

THE HOLLER

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Editor- Chick Cavallero

Celebrating Black History Month with the Blues

*This was reprinted from **All About Blues Music**, an excellent site for the best in Blues writing, whether history, artists, the industry, or the records themselves. Check it out at <https://www.allaboutbluesmusic.com>*

Black history month Began in 1926. Initially called Negro History Week, the national celebration was later expanded to a month. February was chosen because the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass took place then. The aim was to teach the history of American Blacks in the country's public schools. Later Canada and United Kingdom joined the celebration.



**2013 KBA -BLUES SOCIETY
OF THE YEAR**

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Historian Carter G. Woodson, largely regarded as the architect of Black history month, had this to say about its necessity:

"If a race has no history, it has no worthwhile tradition, it becomes a negligible factor in the thought of the world, and it stands in danger of being exterminated."

It's hard to imagine any genre being a more suitable soundtrack for Black history month than the blues. Just as Black history month features a narrative full of struggle, heartache and, ultimately, triumph, the same can be said of the blues.

The history of popular music – spanning across all genres – is loaded with songs depicting the struggle for freedom among Black Americans. Released on the eve of the civil rights movement, Sam Cooke's "A Change is Gonna Come" is an understated masterwork detailing the movement's undying hope:

***It's been too hard living, but I'm afraid to die
'Cause I don't know what's up there, beyond the sky
It's been a long, a long time coming
But I know a change gonna come***

Later in the decade, James Brown's "Say it Loud, I'm Black and I'm Proud" was just the anthem Black America needed after the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King threatened to smother the movement's hope.

But in the idiom of the blues, nothing beats B.B. King's heartfelt anthem "Why I Sing the Blues" when it comes to pathos, warmth and humor. That's right, humor.

Perhaps the most enduring stereotype of the blues is that its songs are nothing more than gloomy exercises in self-pity, early ancestors, perhaps, to the navelgazing genres of 90s grunge or emo. But B.B. King's classic eagerly smashes this trope. King isn't afraid to lace the bad news with good jokes:

***I've laid in a ghetto flat
Cold and numb
I heard the rats tell the bedbugs
To give the roaches some***

Near the end of the track, King spontaneously buckles into laughter, saying "That's all right, fellas. That's all right." Whatever the joke is, he doesn't share it with the listener. But somehow we don't feel alienated. We're having a good time with B.B. even as he describes the bad times. It's a song full of hope, laughter and an unflinching awareness that the struggle goes on.

B.B.'s guitar cries, wails, mocks and roars. It's a lesson you can't miss even if you're not paying attention to the lyrics.

The story of the blues is not about sad, dejected victimization. It's about rising above the pain, above the oppression. It's about the healing power of catharsis.

And that's why B.B. sang the blues.

And [that's](#) why we celebrate Black history month.

Want to test your knowledge of the Blues?

This is a simple Quiz from ***All About Blues Music*** (the folks who wrote the article above). Any Blues fan worth his salt should be able to ace this thing with at least a 90%.

Answers are on Page 26

1. Where did the first known Blues performers come from?

[a](#)- Mississippi Delta [b](#)-Chicago [c](#)-New York [d](#) -New Orleans

2. In the Blues, "blue-notes" are an important element to the melodies and sound, where do the "blue-notes" come from?

[a](#)- Poor education of the performers [b](#)-African work-songs
[c](#)- Extra notes added to a standard Guitar [d](#)-Not being able to tune an instrument

3. Which 2 countries or continents were important in the creation of the Blues?

[a](#)- UK and USA [b](#)- Europe and Africa [c](#)- USA and Africa [d](#)- UK and Africa

4. How did the American Blues become popular in England in the 50s?

[a](#)- Newspapers wrote in-depth articles on The Blues
[b](#)- An active Facebook page reached new fans [c](#)- American Blues artists toured Europe
[d](#)-Local radio stations played American Blues

5. The Blues was only performed by men?

[a](#)- False [b](#)- True

6. What is the most important instrument in the Blues?

[a](#)- Accordion [b](#)- Piano [c](#)- Violin [d](#)- Guitar

7. Muddy Waters pioneered what style of Blues?

[a](#)-Electric Blues [b](#)- Piano Blues [c](#)- Delta Blues [d](#)- Texas Blues

8. Blues was in the beginning mostly performed by Black musicians, in which decade did it appeal to a white audience and white musicians?

a- 30's and 40's b- 70's and 80's c- 90's d- 50's and 60's

9. Nowadays, Afro American music is often labeled "Rhythm and Blues", but what was it originally called?

a- Music of African Origin b- Race Music c- Black Music d- Music of Black Origin

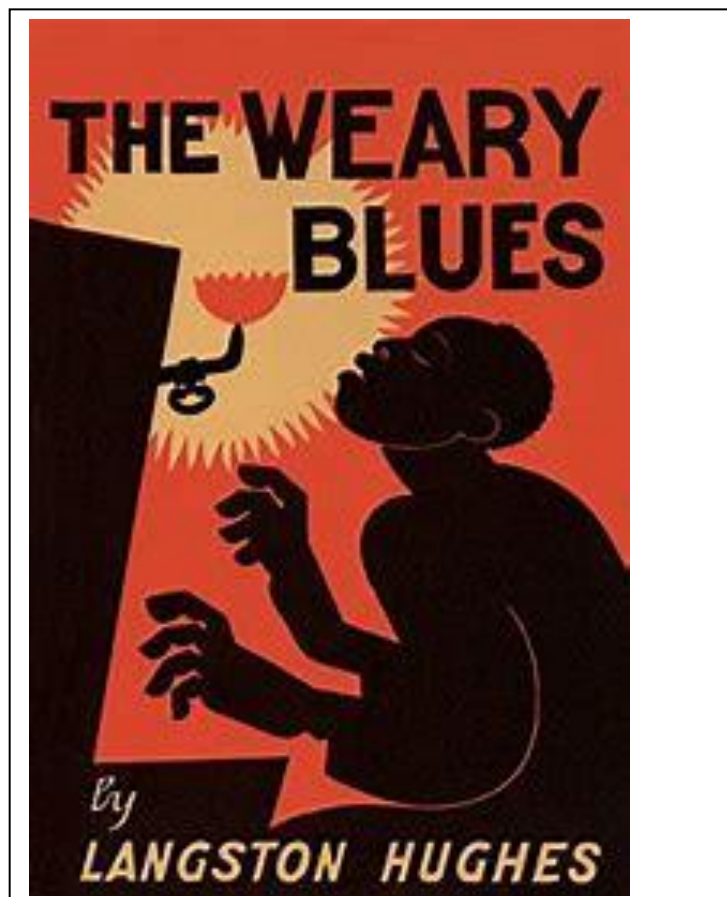
10. Who was known as "The King of Delta Blues"?

a- Stevie Ray Vaughan b- T-Bone Walker c- Muddy Waters d- Robert Johnson

The Weary Blues

Langston Hughes - 1902-1967 - James Mercer Langston was an American poet, social activist, novelist, playwright, and columnist from Joplin, Missouri. One of the earliest innovators of the then-new literary art form called **jazz poetry**, Hughes is best known as a leader of the Harlem Renaissance. He famously wrote about the period that "the Negro was in vogue", which was later paraphrased as "when Harlem was in vogue." His poem 'The Weary Blues' follows below. Granted it isn't Blues 'music' but it does capture the soul and the mood of the music we love.

Appropriate for our Black History edition of **The Holler**. In 1925 "The Weary Blues" won first prize in a magazine literary competition, and Hughes also received a scholarship to attend Lincoln University, in Pennsylvania. While studying at Lincoln, Hughes first book of poetry, *The Weary Blues*, was published by Knopf in 1926. The book had popular appeal and established both his poetic style and his commitment to Black themes and heritage. Hughes was also among the first to use jazz rhythms and dialect to depict



the life of urban Black people in his work. Follow the words and you can hear the Blues pouring out almost as if Muddy or Howlin' Wolf were signing them from the stage.

The Weary Blues by Langston Hughes

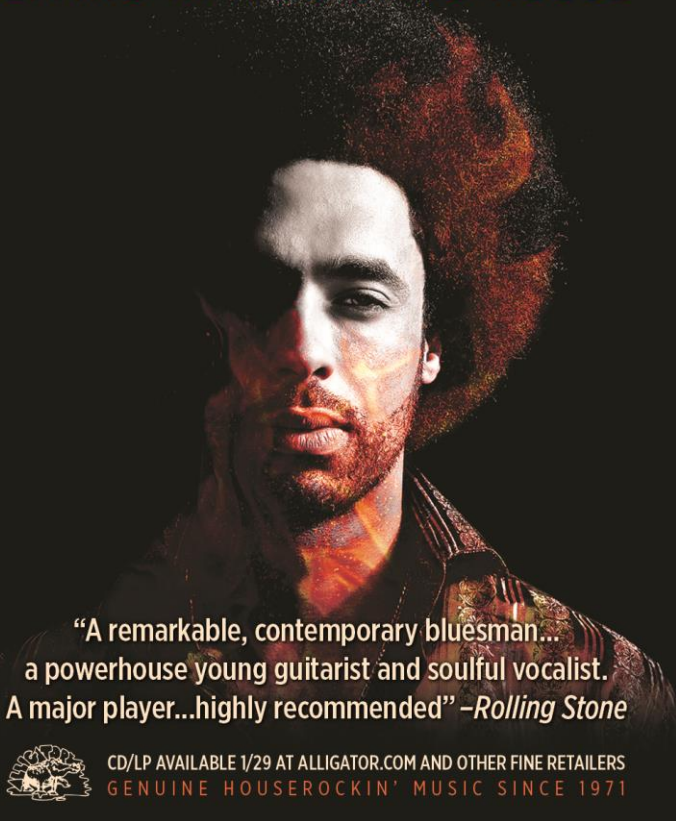
Droning a drowsy syncopated tune,
Rocking back and forth to a mellow croon,
I heard a Negro play.
Down on Lenox Avenue the other night
By the pale dull pallor of an old gas light
He did a lazy sway . . .
He did a lazy sway . . .
To the tune o' those Weary Blues.
With his ebony hands on each ivory key
He made that poor piano moan with melody.
O Blues!
Swaying to and fro on his rickety stool
He played that sad raggy tune like a musical fool.
Sweet Blues!
Coming from a black man's soul.
O Blues!
In a deep song voice with a melancholy tone
I heard that Negro sing, that old piano moan—
"Ain't got nobody in all this world,
Ain't got nobody but ma self.
I's gwine to quit ma frownin'
And put ma troubles on the shelf."

Thump, thump, thump, went his foot on the floor.
He played a few chords then he sang some more—
"I got the Weary Blues
And I can't be satisfied.
Got the Weary Blues
And can't be satisfied—
I ain't happy no mo'
And I wish that I had died."
And far into the night he crooned that tune.
The stars went out and so did the moon.
The singer stopped playing and went to bed
While the Weary Blues echoed through his head.
He slept like a rock or a man that's dead.

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.

