

Sharing America's National Music - *The Blues*



**T
O
M
M
Y

C
A
S
T
R
O**

**Finely Tuned
Success...**

**CHRIS CAIN
WAYNE BAKER BROOKS
FANTASTIC NEGRITO
NICK SCHENBELEN
LAURA CHAVEZ**

JULY 2018 ISSUE 18
US \$7.99 Canada \$9.99
UK £ 6.99 Australia A \$15.95

VANESSA COLLIER

ORDER VANESSA'S
NEW ALBUM
"HONEY UP"
AVAILABLE AT
WWW.VANESSACOLLIER.COM

AWARD WINNING
SAXOPHONIST
VOCALIST
AND SONGWRITER

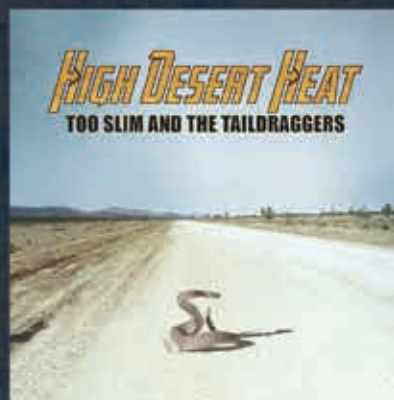
BERKS JAZZ FEST | WIREGRASS BLUES FESTIVAL | CHESAPEAKE BAY BLUES FESTIVAL | RIVERBEND FESTIVAL | READING BLUES FEST
CHESTER COUNTY BLUES FESTIVAL | TINNERS HILL BLUES FESTIVAL | W.C. HANDY BLUES & BARBECUE FESTIVAL | BLUESAPALOOZA
SONGS AT MIRROR LAKE | BRIGGS FARM BLUES FESTIVAL | TALL CITY BLUES FESTIVAL | RBC OTTAWA BLUESFEST
NORTH ATLANTIC BLUES FESTIVAL | RIVERFRONT BLUES FESTIVAL | SHREWSBURY RIBS & BLUES FESTIVAL | TRINIDADIO BLUES FEST
FORGOTTEN MUSIC FESTIVAL | SUMMERSOUNDS CONCERT SERIES | PHILADELPHIA FOLK FESTIVAL | WHITE MOUNTAIN BOOGIE & BLUES FESTIVAL
LEVITT PAVILION SUMMER CONCERT SERIES | LEGENDARY RHYTHM & BLUES CRUISE (FEB 2019)

**NOW BOOKING! CONTACT INTREPID ARTISTS INTL. (704) 358-4777
MORE INFO AND DATES AT WWW.VANESSACOLLIER.COM**

RISEING STARS • SEASONED VETERANS

VizzTone
label group

BADASS DEBUTS • WORLD-CLASS BLUES



check out all the latest and upcoming releases at vizztone.com



CONTENTS

JULY 2018



FEATURES

8 TOMMY CASTRO

Finely Tuned Success

by Michael Kinsman

12 CHRIS CAIN

Back On Top

by Mark Thompson

16 WAYNE BAKER BROOKS

The Brooks Family Legacy

by Art Tipaldi

20 FANTASTIC NEGRITO

Tiny Desk To The Grammys

by Art Tipaldi

24 NICK SCHNEBELEN

The Hardest Working Man In The Blues

by Bill Rosenbeck

28 LAURA CHAVEZ

By Tom Hyslop

30 Sidemen - Long Road To Glory

Interview & Review

By Art Tipald

DEPARTMENTS

6 MUSIC SAMPLER #18

18 Songs To Download

by Various Artists

36 BLUES MUSIC STORE

80 CDs And DVDs Available

by Blues Music Magazine

34 DOWN IN THE DELTA

Celebrities...

by Roger Stolle

44 AROUND THE WORLD

Reckoning With Billy Price

by Bob Margolin

46 REVIEWS

CD Reviews

80 DAHL'S DIGS

Re-Release Sets

by Bill Dahl

81 MORE REVIEWS

DVD and Book Reviews

COVER PHOTOGRAPHY © MIKE SHEA

PHOTOGRAPHY © JOSEPH A. ROSEN



Blues Music Magazine
PO Box 1446
Bradenton, FL 34206

Sharing America's National Music

The Blues

1-855-US BLUES

PUBLISHER: Jack Sullivan

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF: Art Tipaldi

LEGAL: Eric F. Hatten

CUSTOMER RELATIONS: Susan Lujan

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Michael Cote / Thomas J. Cullen III / Bill Dahl

Hal Horowitz / Tom Hyslop / Vincent Abbate

Brian M. Owens / Bill Wasserzieher / Don Wilcock

~~~~

COLUMNISTS

Bob Margolin / Roger Stolle

~~~~

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Grant Britt / Michael Cala / Tom Clarke

Ted Drozdowski / B.J. Huchtemann

Rev. Keith Gordon / Stacy Jeffress / Chris Kerslake

Michael Kinsman / Matt MacDonald

Karen Nugent / Tim Parsons / Phil Reser

Pete Sardon / Richard Skelly / Mark Thompson

M.E. Travaglini / Bill Vitka / A.J. Wachtel

Charlie Frazier / Dan Stevens / Nick DeRiso

Terry Abramhamson / Bill Rosenbeck

~~~~

CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS

Scott Allen / Robert Barclay / Bob Sekinger

Aigars Lapsa / Pertti Nurmi / Rick Lewis

Joseph A. Rosen / Jim Hartzell / Marilyn Stringer

Jen Taylor / Susan Thorsen / Mike Shea

Laura Carbone / Dick Waterman

~~~~

SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

Web: www.bluesmusicmagazine.com

E-Mail: Jack@bluesmusicmag.com

~~~~

EDITORIAL QUERIES

E-Mail: [editor@bluesmusicmag.com](mailto:editor@bluesmusicmag.com)

~~~~

BUSINESS AND CIRCULATION QUESTIONS E-Mail:

jack@bluesmusicmag.com

~~~~

MEDIA SUBMISSIONS

Mail 2 copies to: *Blues Music Magazine*

P.O. Box 1446, Bradenton, FL 34206

