues audiences were shocked to hear that he had inoperable lung cancer.

On August 12, 1997, the World lost one of the most amazing entertainers to ever live. His passing left a huge void in the Blues. He lives on though, in so many ways. His son, Bernard Allison gives amazing performances night after night, reminding us to never forget his legendary Father. Anytime someone plays and plays and gives a marathon performance, unable to stop because they simply can't- the spirit of Luther Allison is alive and well. Luther had a saying he became known for: "Leave your ego, play the music, love the people." Night after night he did just that, and in the process, showed us all how it's supposed to be done.

Thanks Luther.

About the Author-Todd Beebe is a full time musician/teacher in the Chicago area and a staff writer at BG: Blues And Music News. His first exposure to music was hearing his Grandfather's bands playing Traditional Country music by the likes of Hank Williams Sr.,

The Carter Family and Jimmie Rodgers. Tracing the roots of that music lead him to his love of the Blues. Check out more interviews, articles and music with Todd Beebe at https://www.facebook.com/pg/ToddBeebeMusic/notes/?ref=page_internal
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<https://bg.buddyguy.com/tag/todd-beebe/>
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Karen Lovely Her Time Has Come!

Chick Cavallero

Patti and I first saw Karen Lovely at the 2010 International Blues Challenge in Memphis. She wowed us as she took home 2nd place and has been one of our favorites ever



since. I've been waiting and waiting for one of our local Festivals to get it right and bring her into Colorado but so far, no luck, I've had to settle for catching her every year in Memphis at the IBCs where she usually shows up at the Women In Blues Showcase, the Pacific Northwest Showcase or Kathy Bolmer's Pay it Forward Showcase. Every time I see her, I am blown away by her amazing voice. As impressive as anyone on the contemporary

Blues scene, and surpassing most anyone who comes to mind! If you caught her last summer on her first trip to Colorado as a headliner at the



Women in Blues show at the Dickens Opera House, you know exactly what I am talking about.

She is developing a heckuva reputation in the blues world. She followed up her IBC success with three 2011 Blues Music Award Nominations for her 2nd CD release *STILL THE RAIN*. Lovely has taken home 7 Muddy Awards for "Performance of the Year", "Best Contemporary Blues Band", "Best Female Artist" and "Best National Recording." In 2018, she received her 4th prestigious Blues Music Award nomination for "Best Contemporary Blues Female Artist" and her 4th Blues Blast Music Award nomination for "Female Blues Artist of the Year."



*Karen is a singer/songwriter with a style uniquely her own. Her performance are a blistering mix of contemporary Blues, blues Rock, and American roots music. More than a musician, she is a committed social activist, with a passionate driven style. Her songs echo her causes and address domestic violence, sexual abuse, homelessness, mental health, addiction, and suicide. Going beyond just lip service Karen donated a portion of her sales of *Fish Outta Water* to [RAINN](#), the nation's largest anti-sexual assault organization. She has included links to domestic violence and sexual assault hotlines in each of her studio album liner notes.*



Here are what people have been saying about her:

"first class vocalist." - **Art Tipaldi, BLUES REVUE**

"truly exceptional" - **BLUES BLAST**

"magnificent" - **BluesWax Magazine**

"Lovely's voice combines roadhouse grit with a focused emotional clarity all her own...she's an unstoppable force blasting out of the Pacific Northwest." - **Frank-John Hadley, DownBeat**

"The single most impressive emerging female

vocalist I've heard in quite some time" – **James Nagel "The Blues Hound", 90.1 FM KPFT Houston**

I would love to see this powerhouse vocalist returning to Colorado when the Festival season returns to us in 2021.,,,and this damn COVID-19 has disappeared once and for all. It is high time ALL of Colorado's blues fans heard her amazing talent! -Chick Cavallero

HAPPY HALLOWEEN

From... The Colorado Blues Society



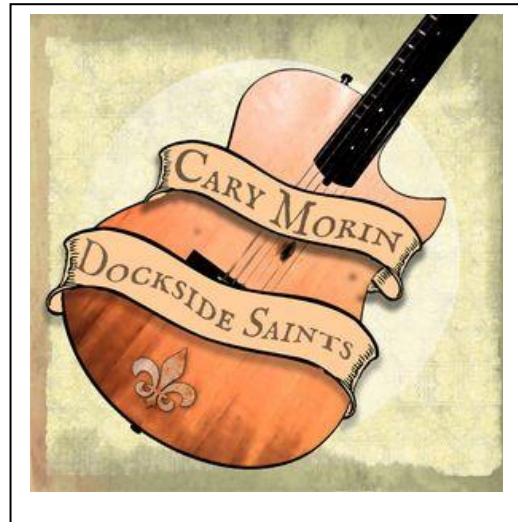
CD Reviews

CARY MORIN *Dockside Saints*

By Chick Cavallero

I've been impressed by Cary Morin since I first heard him at the Colorado Blues Society IBC competition in 2013. Cary won our competition that year and the following year, going on to represent CBS in the International Blues Competition in Memphis and both times made it in to the semifinals, though I have a hard time figuring how the judges kept him out of the Finals. He is a masterful guitarist, songwriter, and singer.