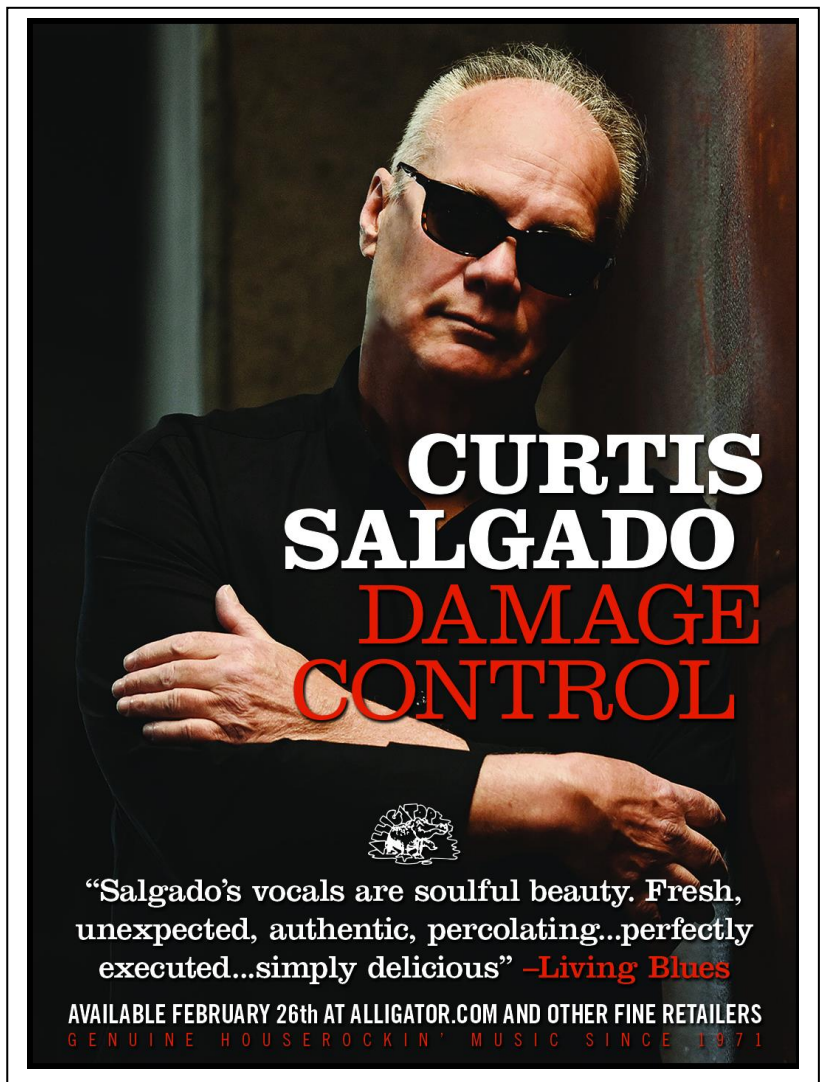
SELWYN BIRCHWOOD LIVING IN A BURNING HOUSE



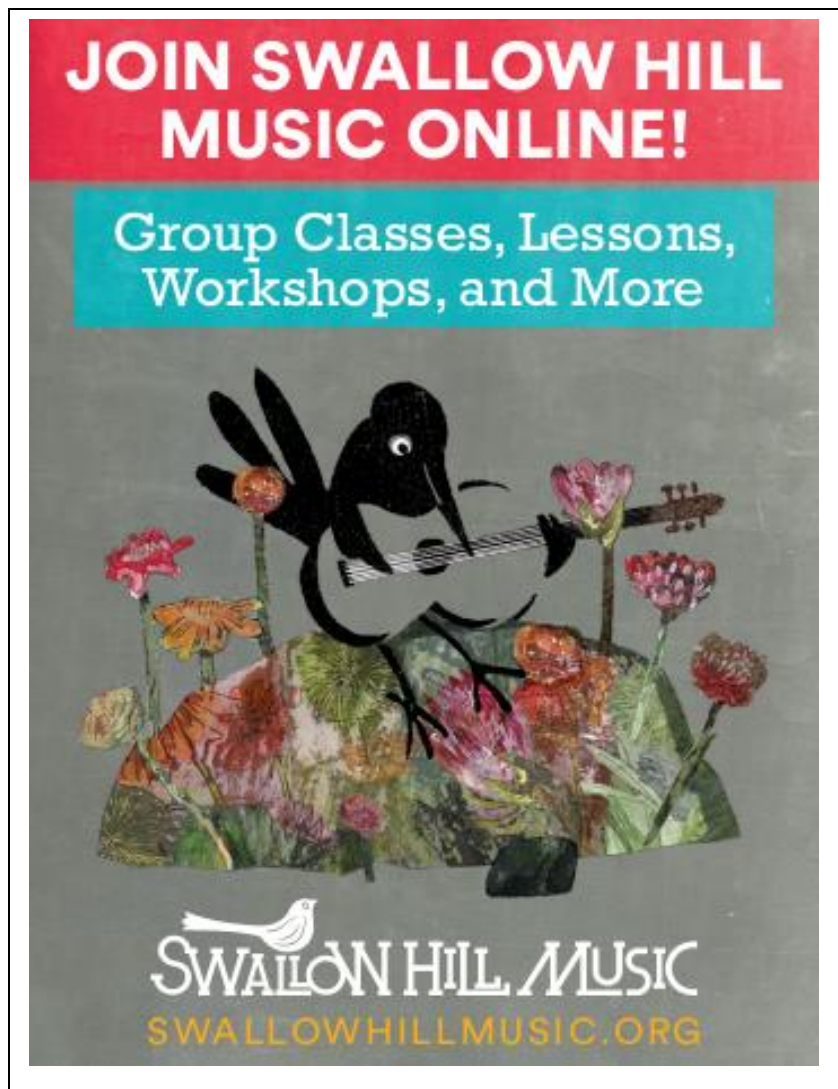
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DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT HOLLER? Deadline for the next issue (**April/May 2021 issue**) is **March 1, 2021**. Here is your chance to write about the music you love...and your chance to see your name in print! Write about anything involving the Blues- 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.



The Voice of the Civil Rights Movement

There have been voices throughout the ongoing civil rights movement.. Billy Holiday had a powerful message with "Strange Fruit", as did Sam Cooke's "A Change is Gonna Come", and Nina Simone's "Mississippi Goddamn". The Staple Singers were a huge part of the movement as well.

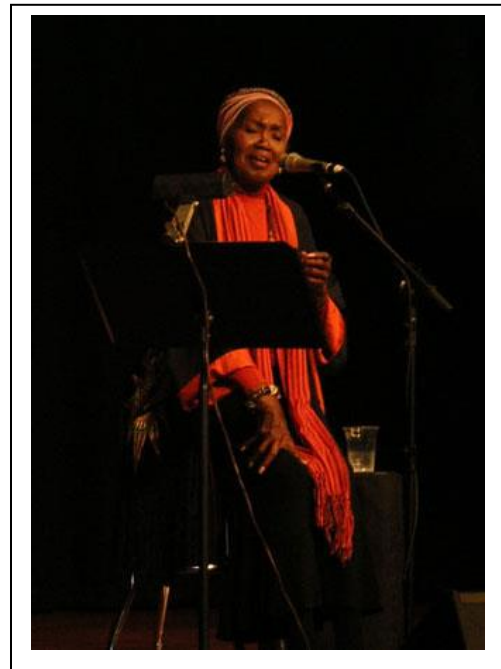
But Odetta Holmes, known as Odetta, was an American singer, actress, guitarist, lyricist, and a civil and human rights activist, who was often referred to as "The Voice of the Civil Rights Movement". Her music consisted largely of folk music, blues, jazz, and spirituals. Odetta was an important figure in the folk music revival as well as the Civil Rights Marches of the 1950s and 1960s. She



influenced many of the key figures of the folk-revival of that time, including Bob Dylan, Joan Baez, Mavis Staples, and Janis Joplin. Time magazine included her recording of "Take This Hammer" on its list of the 100 Greatest Popular Songs. In 1961, Martin Luther King Jr. called her "The Queen of American Folk Music". She is remembered for her performance at The March on Washington, the 1963 civil rights demonstration, at which she sang "O Freedom". She described her role in the civil rights movement as "one of the privates in a very big army"

After releasing only 2 albums from 1977 to 1997, in 1998 she returned to recording and touring. She recorded *To Ella* (dedicated to her friend Ella Fitzgerald), and followed with three releases on M.C. Records that included *Blues Everywhere I Go*, a 2000 Grammy-nominated blues/jazz band tribute album to the great lady blues singers of the 1920s and 1930s; *Looking for a Home*, a 2002 W.C. Handy Award-nominated band tribute to Lead Belly; and the 2007 Grammy-nominated *Gonna Let It Shine*, a live album of gospel and spiritual songs supported by Seth Farber and The Holmes Brothers.

On September 29, 1999, President Bill Clinton presented Odetta with the National Endowment for the Arts' National Medal of Arts. In 2004, Odetta was honored at the Kennedy Center with the "Visionary Award" along with a tribute performance by Tracy Chapman. In 2005, the Library of Congress honored her with its "Living Legend Award".



Click the link below to hear Odetta sing "House of the Rising Sun"

<https://youtu.be/hzc20VmMCi8>





GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN: BOBBY “BLUE” BLAND

by Todd Beebe (reprinted from June 25, 2013 *BG: Blues and Music News*)



On June 23, 2013, the world lost one of the titans of the blues. Bobby “Blue” Bland was a true original in every sense of the word. His vocal style influenced everyone from Van Morrison and Eric Clapton to David Bowie and Gregg Allman. Many vocalists lean towards either the “rough” side or the “slick” side. Bobby Bland had the unique gift of both. Take a listen to any of his great tracks, from “Farther Up The Road” and “Cry, Cry, Cry” to “I Pity The Fool” and “Turn On Your Love Light.” Bobby could draw the listener in with one of the sweetest, smoothest voices they had ever heard, and then tear them to pieces with pure soul and grit.

Bobby Bland was part of a unique breed of artists in the late 1950’s

and early 1960’s. Acts like Bobby, Ray Charles, and Sam Cooke were mixing blues with gospel and R&B to create a new blend of soulful blues that eventually led to acts like the great Otis Redding. By that time the music was called “soul,” and Bobby Bland was one of its founding fathers.

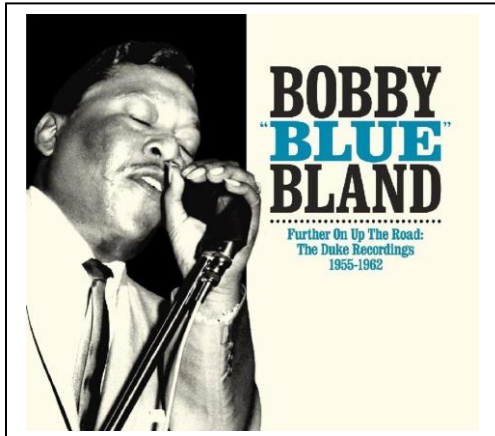
Then in 1948 he moved to Memphis to become part of musical history.

Robert Calvin Bland was born January 27, 1930 in Rosemark, Tennessee. Early on Bland worked with many gospel groups, which had a big impact on his style. Then in 1948 he moved to Memphis to become part of musical history. Bland was part of the Beale Streeters, which also included Johnny Ace, Junior Parker, Rosco Gordon and a then up and coming B.B. King. King and Bland quickly became great friends, and shared many concert billings together through the years.

His first recordings were waxed in the early 50's for labels Chess and Modern. However, Bland's career was temporarily put on hold when the Army drafted him in 1952. After returning from the Service, Bobby teamed up with Duke Records and began recording a string of hits that have influenced generation after generation. Somewhere, right now, as you are reading this, someone in a bar is playing "Stormy Monday Blues," or "Farther Up The Road," or "Saint James Infirmary." These songs have come to be associated with various artists through the years. But make no mistake- Bobby Bland was the first one to really put his own personal spin on these tunes, causing others to want to record them.

***Be sure to listen to the albums
"Together For The First Time" and
"Together Again...Live."***

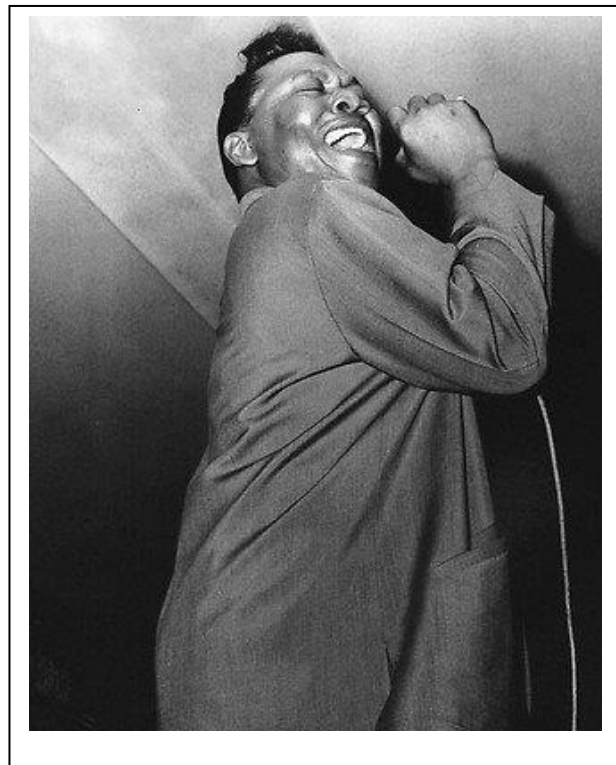
The mainstream never really came



always did it his own way. As the 60's came and went, the 70's saw another run of influential albums from Bobby. ABC purchased the Duke Label and released "His California Album," and "Dreamer." Both are blues masterpieces that showed the world Bobby "Blue" Bland still had a lot to say. He also continued his close association with B.B. King, which made for some great music. Be sure to listen to the albums "Together For The First Time" and "Together Again...Live." In my opinion, these 2 LP's contain some of the finest blues ever recorded.



calling for Bobby Bland, and he was probably OK with that. He stayed true to his heart, and he





I'd like to end this tribute to Bobby sharing one of my favorite blues memories. Bobby Bland was one of the first live blues acts I was ever exposed to. He played with Albert King and B.B. King, right in Merriville, Indiana. This triple bill came to the Star Plaza Theatre every Easter for many, many years. I was there every time, and was fortunate enough to meet these great bluesmen on many occasions. Bobby, Albert and B.B. were always gentlemen in every sense of the word. I have great memories of all three of them recognizing the people who came to see them every year. Blues memories like that make me smile. When Albert King left us, B.B. and Bobby still held court every Easter in

Merriville for awhile. But like all good things, that run eventually came to an end. I'll always remember how Bobby seemed to just hold the audience in the palm of his hand. And the ladies hung on his every word! Then there was his classic "growl." He'd throw it in whenever he felt like it, and the whole place would go wild. I've seen many, many shows over the years, but watching Bobby Bland work a crowd is something I'll never forget.

Those shows in Merriville made a lasting impression on me, and my heart sank when I heard that Bobby Bland had passed away. But I'd like to end on a positive note, as I know that's how he would want it to be. Whenever you hear "Stormy Monday Blues"- think of Bobby Bland. Whenever you hear ANYONE putting some soul and shine on top of their blues- think of Bobby Bland. Whenever you hear someone "growl" and tear the audience to pieces- think of Bobby Bland. And whenever you hear of someone making a living as a true artist, doing it their way and not chasing the trends- think of Bobby Bland. He'll be there. Thank you so much for sharing your life and your music with us. RIP our friend, Mr. Bobby "Blue" Bland.

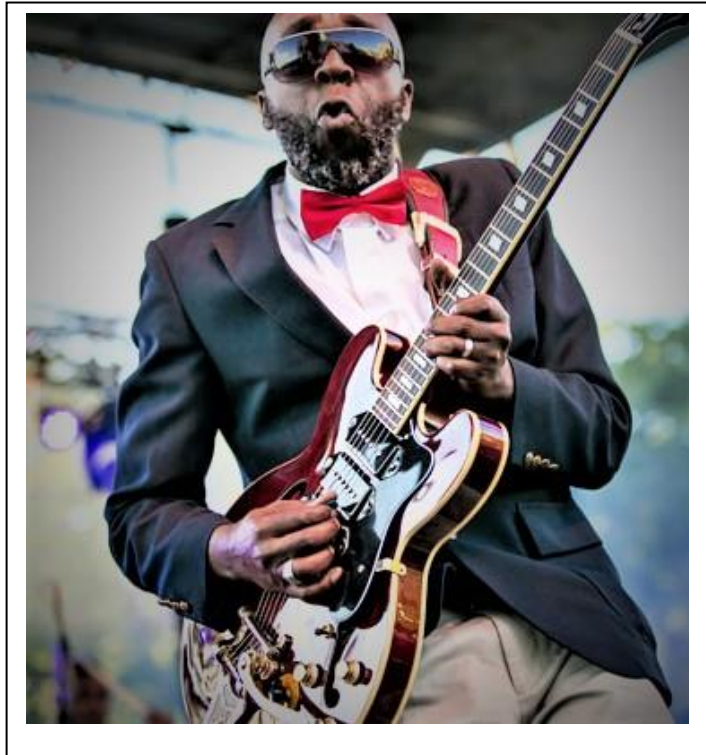
Todd Beebe is a full time musician/teacher in the Chicago area and a staff writer at BG: Blues And Music News. His first exposure to music was hearing his Grandfather's bands playing Traditional Country music by the likes of Hank Williams Sr., The Carter Family and Jimmie Rodgers. Tracing the roots of 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 <https://www.facebook.com/ToddBeebeMusic/> <https://toddbeebemusic.com/> <https://bg.buddyguy.com/tag/todd-beebe/>

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Mr. Sipp- The Mississippi Blues Child and a ‘Super’ Man

By Chick Cavallero

One of the reasons I like the International Blues Challenge in Memphis is it is often the first time in the spotlight for many performers. I love coming across performers before they have become ‘household names’ in the blues world. The IBC was where I first saw Trampled Under Foot, Selwyn Birchwood, Annika Chambers, Karen Lovely, JP Soars, Ori Naftaly, Terrie Odabi, Mary Bridget Davies, Ghost Town Blues Band, Dawn Tyler Watson, Grady Champion, and Bart Walker. It was also the first time I saw Mr. Sipp, “The Mississippi Blues Child” and alter ego of gospel guitarist Castro Coleman.