~~~~

ADVERTISING

Web: www.bluesmusicmagazine.com

E-Mail: service@bluesmusicmag.com

Susan Lujan: 1 - (855) 872-5837

~~~~

*Blues Music Magazine* welcomes articles, photographs, and any material about the blues suitable for publication. *Blues Music Magazine* assumes no responsibility for unsolicited manuscripts, photographs, or illustrations. Material may be edited at the discretion of the editors. To be credited and reimbursed, all submissions must be properly marked with name, address, telephone number, and e-mail of author/photographer/artist. Payment for unsolicited material is at the discretion of the publisher.

All material becomes the property of:

**Blues Music Magazine**  
© 2018 MojoWax Media, Inc.

## Riffs & Grooves

Summer is always a great time to pick up a book, head to a beach blanket or mountain cabin, and get in some relaxed reading. If you are like me, often, we look for books that combine enjoyable storytelling with deep knowledge of the blues and blues culture. Here, then, are some of the fiction books and authors that have populated my decades of reading.

*Another Good Lovin' Blues* by Arthur Flowers is the one novel all blues fans should read. Set in the Delta and Memphis in 1918, the novel chronicles the story of Lucas Bodeen, a blues piano player, and Melvira Dupree, a hoodoo conjure woman. Flowers tells the tale as the all-knowing griot. Bodeen accurately embodies the life of archetypal traveling bluesman. He has a history of lovin' and leavin'. But he is committed to playing an everlasting blues. Melvira is charged with the task of keeping hoodoo traditions alive against the culture's modernization. Both characters are committed to keeping alive a cultural tradition that heals the spirit. But there is so much more.

The novel offers both a picturesque and a tragic view of the South during these times. Through Bodeen, it accurately conveys the essence of the healing power of the blues and the hold the music has on its players.

Flowers the author was born and raised in Memphis and has been writing and teaching class at Syracuse University for over three decades. A writer, teacher, and blues man, Flowers considers himself part of the African-American tradition of writers, incorporating the blues and pieces of the mystical belief system hoodoo into his work.

Another book centered on music is David Wesley Williams' *Long Gone Daddies* novel. The book tells the story of three generations of Gaunt men from the 1930s to today through Luther Gaunt, the current musical Gaunt. Luther's grandfather, Malcolm, was a rambling singer who traveled to Memphis in 1953 to record for Sam Phillips' in his Sun Studios and change music before Elvis.

For his own career, Luther travels with his band, the Long Gone Daddies, through the South following his own band dreams, eventually ending up in present day Memphis. The band's antagonist, Delia, perfectly embodies today's fame at all cost attitude as she begs Luther to write her a song so she can have "fame and wealth and spotlights and magazine covers...and a guitar-shaped swimming pool."

Some very cool parts include Malcolm performing to hone his act as a shy busybody named Elvis watches him. Later there is a hilarious juke joint verbal headcutting between Muddy and Elvis. And there are references to blues culture and locales in Memphis and Mississippi.

Finally, check out any of the Valentin St. Cyr mysteries written by Atlanta's David Fulmer. Beginning with *Chasing The Devil's Tail* and *Jass*, Fulmer's books center on the birth of jass in New Orleans' Storyville during the turn of the 20th century.

In all Fulmer's novels, St. Cyr is a private detective charged with solving murders that threaten to close down the city's illicit cash cow. Fulmer has done his research and accurately describes the place and its people. There are descriptions of Storyville, New Orleans' legal Red Light district from 1890s through 1917, sporting houses, and the tiny, back of the Quarter dives where people like Buddy Bolden were discovering a new form of music. By his later novels, the music has moved into the more established houses and clubs, attracting a more respectable audience.

Using a Blind Willie McTell song title, Fulmer has also written *The Dying Crapshooter's Blues*, the story of Atlanta in the 1920s. All of Fulmer's books accurately tell stories centering on the intersection of music and race.

Art Tipaldi  
Editor-In-Chief





# SAMPLER EIGHTEEN

Visit *Blues Music Magazine.com* to download all these amazing songs. Click on the: *About Blues Music Magazine* link to access Sampler Eighteen to download & enjoy!

Congratulations and thanks to all the artists appearing on the *Blues Music Magazine* July 2018 Sampler. Visit: [www.BluesMusicMagazine.com](http://www.BluesMusicMagazine.com)

1. **Johnny Sansone** - "Plywood Floor" from the album *Hopeland* on Short Stack Records

2. **Samantha Martin & Delta Sugar** - "Good Trouble" from the album *Run To Me* on Gypsy Soul Records

3. **Deb Ryder** - "Got To Let It Go" featuring Chris Cain from the album *Enjoy The Ride* on VizzTone Label Group

4. **Boz Scaggs** - "Little Miss Night And Day" from the album *Out Of The Blues* on Concord Records

5. **Dana Fuchs** - "Sad Solution" from the album *Love Lives On* on Get Along Records

6. **Bob Corritore & Friends** - "Fork In The Road" featuring Oscar Wilson from the album *Don't Let The Devil Ride* on VizzTone Label Group

7. **Dany Franchi** - "Back To The River" from the album *Problem Child* on Station House Records

8. **Damon Fowler** - "Fairweather Friend" from the album *The Whiskey Bayou Sessions* on Whiskey Bayou Records

9. **Lurrie Bell & The Bell Dynasty** - "Keep Your Eyes On The Prize" from the album *Tribute To Carey Bell* on Delmark Records

10. **Kid Ramos** - "Mashed Potatoes & Chili" from the album *Old School* on Rip Cat Records

11. **The Proven Ones** - "Why Baby Why" featuring Jimi Bott, Anthony Geraci, Kid Ramos, Willie. J. Campbell, and Brian Templeton from the album *Wild Again* on Roseleaf Records

12. **Billy Price** - "One And One" from the album *Reckoning* on VizzTone Label Group

13. **Whitney Shay** - "Don't You Fool Me No More" on the album *A Woman Rules The World* on Little Village Foundation

14. **Big Harp George** - "Alternative Facts" from the album *Uptown Cool* on Blue Mountain Records

15. **Kara Grainger** - "Groove Train" from the album *Living With Your Ghost* on Station House Records

16. **J.P. Soars** - "Sure As Hell Ain't Foolin' Me" from the album *Southbound I-95* on Soars High Productions

17. **Jeff Jensen** - "Good Woman Back Home" from the album *Wisdom & Decay* - Self-released

18. **Spencer Mackenzie** - "Move On Down The Track" from the album *Cold November* on Gypsy Soul Records

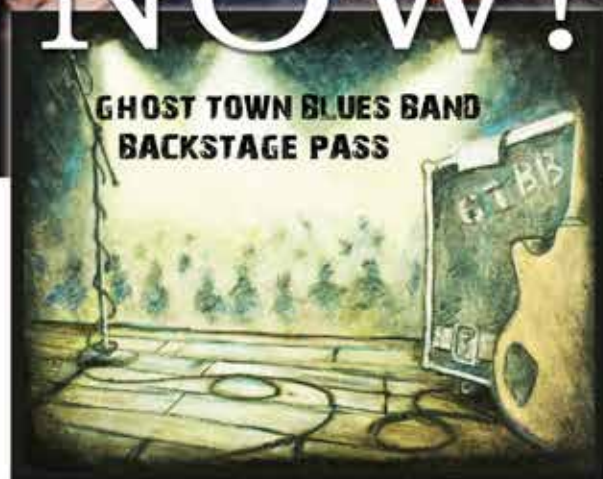


# GHOST TOWN BLUES BAND

**#4 BILLBOARD  
BLUES CHARTS**

GTBB's new live album  
*Backstage Pass*

**AVAILABLE  
NOW!**



***"Ghost Town Blues Band  
is energetic as hell!"***

-Frédéric Lamoureux  
Montreal Jazz Festival

***"The Ghost Town Blues Band defines Memphis & Blues."***

-Jim Holt  
Beale Street Music Festival

***"GTBB had everyone on their feet in record time"***

-Cindy McLeod  
Calgary International Blues Festival



Find out more at [GhostTownBluesBand.com](http://GhostTownBluesBand.com)

Booking: Road Dawg Touring Company  
tel: +1 (303) 670-9950 - [www.road-dawg.com](http://www.road-dawg.com)



# TOMMY CASTRO



PHOTOGRAPHY © JOSEPH A. ROSEN



# FINELY TUNED SUCCESS

By Michael Kinsman

Each time Tommy Castro enters the recording studio is as daunting as it was the first time a quarter of a century ago. He's recorded 16 studio albums, and their success would lead one to believe that he certainly knows what he's doing but he still gets a bit queasy.

"I find that the hardest thing the past few years is to try and keep it fresh and be creative," he says. "You want to take some chances, but balance that with the people who want you to stay the same."

But Tommy Castro & the Painkillers is a different band in 2018 than it was in 2010, which was a different band that it was in 2001 or 1996. "As a musician and artist, I would not be happy putting out a record that was same as the one the last time," says the native of San Jose, Calif. "But you never know how far you should go."

Randy McDonald, his bassist, road manager, and long-time friend, is used to this. "It's kind of a joke with us," McDonald says. "Because no matter what he does in the studio, it's still a Tommy Castro record in the end."

His track record is proof enough that Castro knows what he's doing. The release of his new music is always received well and his CDs – such as his latest *Stompin' Ground* – regularly rise to the top of the charts; he plays as often as any touring blues band and has a steady stream of festival work; and, he won two coveted B.B. King Entertainer of the Year awards from The Blues Foundation, a feat only achieved by two others – Buddy Guy and Tab Benoit – since the award presentation began in 1981.

Plus, he's Tommy Castro, a charismatic and humble musician who is happy to greet any fan who wants a handshake or a photo long after his show is done. "A lot of that comes from his upbringing," McDonald says. "His mother was very charming and generous. I think the charisma is just a reflection of his enthusiasm and joy for what he does."

Castro also is a student of the music industry and knows that he has to change, or get left curbside. "The longer I'm around I realize I'm much better as a songwriter, singer, guitarist, and guy who puts together a show than I have ever been," he says.

"But we've lived through a whole revolution in the music business in how we listen, how we record, and how we get music. To us, it's an opportunity to be discovered for the first time in so many different ways."

Popularity of music conduits such as Youtube, Pandora, and Spotify





is relatively new, but Castro embraces them rather than fearing them. "We have a song with nearly a million Spotify plays because it wound up on some playlist," he says. "That means there are a lot of people hearing us for the first time, and that translates into more people coming to shows."

Castro has had three managers through the years, but always determined that it was best if he managed himself. Today, he and McDonald mull over big-picture strategies as well as coordinating day-to-day operations for the four-piece band.

One of those strategies had been to increase Castro's visibility by gaining new fans on specialty music cruise ships. He initially participated in Delbert McClinton's Sandy Beaches Cruise, which introduced him to some R&B and country fans and encouraged him to further develop his songwriting.

And, since 2005, he has been on every one of the twice-yearly Legendary Rhythm & Blues Cruises. He discovered an affinity for hosting late night jams with other professional musicians, an opportunity he had to further broaden his musical knowledge. "There's no question

that people who were on the cruise are likely to show up when you pass through their town," he says. "Those people are very loyal to the artists they see on the cruises."

Castro's musical vision was very simple in the beginning. He loved playing guitar and wanted to take advantage of a plethora of clubs around San Francisco that would regularly employ blues and R&B bands. "All I wanted was a chance to play those clubs and make a living for me and my band," he says. "I couldn't see beyond that."

His honed his skills night after night through the 1980s until The Dynatoness, a seven-piece R&B band, hired him to play guitar. At that point, McDonald was playing bass for

The Dynatoness and knew that his ten-year stint for the band was about to end.

"We had a lead singer, but when Tommy got comfortable you could see his talents and natural ability coming through," McDonald says. "He had a real ear for the music and an affinity for it. I was really impressed and knew that he probably wasn't going to be happy just playing guitar."

After a few months, McDonald left but stayed in contact with Castro. Another few months passed and by the end of 1991 the pair began to assemble the Tommy Castro Band. The four-piece band quickly distinguished itself. Castro's singing and guitar playing got a sizable boost from Keith Crossen, a versatile

saxophone player who was comfortable rounding out the band's sound as well as stepping forward to play lead lines on his own.

The band found itself as the house band on NBC's *Comedy Showcase*, a weekly showed that aired after *Saturday Night Live*. The three-year TV run left built the band's reputation and soon it landed a recording contract with Blind Pig Records. At the same time, Castro's humble beginnings encouraged him to accept nearly every job that passed his way.

"My family didn't have a lot of money when I was growing up," he says. "My mom raised me and my brothers and sisters mainly on her own. When we wanted something, we had to figure out how to get it. Ever since then, I knew that nothing was going to happen unless I made it happen."

The barnstorming mentality served the band well. The band regularly played 20 dates a month in a grueling schedule. And, it evolved.



PHOTOGRAPHY © ART TIPALDI

PHOTOGRAPHY © JOSEPH A. ROSEN



PHOTOGRAPHY © LAURA CARBONE

Songs changed when they went in the studio and soon they added another horn to their live shows. Then keyboards were introduced, and the band and its music evolved further.

Castro played less guitar because he had other musicians to play lead, and that formula worked well for several years until 2010 when he grew weary of the sound and economics of keeping a six-member band on the road. "It got to be I was just tired of the full sound on every song, he says.

"I tried to winnow out the horns and keyboard from some songs when we went in the studio, but the musicians were there, and like all musicians they would want to play so they would figure out parts for themselves and the songs were different than I envisioned.

"The whole show became less of a guitar show. I wanted to do more of that and knew I was going to have to step up my playing. So I just decided I needed a smaller band."

Reduced to a lineup that included guitar, bass, drums, and keyboard, Castro's enjoyed playing more guitar and it seems to suit the songs he's writing today. He's worked hard at improving as a songwriter. Originally inspired by songwriters Gary Nicholson,

Delbert McClinton, Jeff Silbar, Stephen Bruton, and Jim Pugh, Castro has leveraged songwriting partnerships to expand the creative process.

"A couple of albums back, I was getting stuck," he says. "I just hit a wall, which is common to all songwriters." Castro watched online songwriting tutorials, read books, and has worked with others.

**"My family didn't have a lot of money when I was growing up,"  
- Tommy Castro**

"It's more important to me to be a good songwriter than songs only about what I had personal experience with." He notes that some of his best songs "Can't Keep A Good Man Down" and "Nasty Habits" emerged after his recovery from alcohol and drug problems.

And, while *Stompin' Ground*, offers some autobiographical material, it also addresses social issues. "I come from the '60s and '70s when people started writing songs about something other than falling in love," he says.

"That's something that stays with you." *Stompin' Ground* was recorded at Greaseland Studios, the recording studio in Castro's hometown of San Jose operated by Christoffer "Kid" Andersen, the Norwegian-born guitarist for Rick Estrin & the Nightcats.

"I wanted to work with Kid because he's such a talented guy," he says. "I was producing the album, but told him at the start that he was going to co-produce it because I knew he would have my back. I knew he was not going to let anything get through if he didn't think it was worthy.

Finding that comfort around him is important to Castro as he tries to manage his career, keep his band working and progress in his musical development. "Our current band of Randy (bass), Bowen Brown (drums), and Michael Emerson (keyboards) has been playing together for about three years.

"And, it takes time for a band to come together. We just reached that point where our playing is really tight and the chemistry allows us to just jump into a song knowing that everyone is going to know exactly how to contribute to us," he says. "It's really made it enjoyable for us.

"And, once again, I have a new record, and it still sounds like me." - **BMM**



# CHRIS CAIN



By Mark Thompson

As we age, the wisdom gained from our experiences can foster a deep, abiding sense of gratitude and appreciation for the gift of life. Guitarist Chris Cain certainly has gained a different perspective on the recent portion his journey. His latest recording, *Chris Cain* on the Little Village Foundation label, is his first in eight years. Recorded at Greaseland Studios with the prolific Kid Andersen producing, the disc highlights Cain's striking multi-instrumental talents on guitar, piano, and

saxophone in addition to his compelling songwriting and exhilarating vocal skills.

But life wasn't always such a joy. "I never used to connect with a room full of people. It was like I was playing in a bubble, playing for myself for the first 20 years. Everybody could have walked out of the room, and I would have kept playing without noticing. About 15 years ago, I finally opened my eyes. It was pretty heavy; everyone was smiling and listening, which blew my mind. From that moment, I have worked hard to connect

with the room. It has been a source of a lot of joy for me. At this point, I haven't had so much fun playing the guitar since I was 12 years old.

"The record was originally a love letter to my father. I thinking about him, the kind of stuff he used to listen to, so I starting writing songs for him. Kid Andersen and Jim Pugh heard some of the material. They both decided we should make a record. It turned into two days of so much fun!

"Kid is a beautiful person who

PHOTOGRAPHY © MARLYN STRINGER

# BACK TO TOP

makes the recording process easy. If they hadn't chased me out, I'd still be there. It was a blast! Kid kept handing me vintage guitars to play. It was like Make-A-Wish meets Funland! The studio is in Kid's house, so I would stand there watching Larry Taylor playing his upright bass in the kitchen and Tony Braunagel on drums.

"I haven't played piano or sax on my albums, so I wanted to do that for my dad. Nowadays, it seems like you need to make a record every 15 minutes or you might disappear. I'm really happy that people are listening to this one."

Cain was initially attracted to the guitar because his father had one that he was learning to play. Eventually Cain was given permission to use the guitar at the age of eight. Then Cain's father taught him to play "Baby Please Don't Go." Getting his own guitar as a tenth birthday gift, Cain also got lessons from an instructor at a local college.

"For two weeks he came and basically showed me how to hold the guitar. I went to my parents and asked if I could get rid of the teacher. Then I was doing my own thing. I couldn't play my guitar at first because

it was in tune. My dad's guitar had four strings and was not in tune. I had all of these things figured out on his guitar, but I couldn't play any of my stuff on the new guitar."

After high school, Cain got into playing the family piano, delving deep into the work of one of his idols, Ray Charles. "I don't drive, don't have a license. When everybody else was driving and dating, I was in a room with a record player, guitar, and a clarinet. My brother came back from Viet Nam with

some jazz records by artists like Thelonious Monk, George Shearing & the Montgomery Brothers, and Wes Montgomery. So I was digging jazz, which started the clarinet thing.

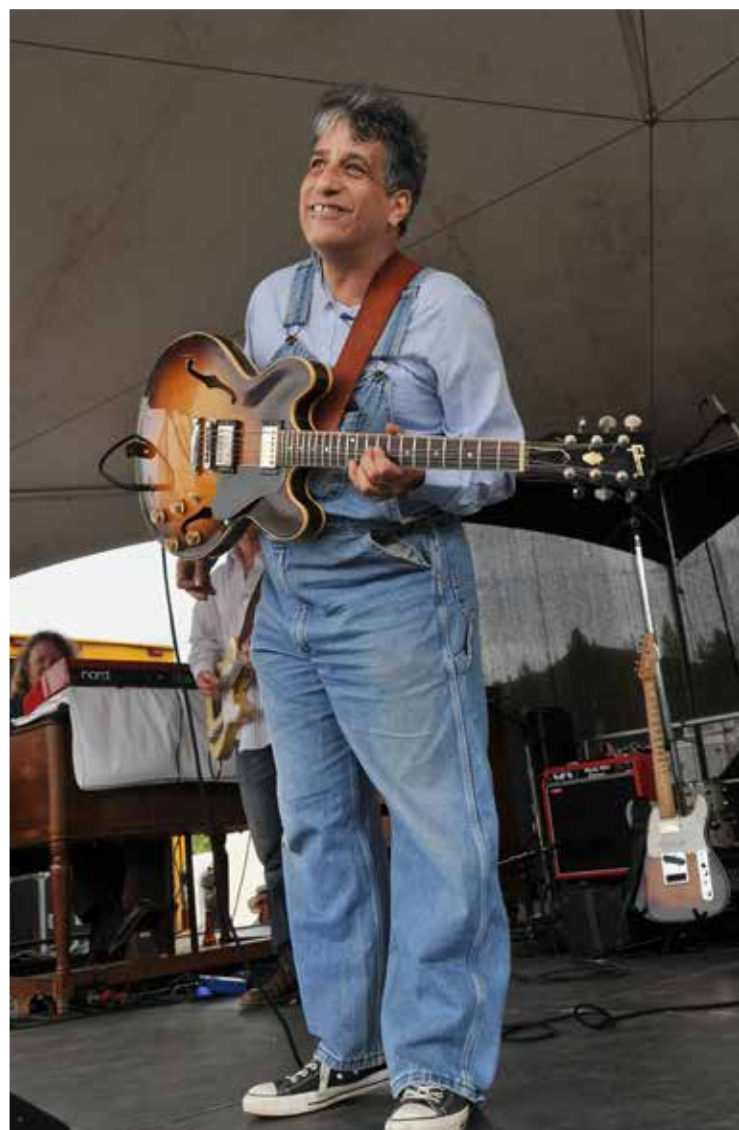
"Then I desperately wanted to try sax, so I got an alto and started figuring things out. To this day, I try to figure things out from records, and would probably do it all day long if that was possible. I was lucky that my parents were so supportive. Anything my dad dug I wanted to do."

Eventually Cain secured a position teaching guitar improvisation at San Jose City College. It was one of those silver linings from a bad experience. "I got kicked out of my own band. They phased me out. So out of spite, I decided I was going to attend school to learn to read music and make dog food commercials. I took whatever courses they had, spending all day there. There were all of these practice rooms filled with cats playing with all this energy. The professors were amazing. They loom large in my life as mentors. They were always willing to work with me.

"I moved up to Instructional aide once they saw that I could improvise through changes, explaining the concepts to other students. Then I did a class on the blues form, where we would investigate a twelve bar or an eight bar tune for two hours. My brother and parents thought school was going to really mess up my playing, because I play by feel, not by a chart. But that didn't happen. San Jose had a killer music department then, but it all disappeared. They don't have the department now."

One memory that has stuck with the guitarist occurred at a show billed as Guitar Explosion. It featured jazz guitarist Joe Pass, Herb Ellis, and Mary Osborne in addition to T-Bone Walker, Shuggie

Otis, Robben Ford, and Roy Buchanan as the headliner. All of the artists except Buchanan played with a jazz trio. He explains, "The blues guys couldn't really communicate with the rhythm section. They could do a slow blues, a shuffle, or a funky blues, but they couldn't do any kind of elaborate arrangement. Then Robben came out, whispered a few things to the trio, and they take off on this amazing tune. And I am sitting there wondering what the hell he said in 30 seconds



that created an instant arrangement? I wanted to know about this music talk. I didn't know about the Dorian mode – I called it Ed! Seeing what Robben did just blew me away."

Cain gave up the school environment once his music career and subsequent touring commandeered his time. His releases on the Blue Rock'it and Blind Pig labels established Cain's place in the top echelon of blues