The first song I heard was "Bare Trees", a hauntingly beautiful tune which reminded me of Otis Taylor with Anne Harris' violin. A truly captivating instrumental. Now, in those IBC's, Cary was always alone, playing solo, something he excels at with some incredible finger-picking skills that few have. But this time, he has put together a bad-ass group of musicians to back him up, and on this opening song, Beau Thomas on fiddle brings tears to your eyes.



"Because He Told Me So" is Cary's tribute to church music, something Roots and Blues music is always bringing to the front, and he does it well. His voice has a way of molding itself to whatever picture his words are painting. "Cary's Groove" is some pure bad ass music! It's another instrumental and shows off the entire band, with an emphasis on Eric Adcock on Keys, John Fohl and Cary on guitars, and Corey Ledet on accordion. It's a powerful mix of blues, rock, jazz, and zydeco.

"Chosen Road" is some of the most beautiful blues I've heard. Great lyrics, incredible vocals, and again has that truly haunting quality to it. "Come The Rain" is a little bit rock, little bit country, with an incredible slide guitar that grabs your attention and weaves it

through Cary's sweet vocals. "Exception To the Rule" follows through with more of the same, a clever blend of rock and country and masterful vocals.

"Jamie Rae" is a fun ride on up tempo zydeco and Cajun. Cary leads the way and Ledet's accordion and Beau Thomas' fiddle fill in any of the cracks. Good stuff. Fact is, it's all really good stuff. "Nobody Gotta Know" "Prisoner", "Tonight", "Blue Delta Home", in all of them Cary has an amazing ability to mix in a little of just about everything. And he finishes up with "Valley Of The Chiefs" to honor his Native American Crow background. As I said, there's a mixture of so many cultures here.

His vocals are perfect for his music, and his music tends to blend a dab of every style, so that each song has a little blues, a little country, some Cajun, some bluegrass, even a touch of jazz and rock. It creates his own unique style of music. It is hard to describe it, as I said, at times I can hear some Otis Taylor, other times Sonny Landreth, and then suddenly I'm hearing New Orleans party music. All in all, it keeps you on your toes and you never are bored listening to it. If you haven't gotten acquainted with Cary Morin yet, this would be a good time to check him out.

Clay Kirkland

The Conversation

By Dan Willging

If pandemic-ridden 2020 has been good for anything, it's been beneficial for catching up on tasks that were allusive before. A few years ago, longtime Denver harmonica bluesman, now Kansas City resident Clay Kirkland visited his son Luke in the Boston area and spent the day with the fellow musician in his studio laying down tracks and experimenting with various ideas. Nothing tangible ever came out of it until the stay-at-home order was issued and Luke had time to assemble those recordings into this five-minute single, "The Conversation." Luke accompanies his harmonica-wailing Major Dad with suspenseful synthesizer chords and spooky little riffs that float off by the wayside. After a minute, a stream of trip-hop beats comes marching in. As the song progresses, the whirling intensity increases, and occasionally an eerie choral part is faintly heard, courtesy of a 1960s Echoplex.

Yet, it's not dubbed "The Conversation" because of its interaction between Clay and Luke. Instead, it's an artful conversation between Clay's acoustic harmonica and his electric harmonica. The acoustic harmonica takes the first passage, there's a pause followed by the electric harmonica. It alternates that way until the end when the tune reaches its apex, and both harmonicas join forces for the mighty last verse. It's a deep track with lots to listen for. It puts Clay in a different light but one that shouldn't be surprising if you are familiar with how envelope-pushing and adventuresome he has been throughout his career. Worth checking out.

www.claykirkland.com



Linsey Alexander

Live at Rosa's

Delmark Records

By Dan Willging

Though it may sound cliché-ish to say slingin' blues guitarist Linsey Alexander is a reason why Chicago blues will never wither away on the vine, it's also true. Alexander has been a fixture on the Windy City scene for decades, starting on Chicago's Southside and eventually breaking through in the Northside clubs that tourists frequent. Being exposed to tourists led to recording a few independently released CDs before being signed to Delmark Records in 2012. Since then, he has been on a tear, releasing three studio albums for the prestigious Chicago imprint.

Alexander's fourth Delmark effort, *Live at Rosa's*, finds the septuagenarian (76 at the time of this performance) at the top of his game. With his barking voice commanding attention, his guitar playing is fluid and brims with technique and



innovation. He is occasionally a string shredder but primarily grooves ahead with a good selection of shuffles, electro-funkers, and slow, scorching burners.