2013 was the first year I was asked to be a judge by the Blues Foundation which I have been doing ever since at the IBCs in Memphis. My first assignment I drew the New Daisy Theater and jeezus, the lineup was amazing with the Mark May Band, Ghost Town Blues Band, an Mr. Sipp and Kin Folk. Talk about a strong lineup! That was the first time I saw Mr. Sipp and he stood out as the total package of entertainer, guitar player, and vocalist...I described him as Chuck Berry meets Urkel! Yep he even had the taped glasses, lol. But he didn't really need any gimmicks, he was fantastic! Fantastic smooth guitar playing reminiscent of BB King, with a sweet voice and stage presence that grabbed you. That year he made the finals but lost out to Selwyn Birchwood and our own Dan Treanor and Afrosippi featuring Erica Brown.

In 2014 I ran into Castro at the Rum Boogie the day before the IBCs started and said “Congratulations” he said, “For what?” I said “I can’t imagine how anyone can do a better performance than you. You gotta win this thing this year.” And yep, he did win the 2014 IBC.

Ever since then I have been hoping he would tour Colorado or get an invite to a local Festival so folks here could appreciate what a fantastic talent he is. Unfortunately, my only seeing him were in Memphis as he would return for IBC week every year. In

addition to his talent he is a humble man, during the 2019 IBC week he took a job backing up four divas doing the 'Heart and Soul' Aretha Franklin Tribute show. Mr. Sipp was content to stand there and nonchalantly play his guitar while Shakura, Terrie Odabi and Thornetta Davis took the bows during a fantastic show.



'Heart and Soul' was an omen for me as Mr. Sipp was booked to do the Greeley Blues Jam in June 2019. Mr. Sipp and his band all wore Superman shirts for the show. Well, many of you may know we lost our grandson in 2016 and we always called him our Superman, as his heart and kidneys were donated, and Leo saved several lives. In 2016 Al and Pam Bricker even dedicated the GBJ to Leo. My son-in-law, Dave, was wearing his own Superman shirt in honor of Leo that day and several times he and Castro did doubletakes pointing at each other, Castro even did some side by side guitar playing next to Dave when he came out into the crowd. All fun stuff for sure. Well, Mr. Sipp finished up with "Somewhere Over the Rainbow" a song that means so much to us with Leo's memory. My wife Patti said we must tell Mr.

Sipp how much that meant to us. So we stood in line for CDs afterwards and when we got to him.



Patti told him how "Rainbow" had made her cry and we told him Leo's story, and how that guy in the crowd with the Superman shirt was Leo's father. Castro got teary eyed himself. He even

remembered me from Memphis and the Heart and Soul show (we had seats next to the stage right below him). We thanked him and headed back to our table. It was dark by then; we were in a preferred seating tent and in about 20 minutes we saw the bass

player and drummer from his band talking and looking around trying to get into our tent. They pointed at us and came over with a Mr. Sipp Superman shirt they had all signed for Dave!!! Wow! Mr. Sipp had no idea where we were sitting in a crowd of 3000 people and he and his band went out trying to find us to give us that shirt!!! What a super effort by a wonderful man! I know it's a simple side story, but it meant the world to all of us.



Mr. Sipp with my son-in-law Dave

If you are still not familiar with Mr. Sipp you need to check out this incredible

musician and wonderful human being. He is fast becoming a force to be reckoned with in the Blues World. He has won several awards already and there are plenty more coming on the horizon for him. Some of his awards include:

- The 2014 Gibson Best Guitarist Award Winner
- Bobby Rush 2014 Entertainer of the Year Award by the Jus' Blues Foundation
- 2015 International Male Blues Artist, Blues Artist of the Year, Entertainer of the Year, 41st Annual Jackson Music Award
- 2016 BMA Best New Artist Album winner
- 2016 The Spirit of Little Walter Award
- 2017 Best Blues Album of 2017 New Recordings (Contemporary Blues) (for "Knock a Hole in It" Malaco Records), 25th Annual Living Blues Award

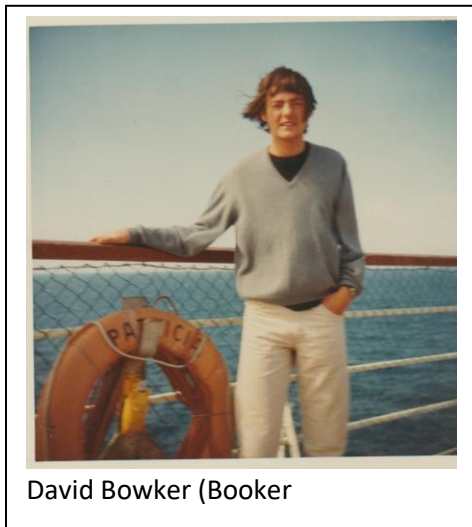
Pretty amazing Blues acclaim for a performer who spent 22 years in the Gospel Music Business as a Recording Artist and a Producer. Castro started out playing the gospel with The Legendary Williams Brothers, The Canton Spirituals and The Pilgrim Jubilees. It wasn't until 2012 that he decided to wander over to the blues. He is a self-taught guitar player starting at age 6 and can also play bass, keyboard, organ, drums, and harmonica! He has played a variety of styles over the years and played with a number of other talented performers and keeps getting better.

Mr. Sipp says, "You should get better with age". There is no doubt that is happening here! His hard work and dedication are paying off...and so is his 'heart' work.

Part 4 Booker in Beirut- Back home in Manchester- off to Bahamas- London Adventure

By David Booker (Parts 1, 2, and 3 have been in the 3 previous *The Hollers*)

Well, Here I am June 13th, 1968, my 21st Birthday on board ship with Manchester's' top band, The Richard Kent Style travelling from Portugal, via Bilbao, Spain to Southampton, England. (picture)



I was already contemplating my next move, it came in September 68' when I went to play in Beirut, Lebanon (The Paris Of the East) with The Kirk St James Wild Silk Band. We covered part one of the trip in the last issue of the Holler and if you recall we left off after an Israeli Commando Unit flew in and blew up Beirut Airport. We were immediately told to carry our passports everywhere as I.D, during the newly imposed curfew. Here's where it gets a little crazy...

Life and nightly gigging carried on as normal for a few days, the mosques were fitted with deafening loudspeakers calling people to prayer loudly 24/7,

American cars, which were in abundance along with old Mercedes Taxis trundled down narrow streets filled with students, sidewalk salesmen, people of menace, beggars, you name it, Beirut had it all in the 60's .

Lebanese tanks and military were patrolling the streets day and night. We in the Love Machine Psychedelic Organ R&B 3 piece donned our pink Dr Kildare shirts, maroon velvet



skintight bell bottom pants and went to work late every night. We usually got out of the club (Barbarella's) about 3 a.m., we had built a sizeable following at this new, hip club it had a young appeal and the decor inside was very "mod" and painted in a "Twiggy"/Swinging London style, and was a hangout for the American students from the University and kids who never seemed to be short of money.

Around this time I met a guy called Miles Copeland, he was a student and his dad was a big wig in the CIA, (Miles Sr had helped to oust Iran's last democratically elected leader Mohammed Mossadegh (he wanted the Iranian people to share in oil profits not Exxon Mobil) in the 50's and was instrumental in placing the brutal 'Shah' in charge). Miles offered to do lights for us at a forthcoming gig at the University, we said sure thing! When I got back to England I ran into Miles and he'd formed a management company to manage bands, I was over at his huge house one day and as I was wandering round, there was a kid bashing away on a drum kit he said "oh, this is my younger brother Stuart, he wants to be a drummer, I just signed a new band called Wishbone Ash and we got a nice record deal".



Mohammed Mossadegh

Meanwhile back in Beirut some of our new American friends, myself and organist Pete Marsh decided to "share a taxi" home from club Barbarella one night. We had been driving for about 10 minutes when armed military personnel stepped in front of us and demanded at gunpoint to see our documents. Me and Pete pulled out our passports but something was wrong, the taxi containing our friends was allowed to go, but Pete and I were ushered into the back of a jeep with at least 2 machine guns trained on us and taken to the nearest Police Station where we explained who we were and where we were working. While we were driving over there I saw the fear in Pete's face, he was losing it, and smoking a cigarette very nervously I said " hey don't show em' you're scared put a smile on yer' face and let's see what happens" (it didn't work, ol' Pete was a quivering mess).

The cops stuck us in a holding cell and made a couple of calls. The cops called the two brothers who owned the club, it was about 5a.m by now and I think they all knew each other because when the owners showed up at about 6.30 a.m. The cops were finished taunting us with their pea shooters and had their hands out for the pay-off.

We were out of jail by 7 a.m. and the brothers said we have to get our visas renewed tomorrow as they have not been re-



Beirut in the 1960s

newed; well as all their passport stamping was in Arabic how were WE to know? I was told technically we could have been charged as spies.

Next day the trek down to the heart of Beirut was quite delightful, the real deal, no tourists, palm trees a couple of camels, and this was the business district!

Well of course when Payday came around the bribes to the cops were deducted from our money, by the brothers, nice guys! All in all, the Barbarellas gig turned out to be a good move, the kids loved us and spent money whereas in contrast back across town at Rasputin's it wasn't going too well. The upscale rich local folks had abandoned the venue and were interested in some of the better bands that were playing rival nightclubs. Bands like The Rebel Rousers (Cliff Bennett) and a band I would join in a year or two, though I didn't know it yet- O'Hara's Playboys (a bunch of crazy Scotsmen)



On a quick visit to say 'hi' over at Rasputin's one night, I noticed the deterioration, it just wasn't happening and Ol' Kirk sounded pretty lame.



The band at Barbarellas

I'm going to back up a little here to the point where we embarked from the plane on our arrival in Beirut. In the previous chapter I mentioned my first impressions(a pain in the arse) of meeting the club DJ, Tony Coe (later to replace me on bass when the organ trio started gigging at Barbarellas) All of us developed over time, a special camaraderie mainly due to our somewhat shitty circumstances that we found ourselves in, eventually we moved

to some better accommodations which helped morale a lot. Tony and I started rooming together and developed a lifetimes friendship, strong to this day. We got into an after-gig nightly routine by going across the hall where Les (guitar) and Ray, (drums) had acquired huge amounts of pure Lebanese Hashish! It was stacked about 4ft high, next to the stereo (of course!) and came in giant bagel type blocks with a hole in the middle. Our record collection contained Super Session (Bloomfield/Kooper) Paul Butterfield *In My Own Dream*, Hendrix, *Electric Ladyland* (just released), Beatles *White album*, *Boogie with Canned Heat*, Miles *Sketches of Spain* and *Brother Jack McDuff Live!*

The hash quickly knocked me out, but these guys went all the way with the hookah water pipe they had acquired.

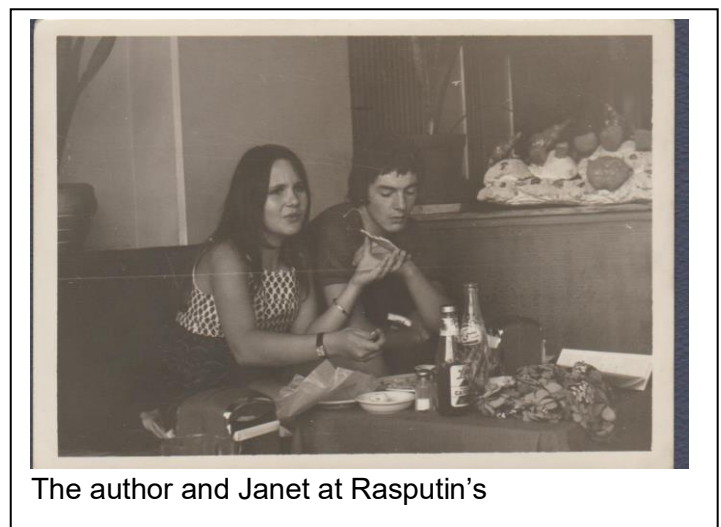


Playing at Barbarellas

One night a couple of guys showed up dressed in suits and smoked with us , they recommended we take some back to UK with us by sticking it in our guitar pickups and made other suggestions on how to stash it for the journey back home. Now we weren't the brightest set of 'beat youths' on the planet, but immediately we knew these guys were Lebanese secret service. We never saw them again and we didn't take any of this stuff with us *either!*

Over in mine and Tony's pad, I had been hearing some rustling in the back of our oven in the kitchen so the whole gang decided to take a look under the burners at the back. There was some mysteriously charred newspapers, then suddenly; a giant RAT shot out through the kitchen, living room, bedroom and down the shower hole in the bathroom in about 3 seconds flat! when I recovered I found myself standing on a chair screaming (as we all were) Oh my GOD! It's a fucking RAT ! Over and over again. We had to clean out the oven and put some rat stuff out. We never saw the rat again. Thank god.

I had spent Christmas '68 with the family of the girl I was seeing (Pilots daughter) let's call her Janet, It was getting towards February 69' and the weather was improving we were ready to leave and get back to UK. I think The Rasputin/Kirk Band guys got paid most of their money, and The Love Machine sure did, but when it was time to leave and catch our plane there was a little matter of back rent on 2 apartments that neither our "agent" Remi or our club employers were willing to take care of, mainly because they were conveniently not around .This became more urgent when our friendly landlord showed up with armed police and there was nothing to do but have a communal whip -round and come up with the money .



The author and Janet at Rasputin's

With funds sadly depleted we boarded our twin prop Bulgarian Airlines flight, not to UK but a 3 day lay over in Communist Sofia, Bulgaria was what we had to look forward to.