guitarists. Looking back, he realizes that things could have gone differently "In my twenties, I was like a wild Comanche. In my thirties, when I started my first band, I was like a force of nature coming through. I was having fun, but I was a problem. I wasn't paying attention to important stuff and didn't have any real regard for much.

"The biggest thing I needed to learn was to shut-up and listen sometimes. Then something happened, like when you see a puppy on the *Today Show* and you start crying. Something in me changed. I started caring about too many things. Things look different once your parents have passed. I don't think they ever told me no until I was about 35. That really rocked me. I'm like – I'm sorry, it sounded to me like you said no. Being able to call my older brother really helped me out with issues. I am Mr. Nostalgia – if the wind blows the wrong way, I'm in tears.

"Some of the guys my age are looking at their watch the minute they get to the gig. They don't feel it any more. I have been waiting all week to play the

show, so let's go. They keep telling me I am 62, but I'm not buying it. This is a conspiracy thing that they should get in to on YouTube. I feel that some things have been doctored – and I am going to look into it if I have time."

Currently, Cain has been using a late '80s Gibson Les Paul interchangeably with a cherry red SG handcrafted by his friend, Francesco Cerasoli. He is excited about finally getting his Gibson 335, affectionately named Melba, back from the shop after being laid up for a year. He continues to use a white Ernie Ball Music Man amplifier he has had over 40 years. "Playing guitar is therapy for me, getting a lot out and off your heart. For a long stretch, my gigs very very sparse. The last two years have brought me a lot more opportunities. Playing guitar in my room has snowballed into a thing where I am in another country with musicians that are playing songs that I wrote. Those moments are like gifts that dropped out of the sky. For me, music is the most beautiful, healing thing on the planet." - **BMM**



Chris Cain's CD is available in the Blues Music Store.

See Pg. 39







# STEVE KRASE BAND

NEW ALBUM OUT NOW!  
**JUST WAITIN'**



**PUPPET SHOW**  
ALBUM AVAILABLE NOW!



**ALLY VENABLE  
BAND**



ALBUM AVAILABLE  
**AUGUST 28TH**

**BOB LANZA  
BLUES BAND**  
KIDS, DOGS, AND  
KRAZY WOMEN



ALBUM AVAILABLE  
**JULY 27TH**

**TRUDY LYNN**  
BLUES CAME KNOCKIN'



**MIGHTY ORQ**  
LOVE IN A HURRICANE



**MARK MAY BAND**  
BLUES HEAVEN

**CONNOR RAY  
MUSIC**

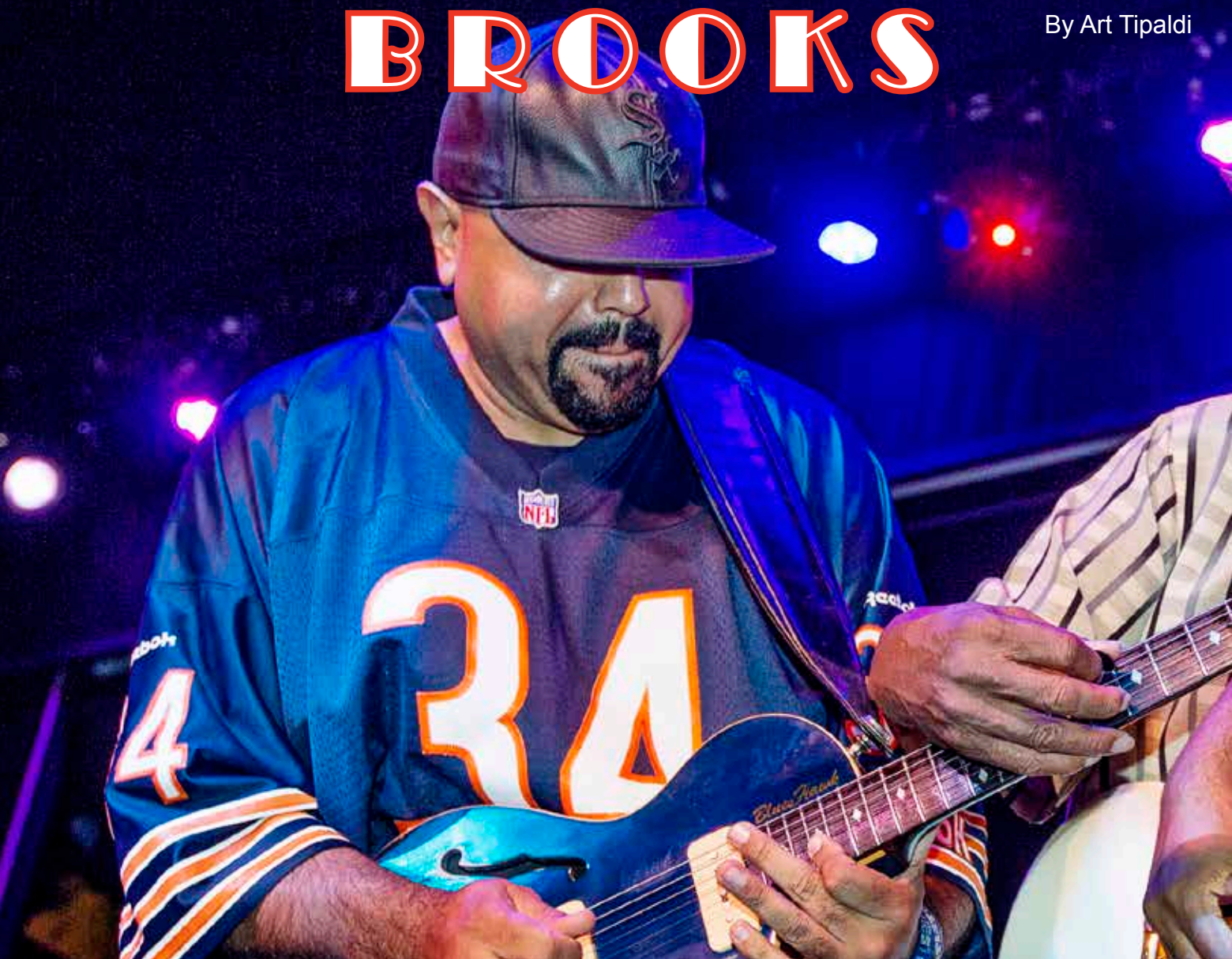
[www.CONNORRAYMUSIC.com](http://www.CONNORRAYMUSIC.com)





# WAYNE BAKER BROOKS

By Art Tipaldi



Could one ever imagine while pounding a box with some spoons as a five-year old that decades later you would be celebrating 20 years of a solo career that has been lauded by the likes of Dan Aykroyd, Buddy Guy, Big Head Todd, Conan O'Brien, Mavis Staples, and many others.

It should come as no surprise that Wayne Baker Brooks, another talented son of legendary musician Lonnie Brooks, has successfully graduated from those early days of bangin' out rhythms with brother Ronnie Baker Brooks in their dad's family band. Most parents who want great things for their children push aggressively instead of gently guiding. Lonnie's approach was much gentler,

with an innate understanding of the psychology of child-rearing.

"I played with my kids, I didn't drive them to anything," Lonnie told me years ago. "They wanted to do it. They enjoyed it because I made it look like fun to them."

"Even though I was doing it as a kid, I was having problems keeping beats," said Brooks. "I was just having fun then. Dad never pushed me. His style was to always keep it fun."

From the beginning, Lonnie instilled a love of the music for music's sake, the drive for his sons to make it on their own, and the safe family environment where success or failure could be accepted. Lonnie Brooks: "The

one thing I always try to tell them is to mean what you play. Play it straight from the heart. If you can do that, people will feel what you feel."

It's that deep-seated respect for the music that has been a driving force in the musical career of his son. Wayne was born in 1970 and like many others of his age group was taken by the basketball bug. But since those early days music was always in his soul. During his high school years, he found time to work summer vacations with his father as a roadie.

Brooks was given his first guitar lessons by his father. "I told dad I wanted to play guitar, and he tried to talk me out of it. But, I kept telling him I wanted to

PHOTOGRAPHY © JOSEPH A. ROSEN



# THE BROOKS FAMILY LEGACY



play. He'd show me a lick and I'd do the lick. When I first began I used to practice 18 hours a day. I really, really wanted to get it right before I got onstage, I didn't want to look like a fool. I didn't want people to say, 'Lonnie Brooks' son can't play. Why is he picking up the guitar?' That's all I was thinking when I was learning.

"The first song I ever played was 'Sweet Home Chicago' at a club in Berwyn, IL called Fitzgeralds. Once the people were screamin' and yellin', and I got that rush, I thought I want to do this for the rest of my life. It was an adrenaline high that went through my entire body like a drug. I felt like I was glowing just from the people's applause.

Once he graduated high school in 1988, it was off to college, Brooks University, where Wayne followed his older brother as full-time roadie in his dad's band. There, he did all the jobs necessary, and also watched and learned.

"I did everything you could do in the music industry for my dad. And if I didn't know how to handle something, he'd tell me what to do. Everything I've learned comes from seeing how he'd interact with his friends, how he'd interact with his band onstage when they were playing, giving them respect, the way he'd interact with his payments from the contracts, and making sure the guys in the band were comfortable.

"We road in a bus, but before

that we rode around in a mobile home and before that, we rode in a tight-ass van. When the money got better, he wanted to give his guys a more comfortable ride."

As much as his father provided first hand lessons every day, it was a family friend who gave Wayne the confidence to look beyond merely opening his father's shows. "I was guitar tech-ing for my dad's band for seven years and felt like no one thought I could play at all. But Luther Allison caught me sound checking for my dad's set in Paris for the Alligator Anniversary tour in Europe.

"He came over to me afterwards and said, 'Wayne, you can play that guitar, man, you don't need to be no



guitar tech, you should be playing, you need to be out here doing it. As Luther and I were chatting, Kenny Neal overheard us and came over and said, 'You can come play with me on my set for the rest of the tour.'

"That talk with Luther changed the game for me. While playing rhythm for Kenny on that tour, I felt more and more connected to the audience, the more I played in front of a jacked-up audience cheering for me with every note I played, it felt refreshing; I felt confident. After that, I felt like I do have something to offer the people because my playing somehow connected with Luther enough for him to believe I could be out here helping preserve this music.

Two years later, 1998, Brooks started up his first band. In 2003, he released his debut CD *Mystery*. That CD featured his brother and father, but also added keyboards, programming, and a DJ which bathes the record in a scratchy, swirl of hot fire beats that ran alongside his old school blues soul. Since that debut, Brooks has released four singles on iTunes, "Something's Goin' Down" with Twista and Sugar Blue, "Changling" produced by Tom Hambridge, and "Tricks Up My Sleeve" and "I Can Read Your Mind" also featuring Sugar Blue.

"I remember in the second grade the teacher told us whenever we were good, I could play whatever records I wanted to play. I would always bring in my dad's *Bayou Lightnin'* and the Sugar Hill Gang's album. I was mixin' it up at the age of eight.

"In 1991 or 1992, I was touring with dad and we were at a festival and we'd just killed it and I started thinking about doing something different, like putting blues and rap together."

And that's where Brooks' new record finds itself. After a hiatus of 15 years with no CD recorded, Brooks is excited about this late summer, early fall

release. "This will be in the same vein as *Mystery*, but I'm trying something different in this album. I'm showing how blues is related to every genre you listen to. Everything I do will always be blues based because it's in my blood. If you listen to my song 'Something's Goin' Down,' that riff is a North Mississippi riff. I just rocked it up by putting my Chicago flavor on it.

"Some of today's genres are

it as an instrument in the arrangement, like you might use a violin."

To the artists today using elements of hip-hop in their music, Brooks points out, "I always say that blues and rap are the same because of the hardship and pain. Rap is their voice in today's world, it's their way of singing out in the their neighborhood, which is their fields. Hip-hop and rap are just the blues 100 years later. That's what makes it relevant.

"When I say that the musical grandfather meets the grandson for the first time, I'm tryin to get people to relate to the thought of the bluesman as the grandfather speakin' to his grandson, the hip-hop artist, sayin', 'You have the voice of the world right now. Use it in a good manner, as inspiration, the way we did. Use it as a way of overcoming your blues. Make it inspirational instead of being negative.' That's how I look at it when I interject those forms into my blues."

Brooks feels strongly that some blues musician has to come out with music that will attract younger audiences. "That's why I love Gary Clark, Jr. He is someone who is brave enough and young enough to speak to his audience. They'll grow right along with him. I applaud him. The rails are already down, he's just gotta make that train go and go faster."

As sons of a respected Blues Hall Of Famer, both have committed to eradicating the genre's strict musical borders. "My new record is a progressive record. It meshes well because everything still centers around the blues.

"Dad is the tree itself and Ronnie and I are the branches. Because dad came up on blues, and we came up on blues through him and other artists that he listened to, blues is the root. It all starts with the blues first. Whatever I do, I always do my best to show that I honor this music. I promised my dad that's what I would do." - **BMM**



actually the grandchildren of the blues. That's how I look at hip-hop. Hip-hop is definitely a bloodline of the blues. You talk about the same subjects – money, women, cars – but in their contemporary voice and in their contemporary ways. Musically speaking, whenever I try and put an element of hip hop to my blues or blues-rock, it's always used as a voice or instrument. I don't want it to be a predominate hip-hop song. I want to use

**NEW CD**



# FIRST CLASS LIFE MIKE ZITO



**BMA Rock Blues Artist  
of the Year**

Blues-Rock played with conviction and  
style - soulful songs & burning guitar...

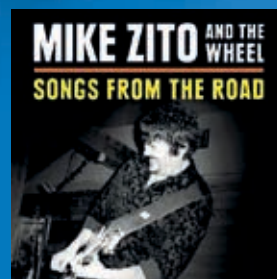
**TOURDATES:**

06/02 NEW ORLEANS, LA - MID CITY LANES  
06/07 IRVING, TX - HIGHWAY 61 BLUES CLUB – TOYOTA MUSIC FACTORY  
06/08 IRVING, TX - HIGHWAY 61 BLUES CLUB – TOYOTA MUSIC FACTORY  
06/09 STAFFORD, TX - REDNECK COUNTRY CLUB  
06/13 BRUANFELS, TX - VINTAGE OAKS  
06/21 SARASOTA, FL - BLUE ROOSTER  
06/22 BOCA RATON, FL - FUNKY BISCUIT  
06/23 JACKSONVILLE BEACH, FL - MOJO KITCHEN  
06/24 SEBASTIAN, FL - EARLS HIDEAWAY  
07/19 KANSAS CITY, MO - KNUCKLEHEAD SALOON  
07/20 LINCOLN, NE - THE ZOO BAR  
07/21 SIOUX FALLS, SD - SIOUX FALLS JAZZFEST  
08/03 THE WOODLANDS, TX - DOSEY DOE  
08/25 ELLISON BAY, WI - BLUES ON THE BAY  
10/28 - 11/04 - LEGENDARY RHYTHM AND BLUES CRUISE -  
THE HOLLAND AMERICA CRUISE LINE - SAN DIEGO, CA

More Dates on: [www.mikezito.com](http://www.mikezito.com)



RUF1189



RUF1206



RUF1221



RUF1238

**AMPED**

[www.ampeddistribution.com](http://www.ampeddistribution.com)

**Ruf**

[www.rufrecords.de](http://www.rufrecords.de)



# FANTASTIC NEGRO



by Art Tipaldi

## TINY DESK TO THE GRAMMYS

“Fantastic Negrito knows the blues. He is one man who has learned his craft well. He loves the blues like I love the blues.” – **Bobby Rush, 2018**

When the 2017 Grammy for Contemporary Blues Album was presented to Fantastic Negrito, the universal cry in the Blues World was, "What is a Fantastic Negrito?"

So let's first address that elephant in the room. "The blues is the father of this country," said Fantastic Negrito. "Blues is honesty. I'm very influenced by all the greats from Robert Johnson to Skip James to Blind Willie Johnson. I can't stop listening to the songs Robert Johnson did because I can't stop learning things from a guy sitting down with one guitar. People ask me what I listen to and that's all I listen to. Muddy Waters said it best, 'Blues is a feeling.' You can play all the 12 bar blues that you want and not be the blues. My album, *Last Days Of Oakland*, doesn't have a 12 bar blues song on it.

"I love people like Bobby Rush or Taj Mahal, and all I care about is what they think. Meeting Bobby was beautiful. We were kindred spirits. Sometimes artists and musicians just know. We looked into each other's eyes, and I felt that bond with him and with Taj.

"When Taj called me, the first thing he said was, 'Thank-you. You get it.' that's all I need. We have very similar beginnings. Both grew up in New England, we both have Afro-Caribbean roots, and both now live on the West coast. In the first two minutes of our conversation, he only spoke Spanish to me."

So ask yourself the question: is your definition of blues a song in 12 bars with the word "blues" in the title? Or is the blues the ability through song to share one's personal stories and observations in a way that connects pains or joys with audiences. The blues songs of Charlie Patton, John Lee Hooker, Son House, Lightnin' Hopkins, and many other first generation blues creators often ignored established blues musical forms and created a distinctive music to augment their highly personal stories. Fantastic

Negrito is a blues artist firmly entrenched in the latter description.

"I can play 12 bar blues, but I didn't become an artist to be fake. I have the highest respect for all the great people who sacrificed, and all the people who don't have names, who just had a guitar and worked in the fields, that's the tradition I respect. And all I'm trying to do is contribute something. I named myself Fantastic Negrito so that I can name Robert Johnson, Skip James, Lightnin'

through to discover that unique voice. Born Xavier Amin Dphrepaulezz (dee-FREP-ah-lez) in Great Barrington, MA, Negrito spent his childhood years growing up in a strict Muslim house. "My origin and roots are outside the box. My dad was an African-Caribbean immigrant born in 1905. He was a survivor, especially for an African-man of his high intelligence level. In those days, that was really quite dangerous to be that intelligent. That was like having a loaded pistol today.

"He exposed me to a wide variety of music that shaped my very eclectic taste in music as both a listener, a creator, and a producer." When Negrito was 12, the family moved from "this lilywhite place called the Berkshires where I was the complete freak" to the mean streets of Oakland.

"Within a week of being in Oakland, I decided I'm not going back home again. I ran into this hot bed of culture – hip-hop in the beginning, punk rock and the counter culture, and drugs – and I thought why would I ever go back home to be in this boring culture of religion that don't make sense."

So from that moment on, the streets informed much of Negrito's choices. Upon hearing Prince's *Dirty Mind*, Negrito pretended to be a student at Berkley, loitered around the school's music rooms, and taught himself every instrument he'd

Hopkins, R.L. Burnside, Taj Mahal, and others so that those names will never die.

"Son House or Taj Mahal tells me to go out there and do something different. I'm still standing on the shoulders of those who came before me. As an artist, we're supposed to be innovative. I'm not trying to be anybody except myself."

That journey to find Fantastic Negrito has taken as many twists and turns as the struggles every sharecropper offspring or Mississippi child fought

heard. Armed with a demo cassette, he landed in L.A. in the early '90s, was awarded a million dollar deal with Interscope Records, and recorded the *X-Factor* in 1996.

Lost amid the failed album and the demands of the soul-less business, Negrito dropped out of sight. In 2000, he was nearly killed in a car accident, spent four weeks in a coma, survived with rods in his body, was released from his Interscope contract, and went back to various illegal activities around South Central L.A. In 2008, Negrito returned





to Oakland. It was after the birth of his son that Negrito re-taught himself to play again and rediscovered the artistic fire that drove him in his youth.

Back home, he reestablished the Blackball Collective, made money growing marijuana, started a family, and finally took to the streets testing his newfound creativity. "The Collective was born right after my Interscope deal, but I put it away for a long time. The rebirth was six years ago. We're a group of artists, musicians, writers, and forward thinkers with love in our hearts. We're trying to

impact the world that we live in the best way that we can."

This eventually led to taking his message to the streets of Oakland, playing in the BART. "The way that I came up with Fantastic Negrito was hit the street and let people decide. Be a contributor. I used to come out and play on the street at 25th and Broadway and let the people decide." Those rush hour sessions gave his themes structure.

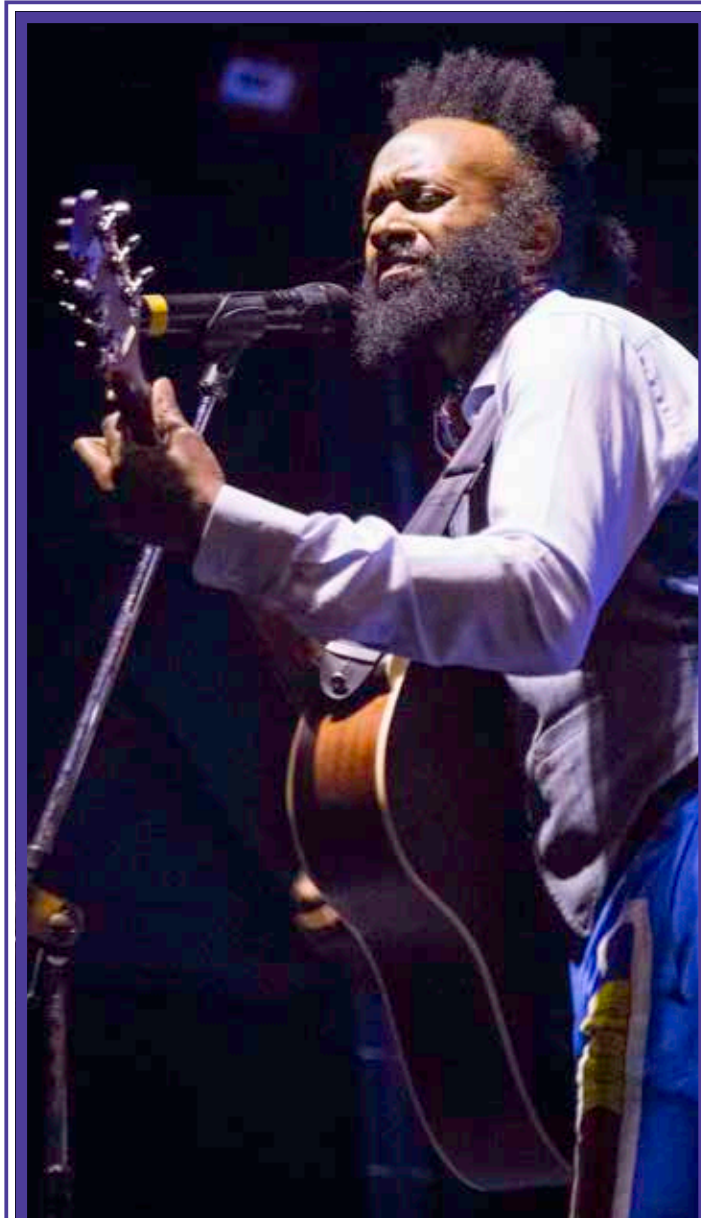
His woodshedding street corner encounters provided the confidence to submit a video to NPR's Tiny Desk in 2015. Of the 7,000 submitted, it was Negrito's that won. "I wouldn't have submitted my work to Tiny Desk without the Collective. I thought of NPR as the Ivory Tower. I was wrong. I didn't know Bob Boilen lived there. He is a great ambassador to the world, and one of the most important people in music. The Collective outvoted me to submit. I was 44 years old going up against hipsters and cool people. I did one take on that elevator, and it changed my whole life."

Tiny Desk led to the aforementioned Grammy Award in 2017 which ultimately led to this new record, *Please Don't Be Dead*. What I hear when played is a cross between Jimi Hendrix's *Electric Ladyland*, the Beatles experimental *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* and *The White Album*, Sly Stone, and Prince. Each of those artists took the accepted musical norms into a studio equipped with up to

PHOTOGRAPHY © MARILYN STRINGER



PHOTOGRAPHY © AIGARS LAPSA







the minute technology and blended tracks in a time warping, cosmic jolt where the older generation felt a seismic shift in the earth. This album by Negrito is what their musical creations might have sounded like 50 years later in 2018.

"We all pick from the same garden. I'm very pleased that I dipped into that amazing garden of black roots music, rock and roll, funk, rhythm and blues, punk rock, and hip-hop. It's all there. It's edgier, with the universal riffs. Especially in this age of technology, and as a producer with all these fun electronic tools, I'm really trying to keep everything organic. I try and use what is in front of us. It might be stacking handclaps or singing through the cheapest microphone you can find with a lot of bleed coming into the room."

Call this album contemporary Black urban music that cycles through field chants into edgy, blues-rock into gospel into sweet soul music into R&B, flavored with urban hip-hop sensibilities. At the same time, the lyrics, like those of his musical ancestors Patton and James, reflect Negrito's world and empower and uplift willing listeners.

"Making this album as a producer, I was thinking go out there and be a positive weapon. I don't wanna produce that same guy who did *Last Days In Oakland* that won a Grammy. I wanna produce someone else. I had to pull that out of Fantastic Negrito."

"Bullshit Anthem" proclaims, "I get knocked down, but I keep on fighting... Take that bullshit and turn it into good shit." "Transgender Biscuits" broadcasts in hip-hop cadence, "I got fired because I'm a woman/I got fired because I'm black/I got fired because I'm a white man/I got fired because I'm fat," then turns R&B in its chorus. And Negrito's 21st century perspective in "The Suit Won't Come Off" declares, "Do you know how it feels when you're standing on the outside?" Think: "Didn't nobody seem to know me, everybody pass me by."

In John Steinbeck's novel *The Grapes Of Wrath*, Steinbeck addressed the migrant workers displacement and suffering by utilizing a narrative shift that emphasized group solidarity in phrases like, "I lost my land became we lost our land." Negrito likewise employs the same group outlooks. His lyrics announce, "Whatever you do to me, I will carry on

" which later in the chorus morphs into "I got friends and they got friends and we will carry on."

"I can't take full credit for that. I'm a recovering narcissist. The people in the Collective challenged me to go out and look at people, look into their faces, and write a song for the crowd. I love not having all the power. I don't write dark albums. I'm a very optimistic motherfucker. If you listen to this album, it's really about the universal riff. I wanted to make an album that was riff and chant oriented that could unite people."

Negrito told NPR, "I wrote this album because I fear for the life of my black son; I fear for the lives of my daughters. I am uncertain about what kind of future they will face. Will someone shoot up their school? Will they become addicted to prescription pills? Will they wind up on the street, sleeping under freeways and overpasses? Will the police murder my son? I came up with the album name *Please Don't Be Dead* because I felt like we'd lost our way as a society."