Of these nine tracks, five are originals with four tunes reprised from previous studio efforts. Whether you're a longtime Alexander fan or a recently converted disciple, they're excellent renditions nonetheless. Practically everyone can relate to Chicago's blustery winters, which makes the chilly imagery of "Snowing in Chicago" suitable blues fodder. "Goin' Out Walkin'" is another fun one as Alexander vows to walk to San Antonio to bring his baby back home. The unveiled original "I Got a Woman" has a struttin' funkiness to its step that's dance floor enticing. Roosevelt Purifoy is great in his shotgun role with jammin' keyboard rides that help propel the grove along.

But the acid test for a real, traditional-based bluesman is how he (or she) handles the slower material. Alexander develops "Ships on the Ocean" and Freddie King's "Have You Ever Loved a Woman" methodically and naturally to feel like a satisfying journey rather than something that's tiresome and overstayed its welcome. Sonically, the sound is so clear you wouldn't know it's a live album except for the few times Alexander speaks to his audience. For these reasons, Delmark labelmate Johnny Burgin hails Alexander's live affair as 'a real blues album from start to finish.' It is definitely one I'll be spinning in the years to come.

Bridget Kelly Band

"Dark Spaces"

Alpha Sun Records

Marketing: Marlene Palumbo @ Indienink Music

By Peter "Blewzzman" Lauro © August 2020

Blues Editor @ www.Mary4Music.com

2011 "Keeping The Blues Alive: Award Recipient

Preface

I'd have to search long and hard to find someone I know through blues music who doesn't know Bridget Kelly and Tim Fik - especially if they are IBC and BMA attendees. Bridget and Tim are the type of people that will walk up to strangers at a blues festival or in a club and not only introduce themselves but do so with such a warmth and a smile that they'll make you feel like you've known them your whole life. If there were ever two people who the terminology "To know them is to love them" applied, it is indeed Bridget and Tim. Right about now, anyone reading this who *does* know them is nodding their heads in agreement, understanding exactly what I mean. It's an honor for me and the Blewzzlady to call them our friends.

Review

"*Dark Spaces*", which the band dedicates to the late and lovable Tony Colter and all those affected by Covid-19, is the sixth release for the Bridget Kelly Band. The

disc features nearly seventy minutes of music, on thirteen all original tracks, that cover several styles of blues that - in their own words - relate to "matters that span from the murky recess of isolation and loneliness, to the summits of hope and unbridled optimism."

For this project, The BKB - as they like to refer to themselves, consists of: Bridget Kelly on vocals; Tim Fik on guitars and bass; Alex Klausner, Sonny Rock and Boss Jones on drums; and Mark Armbrecht on bass.

The disc opens with "*Free Me*", one of just about every one of the thirteen songs that will validate why Tim Fik repeatedly appeared on my first round ballots when I was a member of the Blues Music Awards nominating committee for many years. Calling him anything less than genius just doesn't cut it. The song, brilliantly sung by Bridget as well, is about the need to escape the different types of demons and fears that can sometimes encompass and consume us.



The title track, "*Dark Spaces*", addresses those places that most of us have some of but try to keep hidden way back in the corner of our minds. Although there are many who will be afraid to agree, as Bridget sees it, those places not only need to be explored but brought out into the light as well. With Sonny and Mark pounding out a rhythm that lyrics like these call for, Tim is once again working his magic on repeated stinging guitar leads.

"Find My Way Back Home" is an up-tempo tune that will surely please the foot tappers, knee slappers and booty shakers. It's highlighted by exuberant and sassy vocals from Bridget; smokin' slide guitar from the maestro; and a substantial rhythm led by Sonny, slammin' the hell out of those skins.

"*Things About To Change*" is a heartwarming, inspirational song in which Bridget not only encourages the thought that bad times will get better, she pretty much promises it, as well. That right there is indeed what Bridget Kelly is truly all about. With the band taking a rare back seat, Bridget shines on this one.

When I saw the notes on the one sheet referencing this track use the words "epic slow blues" I knew I'd be all over it. I've repeatedly said that when you truly want to hear the caliber of a singers voice you've got to hear them sing a ballad. That said, you need to hear Bridget on "*Moments*". Now, about those epic slow blues.....just consider that the intense rhythm and the string bending, gut wrenching guitar leads that slap you in the face on the thirty second intro are only a tease.

"In The Spirit (Souls In The River)" is another up-tempo number and the somewhat Latin vibe the rhythm sections grooving in will make it another dance floor filler. On another note, the melodically repetitive lyrics and catchy chorus line will have you joining Bridget for a fun filled sing-a-long.

The disc closes with a triple decker blues sandwich called "*Your Days Are Numbered*". It's a seven-and-a-half minute long track that features Bridget seriously growling out gritty and raspy blues vocals in between not one, not two, but three extended guitar tirades that total close to four minutes long. These are the the kind of guitar skills that will one day win Tim that Blues Music Award I mentioned earlier. Remember where you heard it.

Other tracks on "Dark Spaces": include: "*Sky's The Limit*"; "*Someone To Hold On To*"; "*Sometimes You Gotta Dance*"; "*No Use In Tryin*"; "*Back Seat Love*"; and "*Southern Wind*".