We left ol' Tony behind as he had come over on a separate arrangement with Ms. Delap the high end French Hooker who owned Rasputins, his story was another adventure via Dubai and a stay in a Beirut Jail, until we hooked up in London months later .



In freezing cold Sofia , Bulgaria

Beirut in February was nice and warm but the cold shock that met us alighting the plane in Sofia was alarming. Bulgaria being a communist country at that time had laws stating that if a citizen is chosen by the government to house you, you stay with them! Foreign travelers such as us must comply. Housing in Sofia comprised of big blocks of square apartments and we found ourselves assigned to a cramped apartment that was occupied by what looked like gypsies to us, something out of World War 2. I recall this little fat old lady with a doo rag and large earrings on, and a whole bunch of other weird people. I said let's go look for something to eat guys. There was nothing, the bakeries as I remember had these cream cake looking things, but they

weren't real, and we were advised not to eat them. All we could find was dry bread, sausages, and vodka which we lived on for 3 days till we got outta there.

Ray hooked up with a chick that spoke broken English and as he hadn't been laid in 6 months, I think he enjoyed his stay in Bulgaria! I noticed that 99% of the population was in the army and wore drab scratchy grey wool uniforms. The word got out there was a rock band of English guys in town (we had our guitars with us) and we were asked to play this student hall, they had a drum kit, and amps but no P.A. so we played 'Spoonful' and 'Sunshine Of Your Love' as long Instrumentals. The kids were singing along and having a ball we couldn't believe how ecstatic they were, after we finished, they literally carried us off stage and backslapped us to death! We made a point of carrying our valuables with us, you couldn't leave anything anywhere and after we'd played I looked at my bag I'd put down by me while I played, it was gone; it had a few wires and lps in it but it was ok. These kids would enjoy the music and this memory for a long time, I could always get more in UK. These Bulgarian kids had nothing.



wintery Sofia, Bulgaria

After 3 days of dry bread, sausage and vodka we boarded our Bulgarian Airlines Flight to London, I awoke midflight to some very heavy turbulence it seemed like we were being thrown all over the sky, I managed to doze off again. Many years later after finding Les on the Internet, he told me he went for a pee during that turbulence, as he passed the flight cabin, the door was open and rocking back and forth, he peeped in, the plane was on auto pilot and the crew and attendants were all passed out, there were several empty vodka bottles rolling around the cabin floor, it indeed was a miracle we got to London at all, I was flabbergasted at this news!

We got off the plane in London it was dark, I got down on my knees and kissed the wet tarmac before boarding a bus that took us to the customs and exit terminal. I was home! We all made a bee line for Euston station and the next Manchester train and once home I just crashed for 2 weeks.

My Mother said what are you going to do now? Damned if I know!



About this time I got talking to Martin from the old Big City Blues, he was playing Hammond in a band called Money, and they were looking to replace their vocalist who had just left. I did a few gigs on lead vocals but it wasn't happening, the bass player decided to leave too, so I became the singer /bass player I was much more comfortable with that. The highlight of my 2 months with these guys was a trip to Liverpool to play the Cavern Club, it was May '69, so I guess it was still the original one before they tore it down. We opened for Quintessence a band with some albums out on Island Records They were all hippied out in their Kaftans and had a definite Eastern

jam band groove goin' on and right in vogue with the progressive hippie thing that was currently going on. The era of the mods was over, it was progressive rock now, we were in the era of Woodstock in '69! When we were done with our set, I think we saw a tune or two from Quintessence then hightailed it back to Manchester. It quickly became apparent that Money was not the right name for this band, we were not making any and I was becoming very melancholy and pissed off, I'd been back from Beirut since February it was now May '69 things were not going well with 'Money' at all.

Once again, the telephone rang, it was 'Taz' Reynolds the last guitar player to play within the remnants of Ivans Meads. They had been working as 'Mead' since Ivan had left and now had broken up.

A new group had formed with the very respected Jack Lancaster on Saxophones. Before this new line -up could get off the ground as "Sponge" Jack had left to join Guitarist Mick Abrahams' new band Blodwyn Pig, Mick had just left Jethro Tull as he needed a more bluesey direction and had secured a record deal with this unusually named line -up.

'Taz' whose real name was Barry, said are you interested in coming to the Bahamas with us on bass, and doubling on sax, we have an album deal with Decca (Deram)



Jokers Wild Club in Bermuda

when we get back . I couldn't believe my luck! We jetted off, refueled in Bermuda and before you know it were touching down in Freeport Grand Bahama .The weather of course was beautiful warm and moist, the smell of the sea, sand, palm trees tropical breezes and fresh air was invigorating . We were playing a cool club called the Jokers Wild, the band house was a nice apartment with a swimming pool, and we were given a 57 Ford Fairlane to cruise around in! Girls appeared almost immediately, and encounters came thick and fast! One lovely



Sponge



Sponge, plus Chas Hodge and Micky Burt (from Chas & Dave) and Harvey Hinsley (Hot Chocolate 'You Sexy Thing')



Bowker and the cool '57 Ford Fairlane

lady was from Blackburn (North Manchester!) I'd come all this way just to meet a Lancashire lass! She worked and lived in one of the big hotels, one day I woke up and switched on the telly, Lionel Hampton was playing on the morning show! A mindblower,



you didn't get that on the Beeb! Next thing I know, in she walks with a breakfast tray, bacon, eggs, coffee the whole deal. I was at an age where I took all this for granted but when I look back, I shake my head in wonder at all the potential good things I have walked away from.

Well, life was grand on Grand Bahama, it was fun playing and drinking at night, and hanging on the beach during the day. I got the hint pretty early on that these guys were not interested in keeping me on after this gig and their rather cliquey' artsy way of communicating and doing everything together while I was out exploring and doing stuff on my own was not something that went down well with these odd guys. The record deal with Deram was the carrot that was dangling in front of me but it got less important as the gig progressed. The tone was pretty much set for their future recording and short-lived career after returning to UK. Their album did get recorded and released under the name Pacific Drift and sank without trace. Sponge kinda squeezed the friendship right out of me on this gig, but we had fun onstage falling down competitions were fun, and drinking Zombies which were so strong they turned you into one!

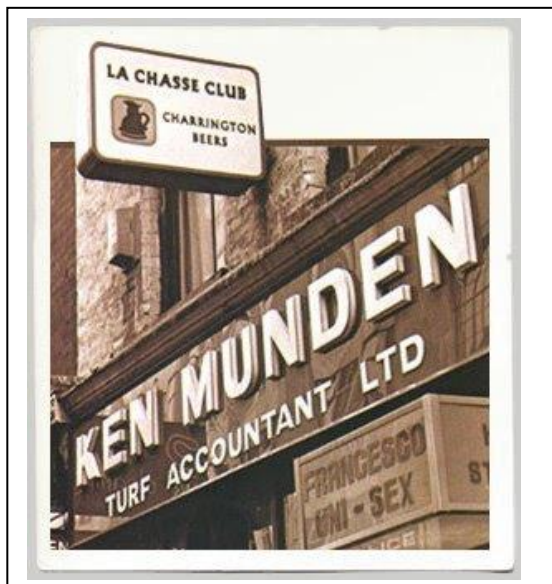
Out of the blue, my pals from Beirut The Rebel Rousers, arrived for a stint playing at the club down the street, and I spent a lot of time hangin' out with those guys, they had a stereo! So I spent time digging my new found LP faves that I'd bought. *Natchl Blues* (Taj Mahal) and *Nashville Skyline* by Dylan was just out! Add *Jammed Together* by Albert King, Pops Staples & Steve Cropper all cool new releases at that time!

After 2 months of sea, sand, swimming',drinkin' and clownin' onstage every night I was ready to get the heck out of there. I'd met a young lady who's sister was married to Deep Purples' Manager Tony Brown, she said look me up in London when you get back, eventually I did.

After touching down in London I decided to stay awhile as I felt Manchester had nothing to offer anymore. I never saw the guys in *Sponge* again Barry 'Taz' Reynolds went on to work with Joe Cocker, Marianne Faithful, and Grace Jones he did a solo album, which included Dan Hicks' cover 'I Scare Myself'. Last I heard he like me, is still in the biz. I've included a picture of their one LP which is now kind of a collector's item; a few years ago Larry Arends the drummer and I exchanged greetings online but that's all the info I have at this writing.

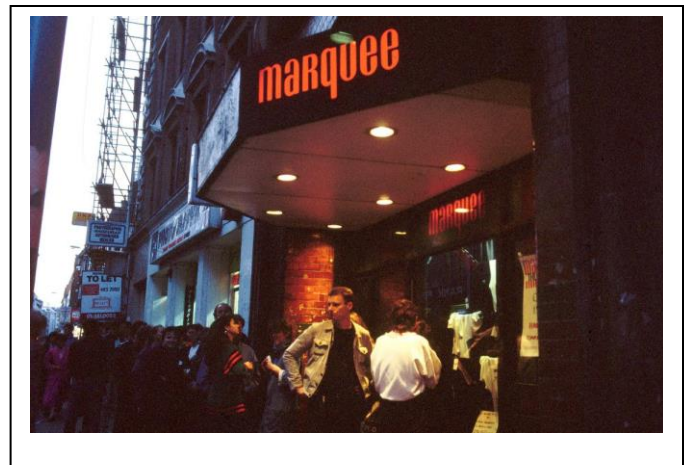


I checked in to the Madison Hotel, aka "The Madhouse" as it was known by musicians, a low cost fairly clean hotel located on the west end of Oxford Street near Hyde Park Corner. This was to be my base while I checked out the scene for work and possibly finding/joining a band with some potential.



Barrie the future Manager of the Marquee

The place to go, hang out, be seen, and make contacts was the Ship Pub on Wardour St, a few Yards away was the cool upstairs hip drinking club La Chasse (operated by Jack



Club). The very word Chasse means to Chase in French and as most of the record label people were gay and liked young musicians, the club was appropriately named! From there you'd go a few yards further down Wardour Street to The Marquee Club at that time managed by an old jazzer the legendary John Gee. The Marquee originally a jazz and blues-based club had turned into the 'must play gig' all the new bands played there to gain a leg up in the biz. Just by playing the Marquee elevated your worthiness by 100% and yes, I eventually played there many times over the years!

90 Wardour Street London W.1

<p>Thursday, May 15th (7.30-11.00)</p> <p>★ TERRY REID</p> <p>★ LEVIATHAN</p> <p>Friday, May 16th (7.30-11.00)</p> <p>★ ONLY LONDON CLUB APPEARANCE</p> <p>★ STEPPENWOLF</p> <p>★ THE STEAMHAMMER</p> <p>SPECIAL GUEST APPEARANCE</p> <p>★ KING CRIMSON</p> <p>(Advance Tickets now available)</p> <p>Saturday, May 17th (8.00-11.30)</p> <p>★ PROCESSION</p> <p>★ PEGASUS</p> <p>Sunday, May 18th (7.30-11.00)</p> <p>★ SUNDAY SPECIAL</p> <p>★ AN EVENING WITH</p> <p>★ RON GEESIN & HIS FRIENDS</p>	<p>Monday, May 19th (7.30-10.30)</p> <p>★ AUDITION NIGHT</p> <p>(Please note that we cannot accept any more applications for this series)</p> <p>Tuesday, May 20th (7.30-11.00)</p> <p>★ MICK ABRAHAM'S</p> <p>★ BLODWYN PIG</p> <p>★ THE GRAIL</p> <p>Wednesday, May 21st (7.30-11.00)</p> <p>★ SPIRIT OF JOHN MORGAN</p> <p>★ SAM APPLE PIE</p>
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4 Track • Stereo • Mono • Recordings
10 Richmond Mews, W.1. 01-432 6731

It was early July '69, Brian Jones had died on July 3, on July 5th the Stones did their concert for Brian in Hyde Park (Near the Madison Hotel) I decided not to go to avoid the crowds and chaos.

marquee

90 Wardour Street London W.1

<p>Thursday, May 29th (7.30-11.00)</p> <p>★ HOWLING WOLF</p> <p>★ JOHN DUMMER BLUES BAND</p> <p>★ McKENNA MENDELSON</p> <p>★ MAINLINE</p> <p>Friday, May 30th (7.30-11.00)</p> <p>★ BLODWYN PIG</p> <p>★ SAM APPLE PIE</p> <p>Saturday, May 31st (8.00-11.30)</p> <p>★ PROCESSION</p> <p>★ EYES OF BLUE</p>	<p>Sunday, June 1st (7.30-11.00)</p> <p>★ "NEW PATHS"</p> <p>★ KING CRIMSON</p> <p>★ CIRCUS</p> <p>Monday, June 2nd (7.30-10.30)</p> <p>★ AUDITION NIGHT</p> <p>(Please note that we cannot accept any more applications for this series)</p> <p>Tuesday, June 3rd (7.30-11.00)</p> <p>★ AYNSLEY DUNBAR</p> <p>★ RETALIATION</p> <p>★ WINE</p> <p>Wednesday, June 4th (7.30-11.00)</p> <p>★ SPIRIT OF JOHN MORGAN</p> <p>★ PEGASUS</p>
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marquee studios • 4 Track • Stereo • Mono • Recordings
10 Richmond Mews, W.1. 01-432 6731

Grim reality hit me in this phase of my life it became very apparent that you had to get a major record deal, and grimly hang on in the hope you

might get on the college circuit via a good booking agency which was virtually impossible for unknowns to find or form an artistic relationship with, build a following, perhaps climb up the festival ladder and get a USA tour, that was a musicians dream in UK at that time. It only came true for a few, you needed to know people AND have talent, Jethro Tull are a classic case, they formed in North Manchester, as a soul band with horns, hooked up with a fledgling Manchester management /agency team, they played every shithole and college you can imagine, developed their concept via the Blues and wrote

MELODY MAKER, March 11, 1967—Page 17

marquee

90 Wardour Street London W.1

<p>Thursday, March 9th (7.30-11.0)</p> <p>★ THE PINK FLOYD</p> <p>★ THE THOUGHTS</p> <p>Friday, March 10th (7.30-11.0)</p> <p>★ THE CHICAGO LINE</p> <p>featuring VIV PRINCE and MIKE PATTO</p> <p>★ SAVOY BROWN</p> <p>★ BLUES BAND</p> <p>Saturday, March 11th (8.0-11.30)</p> <p>Debut of the Great new Scottish Group</p> <p>★ 1-2-3</p> <p>★ SKIP BIFFERTY</p> <p>Sunday, March 12th (7.30-10.30)</p> <p>★ JOHN MAYALL'S BLUES BREAKERS featuring Pete Green with Special Guest EDDIE BOYD</p> <p>★ COCK-A-HOOP</p>	<p>Monday, March 13th (7.30-11.0)</p> <p>★ THE HERD</p> <p>★ PHILIP GOODHAND-TAIT and THE STORMSVILLE SHAKERS</p> <p>Tuesday, March 14th (7.30-11.0)</p> <p>★ JIMMY JAMES and the VAGABONDS</p> <p>★ WYNDER K. FROG</p> <p>Wednesday, March 15th (7.30-11.0)</p> <p>★ FOLK NIGHT</p> <p>★ GERRY LOCKRAN'S GUEST NIGHT with DAVE TRAVIS and RAY SONE</p> <p>Thursday, March 16th (7.30-11.0)</p> <p>★ MARMALADE</p> <p>★ THE NITE PEOPLE</p>
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marquee artists Agency and Management
18 Carlisle Street, W.1 GER 6601

accordingly. in a few short years they were headlining everywhere and gained huge popularity in the USA. They didn't do it on their own it was a combination of booking and artist development within their own ranks. Ian Anderson is a genius!