Then in our conversation, he added, "So it's up to me as a middle-aged guy to try and unite us. I think that we have much more in common despite our differences. I thought, 'America, please don't be dead liberty, please don't be dead justice.' I do this for my kids and your kids. All our kids. I'm really interested in making something that's compelling and interesting. It's funny at this age, I'm really doing it for a reason that has nothing to do with me. I'm looking to plug into something really bigger than the universe." - **BMM**



Fantastic's CD is available in the Blues Music Store.

See Pg. 36







NICHKNEBFEZ



# THE HARDEST WORKING MAN IN BLUES

by Bill Rosenbeck

With two full West Coast tours and four different trips to Europe on top of his usual slate of Midwest and East Coast shows, Nick Schnebelen played over 250 dates in 2017. For context, if we exclude the 52 Saturdays, 53 Sundays, and ten Public Holidays that fell on last year's calendar, there were 250 business days in 2017.

And Nick Schnebelen worked all of them. Then, he worked a few more.

In addition to a bursting-at-the-seams live schedule, Schnebelen spent two weeks recording *Crazy All By Myself*, his first studio album since Trampled Under Foot's 2015 break up. [During that time, Schnebelen has released two live albums.] Experienced musician in the booth, Schnebelen released four studio albums with Trampled Under Foot, all of which took in the neighborhood of eight days to complete. But as the frontman of the Nick Schnebelen Band, the Kansas City native upped his studio presence even further, endlessly writing, recording, tinkering, and re-cutting, as he give his first album the most difficult thing for Nick Schnebelen to come by: time.

"It was that important. We didn't want to put the last nail in until we knew it was going to be the last nail," Schnebelen says. "I always put my soul into a record, but this one took a lot of a time. We worked on the songs for over a year, and that's not because we were being lazy. That's because we wanted to get them right."

Unsurprisingly, "getting the songs right" proved yeoman's work for Schnebelen: in one case, he and co-writer Jeff Paris spent 22 hours working on a subtle, bouncy track called "Soul Magic," which runs counter to the heavier tones and blues stomp central to the Trampled Under Foot catalog. While not every song on the album reached the all-consuming level that "Soul Magic" did, the song is representative of the care that went into *Crazy All By Myself*, a feature born from the responsibility Schnebelen feels about leading an eponymous act

in the blues world. While he doesn't say it overly, the opportunity to make a musical statement independent from Trampled Under Foot must have colored Schnebelen's approach to the new album, as the former outfit still casts a long shadow.

Veterans of the Kansas City scene, Trampled Under Foot was a family venture formed in 2002, which featured Nick on guitar, his sister Danielle Schnebelen on bass and lead vocals, and his brother Kris Schnebelen on drums. Road warriors in their own right, the trio spent over a decade in

legacy left by Trampled Under Foot. It's a leg up for a "new" band, and something Nick appreciates, as he continues to make his living in music.

"I made a lot of headway with Trampled Under Foot, and I feel like I'm in the family of people who know about blues. It's cool to be part of that family and get their support," he says. "A lot of time has passed, but Trampled Under Foot made such an impression that people are going to be associating us with that for a very long time."

While many audiences are familiar with Schnebelen, they'll likely come to understand new layers of the 39-year-old on *Crazy All By Myself*, as the record may prove an exception to the old saying that you can only make a first impression once. After all, he says he, Hagerman, and Moore "are creating a new, cool, blues sound."

"[This record] is an introduction to my style of composition: there's some tunes in there that have a little TUF in them, but there's a lot of new stuff, a lot of variety, which is fun for me. I've always loved all the

different styles of blues: I love swing, I love stompin' stuff, I love low-downs. There's a little bit of everything. I don't want to just find one sound and make a record with it."

During the writing process, that variety was initially intimidating, as the songs seemed more desperate from one another than Schnebelen had initially planned. Eventually, though, tracks began to "pair up"--they "all have siblings" Schnebelen says--which not only gave the record a necessary balance, but provided comfort and confidence for a writer who is signing his name to a solo, studio album for the first time. And in doing as much, Nick Schnebelen is treading new ground as a songwriter, a guitarist, and a singer.

Traditionally, Schnebelen's reputation is that of a shredder, not a wordsmith, as he won the 2008 Albert King Award for Best Guitarist at the International Blues Challenge. As a result



the industry before breaking through to new levels in 2013, as *Badlands*, their fourth and final studio album, received the Blues Music Award for Contemporary Blues Album of the Year and reached the top spot on the Billboard Blues Chart.

However, that newfound success was not enough to keep the group together, as Kris chose to leave the band a year later, while Danielle and Nick laid the project to rest after a 2015 farewell tour. For many fans, the proximity between the band's greatest commercial success and their untimely end was perplexing, but today, the Schnebelens continue to enjoy the benefits of Trampled Under Foot's popularity: Kris currently plays in the Sean Chambers and sister Danielle's, Danielle has released two acclaimed albums on Concord Records, and the Nick Schnebelen Band, a trio that features drummer Adam Hagerman and bassist Cliff Moore, has seen plenty of full crowds on the road, thanks to the



## ***“I’m kind of working my way back towards simplicity”***

of such accolades, as well as his obvious abilities, fans “want to see [him] kick ass on the guitar” at shows, which he is he more than happy to do. On the record, however, there’s a new level of economy folded into his work, which is proving a six-string evolution for the guitarist.

“I’m kind of working my way back towards simplicity,” Schnebelen says. “I write simply. I could write crazy changes, but I just want to play the song. Every song has its own unique flavor, its own unique personality, and you can play to that with music. That’s what I’m doing: complimenting the core of the song.”

The same can be said of Schnebelen’s voice, which was often underutilized in *Trampled Under Foot*. A timeless, soulful croon with the spiced sweetness of Kansas City barbeque, Schnebelen’s vocals seem to come from a bygone era, but remain cathartic and refreshing both on the stage and in the studio. With a heartfelt rasp, his lyrics often serve to even out the high-end of his guitar, but with either voice or strings, Schnebelen narrows his focus to the song; everything else is simply a tool to use within his role of singular songwriter and creative decision maker.

“I don’t write empty songs, I don’t write filler songs. Every song has a thought out purpose,” he says. “I totally stand by [this record.] That’s tough for an artist to say; it really is. I can’t say I’ve felt that way about every record I’ve been apart of.”

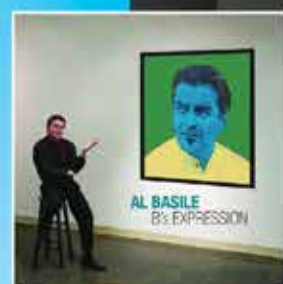
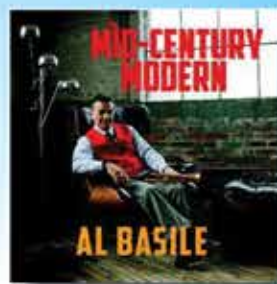
When we talk, the final mixes of *Crazy All By Myself* have just arrived in Schnebelen’s inbox, and he can barely hide his excitement at the prospect of the world hearing his record. But like with everything he’s involved in, there is more work ahead: on top of shows, summer festivals, album promotion, and appearances, Schnebelen has to find a label to help release *Crazy All By Myself*. If not, he’ll put the record out independently.

It would seem crazy for someone to do all by themselves, and after a jam-packed 2017, Nick Schnebelen deserves a day off as much as anyone. But he just laughs, and says “I already started writing the next record.” - BMM



PHOTOGRAPHY © LAURA CARBONE





# AL BASILE

## BMA Nominations

*Best Contemporary Blues Album:*

2016 - Mid-Century Modern

*Best Instrumentalist: Horn*

2010, 2011, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017

Al adds to his distinguished catalogue of original songs with his 15th release on



A Story-Song Cycle -  
a collection of twelve new songs  
and thirteen poems which  
answer these questions about  
the life of a song:

**Who Makes a Song?**

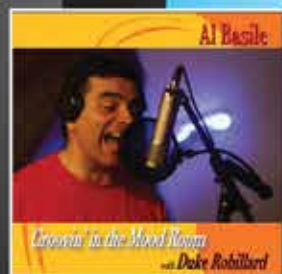
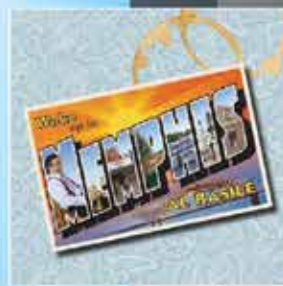
**Who Can Call It Their Own?**

And which tell the story of  
the man who got the credit  
for writing them -  
and his troubling secret.

Conceived and Directed by  
**Al Basile**

Produced by  
**Duke Robillard**

with Duke and the Duke Robillard Band plus Doug James and Doc Chanonhouse



distributed by [www.cityhallrecords.com](http://www.cityhallrecords.com) • [www.albasile.com](http://www.albasile.com)





by Tom Hyslop

# ARE YOU HIP TO LAURA CHAVEZ?

**L**aura Chavez's powerful, distinctive, and creative guitar style has made her an indispensable band member to a fortunate few leaders, and an in-demand session guitarist. She holds a comfortable position on most discerning fans' short list of top players. Our recent phone conversation with the California-based guitarist covered her past, present, and future work, her musical tastes and values, and touched on some surprising subjects, from personal integrity to The Buckaroos.

A native of the San Francisco Bay area, Chavez had a typical, modern-day introduction to the blues. "From the time I was like four or five, all my earliest

memories have songs associated with them. I wanted to learn how to play, and I took lessons when I was eight, which ended up being classical lessons with a teacher who was less than encouraging. It was kind of a horrible experience and I quit soon after, and picked it up again when I was about 13 or 14.

"I started playing electric. At the time I was still listening to classic rock, and punk, and it was the early '90s, so Nirvana and Soundgarden and all of that was out. I heard 'The Thrill Is Gone,' I really liked it. But other than that, it was the classic case of 'Oh, who does Clapton listen to?' and that's kind of how I arrived at blues, more or less at the time

I was in high school.

"I really got into B.B. King, and then probably Eric Clapton – *From The Cradle* had come out at that time. Then Blockbuster Video had two things: A guitar instruction video that I would rent all the time, with B.B. King and Albert Collins, and also Stevie Ray Vaughan *Live At The El Mocambo*, and that definitely blew me away. I still watch it every couple of years. That led me to the Fabulous Thunderbirds, Jimmie Vaughan, and so forth."

Today, Chavez's list of favorites is wide-ranging, including Freddie King, Howlin' Wolf, Steve Cropper, the Rolling Stones, "all the early B.B. King stuff, and

PHOTOGRAPHY © JIM HARTZELL

this Willie Dixon compilation, where it's all the songs he's written with everybody that's done 'em; Magic Sam and Otis Rush, as much for the singing and songs as for the guitar playing," and Little Willie John: "The songs are begging to be redone in garage band versions, like the Detroit Cobras. And they're begging to be sung by women. Candye sort of got me into country. I love Ray Price, and Don Rich for guitar playing." Her less predictable touchstones include organ jazz, and the punk/ roots band X.

"I was definitely not planning on making music my career. I actually always wanted to go to medical school. When I graduated from high school, I had the summer off, and that was when I went to my first jam session. There was a local club in San Jose called JJ's Blues. Buddy Guy, Junior Wells, Koko Taylor, Albert Collins, Albert King, everybody had played there. It was just this shotgun kind of room; the stage was even smaller than the Zoo Bar. That ended up being the place. I played all of my first gigs there. I think in some ways, high school kind of burned me out; I went to a really competitive preparatory kind of school, and I was just over it. From that point on, I really got focused on music."

Soon she was running the jam, which led to a stint in singer Lara Price's band that lasted years, culminating in a trip to the International Blues Challenge in Memphis. Not long after, her name was floated to Candye Kane, who was recovering from a form of pancreatic cancer, and whose last release had been the concept album *Guitar'd And Feathered*, which featured a host of six-stringers.

"Guitar was never really her favorite instrument. She always said she didn't really like the guitar until I came along. It was never the voice that she heard herself with. So she wanted to put together an album of all of her favorite piano players. She was on Ruf at the time, and Ruf was like, no, we need guitar, guitar, guitar! So they compromised on some things, and there were people she really wanted, and that was how she went about it. That album put her in all kinds of different directions. That came out right before I met her and started playing with her."

The partnership brought more new aspects and acclaim to Kane's music, and much greater recognition for Chavez, whose contributions to 2009's *Superhero* album led to co-credit on the following projects, *Sister Vagabond* and *Coming Out Swingin'*. "I don't think either of us planned that that would be such a profound relationship. Musically,

she'd gone through so many guitar players, she was jaded, like 'Oh, everybody's going to quit anyway, in a year or two.'

"We both wanted the same things, we both wanted to write music, and be prolific, and put out albums, and I brought a different energy. She was open to letting me do that, while remaining true to what she did, which was kind of the traditional swing and songs, and I learned so much about so much with her."

In addition to her musical input, Chavez became a sort of medical consultant, and was at Candye Kane's side when she ultimately succumbed to cancer on May 6, 2016. "Everything in my life changed in that moment – it was like, now I don't have a job, now I don't have an emotional outlet to music, everything changed."

Chavez has in fact kept quite busy. She joined fireball roots rock-soul-blues queen Nikki Hill's band, sharing guitar duties with Matt Hill. "The Matt-Nikki thing came about totally by surprise. I met Matt on my first big tour with Candye over ten years ago, and I knew Nikki right after that. We'd always made

***"I was definitely not planning on making music my career. I actually always wanted to go to medical school"***

a point to hang out whenever I was wherever they were. It was just such a surprise when she did ask me. And I thought I have to do this, it's just perfect. I wanted to do something completely different. I wanted to do something young, for a different audience.

"I can't say enough how happy and excited I was when I got that email. I had just started the first leg of this big tour that I was supposed to do with Ruf, the Blues Caravan, in Europe. But I thought about it for a couple days, and I decided, I gotta do this.

"With Candye, I was the guitar player, I was covering the piano parts, I'd try to cover the horn lines. I was doing 20 million things all the time, and I was like, well, how am I going to tone that down with Matt? And Matt was used to doing the same thing too. But our styles complemented each other without being the same, coming from the same kind of place; just our approaches are different.

And it ended up being so easy!

"The ideas and parts that I was free to come up with made me look at the guitar in a completely different way than I ever thought. Neither one of us has ever been happier playing; there's never a struggle; there's never any ego, ever, between anybody in that band. It's been a really great experience. We just recorded her new album. Everything just came together so perfectly from what I can see, I'm just really excited for everybody to hear it."

Chavez's other recent high-profile project was Mike Welch and Mike Ledbetter's Blues Music Award-winning album, *Right Place, Right Time*. "By the time the end of 2016 hit, I just wanted to work and be busy, and not think about all the other stuff I'd been dealing with for the last two and a half years. Mike Ledbetter and I had been talking for a while about playing together. Mike and Mike ended up doing that Chicago Blues Festival thing that propelled them into doing what they're doing.

"And it was very important, it seemed, to both of them that I be a part of the CD. They recorded the album in Boston, and I couldn't get out there to do it, so I did some overdubs in California. They were generous to put my name on the front cover. They certainly don't need any help! They're so talented, they're soulful, their hearts are exactly where they should be, and the chemistry between them is a really rare thing. They're one of those combinations that you see maybe once or twice in a lifetime."

The remark about hearts in the right places has deep meaning for Chavez, who observes, "People are so afraid to be themselves. They're so worried about appearances. I'm not interested in playing with people who are that way. From Candye to Nikki to Mike and Mike, it's all about being true to themselves on whatever level. Be who you are onstage! There's no authenticity, there's no sincerity in anything anymore. That's my feeling about the scene."

As for the solo project many fans would like to hear, Chavez is interested but still in the planning phases. "People have been asking me about it for years. It has never been a priority. I don't sing at all. I have to make sure that what I put out is true to me, and is really good. I want to start an organ trio back home in California. I think it would be fun to do that and hire different guests that I want to play with to come out and sing or play sax, and I thought about putting out an EP or something. But this is in the very early stages." - BMM



# WITNESS THE JOURNEY

NOW AVAILABLE ON DVD AND DIGITAL DOWNLOAD



## DVD Special Features:

- Theatrical Trailer
- Deleted Scenes
- Robert Randolph Performance

AVAILABLE IN A  
LIMITED EDITION VINYL GROOVE  
DVD WHILE SUPPLIES LAST

## Sidemen: Long Road to Glory

is an intimate look at the lives and legacies of three legendary bluesmen; piano player **Pinetop Perkins**, drummer **Willie 'Big Eyes' Smith** and guitarist **Hubert Sumlin**, all *Muddy Waters* and *Howlin' Wolf* sidemen.

The film captures some of the last interviews and final live performances, before their deaths in 2011. The historic live shows are accompanied by performances and personal insights from many of the blues and rock stars these legendary musicians inspired including; *Bonnie Raitt*, *Gregg Allman*, *Derek Trucks*, *Susan Tedeschi*, *Tim Reynolds*, *Shemekia Copeland*, *Robby Krieger*, *Kenny Wayne Shepherd*, *Joe Perry*, *Joe Bonamassa*, *Guy Davis*, *Walter Trout*, *Eric Gales*, *Warren Haynes*, *Bobby Rush*, *Elvin Bishop* and *Johnny Winter*.



amazon.com





## Sidemen, Long Road To Glory

Redhawk films

**F**ilmed with humor and heart, *Sidemen, Long Road To Glory* is a must see for every lover of American music. Under a single spotlight and resplendent in his satiny, three-piece purple zoot suit and piano key socks, Pinetop Perkins walks to his piano and coaxes a keyboard run that might be as ancient as the man himself. Thus begins *Sidemen, Long Road To Glory*.

The documentary beautifully tells the lives and struggles of three iconic sidemen of the blues, Pinetop Perkins (piano), Willie "Big Eyes" Smith (harmonica and drums), and Hubert Sumlin (guitar). Under the pounding stop time of Muddy Waters' "Mannish Boy," testimonials from Bonnie Raitt, Eric Clapton, Gregg Allman, Derek Trucks, Joe Perry, Warren Haynes, Kenny Wayne Shepherd, Joe Bonamassa, Susan Tedeschi, and others spotlight the role of these essential musicians as the 80-minute journey begins.

Written by Jasin Cadic and Scott Rosenbaum (who also produced and directed), the movie lovingly captures the essence of these three legendary sidemen. Some might call this the blues version of 2013's

*20 Feet from Stardom*, I would refer to it as many, many decades from stardom. For each personality, the film details their path from sharecropping and the Jim Crow South as the archetypal journey that every black Southerner walked. The film also spends time crediting the blues, and the contributions of these three, with the birth of rock and roll, their influence on the British Invasion, and ultimately America's return back to the blues.

We travel to rural life in Mississippi and Arkansas, walk roads like Highway 61 to get to Memphis, St. Louis, and eventually Chicago. Without film of their individual journey, the film utilizes the cartoon artwork of an artistic team to depict the early years of each. Among those scenes: there is an artist depiction of Jimi Hendrix playing "Killing Floor" with Hubert and Wolf in England and the storied first meeting between Hubert and Wolf as a young Hubert stood outside an Arkansas juke to hear his idol.

At the same time, the documentary also details the role of

every musician who stands to the side and contributes to the essence of the musical creation. "I was getting scraps, they were getting the money." – Pinetop. "You don't want to overpower the guy." – Paul Nelson. "What you hear is the atmosphere they created." – Warren Haynes. "When your name isn't on the publishing, you ain't getting any checks. And when you're not the lead singer, your name on the marquee isn't gonna draw many people." – Scott Sharrard.

With so much time given to the importance of blues to American music and the role of its sidemen in its proliferation, I have to wonder if blues is the understated sideman in the movie. Rock and roll, rock, and other forms of music are the recognizable names on the musical marquees, but it has always been the influence of blues that is the foundation of so many American musical genres.