To find out more about the Bridget Kelly Band just go to their website

- www.bridgetkellyband.com

BTW, you might also want to click this link - [Tim Fik - Blues Foundation](#) - and read about Tim Fik receiving the Blues Foundation's "*Keeping The Blues Alive*" Award.

Avey Grouws Band

"The Devil May Care"

Self Released

Publicity: Blind Raccoon

By Peter "Blewzzman" Lauro © Feb. 2020

Blues Editor @ www.Mary4Music.com

2011 "Keeping The Blues Alive: Award Recipient

Two of the many reasons I enjoy doing these reviews are the pleasure I experience by getting to hear many new and very good bands before the rest of the world does and then on top of that, the additional pleasure of helping the rest of the world hear about them, as well. The newest of those bands is the Avey Grouws Band and yes indeed, they are very good, as well.

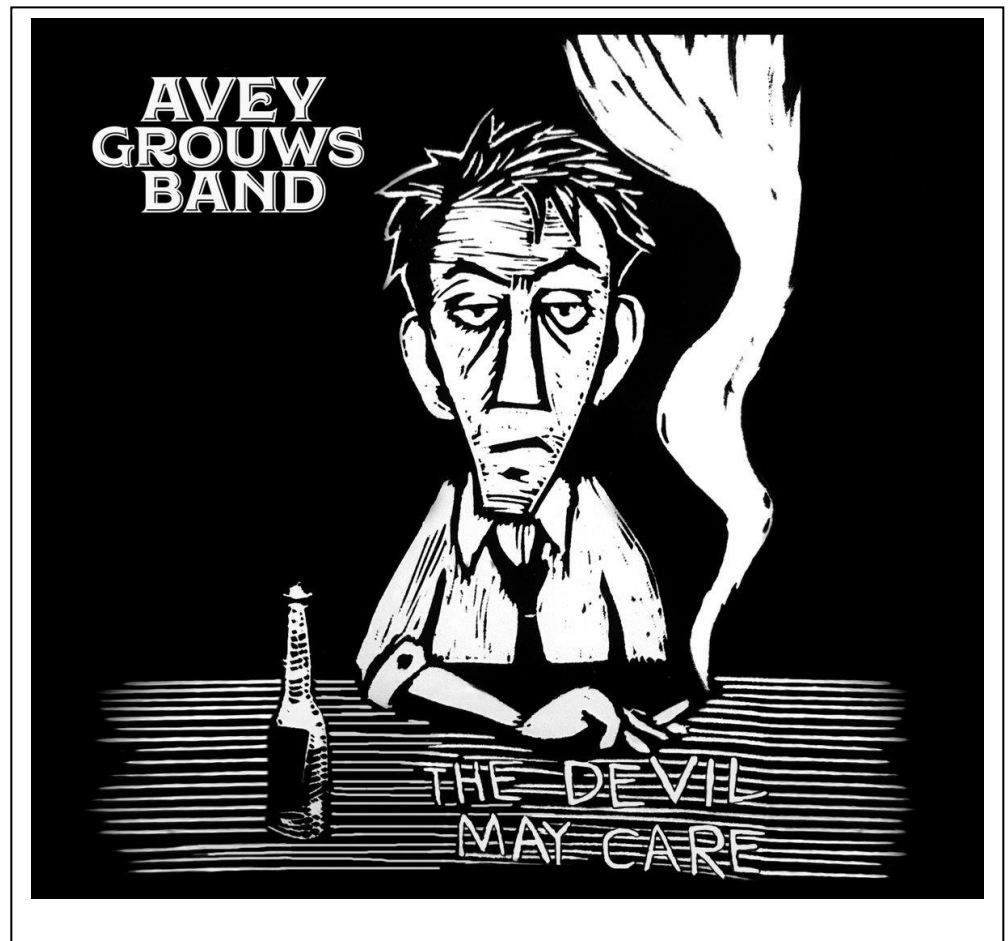
The Avey Grouws Band is Chris Avey on guitar and vocals; Jeni Grouws on vocals; Bryan West on drums; Randy Leasman on bass; and Nick Vasquez on keys. On "*The*

Devil May Care" - the band's debut release - they are joined by: Nolan Schroeder on sax; and Dan Meier on trumpet. The disc contains ten original tracks all penned by the bands' namesakes.

On a most impressive opening track titled "*Come And Get This Love*", the five piece ensemble wastes absolutely no time showcasing their individual and collective

talents. Jeni quickly establishes the fact that with her angelic yet powerful voice, her broad range and just the right amount of attitude that she intends to be a force to be reckoned within the genre's vocal arena: Chris' cutting edge guitar skills validate him being compared by other reviewers to the likes of Coco Montoya, Tab Benoit and Robben Ford; Bryan and Randy have already made it very clear that their rhythm work will be repeatedly complimented; and Nick's fantastically frenzied organ highlights sent me straight to Googling

his name. Toss all this together and it adds up to one heck of a dance floor filling smoker.