NEXT ISSUE

-Back to Germany with the British Jo Jo Gunne

-Deep Purple with The Royal Philharmonic

-I Back Billy J Kramer for a week

-Zappa/ Beefheart/ Baker at The Speakeasy

-More Chicken in A Basket!

NOTE: *In the 1960s the opportunities for the Blues giants were 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*

(David Bowker) in the UK and lived that British Invasion firsthand. Here is part 4 of David's remembrance of those amazing times. David Booker has been a fixture in the Denver music scene since the early 1980s. If you are my age (69), you'll notice some familiar names in here! Hold on, it's a wild ride by a man who now calls Denver home and is one of Colorado's top Blues performers!



JO JO GUNNE in Cologne, Germany

- 1) Mississippi Delta
- 2) African Work songs
- 3) USA and Africa
- 4) American Blues artists toured Europe
- 5) False
- 6) Guitar
- 7) Electric blues
- 8) 50s and 60s
- 9) Race music
- 10) Robert Johnson

**Answers to the Blues Quiz
on page 3**

CD Reviews

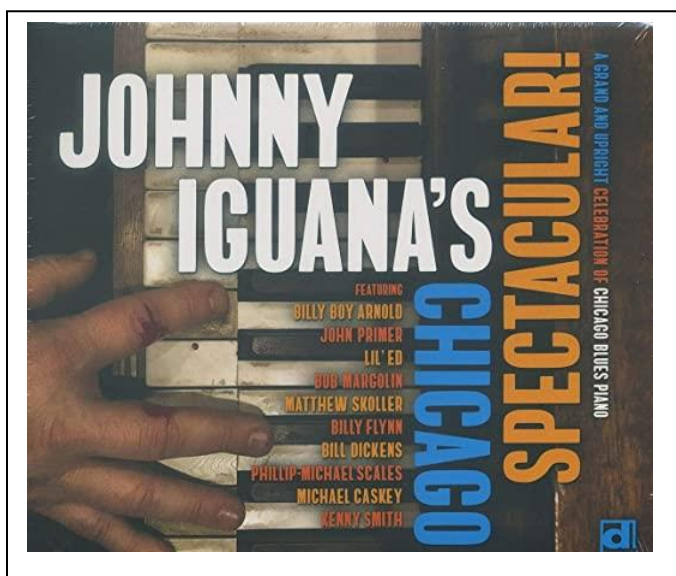
Johnny Iguana

“Johnny Iguana’s Chicago Spectacular”

Delmark Records

Review by Dan Willging

Let’s face it. When it comes to blues, the guitar gets all the glory, frequently overshadowing the piano, one of the genre’s other essential instruments. When it comes to touring, however, guitars do have their advantage by being more portable than back-breaking, hernia-erupting pianos. Still, legacy Chicago blues recordings have often included a pianist, like Otis Spann, Sunnyland Slim, Memphis Slim, or Johnny “Big Moose” Walker, to enrich and round out the arrangements.



With any luck at all, The Claudettes’ piano-pounder Johnny Iguana will likely convert more of the uninitiated to appreciate the role of blues piano on his debut recording. It’s a tribute to seven Chicago blues piano legends, Little Johnny Jones, Joshua Altheimer and Big Maceo, in addition to the ivory-ologists mentioned above.

To obtain the vintage, echo-ey ambiance heard on those classic recordings, Iguana recorded on a 100-year-old studio Kingsbury Piano built by the Cable Piano Company, once a large manufacturer in Chicago. Hence, it all fits together nicely: honoring the Chicago piano blues tradition by playing on a Windy City-birther piano.

Most of these raucously performed, blow-the-doors-off renditions link to the aforementioned greats since they recorded on an earlier version of the song Iguana performs here. The suspenseful “44 Blues” is a nod to Memphis Slim (even though it was written by pianist Roosevelt Sykes). Another such example is “Hot Dog Mama,” a Big Bill Broonzy composition, that featured the overlooked pianist Joshua Altheimer.

Yet, this is hardly a stiff, sterile museum piece. Iguana moves the tradition forward with his own spectacular playing that brims with energy and inventiveness, thereby distinguishing itself from the source recordings these renditions were culled from.

To ultimately cement the feeling of authentic Chicago blues, Iguana enlisted various known commodities like guitarists John Primer, Billy Flynn and Bob Margolin and drummer Kenny Smith. Lil' Ed, who appears on the renditions of Elmore James' "Shake Your Money Maker" and Spann's "Burning Fire," is out-of-this-world electrifying on guitar and vocals. In the harmonica department, Matthew Skoller plays harp and sings on Sonny Boy Williamson's "Stop Breakin' Down." The legendary Billy Boy Arnold, now 85, applies his rough-hewn pipes on "You're an Old Lady" and "Hot Dog Mama," the latter of which he also plays harp on.

Like The Claudette's eclectic tastes, Iguana tosses in the jazz-tinged "Lady Day and John Coltrane" from soul singer/street poet/author Gil Scot-Heron, a Chicago self-acknowledged blueslogist.

"Hammer and Tickle," "Land of Precisely Three Dances" and "Motorhome" are reprised from the Claudettes' Internal Piano Plot...HATCHED! debut while "Big Easy Women" hails from its second long-player, No Hotel. All are reworked, beefier bottom end, more percussion and different solos.

With phenomenal performances anywhere the needle drops, there are lots of details that would augment the appreciation of this one-of-a-kind masterpiece. Iguana realized this and included an eight-panel liner notes foldout with portraits of the seven legends. Whereas many reviews pan or give a thumbs' up to a particular recording, the bottom line here is you simply have to own this if you're a self-respecting blues fan.

Mad Dog Blues Family Reunion 2020

Independent Review by Dan Willging

Mark 'Mad Dog' Friedman has always had a burning passion for acoustic country blues, but it wasn't until a few pivotal events that Mad Dog Blues (MDB) came together in 2017 with mandolinist Jeff Becker and acoustic bassist Clark Chanslor. The group really gelled in October '18 with the addition of Sean Bennight (acoustic guitar/mandolin). MDB grew once more when acoustic guitarist Big Willy Palmer joined its ranks completing the sextet for this recording.

As evidenced by this ambitious double-disc spanning 24 tracks, there's an unmistakable brotherhood that's more than just being the Mad Dog show. Every member sang and

wrote/co-wrote at least one tune, with Mad Dog having the lion's share with 14. Except for Chanslor, who sang only background vocals, everyone else had a shot at lead vocals.

Disc one is imagined in the string band era of country blues, though, admittedly, MDB stretches the concept to fit its own strengths and personality. Splendid mandolin and guitar flatpicking are prevalent throughout, with many songs featuring call-and-response between instruments—most notably between guitarists Bennight and guest Doug Moldawsky.

Other highlights include Mad Dog's passionate vocal performance on the drifty "My Will is Gone" and Bennight's humorous blues-rag "Hangman." Here, the protagonist pleads to be hanged anywhere except in Kansas (the crime scene), even if it's just across the state line.

As with the country blues, 12-bar blues isn't the norm, but "Good Morning Blues" is the best example of that chord progression. Hokum, the rarer but humorous, innuendo-laden idiom, is represented here with "Delivery Man" and "Take a Little Time."



As part of country blues' expansive territory, genre fusions are par for the course. "It's a Sunny Day" and "Sitting Alone" feel spry and folksy enough to fit into the 60s folk-rock movement, just as Gus Cannon's "Walk Right In" did for The Rooftop Singers in 1962. "Powerful Love" could easily contend in the Americana arena.

Disc Two follows MGB's acoustic format, more or less, with a few surprises sprinkled in. Guest Hammond B3 organist Bruce Delaplain adds a touching layer of sentiment to the tuneful "Going to Be Together;" Jenn Cleary, a longtime Mad Dog musical partner, sings her original "Behind the Song."

The feathery instrumental "Thank You Baby" not only changes the pace but is, perhaps, the most breathtakingly beautiful composition of all.

Each disc boasts a delightful extended jam with "Blazz Jam" (disc two) getting the nod over "Shine" due to its cosmic, Dead-like ambiance and interleaving parts floating in and out. Interestingly, Mad Dog opens the tune by playing, of all things, a Native American flute.

There's a ton to absorb here with 24 tracks, the core sextet, and five guests, but there is usually something to be discovered with every listen. In short, ego-less music from a tight-knit group who plays like an extended family.

Mad Dog Blues

“Hug with our Heart”

EP Review

Self Published

By Jack Grace

It's not often that a band releases new music so soon after the unveiling of a 24 track album (Family Reunion, October 15, 2020). Yet, sometimes songs are written that need to be heard in the context of the era in which they were created. Certainly bewildering times such as the ones we reside in now call for musical expression to soothe and help guide us through them. The first two songs on the soon to be released acoustic three song EP, Hug with Our Heart, from Mad Dog Blues reach out to these unsettled times.

The songs, “Hug with Our Heart” and “We Gotta Change”, were presented to the full band after a live online concert. Within an hour, the group learned to play them, took them to heart, and recorded them. The third song, an extended version of “It's Raining on My Chickens”, is one of the band's most popular songs. It was added as a tasty treat. Let's give them a listen ... “Hug with Our Heart”. The song was written by Big Willy Palmer who also does the vocals. It opens with Palmer strumming the acoustic guitar, Jeff Becker's mandolin sounding like a cat scratching at the door to come in, and Mad Dog Friedman playing a fluttering harmonica. The song is full of

haunting images. Best line is, “division will crush us if we don't act soon.” Palmer's voice cracks with emotion throughout but especially when singing the chorus: “Though we've been apart, it's time to realize ... We smile with our eyes, and hug with our heart.” By



the end, Becker's mandolin sounds like raindrops and we are singing along with the chorus. Well done! "We Gotta Change". This one was co-written by Mad Dog Friedman and Jenn Cleary. It's a slow acoustic blues number where Friedman handles the vocals as well as the soulful bluesy harmonica. The last two lines of the chorus are my favorite: "Together we're always better, It starts by reaching out your hand." Good advice that we definitely do not follow enough. There is a round of solos after each chorus; Mad Dog on the harmonica, Jeff Becker on mandolin, and Sean Bennight on acoustic guitar. All done sweetly and succinctly. "It's Raining on My Chickens". Mad Dog Friedman cranks out the vocals and "chicken" harmonica on this bluesy lament. He begins by wailing a good long, "well ... it's raining on my chickens, ain't gonna get no eggs today." Jeff Becker adds some "chicken pickin'" mandolin along the way. This one gives all the players a chance to stretch out and play some down home blues. Mad Dog's harmonica highlights shine all the way through. This is one of those blues songs that sings about something sad but somehow leaves us feeling good. No wonder it's a crowd favorite. There is a concept in evolutionary biology called "parapatric speciation". I claim absolutely zero expertise in this field but my understanding is that it addresses species that are spread out over a large geographic area (like the blues). The species could mate with any other member but individuals only mate with those in their own geographic region. The result is a species that adapts to its immediate environment and is different from those evolved in other environments. I see a similar analogy in music. One can listen to bluegrass music all over the world but is it the same as the bluegrass music originating in Eastern Tennessee or Western North Carolina? Nope. It could be better or worse or just different. Same with country blues in Colorado. Is it the same as Delta Blues? Nope. But it incorporates the best of blues played elsewhere and adds its own unique twists. We are fortunate to have Colorado bands such as Mad Dog Blues that build on true traditions while absorbing and blending our local piquant flavors. The electronic EP releases on January 11, 2021. Go to www.coloradocountryblues.com for more information.

Sonny Green

Found! One Soul Singer

Little Village Foundation

by Dan Willging

When the talking heads say 2020 was full of surprises, their lists usually do not include the national emergence of soul singer Sonny Green who, amazingly, made his full-length debut at the tender age of 77. The longtime Los Angeles resident has always been singing and donning his eye-opening suits in clubs, just not ones where you could easily find him.

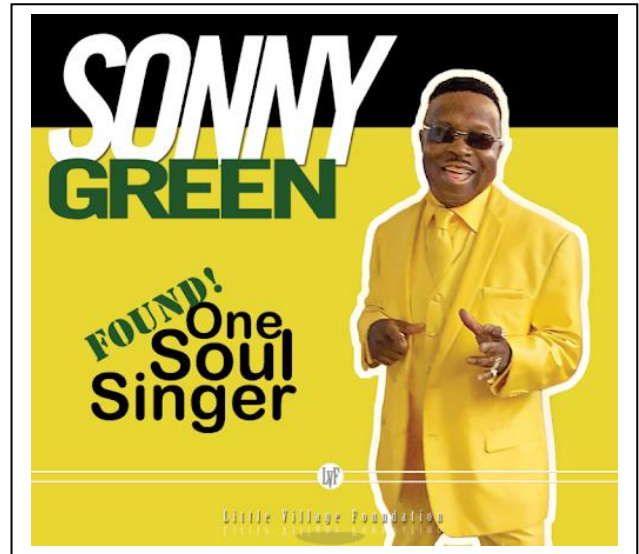
Former KPOO blues DJ/impresario Noel Hayes did, however, and brought this gold mine to the attention of genius producer Kid Andersen (Rick Estrin and the Nightcats) and Little Village Foundation's Jim Pugh. They surrounded Green with a blazingly hot studio band that, of course, included Andersen (guitar) and Pugh (keys) and a stellar, sharp horn section, and then turned him loose for one spectacular performance after another.