Following screening the film, I was able to ask director Scott Rosenbaum some questions.

**BMM** - What was the impetus for doing the film?

Scott Rosenblum - Casting Willie, Pine, and Hubert in my film, *The Perfect Age Of Rock 'n' Roll*, gave me the opportunity to spend all day talking blues and blues history and to hear about their incredible lives in Muddy's and Wolf's bands and beyond. I was blown away by those first-hand accounts and knew I had to do something to help preserve that history.

**BMM** - Once you started the process, how did it change from the original idea into the current incarnation?

Scott Rosenblum - My touchstone for the blues was Muddy's appearance in *The Last Waltz*. Originally I envisioned a concert film like that featuring these blues legends as The Band and all the rock and blues stars were coming out for a guest turns on songs they had covered with their bands. A prime example is Robby Krieger playing "Backdoor Man" and trading licks with Hubert. The original masters and their disciples was the premise. Once Pine, Willie, and Hubert all passed in 2011, everything changed.

**BMM** - What was the most rewarding part of the film for you?

Scott Rosenblum - The most gratifying experiences during the making of the film are too numerous to list. In the end, getting to know Willie, Pine, and Hubert as I did, will stay with me as long as I live.

**BMM** -through working with Willie, Pinetop, and Hubert, what were the most important non-musical lessons they taught you?

Scott Rosenblum - In a few words; grace, generosity, and perseverance. There was an outtake I wish we could have included. It was with Bob Margolin and Hubert joking outside LAX in the midst of the mini-tour we did to capture the performances for the film. Hubert's lighthearted, good-natured joy was fully on display here demonstrating the essence of what made everyone fall in love with him. - **BMM**

**Sidemen**  
LONG ROAD TO GLORY  
Available  
In The  
**BLUES MUSIC**  
Store  
**See Page 39**



The film ends with a bittersweet poignancy. First, we experience Pinetop and Willie's ultimate triumph with their 2010 Grammy win for *Joined At The Hip*. That joyous moment is followed by the announcement of the untimely death of each. From March 2011 to March 2012, the blues saw the deaths of each man: Pinetop at 97, Hubert at 80, and Willie at 75.

But the movie ends on a note of optimism. Two guitar students from the Pinetop Perkins Foundation's yearly Mississippi workshop, Colorado's Austin Young and Mississippi's Kingfish Ingram, stand in a Clarksdale cotton field and bring the blues of Pinetop, Willie, and Hubert home to where it was born.

These men all lived their music as true bluesmen. Though their personal histories are intertwined with the more well-known blues legends like Muddy Waters and Howlin' Wolf, their musical contributions to the world are finally celebrated here. Make sure to hang around to after the credits roll and don't forget to bring tissues.

– Art Tipaldi





## FORGOTTEN MUSIC FESTIVAL

MEXICO BEACH FLORIDA | NOVEMBER 2-3 2018



JP SOARS



JOHN NEMETH



LAUREN MITCHELL



CASEY JAMES



VAVESSA COLLIER



JOSH HOYER



SARAH SIMMONS



WILL THOMPSON

YOUR V.I.P. EXPERIENCE  
FROM YOUR BALCONY!



FORGOTTENMUSICFESTIVAL.COM

GLOUCESTER  
MASSACHUSETTS

# Blues FESTIVAL

ON THE BEACH AT  
STAGE FORT PARK

**SATURDAY**  
**AUG 11 2018**

Biscuit Miller & the Mix  
Albert Castiglia ★ Zac Harmon  
Chris O'Leary ★ Eliza Neals ★ Regina Bonelli



[gloucesterbluesfestival.com](http://gloucesterbluesfestival.com)

\$30.00 ADVANCE / \$40.00 GATE  
advance tix available until 8/6/18





NOV 30—  
DEC 2, 2018

# BRADENTON BLUESFEST

IN THE FLORIDA SUNSHINE ON THE BRADENTON RIVERWALK



**WELCH-  
LEDBETTER  
CONNECTION**  
6:45pm-8pm



**MR. SIPP**  
5:15pm-6:30pm

**SHAKURA  
S'AIDA**  
4pm-5pm



**CHRIS  
CAIN**  
2:45pm-3:45pm



**HARPER AND  
MIDWEST KIND**  
1:30pm-2:30pm

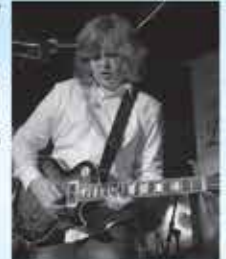
**CHRISTONE  
"KINGFISH"  
INGRAM**  
12:15pm-1:15pm



**KELLEY  
HUNT**  
11am-12pm



**TREY  
WANVIG**  
BETWEEN SETS



COME FOR THE  
**BLUES** STAY FOR THE  
**WEEKEND**

**FRI, NOV 30**  
6pm-9pm  
**FREE CONCERT**  
Memphis Rub Band,  
Bridget Kelly Band  
**SPONSORED BY MOJOE  
PRODUCTIONS, INC.**

**SAT, DEC 1**  
11am-8pm  
**BRADENTON  
BLUES  
FESTIVAL\***  
**PRESENTED BY  
BMO HARRIS BANK**

**SUN, DEC 2**  
11am-1pm  
**BLUES BRUNCH\***  
"Braille Blues Daddy"  
Bryan Lee  
Mattison's City Grille  
Bradenton Riverwalk

*\*requires tickets*

TICKETS ONLINE \$40 | TICKETS DAY OF EVENT \$50 | RESERVED FRONT OF STAGE \$100 | BRUNCH TICKETS \$50

**BRADENTONBLUESFESTIVAL.ORG**

presenting sponsor

**BMO Harris Bank**

**REALIZE  
BRADENTON**  
ARTS • CULTURE • HERITAGE • SPORTS



Bradenton  
Anna Maria Island  
Longboat Key

**BLUES MUSIC  
Magazine**

**CALLAGHAN  
TIRE**





# DELTA JOURNEYS

by Roger Stolle

## "CELEBRITIES..."

I'm starting this issue's column on a serious note. The week I'm writing these words, two cultural icons took their own lives – Kate Spade and Anthony Bourdain. (National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, 1-800-273-8255.) Oddly enough, both played into my blues life in some way.

When entrepreneur Spade broke out with her mega-popular handbag line in the 1990s, my pre-blues career was on the rise in advertising. Doing print and TV ads for department and discount stores, I heard lots about her bag, brand, and customer. Later, when I was doing branding work just prior to my career leap from downtown St. Louis to small-town Clarksdale, I actually created a clothing-line brand name by combining fashionista Kate Spade's NYC attitude with country singer Faith Hill's down-home appeal. The result was "Kate Hill" – a stylish big-city brand with mainstream Midwest values that you can still buy today at Lord & Taylor.

It is this advertising, marketing and branding experience gleaned from my years in Corporate America that I combined with my extreme blues fandom in spring 2002 when I moved to Clarksdale, Mississippi, with a mission to help "organize and promote the blues from within." There is no mystery why "Clarksdale" is now so synonymous with "blues" that the travel experts at Fodors just voted our town the #1 "music city in the U.S. that's not Nashville" back in May. Our brand is blues.

And this brings me to Anthony Bourdain.

### RED'S JUKE JOINT IS PARTS UNKNOWN

The celebrity-chef-turned-travel-journalist set out on TV adventures around the globe in the mid-2000s and, in 2014, set his sights on the Mississippi Delta. I received a phone call one day at my Cat Head blues store from a *Parts Unknown* TV producer. After some discussion, we settled on Bourdain enjoying an evening of blues music at Red's Lounge. They also set up a shoot at the other famous Delta juke joint, Po Monkey's Lounge, for earlier in the day.

Now, if y'all know anything about Red Paden, the longtime proprietor of Red's and self-proclaimed "king of

the juke joint runners," he can be a bit cantankerous when it comes to folks filming at his place. "What happens at Red's, stays at Red's," he says. He also knows his importance and value. Ain't too many juke joints left, and he knows it.

So, I found myself in the middle of a negotiation. Finally, the deal sealed, we booked 80-something bluesman Leo "Bud" Welch at Red's and awaited Bourdain to discover this part unknown.

The first sign that it may not be a particularly fun evening was when the huge TV production crew arrived early, bringing their own dinner in styrofoam containers and taking up potential-customer seats throughout the venue. Red was not amused. When the young crew started to leave their trash behind as they headed outside to get their equipment together, the juke joint king blew a gasket. Let's just say that the camera and audio folks made quick work of cleaning up the place!

Later, with customers seated and the music rollin' and tumblin', the producer received word that Bourdain was on his way. The producer bought a Corona and set it on a ledge along the front wall. The celebrity chef arrived and quietly took a stool next to his cerveza.

The plan was for Bourdain to watch the music for a bit and then interview Red on-camera, but apparently the chef was tired from a long day of shooting so didn't stay long. He walked over and said hello to Red and headed



for his hotel room. Red was understandably less than thrilled, but hey, any publicity is good publicity, right?

### ANOTHER FOODIE ROCKS CLARKSDALE

Another celebrity chef TV show that Red loves to talk about is *Bizarre Foods*. Yes, Red cooked for show host Andrew Zimmern. No, the food wasn't bizarre. Zimmern wanted a blues basis for his swing through Mississippi, so Red just needed to make some barbecue and book some music. The juke joint was bizarre enough.

For this TV adventure, we booked Jimmy "Duck" Holmes (thanks to Broke & Hungry Records buddy Jeff Konkel), and Red fired up the grill. He also invited a couple other musicians, including Watermelon Slim. There were plenty of "characters" in the house.

Now, Red is a master griller and barbecuer – when he wants to be. Sometimes he cranks it out, and it's good. Other times, he really takes his time, and it is spectacular. Well, let's just say he took his time. That afternoon,

ALL PHOTOGRAPHY © ROGER STOLLE



Zimmern and his crew filmed a bit at Cat Head, though none of it made it into the show. There was just too much good stuff at Red's.

After filming, Zimmern and Red sampling barbecue by the grill outside the juke, with Zimmern raving about the meat and Red bull-----ing up a storm, they moved inside for the music. The cool thing about Zimmern was that he not only enjoyed the food and music but also hung out after the shoot. Most crews and hosts just hightail it back to the hotel. These folks hung out.

THE WORLD COMES TO CLARKSDALE While we're on the subject, it is worth noting that unsurprisingly, we get a few notable names through the land of the crossroads on a regular basis. Cat Head has seen its share of interesting folks, including Tom Waits, Dan Aykroyd, Alex Chilton, Ozzy Osbourne, Jessica Lange, Morgan Freeman, and others.

One day, former Led Zeppelin front man Robert Plant showed up. I was having a casual counter meeting with my core Juke Joint Festival co-organizers when he came in. My Cat Head policy is to never call out famous folks till they call themselves out, so I just gave my usual greeting and let him quietly look around my store as our meeting continued.

After 20 or 30 minutes, he made his selections and brought them to the counter. I continued to talk to him like a regular customer until he handed me his credit card. It said, "Robert Plant," so I broke my cloak of feigned ignorance. This was in late spring that year, and he was booked to play in town that August, so I said, "I'm looking forward to August," as I handed back his card. He smiled, and said, "I am too."

I'd seen him duck in and out of Red's the night before, so I mentioned seeing him there. James "T-Model" Ford was playing that night, towards the end of his career, after a small stroke. It was not T's best night, admittedly, but Plant and I got in a slight dispute when he said, "Somebody needs to take the guitar out of that old man's hands." I saw red (not Red) for a moment, and words were exchanged.

Fortunately, we finally settled on T's pedigree and moved on to some blues stories. Plant pointed at my rack of blues DVDs on the wall and told me a story about seeing one of his musical heroes in 1962 at the American Folk Blues Festival in England. Sonny Boy Williamson II played a killer set. Afterward, the young, long-haired, pre-Zepp Plant went to "the loo." While taking care of business, here comes the Sonny Boy, tall in his fancy

English suit and bowler hat, to stand next to him.

Excited to stand next to the Mississippi bluesman, Plant started rambling on about how he was his hero and the reason he'd started blowing harmonica. Sonny Boy ignored him at first, and then finally looked down at Plant and spoke these immortal words to the future millionaire rockstar: "F--- off!"

Plant bought three CDs (Skip James, Slim Harpo, Lightnin' Hopkins) and a DVD (Maxwell Street doc) before asking directions to Shreveport. I referred him to one of my fellow festival planners, who gave him guidance.

After he walked out of my store, our meeting reconvened without comment, so I said, "Well, that was pretty cool, huh?" They were like, "What?" No clue. "You just gave directions to Robert Plant!" I was the only one who'd recognized the old hippy in shorts and a pony tail.

#### MY FAVORITE CELEBRITY CUSTOMER?

On the subject of celebrities, I suppose in some ways my favorite famous shopper was Carolyn Kennedy. Kennedy snuck into town early for a book signing event, so she could explore the town. After all, her uncle Bobby and brother John John had both visited Clarksdale (1967 and 1991, respectively).

Following my store policy, I treated her like a regular customer till – after telling some other in-store tourists about Kennedy's her book signing that evening – Kennedy raised her hand and timidly said, "That's me." She proceeded to have a sweet conversation with the visitors. A class act.

At the Community Book Talks event that evening, she was presented with a cigarbox guitar built by bluesman James "Super Chikan" Johnson.

#### ANOTHER CELEBRITY PASSING

I'll close my column by saying goodbye to the face of Cat Head for a decade and a half, Sadie, my 17-year-old blues pug. Named after the Hound Dog Taylor blues song "Sadie," she heard hundreds of blues performances and was a fav of my customers. RIP.




delta blues  
& folk art, inc.

**CLARKSDALE'S CAT HEAD...  
CELEBRATING 15 YEARS AS  
MISSISSIPPI'S BLUES STORE!**







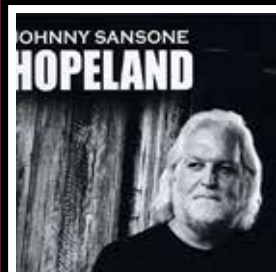


**252 Delta Ave., Clarksdale, Miss.  
662-624-5992 • [www.cathead.biz](http://www.cathead.biz)**  
Find "Roger Stolle" on Facebook,  
Instagram and Twitter, y'all!



# Blues Music Store

Please See Page 40 For More Information



JOHNNY SANSONE  
CD #1



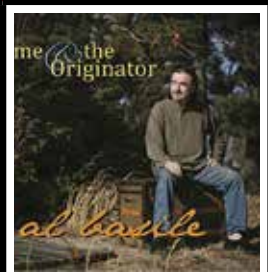
VANESSA COLLIER  
CD # 2



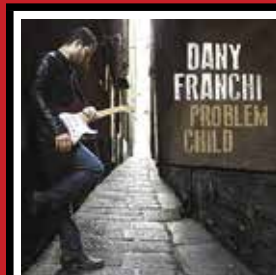
DANA FUCHS  
CD # 3



BUDDY GUY  
CD # 4



AL BASILE  
CD # 5



DANY FRANCHI  
CD #6



KARA GRAINGER  
CD # 7



TYLER MORRIS  
CD # 8



RORY BLOCK  
CD # 9



TOMMY McCOY  
CD # 10



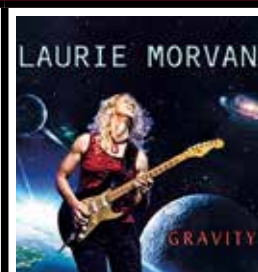
TOO SLIM & THE  
TAILDRAGGERS  
CD #11



J.P. SOARS  
CD # 12



FANTASTIC  
NEGRITO  
CD # 13



LAURIE MORVAN  
CD # 14



SAMANTHA FISH  
CD # 15



VICTOR  
WAINWRIGHT  
CD #16



BOZ SCAGGS  
CD # 17



REVEREND RAVEN  
CD # 18



BISCUIT MILLER  
CD # 19



THE RECORD  
COMPANY  
CD # 20



# Blues Music Store

Please See Page 40 For More Information



GHOST TOWN  
BLUES BAND  
CD #21



BILLY PRICE  
CD # 22



BOB CORRITORE  
& FRIENDS  
CD # 23



DEB RYDER  
CD # 24



DENNIS JONES  
CD # 25



BIG HARP GEORGE  
CD #26



CLIFF STEVENS  
CD # 27



ALLY VENABLE  
CD # 28



ROGER  
'HURRICANE'  
WILSON  
CD # 29



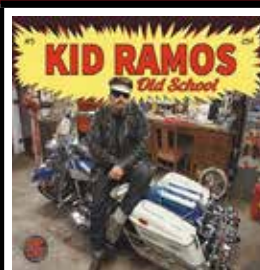
DUSTIN DOUGLAS  
CD # 30



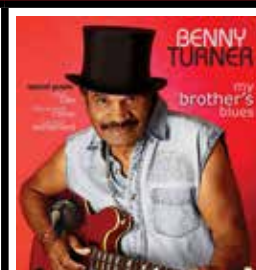
JIMMY CARPENTER  
CD #31



LIL RONNIE  
& GEORGE  
HARROWER  
CD # 32



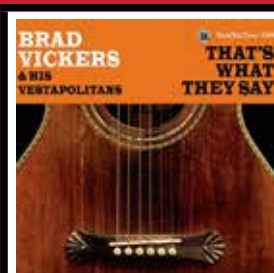
KID RAMOS  
CD # 33



BENNY TURNER  
CD # 34



ERIC JOHANSON  
CD # 35



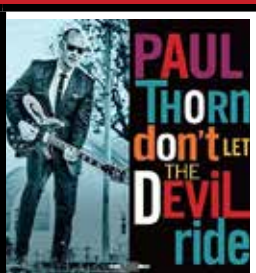
BRAD VICKERS  
AND HIS  
VESTOPOLITANS  
CD #36



JANIVA MAGNESS  
CD # 37



THE NEW ORLEANS  
RADIATORS  
CD # 38



PAUL THORN  
CD # 39



LARKIN POE  
CD # 40

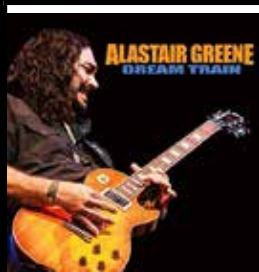


# Blues Music Store

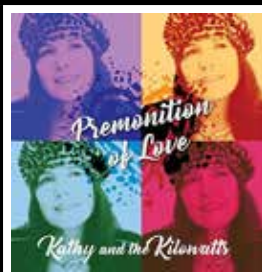
Please See Page 40 For More Information



STEVE KRASE  
CD #41



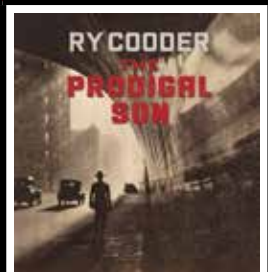
ALASTAIR GREENE  
CD # 42



KATHY & THE  
KILOWATTS  
CD # 43



JOHN CLIFTON  
CD # 44



RY COODER  
CD # 45



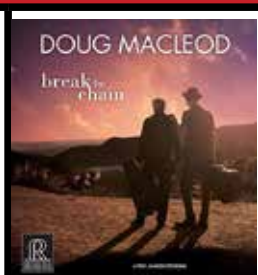
LEON BRIDGES  
CD #46



LUKE WINSLOW-  
KING  
CD # 47



LITTLE BOYS BLUE  
CD # 48



DOUG MacLEOD  
CD # 49



VINTAGE 18  
CD # 50



THORNETTA DAVIS  
CD #51



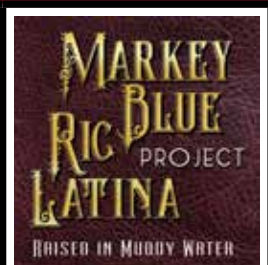
SCOTTIE MILLER  
CD # 52



LITTLE G WEEVIL  
CD #53



MICK KOLASSA  
CD # 54



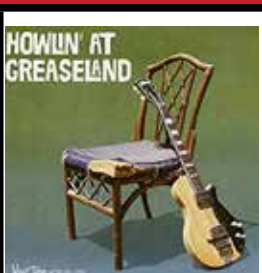
MARKEY BLUE RIC  
LATINA PROJECT  
CD # 55



MARIE KNIGHT  
CD #56



BACKTRACK  
BLUES BAND  
CD # 57



HOWLIN' AT  
GREASELAND  
CD # 58



BILLY THOMPSON  
CD # 59



BILLY PIERCE  
CD # 60



# Blues Music Store

Please See Page 40 For More Information

|                                                                                     |                                                                                     |                                                                                     |                                                                                      |                                                                                       |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|    |    |    |    |    |
| SIDEMEN - LONG ROAD TO GLORY DVD - A                                                | ERIC CLAPTON 2 CD SET CD - B                                                        | ERIC CLAPTON DVD - C                                                                | CHARLIE MUSSELWHITE & BEN HARPER CD - D                                              | DELMARK 65TH ANNIVERSARY CD - E                                                       |
|   |   |   |   |   |
| ELVIN BISHOP CD - F                                                                 | MARCIA BALL CD - G                                                                  | RICK ESTRIN & THE NIGHTCATS CD - H                                                  | SHEMEKIA COPELAND CD - I                                                             | THE NICK MOSS BAND CD - J                                                             |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| MIKE ZITO CD - K                                                                    | TAJMO - TAJ MAHAL & KEB' MO' CD - L                                                 | SAVOY BROWN CD - M                                                                  | DANIELLE NICOLE CD - N                                                               | MUDDY GURDY CD - O                                                                    |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| CHRIS BARNES CD - P                                                                 | BRIDGET KELLY BAND CD - Q                                                           | MARK NOMAD CD - R                                                                   | WILDCAT O'HALLRAN CD - S                                                             | CHRIS CAIN CD - T                                                                     |



# Blues Music Store

## About The Music Store CDs & DVDs

Blues Music Store is featuring 80 CDs and DVDs in this issue on pages 36 to 39.

To order please include the order form on pages 41-43 with your order or call Toll Free: 1-(855) US BLUES.

Canadian or International orders please call the number above or email [service@bluesmusicmag.com](mailto:service@bluesmusicmag.com). Thank you for supporting Blues Music, Blues Musicians, and *Blues Music Magazine*!

### CD & DVD Price Info:

**USA Shipping is only \$2.95 for your total order!**

- CDs listed as #1 - 60: All priced at only \$14 each PLUS 1 bonus issue of BMM per order.

- BONUS BUY 1: CDs #1 - 60: Order 10 CDs for only \$125 PLUS 8 bonus issues of BMM.

- BONUS BUY 2: CDs #1 - 60: Order 20 CDs for only \$200 PLUS 20 bonus issues off BMM.

- BONUS BUY 3: CDs #1 - 60: Order 40 CDs for only \$350 PLUS a BONUS LIFETIME SUBSCRIPTION to *Blues Music Magazine*, a \$250 VALUE!

- DVDs & CDs listed as A-T are priced as marked on the order form.

*Blues Music Magazine* was a proud supporter of the \$229,000 Kickstarter to help crowdfund the Sidemen- Long Road To Glory Project. The DVD is now available. For more information please see Pages 30 & 31. Thank you!





# July 2018 Order Form

Ordering is as simple as one, two, three.

- 1) Review the CDs on pages 36-39. Check your CD choices on pages 42 & 43.
- 2) Enter your order total order amount below.
- 3) Include this order form with pages 41-44, and your payment method and mail to BMM.

**Mail to: *Blues Music Magazine:***

**PO BOX 1446, BRADENTON, FL 34206**

**OR CALL TOLL FREE: 1 (855) US BLUES = (855)- 872-5837**

|                                                                      |  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| <b>ORDER TOTAL -----&gt;</b>                                         |  |
| <b>USA SHIPPING ONLY: \$2.95 Add to Total here -----&gt;&gt;&gt;</b> |  |
| <b>Order Total and THANK YOU!</b>                                    |  |

**NAME:**

**ADDRESS:**

|              |                 |
|--------------|-----------------|
| <b>CITY:</b> | <b>STATE:</b>   |
| <b>ZIP:</b>  | <b>COUNTRY:</b> |

**PAYMENT METHOD: CHECK OR M.O: \_\_\_\_\_ CREDIT OR DEBIT: \_\_\_\_\_**

**CARD INFO: \_\_\_\_\_**

**EXP: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ CVV: \_\_\_\_\_**

Enter your email address for the Digital Edition & email order receipt:

**Looking for a certain CD, DVD, or LP?  
We can help!**

**Call Blues Music Store and let us help you complete your collection.**

**CALL TOLL FREE: 1 (855) US BLUES = (855)- 872-5837**

# Blues Music Store

Make your selections below, enjoy!

| CD # and ARTIST                 | CHOICE | CD # and ARTIST                             | CHOICE |
|---------------------------------|--------|---------------------------------------------|--------|
| 1) JOHNNY SANSONE               |        | 21) GHOST TOWN BLUES BAND                   |        |
| 2) VANESSA COLLIER              |        | 22) BILLY PRICE                             |        |
| 3) DANA FUCHS                   |        | 23) BOB CORRITORE                           |        |
| 4) BUDDY GUY                    |        | 24) DEB RYDER                               |        |
| 5) AL BASILE                    |        | 25) DENNIS JONES                            |        |
| 6) DANY FRANCHI                 |        | 26) BIG HARP GEORGE                         |        |