On the title track - "*The Devil May Care*" - while the rhythm section is in just the right groove behind them, all the heat is coming from the forces behind the Avey Grouws band. In the battle of the scorching vocals versus the scorching guitar licks, the clear cut winner is the listener.

This one's titled "*Long Road*" and, from the way it starts off all the way to it's pinnacle, it's apparently an uphill road. Starting off sounding like Jeni may actually be singing a ballad things quickly progress. The rhythm becomes assertive, the guitars - with fiery slide highlights - become aggressive and that ballad is suddenly one hell of a rocker.

This track tells of how "*Weary*" that long drive home from being on the road can sometimes be. It's one of the more relaxed songs of the lot and it allows the simple smoothness and pure beauty of Jeni's voice to take center stage. Right there with her, starting off with a mellow acoustic guitar then switching over to some silky slide leads, we also get to hear the smoother side of Chris' guitar skills. That, combined with Randy's softened bass lines all combine for this being an absolutely beautiful performance.

Although "*Dig What You Do*" is indeed something I could easily say to the band, it's actually the song's title. It's a flat out fast paced boogie featuring Chris joining Jeni on a delightful duet that's powered by a rollicking barrel-house piano led rhythm and rousing guitar leads.

Wow, the band does jazz too! I guess with "*Two Days Off (And A Little Bit Of Liquor)*" anything can happen. With the help of some outstanding saxophone and trumpet additions at the hands of Nolan and Dan, and a chorus line by well harmonized back up vocals, the Avey Grouws Jazz Ensemble is laying down one hell of a swingin' shuffle.

Other tracks on "*The Devil May Care*" - a disc that may very well draw some "Debut Release" nods - include: "*Rise Up*"; "*Let's Take It Slow*"; "*Let Me Sing The Blues*", and "*Dirty Little Secret*".

To find out more about the Avey Grouws Band just go to www.aveygrouwsband.com

The Reverend Shawn Amos & The Brotherhood "*Blue Sky*"

Put Together Music

Publicity: Blind Raccoon

By Peter "Blewzzman" Lauro © Apr. 2020

Blues Editor @ www.Mary4Music.com 2011 Keeping the Blues Alive Recipient

With many prior releases under Reverend Shawn Amos' belt, "*Blue Sky*" is actually the debut release for the ensemble billed as Reverend Shawn Amos & The Brotherhood - and from the way I'm understanding it, expect more. According to the one sheet, with "Everybody in the band is feeling pride of ownership, The Brotherhood is in it for the long haul".

The Reverend Shawn Amos & The Brotherhood is a deep roots collaboration between Shawn Amos - the acclaimed blues singer/songwriter and harmonica player - and some old friends: drummer Brady Blade; bassist Christopher "CT" Thomas; and his long time

guitarist, Chris "Doctor" Roberts. Friends of The Brotherhood include vocalists: Ruthie Foster, Piper Amos, Charlotte Gibson, and Kenya Hathaway, who are collectively known as The Sisterhood; with Jamelle Adisa and Mike Cottone on trumpet; Marc Bolin on sousaphone; Matthew Demeritt on tenor sax; Tim Ganard on bass drum; Matt Hubbard on piano, Wurlitzer and Hammond; John Montgomery on snare drum; Ben Peeler on lap & pedal steel and dobro; James Saez on sundry stringed and electronic things; Johan Stein on guitar; and Dan Weinstein on trombone.



Fans of blues, folk, Americana and even country will all agree that "*Stranger Than Today*" is right in all of their wheelhouses. The song is a tale of Walter Marion Jacobs' - a.k.a. "Little Walter" - departure out of Marksville, Louisiana. Musically, the melding of: Blade's drum set and electronic drum machine; the steel and electric guitars; the lead, backup and echoing vocals; along with the smooth and lazy harmonica leads; all magnificently and masterfully comes together.

From its lyrics, to its music, to its vocals and their presentation, everything about "*Troubled Man*" is deep and compelling. As a duet, Ruthie Foster and The Reverend are a force to be reckoned with. Already leaning in an eerie direction, the harmonica and guitar leads of The Rev and Doctor Roberts take it further down that lane. Awesome track!

At just a minute-and-a-half in length, this one does not "*Hold Back*." It's hard drivin' rhythm and fast paced vocals - with the Sisterhood adding extra gears - create a pedal to the metal attitude. As fast and as hard as it started, the tracks abrupt ending is quite appropriate.

On this melancholy track, "*The Pity And The Pain*" can be clearly felt through the track's tender vocals. Using their fabulous falsettos on the lead and harmony vocals, The Reverend and Kenya Hathaway are a natural fit.

"*27 Dollars*" features several funny lines - particularly the one where The Reverend states "I got 27 dollar bills, I'm gonna need a few more so I can get that Coupe DeVille"; and the one where he tells his landlord he can't pay his rent 'cause he's saving for a

Coupe DeVille and her reply is "I hope that Coupe got a kitchen, 'cause you no longer living here". A strong drum fueled rhythm, sharp harp leads and a barrelhouse piano all make this a dancer's delight.