With his raspy, rough-hewn pipes, he often draws comparisons to Bobby 'Blue' Bland, but after that, Green is his own entity. He comes across as having the energy and vitality of a man half his age, brimming with fire and passion. He frequently lets out an explosive 'Heys!!!' and quick, wavering screams when the groove feels right, which it often does.

Disciples of old school, Chitlin' circuit soul & RB will likely recognize his influences, Bland's "I'm So Tired," Sly Johnson's "Back For a Taste of Your Love" and Little Milton's "If Walls Could Talk." With Alabama Mike, Green trades vocal parts back and forth on the funky- struttin' "Trouble," one of two songs making their debut here. Rick Estrin's rollicking "I Got There" is the other.

Though it's an energetic affair, on the trebly-toned, soulful "Are You Sure," written, oddly enough, by Willie Nelson and steel guitar legend Buddy Emmons, Green slows it down for a satisfying belly rubber.

Meanwhile, you couldn't ask for better support from Andersen's assembled ensemble, Pugh's gliding, cool rides, and horns that dance, crest and swoon majestically. On the comical yet funky "Cupid Must Be Stupid," trombone/horn arranger Mike Rinta lets it out in blaring epic proportions, which is rare for a 'bone to have that much prominence on a blues record. It's one of 2020's best, but don't wait for the talking heads to tell you that.



Paul Boddy & The Slidewinder Blues Band

"Friends Of Tuesday"

Slide Records

Publicity: Blind Raccoon

By Peter "Blewzzman" Lauro © November 2020

Paul Boddy & The Slidewinder Blues Band are out of the Philly, PA area, and with the band being made up of several members of The Every Tuesday Funk 'n' Blues Jam - a long running local jam - they cleverly decided to call their first release "*Friends Of Tuesday*". The nucleus of the band consists of founder Paul Boddy on lead vocals and guitar; Lori Gaston on backing vocals; Glenn "The Wizard" Hale on piano, organ and accordion; Chuck Hearne on bass; and Jim Bowman on drums. Adding some wind to the project are Tim Shay on saxophone and Mikey Jr. on harmonica. All of the disc's five tracks are Paul Boddy originals.

Using humorous metaphors, the opening track addresses a situation all too common to us aging baby boomers - getting old, in spite of not feeling old - or as Paul says, I may be over the hill but I'll never get "*Over The Hump*". Musically, Glenn, Chuck and Jim - on the organ, bass and drums - are all leaving no doubt as to why that Tuesday jam contains the word "Funk". By the same token, Paul's mid song guitar leads are representing the blues part, as well.

Keeping things in rocking mode is the smokin' shuffle titled "*Love Me Darlin'*" - as in "love me darlin' or please leave me alone"....yeah, it's NOT a love song. What it is is another of five songs that feature dance floor filling rhythm with humorous lyrics and well sung lead and harmony vocals by Paul and Lori.



What I love about the titles of all the songs on "*Friends Of Tuesday*" is the fact that they are actually only a small part of the title. This one's called "*Money On Love*" and not until you hear Paul say "It's time to go out drinking and spend some money on love" do you get the drift.

This particular track finds Paul ready to go out for a night on the town to holler and hoot and although you may want to laugh at his pants, shame on his shirt and hate on his hat, I'd take him serious when he says don't you dare "*Knock On My Boots*". From start to finish, with Paul's lead and slide guitar runs and fancy pickin'; Glenn's rollicking piano leads; Chuck and Jim's profound and disc's best rhythm; Tim's penetrating saxophone solo; and powerful vocals from Paul and Lori; this one is hands down the disc's best track.

Loaded with innuendos and many feline references, "*Pretty Kitty*" may or may not be a song about a cat. That said, while flirting with the risqué, the humorous song is tastefully done. It features special guest Mikey Jr. and if you know anything about him you're now correctly thinking it's got some rippin' harp leads. Speaking of ripping, you

could say that about the guitar and organ leads and the rhythm, as well. You might just as well say she's got a pretty rippin' kitty and call it a wrap.

Because they generally don't contain a whole lot of music, I usually shy away from reviewing EPs but as you can certainly see, that is not the case here. "*Friends Of Tuesday*" may only have five songs but there's not only a lot of music, there's a lot of good music.

To find out more about Paul Boddy & The Slidewinder Blues Band just go to their website- www.slidewinderbluesband.com

Laura Tate

"Live From El Paso"

811 Gold Records

Publicity: Blind Raccoon

By Peter "Blewzzman" Lauro © November 2020

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

Perhaps you know of Laura Tate from having heard some, or all, of her previous four releases; perhaps you know of her from having seen some, or all, of the dozen or more TV shows and movies she's appeared in; perhaps you were in the audience at some of her many off-Broadway shows, as well as other theatrical performances in theaters around the country; perhaps you know of her from having seen some of the many videos and documentaries she has directed; perhaps you know of Laura Tate from being the philanthropist who was acknowledged with awards by Presidents Bush and Obama; and by now, perhaps you've caught my drift. If there were anyone in the entertainment industry who can say "Been there, done that", Laura's your lady.

"*Live From El Paso*", Laura Tate's fifth release, was recorded at the McKelligon Canyon Amphitheater as a benefit for her Laura Tate Fund for the Arts in the El Paso Community Foundation. The disc includes a dozen of Laura's favorite songs and, since many of them have performed on her previous releases, some of her favorite musician's, as well. Joining lead vocalist Laura Tate are: Terry Wilson on bass and vocals; Teresa James on vocals; Doug Hamblin on lead guitar; Jeff Paris on piano and vocals; Tony Braunagel on drums; Joe Sublett on saxophone; Lee Thornburg on trombone; and Darrell Leonard on trumpet.

"I'll Find Someone Who Will" is rarely a sentence in itself because the words are usually preceded by the threatening "if you don't.....", "if you can't....." or "if you won't.....". Basically, it's pretty much the ultimate ultimatum statement. In this particular case it's Laura sassily letting an obviously cheating man know that if he can't stay home with her - that's right - she'll find someone who will. This blues rocker was written by band mates Terry Wilson and Teresa James (The Rhythm Tramps) and was originally done by Coco Montoya on his "Hard Truth" album. With Tony and Terry setting the powerful rhythm

pace on the drums and bass, and the horns all blowin' heat with scorching sax leads by Joe, this one's all about the rhythm.

Wasting no time at finding someone who will, and creating a perfect segue as well, "*I Need A Man*" (Deitrick) shows us that Laura is a woman of her words. Sounding like a



sultry jazz lounge singer belting out a bluesy ballad with flirtatiously sung seductive lyrics, Laura could very well be at disc's best on this one. Making it work musically, the guys are in that jazz combo mood as well. The dreamy rhythm behind Doug's delicate guitar leads, Jeff's tantalizing piano highlights and Darrell's sizzling trumpet leads are all nothing other than masterful.

As the title may indicate, "*Still Got the Blues*" (Harker/MacCleod) is the most traditional blues track of the lot. It's a steamy blues ballad that's right in Laura's wheelhouse. Everyone who has ever read a review of mine knows that I'm a sucker for songs like these from female singers - and this is

exactly the reason why! Great laid back rhythm, soothing horn and piano leads and just the right amount of sting from the blues guitar leads. Good stuff!

The pace quickly picks up on a dance floor filler called "*What A Way To Go*" (Harker/Schunk). At barely over three minutes, there was plenty of time for a few smoking piano and guitar leads and at the pace Tony and Terry were banging out on rhythm, more than enough time for those dancers to break a sweat.

Now I'm not exactly sure if the layout at the McKelligon Canyon Amphitheater is compatible with dancing in the aisles or if the venue even welcomes any type of boisterous carrying on, but I do know that "*Big Top Hat*" (Bruton) could pretty much turn any venue into a bawdy Texas roadhouse. The scene I'm imagining is a bunch of line dancing, short-shorts and boot wearing cowgirls, hootin' and hollerin' and all chiming in with perfect harmony to the "You can kiss my ass till my hat falls off" line....just as Laura and Teresa are doing. Musically, with all the excellent solos and individual highlights going on, this one is hands down the disc's best track.

The concert comes to an end with an original track by band mates Terry Wilson and Jeff Paris titled "*If That Ain't Love*". Like they've been doing for the for the last fifty minutes, Laura and Teresa are killing it on the lead and backup vocals and the whole band, this time with fabulous guitars leads from Doug, are amazingly tight. The one thing I found to be missing from this track was the thunderous ovation and chant's for more from the crowd as it came to an end. That was obviously edited out because a show this impressive does not end without it. Great performance.

Other tracks from "Live From El Paso" are: "No Place To Hide" (Harker/Schunk); "The Boys Are Back In Town" (PLynott); "Hittin' On Nothing" (Neville); "Can't Say No" (Wilson/Raven/Watts); "Nobody Gets Hurt" (Bruton/ Anderson/Vaughan); and "Cowboy Jazz" (Harker/ Marshall).

To find out more about Laura Tate just go to her website - www.musicbylauratate.com

J.T. Lauritsen & The Buckshot Hunters

"Blue Eyed Soul Vol. 2"

Hunters Records

By Peter "Blewzzman" Lauro © October 2020

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

A little over two years ago when I reviewed "Blue Eyed Soul Vol. 1" by J.T. Lauritsen & The Buckshot Hunters, I closed out my review by saying..... *"Aside from the music, I also found the words "Volume 1" in the albums title to be quite exciting. That can only mean one thing - there will be some more "Blue Eyed Soul" in our futures. Bring it on J. T.".....and here we have - "Blue Eyed Soul Vol. 2"*

So when you think of cities synonymous with soul music, Detroit, MI; Memphis, TN, Philadelphia, PA; and even Chicago, IL, and New Orleans, LA pop into mind. Likewise, when you think of male bands synonymous with soul blues, Bobby Rush and his Soul Revue; The Johnny Rawls Band; Wee Willie Walker, & The Anthony Paule Soul Orchestra; and countless others come to mind. That said, although I'm not quite ready to toss Lillestrøm, Norway and The Buckshot Hunters into this mix of cities and artists, J.T. and the guys certainly have soul in their souls.

Along with J.T. Lauritsen on vocals, accordion, harmonica and Hammond organ, the Buckshot Hunters are: Arnfinn Tørrisen on guitars; John Grimsby on drums and percussion; Ian Fredrick Johannessen on guitars; and Morten Nordskaug on bass and background vocals. For Volume 2 of this series, special guests include: Bill Troiani and Hans Cato Kristiansen on vocals; Victor Wainwright on piano; Mike Zito on guitar; Børge-Are S. Halvorsen on baritone and tenor sax; and Jens Petter Antonsen on trumpet and trombone. Of the disc's eleven tracks, nine are J.T. originals and/or compilations.

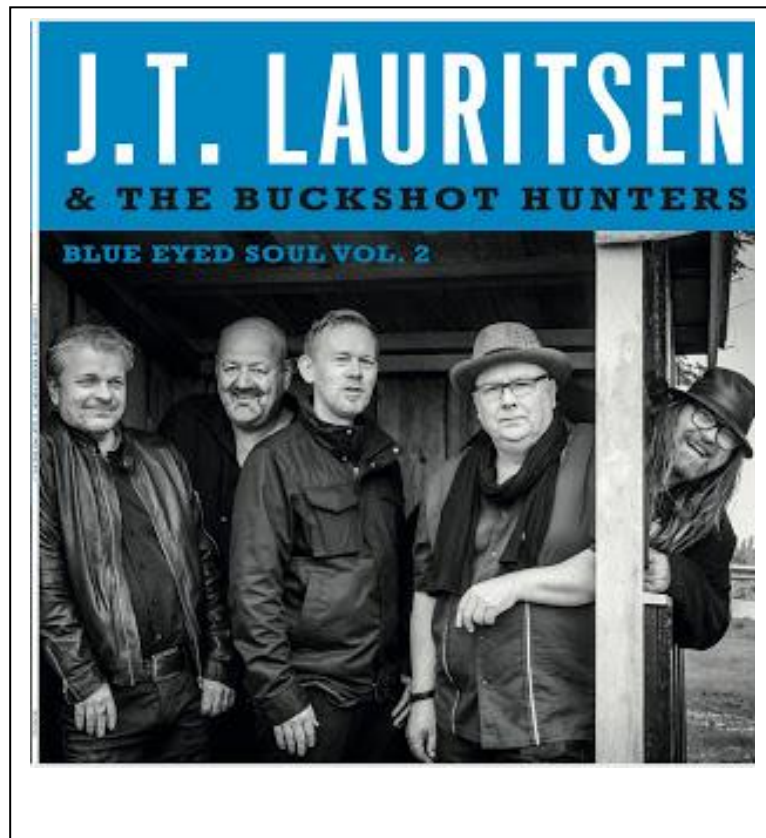
The disc opens with a track titled "Blues Never Feel That Bad" and it's an ideal blend of blues, funk and soul. With a lot of support from the horn section, the sticks in the hands of Jon are responsible for a powerful and funky rhythm - and during the recording session someone may have hollered out *"more cowbell"*.....because Jon listened! Blues wise, Ian and Arnfinn - with their back and forth solos - have that under control; then there's the soul, which exudes from J.T.'s vocals as he philosophically explains that as

bad as things get there's a way to work it all out - in a nutshell, "*the blues never, ever feel that bad*".

When I saw this song on the track listing, I just couldn't wait to hear this rendition. As a teenager, back in sixties, it was one of my favorite R&B songs, and I was overly curious as to if the Buckshot Hunters could do justice to it like Bobby Blue Bland, O.V. Wright, The Staple Singers, and so many other great soul artists have. That said, just telling you there was a smile on my face from start to finish pretty much clears that up. The song is Don Robey's classic, "*You're Gonna Make Me Cry*", and Bobby Bland was the first to record it, in 1964. With the band right where they're supposed to be on a song like this - settled into a perfectly smooth rhythm - J.T. (lead) and guest vocalist Hans Cato Kristiansen (harmony) are totally nailing the vocals. Wow! Wow! Wow!