| 7) KARA GRAINGER                |        | 27) CLIFF STEVENS                           |        |
| 8) TYLER MORRIS                 |        | 28) ALLY VENABLE                            |        |
| 9) RORY BLOCK                   |        | 29) ROGER 'HURRICANE' WILSON                |        |
| 10) TOMMY McCOY                 |        | 30) DUSTIN DOUGLAS & THE ELECTRIC GENTLEMAN |        |
| 11) TOO SLIM & THE TAILDRAGGERS |        | 31) JIMMY CARPENTER                         |        |
| 12) J.P. SOARS                  |        | 32) LI'L RONNIE & GORDON HARROWER           |        |
| 13) FANTASTIC NEGRITO           |        | 33) KID RAMOS                               |        |
| 14) LAURIE MORVAN               |        | 34) BENNY TURNER                            |        |
| 15) SAMANTHA FISH               |        | 35) ERIC JOHANSON                           |        |
| 16) VICTOR WAINWRIGHT           |        | 36) BRAD VICKERS AND HIS VESTOPOLITANS      |        |
| 17) BOZ SCAGGS                  |        | 37) JANIVA MAGNESS                          |        |
| 18) REVEREND RAVEN              |        | 38) THE NEW ORLEANS RADIATORS               |        |
| 19) BISCUIT MILLER              |        | 39) PAUL THORN                              |        |
| 20) THE RECORD COMPANY          |        | 40) LARKIN POE                              |        |



# Blues Music Store

Make your selections below, enjoy!

| CD # and ARTIST                     | CHOICE | CD # and ARTIST                       | CHOICE | \$ |
|-------------------------------------|--------|---------------------------------------|--------|----|
| 41) STEVE KRASE                     |        | A) DVD - SIDEMEN - LONG ROAD TO GLORY |        | 25 |
| 42) ALASTAIR GREENE                 |        | B) ERIC CLAPTON - 2 CDs               |        | 20 |
| 43) KATHY & THE KILOWATTS           |        | C) DVD - ERIC CLAPTON                 |        | 18 |
| 44) JOHN CLIFTON                    |        | D) CHARLIE MUSSELWHITE & BEN HARPER   |        | 16 |
| 45) RY COODER                       |        | E) DELMARK RECORDS 65TH               |        | 16 |
| 46) LEON BRIDGES                    |        | F) ELVIN BISHOP                       |        | 16 |
| 47) LUKE WINSLOW-KING               |        | G) MARCIA BALL                        |        | 16 |
| 48) LITTLE BOYS BLUE                |        | H) RICK ESTRIN & THE NIGHTCATS        |        | 16 |
| 49) DOUG MacLEOD                    |        | I) SHEMEKIA COPELAND                  |        | 17 |
| 50) VINTAGE 18                      |        | J) THE NICK MOSS BAND                 |        | 16 |
| 51) THORNETTA DAVIS                 |        | K) MIKE ZITO                          |        | 14 |
| 52) SCOTTIE MILLER                  |        | L) TAJMO- TAJ MAHAL & KEB' MO'        |        | 16 |
| 53) LITTLE G WEEVIL                 |        | M) SAVOY BROWN                        |        | 16 |
| 54) MICK KOLASSA & FRIENDS          |        | N) DANIELLE NICOLE                    |        | 13 |
| 55) MARKEY BLUE RIC LATINA PROJECT  |        | O) MUDDY GURDY                        |        | 13 |
| 56) MARIE KNIGHT                    |        | P) CHRIS BARNES                       |        | 8  |
| 57) BACKTRACK BLUES BAND CD/DVD SET |        | Q) BRIDGET KELLY BAND 2 CD SET        |        | 10 |
| 58) HOWLIN' @ GREASELAND            |        | R) MARK NOMAD                         |        | 12 |
| 59) BILLY THOMPSON                  |        | S) WILDCAT O'HALLORAN                 |        | 8  |
| 60) BILLY PIERCE                    |        | T) CHRIS CAIN                         |        | 16 |

# AROUND THE WORLD

by Bob Margolin

## RECKONING WITH BILLY PRICE

In 1978 a French journalist asked me, "Who have you seen on the road that moves you?" Great question, most interviewers want, "Who do you know that is famous?" I raved about Billy Price, a singer who transcends categories like blues, soul, or R&B to transport his audiences to the deepest parts of their hearts. I'm still steady ravin'.

Full Disclosure: Billy Price is my friend all that time, and I'm a founding partner of The VizzTone Label Group which released his Blues Music Award-winning *This Time For Real* album with the late great Otis Clay, Billy's *Alive And Strange* album, and now his new one, *Reckoning*. However, if every reader of this magazine buys all of Billy's VizzTone albums, I'll personally make enough money to buy one of you lunch.

I'm writing this because I love Billy's music. I want to recommend it as if you and I were talking and you asked, "What moves you now?" I rave that *Reckoning* is Billy's breakout fulfillment of his amazing discography, and he proves it onstage at every gig. You see a lot of hype in promotion, this is not that. I'm telling you about Billy as one music lover to another. Let's talk to Billy about it too. I'm confident you'll enjoy him.

Bob: Billy, tell me the story of how *Reckoning* came to be recorded at Kid Andersen's Greaseland Studio with fine musicians.

Billy: I've been going to the Blues Music Awards in Memphis for the past four years, and it was there that Kid got my attention. I was knocked out by his guitar playing and introduced myself, and we got to know each other. A sax-player friend of mine from Pittsburgh,

Eric Spaulding, was living out in Northern California and did a lot of sessions for Kid at his Greaseland Studio in San Jose, and he had been telling me about the great scene out there and urging me to talk to Kid about producing me. I guess he had also been raving to Kid about me.

I had been a big fan of the album Kid produced for Wee Willie Walker, and eventually we started talking in Facebook and making plans to work together. Kid knows and understands soul music,

musicians available to come in and help out. We have Jerry Jemmott on bass, Jim Pugh on keyboards, Alex Pettersen, the great drummer from the Nightcats, Johnny Bones from the California Honeydrops, Nancy Wright, Rusty Zinn, the Sons of the Soul Revivers gospel group, Kid's wife Lisa who is a tremendous singer, and Kid himself, all these great people doing their part to make this album what it is. It was an unforgettable two weeks, easily one of



and his background, taste, and musical vocabulary were completely compatible with mine. We connected right from the start, and working together was a great experience for both of us.

Bob: Did it feel like you were just crafting your next release or could you feel like something special was happening, even in the context of your impressive musical history?

Billy: Yes, emphatically. The scene out there around Greaseland is so rich and vibrant, with so many great

the best musical experiences I've had in my life.

Bob: Kid Andersen has produced some brilliant recordings in the last few years and is now appreciated for it. What did he tell you about *Reckoning* as it was completed?

Billy: You'd have to ask him about that, but I'm pretty sure that he wasn't blowing smoke when he said, repeatedly, that he thinks this album is something special.

Bob: So I did ask producer/

PHOTOGRAPHY © DAVID ASCHKENAS



guitarist, multi-instrumentalist Kid Andersen about *Reckoning*. He offered:

Kid Andersen: This record is one of my proudest achievements. I'm getting to play with a singer, and some musicians, that have been of my musical upbringing forever, and we created possibly the best music of all our lives. Billy Price, known as a prime exponent of "blue eyed soul," transcends all boundaries and preconceptions here. I don't know anybody who can do a Bobby Blue Bland number, and make you feel like you're hearing it for the first

songs I'd always send them to Kid for his feedback. We also discussed cover songs a lot, kept a running list, and finally settled on the songs that are on the album. "Dreamer" (Bobby Bland) and "No Time" (J.J. Cale) were Kid's ideas. Rick Estrin suggested "Get Your Lie Straight" (Bill Coday). I brought in "Love Ballad" (LTD), "I Love You More Than Words Can Say" (Otis Redding), and "Synthetic World" (Swamp Dogg). The title song, "Reckoning," was written by a friend of Kid's from Norway, Billy T (Bill Troiani).

Johnny Rawls wrote a song for me, and so did a friend of mine from Muscle Shoals, Andreas Werner.

I think you are right that there was never a hint of our making this album as some kind of a retrospective throwback or tribute to music of the past. This is music that we love and always have, and this is the way we express ourselves musically today, in 2018.

Bob: As a fan of legendary bassist Jerry Jemmott, I've got to ask you about that thrill to work with him.

Billy: Oh

man, was it ever. I never would have believed that I'd have an opportunity to work with the guy who played bass on "The Thrill Is Gone" and "Memphis Soul Stew." Kid and I locked Jerry in on the session very early in our planning. His playing on the album is superb.

Bob, turning to you: Did Billy Price, Kid Andersen, and I get your attention about *Reckoning*? You'll see reviews and hear it if you listen to blues radio shows. And today you can listen before you buy or you can add to your streaming list. But no matter what we said about it here, it's Billy's music itself that will take you and shake you. Please listen and I believe you'll rave too. Hear how Billy's music expresses a human soul in today's romantic and social battlefields, as well as sweet love. I've been fortunate enough to share the stage with legendary musicians, most gone now. Billy Price thrills me in the same way. Today. I want you to enjoy that thrill too.

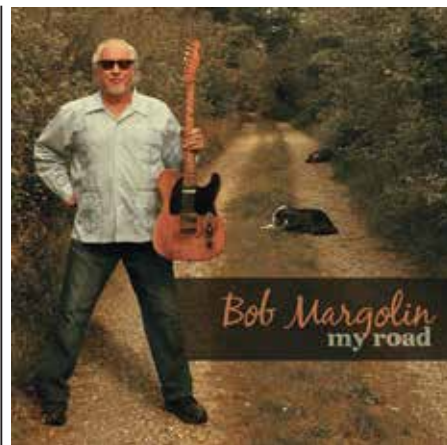
time. Billy does. His personal voice is just that strong.

I could not be any prouder of this record.

Bob: That's quite an endorsement from Kid Andersen considering his accomplishments. I found that the music did not try to ride the classic R&B/soul music conventions, but were driven by expressing the songs. I think that makes them feel fresh, original, and personal to you as a singer. Billy, what was the song selection process and how did the chosen songs inspire you?

Billy: Kid and I spent about six months collaborating on song selection, and in the process we learned about each other's tastes and discovered how much we had in common. By the time I got to San Jose, we were ready. Kid said he had never been so well prepared for a project at the start as he was with this one.

I wrote with the keyboard player in my band, Jim Britton, and my guitarist friend from France, Fred Chapellier, and as we finished



## My Road

**Bob Margolin  
2017 Blues Music  
Award Winner**

***"My Road reveals who I am today, musically and very personally. Each song takes a surprising turn from the others and my previous music."***  
-Bob Margolin

***"It is also an album of confidence and joy, played with spark and deep emotional power."***  
- Blues Blast Magazine

**BOOKING INFO  
Blue Mountain  
Artists  
(704) 525-1559  
[www.BobMargolin.com](http://www.BobMargolin.com)**



# CD REVIEWS

## BUDDY GUY

### *The Blues Is Alive And Well*

Silvertone/RCA Records



This is arguably the first Buddy Guy album in more than 60 years that outclasses his live performances. It was his work on Junior Wells' *Hoodoo Man Blues* Delmark

album in 1965 credited to Friendly Chap that convinced me in college that even though rock was gaining a new credibility, that it could never equal the pure heart-felt honesty and raw depth that Buddy and Junior bled out on this record.

That said, Buddy was never able to capture on record the flaming mercury that caused him to inspire Jimi Hendrix until long after Jimi had passed and Buddy was well into his tenure with Silvertone in the early '90s. But it was producer/songwriter/drummer Tom Hambridge who miraculously became more Buddy Guy than Buddy Guy as far as creating autobiographical songs

for him on his last several albums. Never a strong songwriter himself, Guy's forte has always been in his unprecedented style on guitar which has taken him far beyond his influences of Muddy Waters, Hubert Sumlin, and Robert Nighthawk. Other than a cover of Sonny Boy Williamson's "Nine Below Zero," this new album is the antithesis of retro.

Guy once told me that he always demurs to the producer in the studio because he assumes that's their turf, and they know more about creating a product that sells. In concert, however, I've seen him charge down the center aisle of the Royal Albert Hall throwing Eric Clapton completely off his game and even take his wireless electric guitar into a lady's room at full throttle.

Producer Hambridge not only understands how to capture Guy's larger than life energy between the grooves, but he's also tapped into Guy's muse as a guitarist. These are real compositions in which Guy uses his complete mastery of the strings to create an ambiance that accompanies the moods and messages of the songs, rather than being a muscle car attack on our senses. The results are

stunning. Hambridge has written or co-written 12 of the 14 songs. Yes, there are a few bows to aging in songs like "A Few Good Years" and "End Of Line" where Guy sings, "I'm the last one to turn out the lights." But on a CD with 14 cuts, many of them five and six minutes long, Guy seems to have become a cat starting in on his second batch of 13 lives.

Whether it's Jorma Kaukonen in Hot Tuna or Keith Richards in the Rolling Stones, hard driving musicians who scream out their machismo in concert often find it difficult to refine their aggression as octogenarians. Even Muddy Waters and Howlin' Wolf seemed to strain to keep up when retooling their earlier signature songs with heart conditions and on dialysis. But I defy you to detect any evidence of aging in Guy's voice here. And while his concerts often are 80% material that's at least half a century old, the new songs here firm up his legacy as he crows about \$200 "Cognac" and extols the virtues of "Whiskey For Sale." Dylan's early work waved a flag for a young generation looking for causes. Buddy Guy on *The Blues Is Alive And Well* does the same thing for aging generations unwilling to bury their blues legacy.

— Don Wilcock

The Wildcat O'Halloran Band

Get locked in the **DEEP FREEZE** of The Blues with Wildcat's new album:

**HOT PULLDOWN**

available from CDBaby ...or this magazine!

www.wildcatohalloran.com



# VINTAGE #18



"Robbin is a whirlwind of soulful excitement backed by one of the tightest trios in the trade."  
- Mark Wenner, The Nighthawks

BOOKING@ **VINTAGE18.NET**  
**(571) 409-1526**

## NOW BOOKING

Get the NEW release by

# BILLY THOMPSON



NOW AVAILABLE AT  
**BillyThompsonMusic.com**  
OR AT  
**store.cdbaby.com**  
Digital Download



## BEN HARPER AND CHARLIE MUSSELWHITE

### *No Mercy In This Land*

Anti-



The anticipated follow-up to their Grammy winning *Get Up!* (from 2014) is filled with ten blues-infused Harper originals that combine elements of country, folk, gospel, jazz, and soul in a seamless manner. Although there is a 25-year age difference between the principals, they sound like they've been playing together for much longer than the last five years. (They initially met when John Lee Hooker recruited them to play on his 1993 album *Burnin' Hell*.)

Throughout his long career Musselwhite has always been one of the most musically adventurous harmonica players. Harper's diverse compositions are a perfect fit for someone like Musselwhite whose nimble harp gracefully twists around and gently punctuates Harper's simple yet powerful lyrics. Harper sings in a plaintive voice and accompanies himself on acoustic

and electric guitars. Lead guitarist Jason Mozersky, drummer Jimmy Paxson, and bassist/keyboardist Jesse Ingalls provide unobtrusive musical support.

I most enjoyed the three tunes that are redolent of classic Chicago blues: "Bad Habits," reminiscent of a "Rollin' & Tumblin'" groove, "The Bottle Wins Again (Blues)," an edgy Muddy-esque stop-time cruncher, and "Movin' On," a rockin' blues that reminded me of a Satchel Paige quote: "Don't look back, something could be gaining on you."

The somber title track with Harper and Musselwhite trading vocals deeply affected me on a personal level, especially the emphasis that Musselwhite puts on the poignant lines in the last verse: "Father left us down here all alone/My poor mother is under a stone/ With an aching heart and trembling hands/ Is there no mercy in this land." This tune reminds me of another great tune about the lack of and need for mercy (both personal and societal): Mose Allison's "Everybody's Cryin' Mercy (But Nobody Knows The Meaning Of the Word)."

Fans of *Get Up!* are certain to enjoy this equally impressive follow-up that will probably again get serious attention from the Grammy folks as well as numerous reviewers for album of the year.

- Thomas J. Cullen III

## CURTIS SALGADO AND ALAN HAGER

### *Rough Cut*

Alligator



On the aptly named *Rough Cut*, harmonica player and singer Curtis Salgado and guitarist Alan Hager dig down deep on a baker's dozen of originals and covers that adhere close to tradition. His voice weathered by time and toil – he has survived liver cancer, lung cancer, and quadruple bypass surgery – Salgado inspires chills on the original "I Will Not Surrender," accompanied only by Hager's quietly haunting electric guitar. "I want to hear a song by a soul that sings in key," Salgado sings. "From a place so deep within that the pain just covers me. And feel every cut I can and take it like a man. I will not surrender."

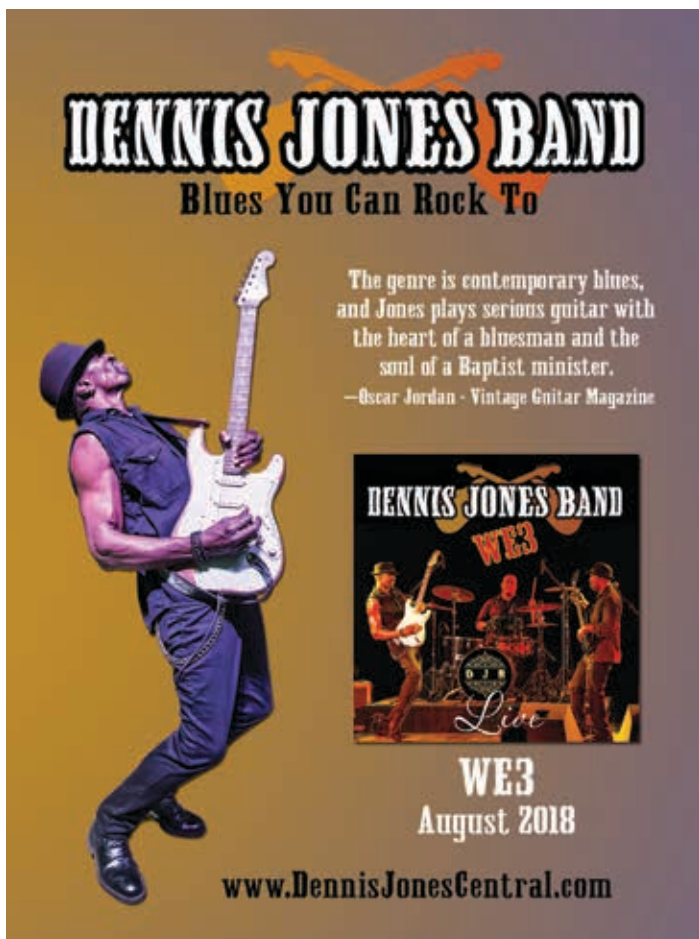
It's the kind of song that some artists might choose as the album closer rather than the lead-off. From there, there's nowhere to go but to be more upbeat, which is what you get on "So Near to Nowhere," a slice of acoustic guitar and harmonica country blues. While it's got a toe-tapping groove, the lyrical territory in these "tombstone visions" is only a shade



**DOUG DEMING & THE JEWEL TONES**

**NEW ALBUM COMING SOON!**  
featuring special guests... Little Charlie, Kim Wilson and Bob Welsh. Recorded at BigTone Studios by Big Jon Atkinson

REAL DEAL ROCKIN' RHYTHM & BLUES  
[WWW.DOUGDEMING.COM](http://WWW.DOUGDEMING.COM)



**DENNIS JONES BAND**  
**Blues You Can Rock To**

The genre is contemporary blues, and Jones plays serious guitar with the heart of a bluesman and the soul of a Baptist minister.  
—Oscar Jordan - Vintage Guitar Magazine

**DENNIS JONES BAND**  
**WE3**  
*Live*

**WE3**  
August 2018  
[www.DennisJonesCentral.com](http://www.DennisJonesCentral.com)

lighter, albeit with a comic touch. Salgado sings about love gone bad: "Tomorrow who knows. Tonight who cares. And it feels like I'm next to nothing, so near to nowhere."

The duet is augmented by piano (Jim Pugh) and drums (Jimi Bott) on the rollicking "One Night Only," an up-to-no-good tale – even a nun breaks her vow – that features a nice taste of Salgado's harmonica playing. While there are original tunes sprinkled throughout, Salgado and Hager stack most of the covers in the middle of the album, including gems by Muddy Waters ("I Can't Be Satisfied"), Sonny Boy Williamson II ("Too Young To Die"), and Son House ("Depot Blues"). And there's a sweet duet with singer Larhonda Steele on the traditional "Morning Train."

Salgado's brushes death may have made him more poignant and wise, but he injects it all with a great sense of humor. Salgado says he wishes he had been the king of rock 'n' roll or had written Dylan's "Blowin' In The Wind," and that he would love to see his later mother again. But this song says it all in the title; "I Want My Dog To Live Longer (The Greatest Wish)."

– Michael Cote

## MARCIA BALL

**Shine Bright**  
Alligator



Marcia Ball, at age 69, has been recording for nearly 50 years, beginning as the Freda of Freda & the Firedogs, a scrappy Austin-based band which cut an album for Jerry Wexler at Atlantic in 1972 and then blew off signing the papers until it was too late for release. Her solo career got a better launch with Rounder Records in the 1980s, where her voice and Louisiana swamp-blues/boogie-woogie piano style found a comfortable home, especially when paired with producer Scott Billington on Hot Tamale Baby (1985), to this day my pick as her finest album.

She has a new release, *Shine Bright*, on Alligator. What to say about it? Well, she still has maximum chops on the 88s, especially when she's channeling Prof. Longhair and James Booker, but hard time on the career highway seems to have taken a toll at the vocal pay station. The lead-off track and several subsequent ones find her voice sounding forced. Notes that used to come easily now seem to involve a struggle. Plus the relentless tempo of the title song "Shine Bright" is maybe not best suited for a celebration of heroes ranging from the Rev. Martin Luther King and Ruth Bader Ginsburg to Stephen Hawking and Little Richard.

The songs that make the best impression on this 12-track, 42-minute disc are the mid and slower tempo ones. If only Ball and producer Steve Berlin of Los Lobos had included more of them. The best are Ray Charles' "What Would I Do Without You," Ball's own "World Full Of Love" and the album-closing cover of Jesse Winchester's "Take A Little Louisiana" with its strong Zydeco flavor.

– Bill Wasserzieher

**Blues Music Store**  
**Call Toll Free:**  
**1 (855) US - BLUES**



**THE PROVEN ONES – Bott, Campbell, Ramos, Geraci, Templeton**  
**Wild Again**  
 Roseleaf Records



If it takes decades to call yourself proven, then this band has certainly earned that distinction. Take two parts James Harman band, add one part Mighty Flyers, three parts Fabulous

Thunderbirds, one part Bluetones, sprinkle in the Mannish Boys, and add a pinch of the Radio Kings and you have five musicians who have proven themselves over four decades. West coasters Kid Ramos (guitar), Willie J. Campbell (bass), and Jimi Bott (drums) have connected with East coast musicians Anthony Geraci (keyboards) and Brian Templeton (vocals) to deliver impressive readings of four originals and seven diverse covers.

The disc opens with Geraci's massive Hammond swells into Bott's lively "Cheap Thrills," which Bott wrote as a 22-year-old touring with the Flyers. Here, Campbell's strapping bass, Ramos' muscular guitar embellishments, Bott's understated percussion accents, and