Most of what you might imagine hearing while a large band with horns is playing at a rambunctious party can be heard right here on "*Keep The Faith, Have Some Fun*". Boisterous chatter, check; playful laughter, check; hooting and howling, check; percussion type sounds - be they from the band or the crowd, check; band members exuberantly encouraging each other, check; a catchy sing-a-long chorus line with fun lyrics, check; blaring harmonica and horn leads, check; party goers and band members having one hell of a good time, CHECK!

Other original tracks on *Blue Sky* include: "*The Letter*", "*Counting Down The Days*", "*The Job Is Never Done*", and "*Albion Blues*".

To find out more about the The Reverend Shawn Amos just go to www.shawnamos.com

Leroy Ellington's Sacred Hearts

"Live And Kickin' It"

Infiniti Group Records

Management: The Galaxie Agency

Publicity: Jill Kettles

By Peter "Blewzzman" Lauro © Apr. 2020

Preface

On the one sheet accompanying the disc, Leroy states: "*I'm proud of this live project, yes, it's live, it comes with all the hiccups that happened those two nights! I'd like to think this CD represents the way we should live our lives...jump right in there, make your mistakes, give it everything you have and never give up! There are no overdubs at all on this album...what you hear is what we played...I can live with that!*". To that I say "Leroy, although I agree with your lifestyle philosophy and how to attack a song, I gotta tell you, I heard no hiccups or mistakes".

Review

Apparently, Leroy Ellington and his Sacred Hearts don't like resting on their laurels.....and that's a good thing for us. Just about a year ago I had the pleasure of

reviewing the bands second release - "*Sanctified*" - and here I sit about to go to work on "*Live And Kickin' It*". Being a live recording, it contains: two original tracks from an earlier solo release by Leroy, titled "*Blue Eyed Blues*"; three original tracks from the bands previous release; with three new originals and three covers.

The very talented musicians on the project are: Leroy Ellington on lead vocals and saxophone; his sacred hearts: Max Gise and Marcos Sastre on guitar; Mike Grosser on bass; Charlie Fletcher on keyboards; Josh Parker on drums; The Soul Flower Singers, who are: Sonya Jackson and Karen Bolden on background vocals; and The Blowin' Smoke Horns who are: Dwayne Irvin on saxophone and John Zappa on trumpet.



The words "and lead us not, into temptation" will ring a bell for those of you who have ever said The Lord's Prayer - or as us Catholic School kids called it - "The Our Father". Being someone who was always trying to "stay out of trouble because he wanted to get in (to Heaven)", Leroy knows a thing or two about temptation. As a result, he sometimes found himself being the guy that "Heaven don't want and Hell can't handle". On "*Heaven Don't Want Me*" - one of his new originals - Leroy addresses life on that roller coaster ride of good and evil. This is the first of two tracks on which he blows lead sax and his sound on that is as soulful and emotional as his heartfelt vocals. Additionally, as you will hear me say many times coming up, the rhythm and guitar work is as powerful as it gets.

When is something that you absolutely don't need and would never pay \$150 for, a good deal? Well, if you think like Leroy (and me as well) - never! On the other hand, Mrs. Ellington disagrees. Ya see, "*Three Easy Payments*" now makes it an offer she can't refuse. Yep, this true story is not only what gave Leroy a bad case of the QVC/HSN blues but it led to this original song, as well. Look at that Mrs. Ellington - the silver lining in the cloud! This dance floor filler is powered by a very hot rhythm led by Charlie's smokin' organ leads the killer guitar licks of Marcos. On top of the dancing, the catchy chorus line will have you singing, as well.

Should you be wondering if the above situation may have landed Leroy in the "Doghouse", the answer is a big yes. Featuring seven full minutes of an all out, full throttle jam session, the live version of this original song is considerably longer than the studio version. First and foremost, Josh - easily at disc's best on drums - is literally beatin' the s - - t out of the kit; the dueling guitars - with monster solos by Max - are mind blowing; Dwayne and John are validating why they're called The Blowin' Smoke Horns; and Leroy, on top of belting the hell out of the vocals is blowin' some smoke of his own on the saxophone. I can just imagine the rush this one gave the audience, 'cause I'm in total awe listening from home. Great job guys!

The first of the disc's covers, "Why Me", is a song by one of Leroy's idols - Delbert McClinton. And just as Delbert did, The Sacred Hearts laid it out in grand form. Once again, this time led by some chest thumping' bass lines by way of Mike, the rhythm is off the charts; the horn section, be it synchronous or on trumpet and saxophone solos by John or Dwayne, are doing what they do - blowin' smoke; and Leroy is doing what I've now come to realize comes quite easily to him - singing the hell out of the song.