It's Friday night and J.T. is looking for a hottie to fill the passenger seat of his '69 Mustang for a "*Friday Night Ride*". More good rhythm and percussion out of Jon and Morten with more super support from Børge-Are and Jens Petter on the horns; and killer piano leads by multi Blues Music Award winner Victor Wainwright. Real good stuff!

One of the disc's smokers is a track called "*Like You Do*", and I don't believe that it's a coincidence that Mike Zito, kicking ass on an extended mid song guitar solo, had a lot to do with that. Other highlights include outstanding vocal performances by J.T. (lead) and guest vocalist Billy Troiani (harmony); the usual outstanding rhythm; and a second, track ending killer guitar solo, this time by Arnfinn



"*I'll Carry The Key*" (Monika Nordli) is another excellent track. It features tremendous bass lines by Morten; and head Buckshot Hunter, J.T., not only doing a fabulous job on the vocals but showcasing his harmonica and accordion skills as well. .

Saving the best for last, J.T. is indeed at his vocal best on a tender, heartwarming ballad. It's titled "*Woman In My Life*" and on it J.T. sings his heart out as he pays tribute

to this obviously worthy woman. Songs like these are the ones you hear and they make you feel so good that you just hope they were written from a real life experience. Knowing J.T and his wife Marion, I honestly believe this was. Beautifully said and done J.T.

Other tracks on the second of what I'm hoping will be a long running series of volumes - "Blue Eyed Soul Vol. 2" include: "Hold You One More Time"; "Don't Want To Lose You Now"; "Going Back Home"; "You'd Better Come Home"; and "Southbound".

If you haven't yet received a copy of "Blue Eyed Soul Volume 2" for airplay, want to purchase a copy for yourself, or want to learn more about J. T. Lauritsen And The Buckshot Hunters, please contact them at www.jtlauritsen.com.

StratCat Willie & the Strays

"On The Prowl"

BlackHat Music

By Peter "Blewzzman" Lauro © September 2020

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

StratCat Willie is Willie Hayes, a seasoned bluesman of some fifty years. With influences that include Mike Bloomfield (one of my early influences as well), T-Bone Walker, Ronnie Earl, Johnny Winter, and B. B. King, you'd be correct in thinking old-school blues might be his thing.

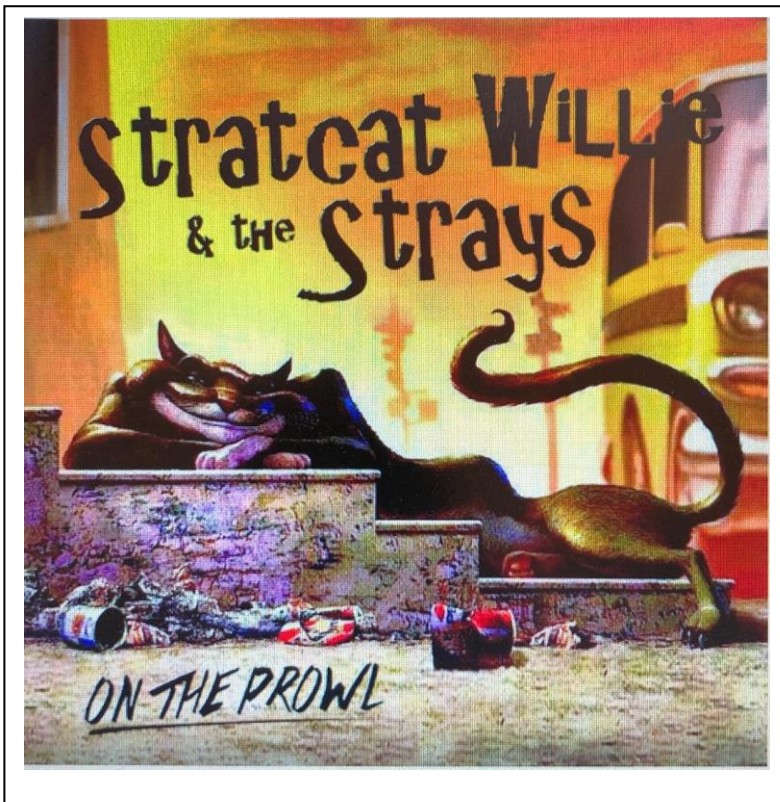
"On The Prowl", StratCat Willie's debut release, encompasses a half-century journey through the blues. It features thirteen original tracks that, according to Willie, "cover virtually every imaginable style of blues". Joining StratCat - on guitars and vocals - are: John Wisor, a fifty year associate, and Vinnie Burvee on bass and bgv; Dave Fiorini and Dave Salce on drums and bgv; Neal Massa on keyboards and bgv; and guest Stray Jeremy Hummel on percussion.

So, if this were Jeopardy and the answer was "Come On In", the correct question would of course be - "What do you say when the blues comes a knockin'?" That's exactly what StratCat Willie said back in '65 and those blues have been steadily comin' in ever since. This T-Bone influenced shuffle features a vigorous rhythm groove coming from John and Dave F. on the bass and drums; a fabulous piano lead by Neal; several nice blues runs by the StratCat on the Stratocaster; and outstanding lead and harmony vocals, especially on the catchy sing-a-long chorus line. Nice way to kick things off.

Whereas B. B. didn't start worrying about being able to find his baby till it was 3 O'clock in the morning, StratCat's already freaking out and it's only "1:38 In The Morning". This is one of those "I gotta quit her but I just can't do it" kind of ballads. You know, the one's

with the sullenly sung, melancholy lyrics associated with a distrustful relationship; the moody rhythm groove; the pensive piano leads; and those pain exuding guitar riffs. In other words, it's a killer slow blues track.

I'm guessing that not many people may know that "A-Tisket, A-Tasket" was originally composed by Ella Fitzgerald. I'm also guessing that many people actually do know that Stevie Ray Vaughan used some of it's lyrics on his killer "Mary Had A Little Lamb". That said, on this quick, very well done, two-and-a-half minute instrumental titled "Scramblin'", you'll surely notice some similarities.



"It's Just That Way" is real deal, old school, fifties style, slow and soulful blues, at it's best. It's that kind of song where even those who don't like to dance, like to dance to. Just throw your arms around someone who feels good in them and get hypnotized by the mood.....that's what I'm talking about. Great crooning by Willie; great relaxing rhythm groove, this time by Vinnie and Dave S. on the bass and drums; great organ vibe by Neal; and great song in general.

If you've ever been to Memphis, chances are very good you've been in the Rum Boogie Cafe. That said, chances are also very good that you've heard the title of this song, as well. It's

called "Eat, Drink, Boogie, Repeat" - which is the cafe's famous slogan. It's a rollicking tale about StratCat's annual frolic from the upstate New York area to the International Blues Challenge and the antics taking place along the way and even more so - upon arrival. A party song for sure.

Staying in road trip mode, this one's traveling music at it's best. Leaving from Pensacola and picking up band mates along the way, Stratcat Willie is "Big Easy Bound". If the guys are driving anything like the speed at which they're playin', it's not gonna take very long to get there. With everyone in all out jam mode, this one's pure, unadulterated, good ol' Rock 'n' Roll.

The disc closes with a track called "Good News Of The Blues" and it somehow tells of actually finding an upside to being down and out. As StratCat tells it, the silver lining to having the blues is.....*having the blues*. It's a smoker with everyone at disc's

best. John, Dave F., and Neal are cooking up a fast, furious and very funky rhythm on the bass, drums and keyboards, and at six minutes long it allows for several nice solos. One is a monster minute long piano lead by Neal and then at four minutes in - when it sounds like the song is about to end - StratCat Willie closes it out with a two minute long mind blowing lead guitar tantrum. OMG!

Other tracks on this excellent debut release include: *"Sure 'Nuff Got The Blues"; "I Know"; "Since You Left Me"; "I've Got It Bad"; "Life Is Good"; and "Take It Easy".*

To find out more about Stratcat Willie just go to his website - www.stratcatwillie.com - and if you haven't yet received your copy of

"On The Prowl" for airplay, just email Willie at stratcatwillie@stratcatwillie.com.

Malaya Blue

"Still"

Blue Heart Records

Publicity: Blind Raccoon

By Peter "Blewzzman" Lauro © September 2020

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

If you're a fan of *The Voice* you'll certainly have seen a blind audition where the coaches hear such a stunning vocal performance that not only do all four of them turn, but they fight tooth and nail for the honor of being chosen by the singer as their coach. Malaya Blue has ***that*** kind of a voice.

"Still" is the third release for UK based contemporary blues singer/songwriter Malaya Blue. For the project: from collaborating on songwriting, to seeking advice and input, Malaya Blue teamed up with several Grammy Award winning artists and some of the finest musicians from the UK. Joining Malaya, on all vocals, are: Nat Martin on all guitars; Stevie Watts on Hammond, keys and piano; Mike Horne on drums and percussion; and Eddie Masters on bass. Special guests include Richard Cousins (Robert Cray Band) on bass and Sammie Ashforth on piano.

On *"Still"*, as a special advisor and collaborator, Malaya Blue turned to a gentleman that if I'm not careful, I could easily get sidetracked talking too much about. That would be none other than Grammy winner, BMA winner, songwriter, musician and producer extraordinaire - Dennis Walker. Attempting to simulate an LP, the disc presents its songs in a two side fashion with the *"Still Side"* featuring six songs lending themselves to soulful R&B and the *"Blue Side"* featuring six songs that.....yeah, you get it. From a collaborations standpoint, all twelve are originals.

The title track, *"Still"*, was a song originally slated for a Robert Cray project and since it never did get recorded, bassist and composer Richard Cousins donated it to the cause. It's an emotional and soulful ballad that features Richard (on his only

appearance) and Mike laying down a refined, then rich rhythm; fabulous piano, organ, and guitar highlights by Stevie and Nat; and a stunning vocal performance by Malaya that will have you thinking "that's what he was talking about in the opening paragraph". Wow!

With drummer Mike Horne taking charge on another great rhythm fueled track and guitarist Nat Martin shining, as well, there are indeed some magical musical moments on "*It's A Shame*". That said, Malaya, has her own wizardly things going on with the vocals. Between her lead and her own harmony and backup vocals she belts out one heck of a remarkable vocal performance. Replays will certainly be in order on this one.

Being someone who tends to get emotional when hearing of someone losing their life in war, the lyrics on "*Why Is Peace So Hard*", combined with the powerfully emotional and melancholic vocals used by Malaya to deliver them, did indeed tear me up. The song, or more appropriately - the hymn, tells of a mother proudly seeing her son walk out the door as he left for war till the time she sees him return.....with a flag draped over his coffin as it comes off of a plane. The spirituality that Stevie Watts adds to the song with a masterful and mystical performance on the Hammond organ truly makes it worthy of being played at a mass for a fallen soldier. Easily worthy of a "Song Of The Year" nod, as well.

This is a perfect time for me to flip the record over to the 'Blue Side', while also taking a minute to compose myself.....phew!

Side two, so to speak, kicks off with a smoker called "*Kiss My Troubles Away*". It's kind of like a modern day "Working Nine To Five" song. For Malaya, there is nothing like coming home from a stressful day at work, tossing her keys on the counter, kicking her shoes off onto to floor, leaving a trail of her office clothes on the stairs behind her and happily seeing the person who kisses her troubles away. How cool of a compliment is that? Being told you kiss my troubles away. If she didn't read my reviews, I'd actually try stealing that line and using it on the Blewzzlady. In a dual role, Malaya is once again blowing the roof off with her powerful lead and back up vocals and crazy good rhythm Stevie, Mike and Eddie are blowing out on the keys, drums and bass will surely have everyone heading to the dance floor.

On a song about losing and then finding love again, as Malaya sees it, falling "*Down To The Bottom*" is merely something that happens before going back up to the top. Sounding as confident as she does sultry, Malaya is sure she'll once again find



love. That's a great attitude, inspiration and advice. Musically, the track has a velvety jazz lounge vibe.

On his only appearance, pianist Sammie Ashforth teams up with Malaya on a ballad so beautifully done that I imagined I was hearing the duet in a Broadway production or a Carnegie Hall performance in which the audience sits there with their jaws dropped, amid a silence, allowing a dropped pin to be heard.

Other tracks on "*Still*" include: "*Down To The Bone*"; "*Love Can Tell*"; "*Love Of Your Life*"; "*Settle Down Easy*"; "*These Four Walls*"; and "*Hot Love*".

Having been nominated for a handful of awards by the British Blues Association just a few short years ago, and now having the likes of Dennis Walker, Betsie Brown and Sallie Bengston in her corner, Malaya Blue seems poised to possibly add some American Blues award nominations to her credentials. Remember where you first heard it.

To find out more about Malaya Blue just go to her website - www.malayabluemusic.com

Eric Johanson

"Below Sea Level"

Nola Blue Records

Publicity Blind Raccoon

By Peter "Blewzzman" Lauro © August, 2020 Blues Editor

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

"Below Sea Level" is Eric Johanson's second solo release and his first on the rapidly growing Nola Blue Record label. The trio of musicians, or more fittingly said - music dynamos, that make up the band are Eric Johanson on guitar and vocals; Cody Dickinson on drums and Terrence Grayson on bass. Please don't confuse the word dynamo with powerhouse because quite frankly, I am not a fan of so called "powerhouse trios". Fashionably, they're much too over the top for my taste. That said, Eric, Cody and Terrence - along with Ray Jacildo on organ on one track - pleasingly took me right to the edge.