Templeton's beefed up vocals offer a hint of what is to follow. The band adds horns to Arlester Christian's "City Dump," stepping into late-'60s funk that Dyke and the Blazers were noted for. Templeton and the band tackle the Bartholomew/Domino tune, "Don't Leave Me This Way" in full clothed '50s R&B. Here, Ramos' strapping guitar takes the soloing lead. Other covers include Peter Green's twisting guitar and piano exchange on "If You Be My Baby"; Clarence Carter's Memphis soul "Road Of Love," with Ramos approximating Duane Allman's slide guitar from the Fame Studios original; and 11 minutes of Fenton Robinson's iconic "Loan Me A Dime" with Templeton pleadin' his case over Geraci's Hammond, Ramos' twisting string bursts, and the horn arrangements of Joe McCarthy.

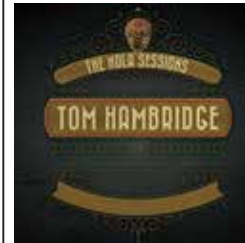
The discs' originals include Geraci's "Why Baby Why," Ramos, Bott, and Campbell's "Wild Again," a nod to the out of control feel of "Goin' Down," and the Kim Wilson, Bott, and Ramos' "Right Track Now," which harkens back to their Fabulous Thunderbird days.

The CD ends with the band combining the Beatles "Don't Let Me Down" with their "Proven Fugue In E Major." Halfway through Templeton's begging forgiveness, the Beatles classic morphs into Ramos and Geraci indulging in a jazz instrumental coda. I saw the core band last

winter at a festival and realized that this would be an exciting musical ensemble worthy to use the traditions they grew up with in expanding contemporary blues integrity.

– Art Tipaldi

**TOM HAMBRIDGE**  
**The Nola Sessions**  
 Superstar Factory



Tom Hambridge is a two-time Grammy Award winning producer, songwriter, and drummer. He has produced five other Grammy nominated albums and has

won numerous Blues Music Awards, eight Boston Music Awards, and several ASCAP Country Music Awards. His latest release is a driving, very enjoyable collection of great music. Probably the single most impressive feature about this new release from an old master is the high level of energy and passion present alongside his typical perfect-pitch production and entertaining drumming groove.

Make no mistake about it: The Nola Sessions is the real deal. This recording is a masterpiece waiting to be



# backtrack blues band



Available on  
iTunes



Available at  
amazon

Buy exciting live CD/DVD  
 "Make My Home In Florida."

Buy at: [backtrackbluesband.com](http://backtrackbluesband.com).



"Sonny summons nails-tough vocals and boiling harp solos. Kid Royal stretches out on guitar that would have amazed even T-Bone Walker!"  
 —Bill Dahl, author  
*The Art of the Blues*

"This is blues par excellence! Musically, this disc is flawless, the arrangements and vocals are superb, and the instrumental renditions are truly magnificent!"  
 —Tom Walker, *Blues Matters Magazine* (UK)

"The album is a "must have" for all blues lovers. If you can't get enough harp playing, you'll be left breathless!"  
 —Elmore Magazine

"When Chicago and Texas meet, then Backtrack Blues Band appears. Stellar work by the guitar players and electrifying harmonica and great vocal contributions. This is a high spirited and totally crushing recording!"  
 —La Hoya Del Blues (Spain)

Contact band: Harpo Records, (727) 515-8444, [cwross23@gmail.com](mailto:cwross23@gmail.com)  
 Distribution: Select-O -Hits, (800) 346-0723, [selectohits.com](http://selectohits.com)  
 Booking USA: Blues Pros Talent, (850) 875-2587, [harty@bluespros.com](mailto:harty@bluespros.com)  
 Booking Europe: Blue Mountain Artists International, (704) 525-1559, [patm@BMATours.com](mailto:patm@BMATours.com)



**BACKTRACK BLUES BAND NOW ACCEPTING FESTIVAL BOOKINGS IN NORTH AMERICA AND EUROPE !!**



NEW MUSIC FROM



#7  
Billboard  
Blues Chart  
Debut

KARA GRAINGER - LIVING WITH YOUR GHOST

"Grainger has the rare ability to make even the most heartfelt performance seem effortless. As she sings the deeply personal lyrics about lost love, it feels as if she's having an intimate conversation with the listener."

— No Depression

"A relentlessly seductive, distinctly modern take on roots, blues and soul music." — *Blues Rock Review*



#4  
Billboard  
Blues Chart  
Debut

DANY FRANCHI - PROBLEM CHILD

"Dany is one of my favorite young Blues artists. He has an exciting, fresh approach to the music while keeping it honest."

— Anson Funderburgh

"With his great voice and engrossing guitar playing, Franchi belongs at the top of the blues world. The musical diversity that resounds here is really world-class! The album *Problem Child* is a highly recommended release!" — *KeysAndChords.com*



StationHouseRecords.com | KaraGrainger.com | DanyFranchi.com

heard. The opening cut, "Blues Been Mighty Good To Me" with Allen Toussaint on piano and vocals, sets the mood. Toussaint was known as the master of the New Orleans soul and R&B sound, and this is one of his last studio recordings before his death in 2015. Both Hambridge and Toussaint are known as successful songwriters who have played important roles in countless classic compositions done by other artists. This tune is an easy, swinging duet.

Songs "I Love Everything," with NOLA's Naughty Horns and "What You Leave Behind," featuring Ivan Neville's signature B-3 are both tributes to NOLA musicians and the music scene. Real Bourbon Street party anthems. I really dig the *bad ass* bar band sound of "Blue Crazy," and "Me And Charlie," the latter tune about Buddy Guy's road warrior bus driver Charlie McPherson; both showcasing Clapton's favorite slide guitarist Sonny Landreth's scorching *slydico* leads. I also really like the stomping "Little Things" and "Save Me," co-written with Derek and The Dominos legend Bobby Whitlock. The McCrary Sisters sing their beautiful backing vocals on this magnificent melody and add an authentic Mardi Gras vibe to this up-tempo power pop tune. Check out "Whiskey Ghost" the quirky R&B tune that first turned up on his 2013 collaboration CD with Buddy Guy *Rhythm & Blues*, now done with greasy Landreth licks.

Hambridge wrote all the songs, did the fine production that makes the music sound live, and the final mix was done at Abbey Road Studios in London. The sibling sister singers Sarah and Rachel, Hambridge's daughters, add their vocals on the closing cut "Faith." They join The McCrary Sisters and the Naughty Horns, who tack on their own special Big Easy flavor to this soulful song. It's an introspective ending to a first class collection of compositions.

Blues, R&B, Americana, ballads, shuffles, and twisting stomps are all done better than you've ever heard them done before. Awesome aural advice: Jump on the Tom Hambridge locomotive or get out of the way!

— A.J. Wachtel

## MIKE ZITO

### *First Class Life*

Ruf Records



Fresh from his 2018 Blues Music Award for Blues-Rock Artist Of The Year, Mike Zito has released his latest record. St. Louis born Zito was blessed with the gifts of singing, songwriting, and guitar playing skills that has allowed him to traverse the world with his craft. *First Class Life* is themed with a blues-based flavor that describes the various stops along the way. The Blues Music Award for best song was Zito's in 2010 for "Pearl River." Later that year he joined up with Devon Allman and Cyril Neville to form the Royal Southern Brotherhood where he stayed for four years before going back out with his own band. *First Class Life* features a tight backing trio with Terry Dry on bass, Matthew Johnson on drums, and Lewis Stephens on three varieties of keyboards, and they provide a secure level of backbeat that allows Zito to delve deeply into each song.

His lyrics are direct and his vocals have the right timbre for blues. In "The World We Live In," he shares the learned wisdom of his life with the line: "don't take your life for granted, hug your kids every day, tell your wife you love her, give thanks when you pray, this world is not forever..." Zito wrote all 11 songs and the standout track is "Time For A Change" which displays an ear friendly beat that will have you swaying to its contemporary upbeat lyrics such as "love in your heart is the way – I believe it's





# Billy Pierce

“Billy Got Slide”

Now Booking for  
2017/18 Festival Season

Billy's new CD  
available from his website,  
CD Baby, Amazon.com,  
iTunes and LA Music Factory

**Billy Pierce**  
*Shapes of Soul*

Billy Pierce - Slide Guitar - Vocals  
 Charlie Hootch - Bass  
 Doug Benson - Drums  
 Koko Kincaid - Piano - Keys  
 Bruce Darnell  
 Michael Dwyer - Fiddle  
 Jacob Rice - Mandolin  
 Chris Casanova - Lap Steel  
 Mike Zito - Ukulele  
 Eugene - Harmonica  
 Jeff Wilkins - Sax  
 Produced By Charlie Hootch

 **billy.pierce.77**  
 **@BillySlide**

**Booking & Contact: (443) 253-8156** [www.BillyPierce.com](http://www.BillyPierce.com) [Billy@BillyPierce.com](mailto:Billy@BillyPierce.com)

time for a change.” He is no slouch on the guitar either. When you are the only guitarist in the group, your notes provide the pathway and feel of the song. Be it slide, slow single blues notes, or blues-rock, Zito has it all covered. On “Mama Don’t Like No Wah-Wah,” fellow Ruf recording artist Bernard Allison adds yet another fine flavor.

The clever line of the title song, simply states that he now has “a second chance of living a first class life” and after listening to this CD over and over, he certainly has earned it!

– Pete Sardon

#### FANTASTIC NEGRITO *Please Don't Be Dead* Dirty Cat Records



With *Please Don't Be Dead*, Fantastic Negrito should make meteoric impacts that resound with blues communities, rock fans, hip-hop factions, and all

in between. Wild, movie-worthy twists in his life brought him to this time, and this incredibly captivating chronicle of truths as he sees them. Somalian by heritage but born in Massachusetts, Xavier Amin Dphrepaulezz

broke away and became more than just streetwise after his stern Muslim father moved his family to Oakland, California, in 1980.

Besides delinquency, the 12-year-old became driven by music. Upon hearing Prince’s *Dirty Mind*, he taught himself to play all the instruments he could get his hands on. When he released his 1996 debut album as simply *Xavier*, the music business machine promptly ate him alive, and then in 2000 a horrific car accident nearly killed him dead. But he was back in the music arena in 2014, stronger than ever, as Fantastic Negrito.

He also went back. Blues music became his artistic wellspring. Other surprising touchstones are also buried in these fascinating melodies, all played with fire by gifted musicians. The opener, “Plastic Hamburgers,” rides on a rubbery guitar riff that could easily be from an early 1970s Grand Funk Railroad record. Otherwise, it’s funky, modern rock that propels Negrito’s angst, urging people to break free of obsessions. “A Letter To Fear” moves like Led Zeppelin in the bones; stomping, but genteel in an instant as well. The burning soul in Negrito’s voice sounds like Curtis Salgado filtered backwards through the likes of Robert Plant to the root of Otis Redding. He’s at once a reverent, revolutionary singer. “A Boy Named Andrew” takes off

f with handclaps, like an Irish jig rocking a Turkish coffee house, but with a true soul man on the carpet, singing about gang life. Yes, that imaginative.

Masa Kahoma’s worldly guitar playing must be noted, inventive all the way through but definitely inspired by Jimmy Page and others of that time and talent. In fact, “The Suit That Won’t Come Off” could be a Jimi Hendrix blues covered by Black Sabbath, and then turned on its ear by “The Symbol.” Prince must certainly be smiling down on Negrito. “A Cold November Street” represents the most direct path backwards to the blues, and specifically Blind Willie Johnson’s gospel variation. It’s an awesome tribute. “Dark Windows,” then, sounds like Pink Floyd recording at Muscle Shoals, culminating in near orchestral, operatic strains.

Every song on this album moves through modes while jostling the soul, bending the mind, and sticking to the ribs. Negrito’s previous album, 2016’s *The Last Days Of Oakland*, won a Best Contemporary Blues Album Grammy in 2017. So, this vivid music may pave a path to the propagation of the genre. Fantastic Negrito definitely has his mojo working.

– Tom Clarke







DEBUTED AT  
**#2**  
 ON BILLBOARD  
 BLUES

# DANA FUCHS

## LOVE LIVES ON

AVAILABLE EVERYWHERE NOW!



FOR BOOKINGS & INQUIRIES:  
**INTREPID ARTISTS INT'L**  
[WWW.DANAFUCHS.COM](http://WWW.DANAFUCHS.COM)  
© & © 2018 GET ALONG RECORDS. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. GETALONGRECORDS.COM





## THE RECORD COMPANY

### *All Of This Life*

Concord



Ok, so they didn't take home the Grammy.

Still, the likelihood of a new act's debut being nominated for the record industry's most prestigious honor put L.A.'s

somewhat unfortunately named The Record Company prominently on the roots map. Any blues fan who hadn't yet heard of them took notice as their first release popped up as one of five nominees in 2017's Grammy for Best Contemporary Blues Album category. Not only did it garner the stripped down trio much needed attention, but they graduated from playing small clubs to large clubs to auditoriums, all within the space of a few years. More improbably, they recorded that set in a living room, further demonstrating the less-is-more axiom.

Not surprisingly, everything here is a little bigger, tighter, more confident and conversely occasionally more introspective on this much anticipated sophomore shot. These songs are often riff based as the opening repeated bass lick of "Life to Fix"

indicates. While The Record Company is perhaps incorrectly pigeonholed as a blues outfit, much of the material on their first album, and especially this one, is more roots rock with subtle blues influences. They're not shy of strutting their blues/rock swagger on songs such as the pounding "Coming Home" and the thumping drum propelled "Make it Happen." But unlike many guitar-bass-drums trios, these tracks aren't built around six-string solos and standard structures. On the contrary, even though singer/frontman/guitarist Chris Vos' instrument is an integral ingredient of the mix, it's often not highlighted and his featured parts are few and far between.

That makes The Record Company threesome a band in all the best ways. Similar to a three-legged stool, this group could not function with any of its parts missing. Vos has a pleasant emotional everyman voice somewhat comparable to Steve Miller and is an adequate guitar player. But, like bassist/producer Alex Stiff and drummer Marc Cazorla (both also play multiple other instruments), he is more interested in creating edgy, moving and often dark parts to originals like "Night Games" and the anti-gambling "Roll Bones" than showing off his talents as a nimble instrumentalist. A handful of songs including the closing folksy "I'm Changing" and the bittersweet "You And Me Now" are played

on acoustic guitar and only tangentially blues inflected. And nothing slots into traditional electric Chicago blues rock or 12 bar blueprints.

Those who remember the band Treat Her Right will recognize similarities to that sound in The Record Company. But this album's soulful "Goodbye to the Hard Life" where Vos sings in falsetto brings them closer to Lenny Kravitz territory. Just when you think you have a handle on their approach, they zig instead of zag and go in a different musical direction.

The future of the blues will be propelled by groups like The Record Company who understand the roots of the genre, yet apply them to material that pushes established boundaries into new, fresh and inspired areas, respecting the music's foundations without copying them.

— Hal Horowitz

## JAMES HARMAN

### *fineprint*

Electro-Fi



The master raconteur's follow-up to 2015's *Bonetime* is an even stronger exemplar of "The Icepick's" songwriting prowess. Thirteen



tunes recorded over a period of ten years confirms a conversation I had with Harman that he had a large cache of tunes in the vault to release as he saw fit. Harman plays mostly taut Sonny Boy II-styled harp but also performs on chromatic. Long time guitarist Nathan James is heard throughout and also assists as co-producer. They are joined on various tracks by pianists Sonny Leyland, Tom Mahon, and Gene Taylor, bassists Troy Sandow, Jeff Turmes (also guitar), and the late Buddy Clark, drummers Marty Dodson, Stephen Hodges, and Alan West, guitarists Danny Michel and Kid Ramos, and percussionist Mike Tempo.

The bare bones boogie of the stark title track sounds like early John Lee Hooker and was inspired by his father's warning about "lawyer Hieroglyphics" and "the devil's handwriting." The sly Sonny Boy II-like shuffle "In With The Grief (In With The Gravy)" about the Yin-Yang nature of romance is one of several song of the year candidates. Another is "Memory Foam Mattress." Harman's sardonically caustic wit is at its finest on this tale of a failed romance with the title as metaphor. There is a long list of disposed possessions described in detail (e.g., "I put your crushed velvet Lazy-Boy out in the dumpster out behind the mall, folded up your TV dinner tray and placed it neatly in the hall.") It is one of the most lyrically inventive blues tunes I've ever heard. "The Fruit Of The Poisoned Tree" (her "mother was Bella Donna") is another clever take on a troubled and potentially dangerous relationship. Harman understood what Hamlet understood: "The devil has the power to assume a pleasing shape."

A number of songs reference the devil and evil. On a lighter note, Harman displays his tender side on the gently throbbing "Come On And Dance With Me" which he describes in his liner notes "[as] a guitar line I heard while walking through cafes and cantinas in some forgotten town in Mexico." There are two very different versions of "What 'Cha Gonna Do 'bout Me." One is Nawlins R&B propelled by Sonny Leyland's piano; the other is a languid grinder akin to swamp blues. *fineprint* will be a contender for album of the year and will be on many a Top Ten list. — Thomas J. Cullen III

#### BETH HART Front And Center Provogue



Not counting Beth Hart's live recordings paired with Joe Bonamassa, it has been 14 years since she last released a live CD/DVD strictly of her own material backed by her world class band. In that *Live At Paradiso* outing, Hart prowls the stage with the edgy youthful intensity of someone who had harnessed her artistic lightning as it crackles and explodes through a set of 15 water-soaked salvos. Her emotional

tremors were as exposed as throbbing, raw-nerved revelations. Even her between song banter was an window into her soul at that moment.

Her current live set was recorded during an intimate gig in March 2017 at NYC's famed Iridium Jazz Club. Originally, this was meant to be a show only, but when Hart, her band, and management viewed the product, they unanimously agreed the night needed to be released. As showcase for Hart to deliver tunes from her most recent albums, *Front And Center* is also an opportunity for Hart's fans to behold her maturation. No longer clad in low rider jeans or tank tops and no longer slithering on the stage, Hart is now a seasoned artist who is very comfortable in the performer, writer, and musician she has evolved into.

I saw Hart perform two weeks prior to this night, and I have seen her twice at festivals since, and I can honestly say

Named one of the Best Albums of 2017 by Downbeat Magazine

*The Beat of my Heart*  
LISA BIALES

"She nails the good time spirit of the blues."  
Sean Arthur Joyce - Chameleon on Fire

"... her voice is distilled magic."  
Blues Blast Magazine

[www.LisaBiales.com](http://www.LisaBiales.com)

MICHISSIPPI MICK KOLASSA'S  
**TAYLOR  
MADE  
BLUES BAND**  
FREE RANGE BLUES®

Original blues, cherished classics, and a few blues uncover surprises ... brought to you directly from the Delta!

booking contact [mimsmick@gmail.com](mailto:mimsmick@gmail.com)  
[www.mimsmick.com](http://www.mimsmick.com)

that these 15 songs and 80 minutes represent exactly her current show.

Basically it's a pick your Hart fest. On the DVD, you can visually watch her journey through songs at the piano, on her acoustic guitar, or standing at her mic. Or you can listen to the tunes on CD and imagine the visuals. After opening with "Let's Get Together" and two recent piano-based tunes, "Baddest Blues" and "Jazz Man," Hart shows off her arena-rocker muscle on "Delicious Surprise," a full throttled runaway reprised from her 1999 *Screamin' For My Supper* release. Another tune from her Atlantic days, "Isolation," features Harp playing her acoustic bass guitar next to Jon Nichols warm guitar.

Amid this highlight reel of superb moments are the stunning ballad, "Tell Her You Belong To Me," her saintly tribute to Mother Teresa, "Saint Teresa," her ode to her husband, "My California," and my personal favorite at every concert, "Leave The Light On." On "Can't Let Go," Hart and the band call Sonny Landreth to the stage to add his signature slide to the six-minute rollercoaster.

Her solo piano DVD finale, "As Long As I Have A Song," and CD final song "No Place Like Home," are affirmations of the strength Hart continues to find in the writing and playing of her music. It takes a special performer who has the confidence

to end a show with an intimate ballad and keep audiences enthralled. I have seen Hart embrace these personal endings over the past three years at both intimate theaters and 10,000+ audiences at festivals. And always to the same standing ovation reaction. The DVD bonus material includes a 17-minute interview with Hart, three band tunes and three acoustic tunes.

For those of us who have watched Beth Hart since her Atlantic Record days, her maturation is a joy to behold.

— Art Tipaldi

### BETTYE LaVETTE *Things Have Changed* Verve



To say that Bettye LaVette makes these this music her own doesn't do justice to the 12 cuts that begin with Dylan songs, some little known '70s and '80s cuts, and "la Vettes" them. If Dylan is the sage of a lost generation bursting to cut loose from the post-war Eisenhower generation, Bettye LaVette is his grandmother. Not the kind of grandmother that slips him candy when mom isn't looking, but the grizzled crone