When it comes to his band mates, one of the many things that prides Leroy is the raw power that they individually and collectively exude during their performances, and that can clearly be backed up by pretty much every song on the disc. That said, the guys are also capable of exuding an intense level of tenderness, emotion and sensitivity as they clearly do on "Gravity" (John Mayer). Then there's that tirade that Marcos takes off on during the last nearly two minutes of the song that is a whole other story. Plain and simple it's some of the baddest guitar work I've heard in a very long time.

There's probably not a day that goes by where you either use, or hear someone else use, an idiom. Some of the more common ones are: 'fit as a fiddle'; 'feeling under the weather'; and "Baptized In A Bedpan".....okay, maybe not so much that last one. However, the song is a true story based on Leroy's birth and those early days - make that months - in an incubator. Ya see, Leroy was indeed not fit as a fiddle in the beginning and he learned what it meant to be feeling under the weather long before anyone should have to. As a matter of fact, not being sure if he'd ever make it out of the hospital, to insure his receiving the Sacrament of Baptism, they brought in a chaplain who truly performed the procedure in a bedpan. But that was a long, long time ago and now Leroy is a big bad blues man who is *live and kickin' it* and having a good time telling that story.

Other tracks on "Live And Kickin' It" include; "My Father's Son"; "Until We Meet Again"; "Something Funky Going On"; "I Wanna Tickle Your Fancy"; and "The Forecast Calls For Pain" (Robert Cray).

To find out more about Leroy Ellington's Sacred Hearts just go to their website - <https://leroyssacredhearts.com/>

The Michael Mills Band

"Stand Up"

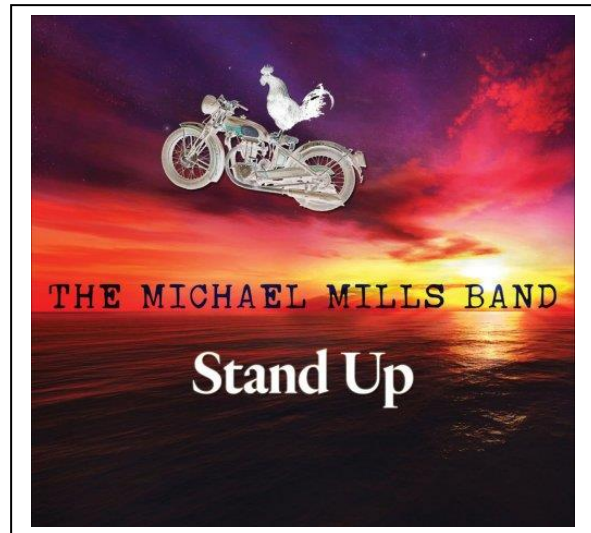
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By Peter "Blewzzman" Lauro © May 2020

Blues Editor @ www.Mary4Music.com 2011 Keeping the Blues Alive Recipient

The Michael Mills Band, based out of the blues rich Huntington Beach, CA area, consists of: Michael Mills on rhythm guitar and vocals; Jesse Godoy on lead and slide guitar; Scot Campbell on bass; Ron Ravicchio on drums; and Mark Weisz on Hammond B3 organ. Joining them are: Eddie Hagihara, Ron Robbins and Jim Butler on saxophone; Chef Denis on harmonica; Albert Margolis on piano; and Jackie Simone Elliott and Cydney Wayne Davis on background vocals.



Although they released a five song EP some time last year, "Stand Up" is the first full length release from The Michael Mills Band. Covering all the styles of blues, all twelve of its tracks are original songs with eleven of them being new for the project.

"*Stand Up*", the disc's opening and title track, kicks things off in grand fashion. It's an impressive blues rocker doing exactly what an opening track should do by featuring the nucleus of the band, all on top of their game. The tone has indeed been set.

You'll not only notice it but you'll "*Feel It*" as the band establishes their versatility by very comfortably switching gears into this absolutely beautiful ballad. Everything from the soulful and heavenly lead and background vocals; to the delicately intense rhythm; to the sensitive guitar chords; to the interweaving of the B3 organ and piano; are all amazingly masterful.

On "*I'm Not Sorry*", it took all of three notes of Jesse's opening guitar intro for my ears to perk up and my brain to think "oh yeah, here comes some serious slow blues". Then Mark so appropriately sets just the right heartbeat to the song with the Hammond organ; Scot and Ron fall right in with an easy-going rhythm; Michael starts emotionally belting the hell out of the songs' melancholic lyrics; and here I sat - per my taste - listening to what I believe will be the disc's best track.

"*My New Woman*", the only track that appeared on the band's earlier EP, is definitely one for the movers and shakers. Michael's melodic and vibrant vocals; Jesse's pickin' and slidin' on the acoustic guitar; Chef's howlin' harp leads; and Albert's honky-tonk piano playin'; all give this one the feel of a country blues jamboree.

While Michael's singing "*My Baby Drives*" like she's running away from the law", the band's keeping a pace that sounds like they are, as well. On this blues rocker, the rhythm is ferocious, the harp leads wail and the very Elmore James sounding slide guitar work is amazing.