Keeping it as real and as raw as possible, "*Below Sea Level*" was recorded live, in just three days, with very few overdubs. Similar to his debut release titled "*Burn It Down*", all twelve of the tracks are Eric's originals. To quote Eric, "*It's contemporary music naturally grown from the roots of southern blues and psychedelic inspiration.*"

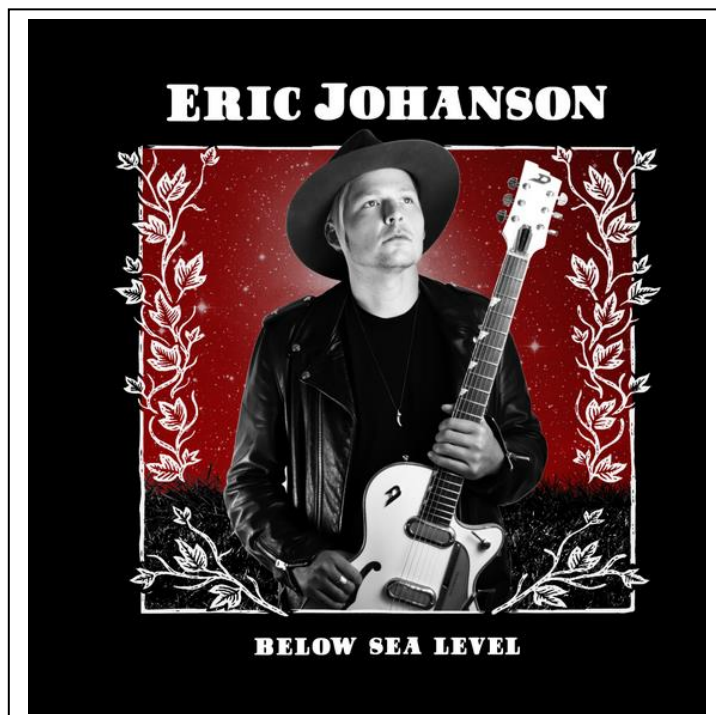
As the disc opens with "*Buried Above Ground*" (which is what I'm calling the pseudo title track), absolutely zero time is wasted living up to Eric's quote. He and Cody come right out of the gate in a toe to toe slug fest that's harder and rougher than a twelve round Ali-Frazier battle. This smoker references Eric's native New Orleans. If you've ever been there and toured the famed cemeteries you'll immediately get the song title and album titles.

Being one who peaked during that era (no pun intended), for some of that psychedelic inspiration you need not go further than track two - "*Down To The Bottom*" - a track about diving into your imagination and letting go of the world. Killer mind and string bending slide guitar, profound rhythm and guiding lyrics will all accompany you on the trip.

There is no question about Eric being able to belt it out on the rockers but when it comes to really appreciating a singers voice, I'll take a ballad every time. This track, which totally changed the band's tempo, is titled "*Changes The Universe*". On songs like this is it's not uncommon for me to use the term flawless because this is what floats my blues boat: strong, heartfelt and soulful vocals; a tight and relaxed rhythm groove, slick blues guitar licks; and a heartbeat that only a Hammond organ can give a song. On his only appearance, Ray certainly made his presence known.

Kudos have to go out to Luther Dickinson, the disc's producer on "*Have Mercy*". His creating the perfect dark instrumentation to match the tracks dark lyrics was nothing short of masterful.

"*Nowhere To Go*" is surely one for the dancers.....that is if they can keep up with it. With Eric being one, Cody being another and Terrence being the third, this rocker is indeed a three alarmer.



Just like everything else seems to do, protest songs also make comebacks - and the fact that they need to is indeed a sad reality. No matter how high the wall, how strong the chains, how divided the boundary, all these things are just prisons in your mind. Eric's take is that "*Love Is Rebellion*" from any kind of tyranny and love is Eric's parents, must have been readers of the American poet Maya Angelou. It was she who wrote "*It is time for parents to teach young people early on that in diversity there is beauty and there is strength.*" Showing such

diversity, Eric closes out the disc with "*Riverbend Blues*", a beautiful and strong solo acoustic effort.

Other tracks on this awesome album include: "*Never Tomorrow*"; "*Hammer On The Stone*"; "*River Of Oblivion*"; "*Open Hearted Woman*" and "*Dose Of Forget*".

To learn more about singer, songwriter and guitarist extraordinaire, Eric Johanson, just go to - www.ericjohanson.com

DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT HOLLER? Deadline for the next issue (**April/May 2021 issue**) is **March 1, 2021**. Here is your chance to write about the music you love...and 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.



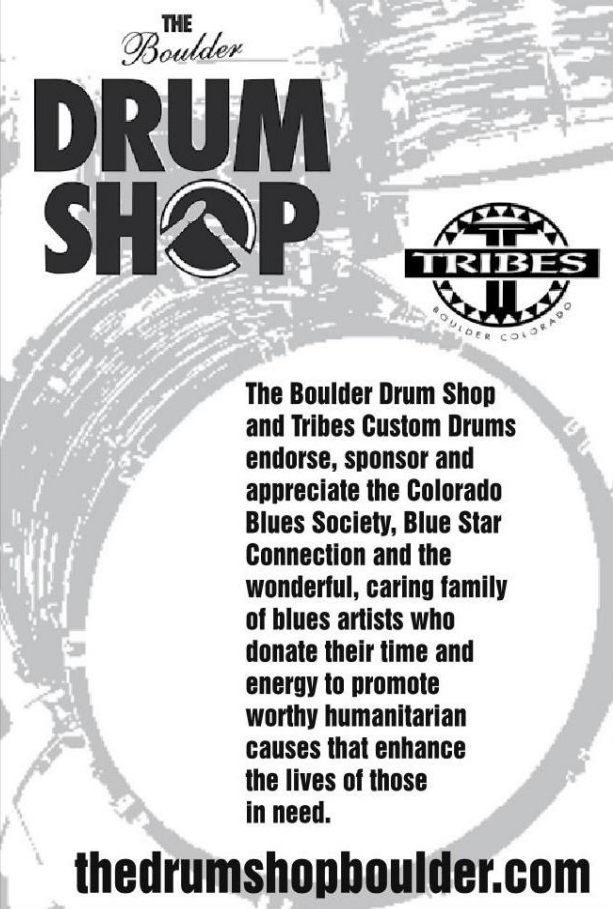


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Colorado Blues Society Mission Statement

The Colorado Blues Society is dedicated to preserving Blues heritage and increasing awareness of and appreciation of the Blues as an indigenous American art form (the wellspring from which all contemporary popular American music originated)

Colorado Blues Society

Members

Music Acts- Musicians/Bands etc...

50 Shades of Blue
Al Chesis and The Delta Sonics
Alfonzo
Blues*Wa*Feeling
Cary Morin
Cass Clayton Band
Clay Kirkland Band
Colorado's Midnight Train
Dan Haynes
Danny Ford Band
Dan Treanor
Deborah Stafford and The State of Affairs
Doc Brown's Blues Band
Erica Brown
Felonius Smith
Hogback Blues Band
Incoming Groove Band
Jack Hadley
Jenn Cleary
Johnny Johnston
Kerry Pastine and The Crime Scene
Mad Dog Blues
Reckless and Blue
Robert Wilson Blues Band
Shaun Murphy
Spidercat
Super Saxy Entertainment
Supertonic
The King Stan Band
The Lionel Young Band
The Movers and Shakers
The Rhythm Allstars
Three Shots

Officers and Board of Directors

Kyle Deibler- President
Wolf-Vice President
Scott Fitzke- Secretary
Joe Menke- Treasurer
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Holler Editor-Chick Cavallero

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Chick and Patti Cavallero
Steve Coleman
Julie & Jim Gardner
Grand County Blues Society
Greeley Blues Jam
Dave Kennedy & Jill Kamas
Patrick Kennedy
Kerry Pastine and the Crime Scene
Dave & Priscilla Kropuenske
Gene & Kay Walker
Neil Sexton
Carl Seyfer
Super Saxy Entertainment

CBS Business Members

Buffalo Rose

119 Washignton Street
Golden, CO
303-278- 6800

Snowy Range Music Festival

Swallow Hill Music Assn.

71 East Yale Avenue
Denver, CO
303-777-1003

Colorado Lifestyles Properties, LLC

<http://tomsund.com/>

Memphiswest Music, LLC

<http://memphiswestmusic.com/>

Mark Sundermeier Booking

303-463-2981 Office
720-203-4539 Cell

The Normobbi Agency

<https://m.facebook.com/normobbi/>

One Sweet Summer Blues Nights in Downtown Loveland

www.downtownloveland.org

Get Connected Events

<https://www.getconnectedevents.com/>

TJMusic.net

<https://www.tjmusic.net>

The Blues Jam

<https://www.thebluesjam.com/>

CBS President's Column

From Kyle Deibler

Everyone,

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Colorado Blues Society, let me wish all of you a very happy and prosperous new year. 2020 definitely had its challenges and we still face a number of them as we look forward to the new year. Our music scene, both locally and nationally is under siege. We've lost a number of venues already and time will tell if the arrival of the vaccine for Covid 19 can be distributed fast enough to offer enough protection so that we all can meet & gather to see the performers we love in audience sizes large enough to sustain and assist both the venues and musicians in once again prospering in 2021.

And yet the heart beat of it all still shows us all that is possible. Kudos to Dazzle, Cass Clayton and all of the volunteers and donors who have contributed to the Musician's Food Pantry to put food in the cupboards of all musicians in need. The live streams that Dazzle presents have kept the music in front of us and brings the promise of a brighter day. Andy Sydow's 12 days of PJ's and Piano was a treat for the holidays and the New Years Eve show with Cary Morin & Ghost Dog marked the first appearance of A.J. Fullerton as part of the band. It was a great show that brought the promise of 2021 for the forefront of the holidays and I am grateful for that.

All we have is time, time for the Covid 19 Vaccination to be distributed, time for all of us to continue to practice social distancing and wearing our masks so that we all can once again enjoy live performances of the music we all know and love. It's definitely been a struggle for all of us for sure and I know at times it's hard to have faith but faith in the future is what will see us all through. So in the meantime, have faith, bring your CBS membership up to date so that we can look forward to doing all we can to assist our Blues scene in once again flourishing and be good to one another. As my good friend Spike would say:

Peace and Blues

Kyle

BLUES BROADCASTS

SUNDAY

KSTR 96.1 FM Grand Junction,
9-10 am & 8-9 pm Blues Deluxe
KVNF 90.9 FM Paonia & 89.1 FM
Montrose, 4-5 pm, Beale Street Caravan,
www.kvnf.org
KOTO 91.7FM, 89.3FM, 105.5FM Telluride,
4-6 pm Blues Hang Over (every other
Sunday) www.koto.org, Island Radio,
5-7 pm (rebroadcast Thursday, 5-7 pm)
True Blues with Brian Elliott
www.island92.com
KRFX 103.5 FM Denver, 7-10 pm
Strictly Blues with Kai Turner
KBCO 97.3 FM Boulder, 9-10 pm
Blues from the Red Rooster Lounge
KPLU Seattle, 7 pm-1 am
http://www.kplu.org

MONDAY

KSBV 93.7 FM Salida, 9-10 am Blues Deluxe
KAFM 88.1 FM Grand Junction, 9 am-noon
Jimmy's Blues Kitchen (alternate weeks)
KAJX & KCJX 88.9, 89.7, 90.1, 90.9, 91.1,
91.5 FM Aspen, Carbondale, Rifle and
other towns, 11-midnight Blue Horizon
with Blue Bird

TUESDAY

KVNF 90.9 FM Paonia & 89.1 FM Montrose,
noon-3 pm, Blues & Other Colors
www.kvnf.org
KAFM 88.1 FM Grand Junction, 1-4 pm,
Bluesday Laboratory
KLZR 91.7FM Westcliffe.
2-4pm blues with Sally Barnes

WEDNESDAY

KCRT 92.5 FM Trinidad, 7-8 pm
Trinidaddio Blues Hour with
Ken Saydak and Darnell Miller
KHEN 106.9 FM Salida, 1-4 pm
Jazz & Blues with Bill
KVNF 0.9 FM Paonia & 89.1 FM
Montrose, 9:30 pm-midnight Crossties,
www.kvnf.org
KRFC 88.9 FM Fort Collins, 8-10 pm
House Rent Party with Jeff

THURSDAY

KAFM 88.1 FM Grand Junction, 9 am-noon
Blues Injection with Mickey the K
KVLE 93.5 FM Crested Butte/Monarch,
102.3 FM Gunnison, 2-3 pm Blues Deluxe
www.blueswithrussell.com, 8-10 pm
Blues with Russell
KAJX & KCJX 88.9, 89.7, 90.1, 90.9, 91.1,
91.5 FM Aspen, Carbondale, Rifle
and other towns, 11-midnight,
Beale Street Caravan
KLZR 91.7FM Westcliffe.
2-4pm blues with AJ Biggerstaff

FRIDAY

KVNF 90.9 FM Paonia & 89.1 FM Montrose,
1-4 pm, Friday Afternoon Club
www.kvnf.org
KGNU 88.5 FM Boulder, 1390 AM Denver,
93.7 FM Ward/Nederland 6-9 pm
Blues Legacy

FRIDAY

www.ckua.com
9pm -midnight Friday
Night Blues Party,
www.wfit.org,
8-10 pm Rev. Billy's
Rhythm Revival

SATURDAY

KAFM 88.1 FM Grand
Junction, 9am-6pm Jazz,
Blues, Folk & Rock
KHEN 106.9 FM Salida,
noon-4 pm Sonic Gumbo with Doc
www.kgoat.org,
noon-1 pm
Jazz & Blues Crusade
with Count Rabula
KDUR 91.9 FM &
93.9 FM Durango,
2 Sides of the Blues,
6-8pm
KUVU 89.3 FM Denver,
www.kuvo.org 5-7pm
Blues Highway
with Sam Mayfield or
guest host
KUVU 89.3 FM Denver,
www.kuvo.org 7-8pm
R&B Jukebox
with Rolando, Pete,
Easy Bill or Carlos
KVNF 90.9 FM Paonia &
89.1 FM Montrose,
7-9:30pm, Turn It Up
www.kvnf.org
KRCC 91.5 FM Colorado
Springs, Noon-1pm
The Blue Plate Special
Vintage Voltage Style
KUNC 91.5 FM Greeley,
8-9pm Beale Street Caravan
KUNC 91.5 FM Greeley, 9-10pm
9 O'Clock Blues with Marc
KAFM 88.1 FM Grand Junction,
9pm-midnight Rockin' Blues
KAJX & KCJX 88.9, 89.7, 90.1, 90.9,
91.1, 91.5 FM Aspen, Carbondale, Rifle
and other towns,
Midnight - 4am
Blues Before Sunrise
KPLU Seattle, 7pm-1 am
www.kplu.org

www.ckua.com
3-5pm Natch'l Blues

MONDAY - FRIDAY

KRCC 91.5 FM Colo.
Spgs, Noon-1 pm
The Blue Plate Special

FRIDAY - SUNDAY

KVCU 1190 AM
Boulder -
www.radio1190.org
1-7am Blues Til Dawn

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Sirius Blues Channel 74
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