Being the funkiest of the lot, ya know the rhythm cats are gonna be all over "*Big Black Car*". That said, it's the only track that features Eddie Hagihara blowin' the hell out of several tenor sax leads and, although there are many more, that's reason enough for listening.

When Michael Mills and I first started conversing, back in July of 2019, I recall him explaining to me that he was new to the blues. I also recall wanting to reply with "Yeah, right!". Give this track a listen and "*I Know*" you'll agree. This kind of straight up, gut wrenching blues is what you'd expect to only hear from seasoned blues veterans.

Other tracks on "*Stand Up*", a disc that I feel establishes The Michael Mills Band as a force to be reckoned with in the genre, include: "*Real Good Thing*"; "*One More Alone*"; "*Love Is Ahead Of Me*"; "*You Can't Hide*"; and "*Chasing The Blues*".

To find out more about Michael Mills and the band, please go to www.michaelmillsband.com

Blind Lemon Pledge

"Goin' Home"

OFEH Records

Publicity: Blind Raccoon

By Peter "Blewzzman" Lauro © Apr. 2020

Blues Editor @ www.Mary4Music.com 2011 Keeping the Blues Alive Recipient

I doubt anyone of you are wondering if the name Blind Lemon Pledge appears on this artist's birth certificate, but for those who may not know what name actually does, that would be James Byfield.

Averaging a very impressive year-and-a-half between releases, since 2008, "*Goin' Home*" is the eighth for Blind Lemon Pledge. It's a twelve song project that features two originals and ten of Pledge's favorite songs covering blues, jazz and folk standards. Unlike his last release on which the multi-instrumentalist played all the instruments, here Pledge - on vocals and guitar - is joined by Peter Grenell on bass and vocals. If down home, from the heart and soul acoustic sounds float your musical boat, then sit back with your headphones on and enjoy your beautifully relaxing journey.

Reaching back some seventy years, Pledge opens with "*I Feel Like Going Home*" (McKinley Morganfield), one of several songs that were responsible for the early popularity of Muddy Waters back in the late forties. Had this been performed in a club, Pledge's mastery over the slide guitar would have alone been worth the price of admission.

You can search the Internet and come up with all different answers as to what may be the most covered song of all time. However, if you were able to count every lounge act or bar band in that crowded field, my money says "*Fever*" has to be in the top five. The song was written by Eddie Coolie and John Davenport (whose real name was Otis Blackwell) and was originally recorded in 1956, on an album with the same title, by Little Willie John. Over my many years of hearing it, my favorite renditions were the sultry versions done by various female jazz singers. That said, staying true to the original, Pledge gives the song the justice it's due.



One of the two originals is title "*Sugar Rush*" and it's nothing like the kind you worry about your kids having. As a matter of fact, it's the kind most adults enjoy having. In this case, the sugar refers to the treats you derive from your sugar.

Another of my personal favorites is a very well done version of one of my favorite songs - "*Somebody Loan Me A Dime*" (Fenton Robertson). Pledge not only nails it vocally but may have done one of the best solo acoustic blues leads I've ever heard. Killer track!

At barely over two minutes, while being the disc's shortest track, this other original sacrifices absolutely nothing. Add another verse or two to this uptempo song about a cutie called "*Sweet Celine*", let a pop country artist record it and you've got a hit.

Another noteworthy performance is Pledge's masterful presentation of Robert Johnson's "*Love In Vain*". Easily, some of the disc's best pickin' takes place right here.

Although "*The Little Black Train*" (Traditional) will certainly take you to church, it's the next stop - which is indeed the last stop - you don't want to be aboard for. Laying down their instruments, Pledge and Grenell team up for outstanding vocal harmony and timely hand claps on this a cappella style Gospel track. Excellent way of closing out an excellent recording.

Other tracks on "*Goin' Home*" include: "*Come Back Baby*" (Walter Davis); "*Crazy Mama*" (J. J. Cale); "*Big Road Blues*" (Tommy Johnson); "*It's Too Late To Cry*" (Lonnie Johnson); and "*I Know You Rider*" (Traditional).

With the Blues Blast Awards currently accepting submissions, should this one happen to make it into the hands of the nominators, I easily see a "Best Acoustic Recording" nomination in its future.

To find out more about Blind Lemon Pledge go to www.blindlemon-pledge.com



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Deadline for the next issue (**December/January 2021 issue**) is **November 1st** and I could use your help. Here is your chance to write about the music you love. Here is your chance to see your name in print! Write about anything involving the Blues- a show you saw, favorite performer, festival, favorite club, why you like the blues and when you started liking the blues, your Blues 'Bucket list', Anything. I want it your words, and hopefully have someone each issue with a different perspective on things. Include pix you took as well. Also, take a stab at reviewing a new CD you might have



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www.kvnf.org
KOTO 91.7FM, 89.3FM, 105.5FM Telluride,
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Sunday) www.koto.org, Island Radio,
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