who sips vodka out of her water bottle and ignores the PG warnings because she's wise enough to know her grandkid is street smart and book learned more than she is.

It's one thing to say an artist makes someone else's songs his or her own. It's another to say they so completely remake a song that when you first hear it you don't even remember that it's someone else's view of the world. You might not even think about it as other than a brand new song. Then, the meaning of the song can be completely different: different attitude, different mood, different take on the message.

Tell me after you hear her sing, "Don't get up gentlemen, I'm only passing through People are crazy and times are strange" from the title cut that you can even imagine Dylan singing "Things Have Changed" ever again. Or "I'm locked in tight, I'm out of range/I used to care, but things have changed/This place ain't doing me any good/I'm in the wrong town, I should be in Hollywood." I can see why Dylan kissed her on the lips when they first met. Twisted tea, both of them.

Many of these songs are from Dylan's middle period that most people ignore but just think about how different these lyrics from the title cut come across sung by a 72-year old soul singer who should have given Aretha a run for the gold in the 1960 and is certainly ten times more interesting than the Queen of soul circa

## 5th Annual



Presented by GPS Festival Productions, LLC, Partners  
Paul E Benjamin and Greg Herndon

**October 19-21, 2018**  
Sertoma Youth Ranch, Brooksville, FL  
Best Weekend of Blues  
RV, Tent Camping & Hotels Available  
Tickets on Sale  
941-758-7585  
[www.campingwiththeblues.com](http://www.campingwiththeblues.com)

### FRIDAY, OCT. 19:

Campers Acoustic Jam  
Brody Buster  
LC Williams & the Driver  
Duffy Bishop  
JP Soars & the Red Hots  
Jam to Follow

### SATURDAY, OCT. 20:

Campers Acoustic Jam  
Scott Ellison  
Packrats Smokehouse  
Prestage Brothers  
Gracie Curran & the High Flautin' Band  
Beautiful Bobby Blackmon  
Dirty Red & the Soul Shakers  
Mark May Band  
Jam to Follow

### SUNDAY, OCT. 21:

Campers Acoustic Jam  
Blues Doctors  
Amanda Fish  
Tas Cru & Tortured Souls Band  
Brandon Santini  
Jam to Follow

FIND US ON:





2018. Imagine a female version of a leather-throated Johnny Cash post June Carter. Yeah, I know. You gotta hear it for yourself.

If you don't yet think you've gotta have this CD, imagine Keith Richards playing reserved guitar on two cuts and a band that includes producer Steve Jordan on drums and guitar, Larry Campbell on pedal steel and Trombone Shorty on trombone.

— Don Wilcock

## LARKIN POE

**Peach**

Tricki-Woo Records



Sisters Rebecca and Megan Lovell began recording as Larkin Poe after the breakup of the Lovell Sisters, a bluegrass act they formed with their older sister when they were teenagers. Larkin Poe augments acoustic and electric guitars and banjo with keyboards and programmed percussion on the duo's third album, *Peach*, presenting a blues/electronica hybrid. While the modern touches gives the songs a

contemporary framework, the Lovells, who produced the set on their own, write songs that don't stray far from the structure of the traditional blues they use as their blueprint.

Thus, fresh takes on such familiar fare as "Come On In My Kitchen," "Black Betty," and "John The Revelator" mix well with originals like "Freedom," which recalls the Americana-laced pop of K.C. Tunstall, and "Cast 'em Out," which echoes the influence of Mississippi John Hurt. A cover of Son House's "Preachin' Blues," a gospel rave-up featuring banjo and electric slide guitar, is punctuated by electronic hand claps.

While the Atlanta-based sisters are adept as string players, they bring a compelling vocal sound to the mix, harmonizing in the way only sisters can. While these songs will appeal to blues fans they're bound to attract listeners from wider sphere. "Pink & Red," for example, features a spoken-word vocal part and a hip-hop sensibility that underscores the duo's mainstream appeal.

Not surprisingly, Larkin Poe has opened for such diverse artists as Elvis Costello, Conor Oberst of indie-act Bright Eyes, and Kristian Bush of the country band Sugarland. Producer T Bone Burnett tapped them to perform and sing on *Lost On The River: The New Basement Tapes*, a multi-artist collaboration that included Costello and members of Dawes, Mumford & Sons, and My Morning Jacket crafting new songs from leftover Bob Dylan lyrics.

— Michael Cote

## LITTLE STEVEN

**Soulfire**

Wicked Cool



Steven Van Zandt was a prominent performer and presenter at the 2018 BMA festivities in Memphis this last May. The singer/songwriter/guitarist/garage rock guru is well-known beyond the music world for his work in TV and movies. *Soulfire* is his first album in 18 years. Self-produced and released on his Wicked Cool imprint, *Soulfire* is an apt title for such a passionate and well-performed album. It is certain to please

his fans as well as fans of other "Jersey Sound" purveyors like Southside Johnny & the Asbury Jukes and Bruce Springsteen.

The 12 tracks include ten originals

# RECKONING BILLY PRICE

RECKONING, 16th career recording  
by 2016 Blues Music Award  
winner Billy Price, former  
collaborator with  
Roy Buchanan and Otis Clay

*"Reckoning is Billy's breakout  
fulfillment of his amazing discography"*  
—Bob Margolin

Produced by Kid Andersen and Billy Price  
and featuring Jim Pugh (keyboards),  
Jerry Jemmott (bass), Alex Pettersen (drums),  
Johnny Bones (sax), Rusty Zinn (vocals),  
Lisa Leuschner Andersen (vocals),  
Sons of the Soul Revivers (vocals)

Available at  
Amazon, iTunes,  
and [billyprice.com](http://billyprice.com)

Publicist:  
Amy Brat  
BratGirlmedia  
[brat@bratgirlmedia.com](mailto:brat@bratgirlmedia.com)  
708-305-0778

Festival and  
Concert Bookings:  
Kimberly Horton  
[muzik4youent@gmail.com](mailto:muzik4youent@gmail.com)  
[Muzik4YouEnt.com](http://Muzik4YouEnt.com)  
601-506-7637



# Bridget Kelly Band

2015 & 2016 IBC Semi-Finalists  
#1 charting RMR "Electric Blues" Artists



featuring ...

Bridget Kelly

Tim Fik

NEW CD 2018  
"Blues Warrior"



**ROAD DAWG  
TOURING CO.**

doug@road-dawg.com



"Blues Warrior is a game changing, shape shifting, cliché busting album that is sure to bring more attention to this extremely talented band."

*The Real Music Observer (David Spuria) May 11, 2018*

"An excellent Blues album" *Sheryl & Don Crow, The Nashville Blues Society, May 27, 2018.*

"everything a contemporary Blues album should be ..power, passion and soul...found in abundance."

*Bill Wilson, "Reflections in Blue" May 28, 2018*

bridgetkellyband.com  
bridgetkellyband@gmail.com

(several previously recorded by himself or others) and two covers: the wah-wah infused, percussion-percolating "Down And Out In New York City," originally performed by James Brown in the 1973 movie *Black Caesar* (with a sound track similar to Curtis Mayfield's work in *Superfly* from 1972), and "Blues Is My Business," a funky blues by Etta James (penned by Kevin Bowe and Todd Cerney), with snarling, side-piercing guitar.

Overall, the music is boisterous soul-rock, influenced by the music of the Fifties and the Sixties, with bright and brassy Phil Spector wall of sound production flourishes. While most of the tunes deal with the vicissitudes of love, the introspective title track urges us to find the "Soulfire" within us to persevere through life's tribulations. The sadness of heartbreak and broken promises is palpable on the string-laden "The City Weeps Tonight," a ballad which harkens back to the heyday of doo-wop. Van Zandt puts a Dylanesque vocal spin on the strummer "Saint Valentine's Day," originally recorded by the Norwegian rockers Cocktail Slippers on a 2009 album produced by Van Zandt.

A large cast of 18 musicians (including nine horn players) accompanies Van Zandt. Additionally, there are six female backing vocalists while the Persuasions provide the background vocals on "The City Weeps Tonight" and "I Don't Want To Go Home." Little Steven is true to his muse on *Soulfire*, an album 18 years in the making.

— Thomas J. Cullen III

## TERESA JAMES

*Here In Babylon*

Jesi-Lu Records



She usually comes out roaring, packing a lot of power in a small package. But on Teresa James' latest, *Here In Babylon*, she shows a mellow, soulful side. It's a revelation to James' fans who have come to expect to have their hair blown back every time the diminutive Texas tornado steps up to the mic. But her opener, "I Know I Ain't Been So Perfect," is county soul, James' drawl book-ended by Mike Finnegan's burbling B-3 and Billy Watts' guitar adding some prickly blues barbs in the middle. "Give Me A Holler" is also pretty subdued for James, Bonnie Raitt-ish, low-down, horny funk that slithers along, threatening to break out into a second line strut any second but never quite breaks a sweat, content to keep it to a cool lope.

James pays tribute to Greg Allman with "The Day The Blues Came To Call," her vocal a blend of Etta James sweetened by Bonnie Raitt. "That voice reached me deep down/Woo man! He could sing anything," James howls, as the band carries her along at funeral march tempo. James doesn't get around to rocking until late in the set on "I Gotta Roll," throwing down a Delbert McClinton groove on a can't stand still, holler and jump extravaganza, a Jerry Lee key ticklin' celebration buoyed by Joe Sublet's sax and Darrell Leonard's trumpet. James elicits Bo Diddley's help as a throbbing framework in her search for a serious drinkin' establishment on "Find Me A Bar," looking for one with "sawdust on the floor and a bar-b-q pit smokin' out the back door." She's just as picky about her choice for entertainment, declaring that said juke joint must have a couple of specific jukebox items as well, because "T Bone Walker gonna fix my disposition/ Jimmy Reed always improves my condition."

Even though it's more laid back than some of her previous work, Teresa James and the Rhythm Tramps deliver a Texas flavored, message dripping with hot sauce that's hard to resist.

— Grant Britt



## KID RAMOS

### Old School

Rip Cat Records



Ace Orange County, CA, guitarist David "Kid" Ramos re-enters the recording world with his fifth release, and first since 2001. Although he continued performing sporadically during the interim, for part of the time he was dealing with a serious health problem that he seems to have conquered. His return to recording is welcome.

Ramos has an impressive resume, from his near-decade as a twenty-something-year-old in the 1980s with the James Harman Band, to stints with lauded bands Roomful of Blues, the Fabulous Thunderbirds, and the Mannish Boys. High quality bands recruit high quality talent, and Ramos fits the bill, as attested by his receipt of thirteen Blues Music Award nominations (and one win). On *Old School* he has "paid it forward" by himself aligning top flight talent: his backing ensemble is anchored by West Coast blues experts Kedar Roy on bass, Bob Welsh on keyboards, and Marty Dodson on drums.

On the 13 tunes, five written or co-written by Ramos, he distinguishes himself by doing what he does best: creative guitar work with impeccable rhythm. (I first saw Ramos live in his days sharing the guitar duties in the Harman Band with the late, great Hollywood Fats; the two of them together were scintillating, and Ramos has inherited Fats's dead-on sense of pace and irresistible swinging style.) His skills are evident from the opening track, "Kid's Jump," a tribute to B.B. King, which doesn't evoke King's style but is classy nonetheless and benefits from Welsh vamping on the keys. Equally impressive are the set's other instrumentals, "Mashed Potatoes And Chili" and "Wes Side (Bumpin')," the latter a Wes Montgomery tune showing that Kid can effortlessly play a slow jazzy blues with aplomb.

The ensemble also digs deeply into "All Your Love," one of my favorite songs by the late Chicago bluesman Magic Sam (Maghett), on which Ramos does some understated but beautiful guitar work. Also covered nicely is a T-Bone Walker composition, "High Society," on which guest Kim Wilson provides the fine vocal. Along the way there are some tunes with a 1950s vibe ("Mona Lisa") and even some with hints of a Latino flavor, not surprising given Ramos's ethnic origin and his stint with the (now apparently defunct) band Los Fabulocos.

As for the vocals on "Old School": Kid sings on only one track; his son Johnny and guests Jon Atkinson and Johnny Tucker provide the singing on the remaining tracks. In my opinion, the vocals on the album don't reach the high bar set by the musicians. That said, the album is still a worthy addition to Kid Ramos's oeuvre.

— Dan Stevens

## IAN SIEGAL

### All The Rage

Nugene



It has been six long years since UK bluesman Ian Siegal released a studio album of new material. He has kept his name in the marketplace with a series of live discs but is overdue for new rootsy (mostly) electric original music. The tough, raw and gritty *All The Rage* is a reminder of just how powerful a musician he is.

**"Tampa Bay's Premier Bluesman"**

**Tommy McCoy**

**New CD**

**727-403-9354**

**tommyccoyblues.com** **tommyccoyblues@gmail.com**

Tommy McCoy 25 Year Anniversary  
Tommy with Commander Cody  
w/ British Blues Band Parkway's Allie  
with Levan Haden and Gorth Hudson  
Tommy's first early release  
Tommy with Lucky Peterson  
Tommy with Double Trouble  
with Gregg Allman Band Alumni

**New From The Multiple BMA Nominee Saxophonist/Singer/Songwriter**

**Jimmy Carpenter**

**Plays The Blues**

**Classic and Original Blues**

**"...a slow-drivin' down-n-dirty lesson on how to coax the deepest shades of blue imaginable outta that horn of plenty"**

*Sheryl A. Dean Crow, Nashville Blues Society*

**Produced by Mike Zito with Tinsley Ellis, Anders Osborne, Tony Diteodoro, Dave Keyes, Jonn Del Toro Richardson, Lewis Stephens**

Available at **BluesMusicStore.com** **VizzTone.com** **iTunes** **Amazon** **Signed Copies at JimmyCarpenter.net**

**VizzTone** Label Group



Siegal seems to have spent some of that time absorbing Tom Waits. His increasingly gravelly voice shares similarities with the idiosyncratic American singer/songwriter in his *Rain Dogs* era (and Howlin' Wolf too). Lyrically, Siegal is irritated with the political climate, both in America and the UK, which adds an extra spoonful of passion to these tracks.

Those who have followed Siegal's career know he is heavily influenced by the Mississippi backwoods hill sound. He has recorded two discs with members of the North Mississippi Allstars and, although they are not a part of these proceedings, longtime friend, Mississippi resident and co-conspirator Jimbo Mathus (the two recorded a 2016 live, unplugged CD) is essential to this set. He flew over from the States to Amsterdam to co-write, produce, and play, and his contributions are integral to its success.

The ten tunes were cut in just four, six-hour sessions, but nothing seems rushed or hurried. Rather than employ studio pros, Siegal is backed by his touring trio along with Mathus who contributes guitars, keyboards, mandolin, and even drums on one tune. The vibe is low key – nothing really rocks – yet a rugged, often biting edge to the overall sound keeps the listener riveted. There's an early electric

Dylan feel to "I Won't Be Your Shotgun Rider" that creates an unmistakable groove, heightened by a tough Siegal acoustic slide solo. He goes to church to testify on the melancholy gospel-soaked "Sweet Souvenir" complete with backing female vocals and a Stax/Otis Redding undercurrent. Siegal gets tender on the unplugged and very personal "My Flame," a love song to a life partner sung with palpable, raspy emotion.

The aforementioned Waits influence is all over the Latin rhythm of the politically portentous "Ain't You Great?" ("Ain't it great again/all this hate again?"), from which the album's double entendre name is derived. The easy funk of "Sailor Town" tells the story of the titular burg with a strong dose of simmering swamp. And when Siegal rips into the slow blues of "The Shit Hit," another track with contemporary political/social overtones, he lets his aggressive slide do the talking. He also convincingly channels the spirit of Howlin' Wolf on the hypnotically repeated riff of "If I Live" with "Smokestack Lightning" intensity.

It might have taken a few too many years to arrive, but *All The Rage* proves that Ian Siegal is a serious and dedicated blues lifer, not content to rest on his impressive laurels and who improves and impresses with each release.

– Hal Horowitz

## JONTAVIOUS WILLIS

### *Blue Metamorphosis*

Self-release



Within minutes of Jontavious Willis' "Ancestor Blues," you will understand why *Blue Metamorphosis* was honored as the Blues Foundation's

Best Self-Produced CD in January 2018. Willis' full-bodied acoustic guitar and delicate voice are immediately captivating. Profiled in BMM # 14, Willis was lauded by Taj Mahal as his "wonderboy...a great new voice of the 21st century in acoustic blues." and his debut recording, *Blue Metamorphosis*, is solid proof of Taj's prophetic insights.

Willis comes to the world with a similar dedication to the acoustic pre-war blues of the Delta, Texas, and the Carolinas as Alvin Youngblood Hart or Corey Harris embraced 25 years ago. He is not into merely playing the music of the genre's elders. Instead, Willis smartly embraces the musical intricacies of those forefathers and adds contemporary lyrics that illustrate his 21st century world. Totally dedicated to the acoustic traditions of the South, Willis and his resonant guitar have no trouble residing

A VizzTone label group Album Release

# Chris BAD News Barnes

## HOKUM BLUES

### THE BAND:

Steve Guyger, Jimmy Vivino  
Will Lee, Shawn Pelton  
Bette Sussman

“ This is a wonderful combination of Traditional Hokum and Contemporary Satire made by mighty fine musicians with a love of both. *It is Tight Like This*, enjoy. ”  
– Bill Wax, Blues Radio Luminary

Management & Bookings: Under The Radar music group 651-755-7944 mvt@utrmusicgroup.com



on the blues or spiritual side of the street in any blues locale. Mostly, Willis' acoustic soul is centered in the rural pre-war blues he has spent immersing himself in.

With a voice reminiscent of Hart, Willis opens the CD opens with "Ancestor Blues," his homage to the bluesmen and women who came before him. Like his contemporary Marquise Knox, Willis answers in song why this young man plays the blues, "because the music is in my blood." Boogie woogie guitar picking is the engine that drives "Mr. Willis' Worried Blues," a distant cousin to Blind Blake's "Blake's Worried Blues." "So So Blues" features Willis accompanying his slide guitar with his country harmonica in a stylish rag. (I love his vocal asides here a la Charlie Patton.) "Drunk Sunday" takes on the Southern obligation that you juke joint Saturday night, but attend church Sunday morning. On "Luxurious Man" Willis unpacks the 12-string and street corners a boastful ragtime strut to show his obvious wealth to the passing ladies.

Willis can also deftly handle an electric blues band. The final five tunes feature Willis adding bass, piano, and drums to the arrangements. "Tip Toe" is centered on a funky groove, "Graveyard Shift Blues" and "I Got A Janky Woman" feature the ensemble styled blues of Muddy Waters, and "Meriwether Boogie" is a snappy slide guitar and piano instrumental. Willis' bent notes in either style cut deep into the soul and possess the ability to deliver meaning in today's over processed musical world. Word is that he has been in the studio working with Keb' Mo' on a follow-up recording, probably released later in the year.

— Art Tipaldi

#### The Allman Brothers Band

*Cream Of The Crop* 2003

Peach Records



On their 2003 tour promoting *Hittin' The Note*, The Allman Brothers Band played their first brand-new songs in ten years during long, significantly varied sets. The rebuilt Brothers, featuring Derek Trucks and Warren Haynes goading each other on guitars, was as hot as a rocket. Who better then to launch an Instant Live CD venture? Thirty minutes after each show ended, fans could go home with a damn good-sounding copy of that rocket in their pocket. Now Haynes, with renowned producers Bill Levenson and John Lynskey, have mastered and sequenced 36 songs from six nights of Instant Live into the ultimate Allman Brothers Band extravaganza.

Each of the four CDs contains exceptional versions of Allman Brothers classics, and a flood of brilliant blues music. From their nascent beginnings in 1969 until their final epic show in 2014, The Allman Brothers played the blues with a deep reverence for the African-American work song heritage and Chicago revisions of the idiom, and with unmatched improvisational chops and spirit. The first song 23 year-old Duane Allman conducted his new band through in '69 was Muddy Waters' booming "Trouble No More." All the years later here, the song projects that same youthful urgency and pioneering character, not to mention wicked wisps of slide guitar by 24 year-old Trucks. Trucks and Haynes consistently displayed, during their inventive harmonies and solos, the perfectly suited dimension they brought to the band.

The parallels with the past were uncanny. A buoyant take on Freddie King's "Woman Across the River," Gregg Allman's devastating "Desdemona," and Haynes' jazzy, brooding "Who To Believe," were among the blues freshly-minted for fans courtesy of the new studio album. The band worked up several other blues numbers, too, including Sonny Boy Williamson II's immortal "Good Morning Little Schoolgirl," which showcased the full, rumbling and



finely-tuned aggregation to great effect, punctuated on this night by guest Karl Denson's inspired sax playing. Allman Brothers staples such as "Hoochie Coochie Man" (a showcase for Haynes' growling voice and stinging, fluid guitar work), Blind Willie McTell's "Statesboro Blues," and Elmore James' "One Way Out" (the latter two effectively Band anthems), also sound particularly vital.

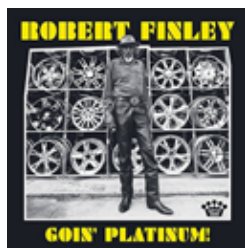
Gregg Allman roared on his colossal "Whipping Post," his dangerously swinging "Dreams," and his sly "Come And Go Blues," among many others, with fire in his belly. He also confessed his soul during new songs "Old Before My Time" and "High Cost of Low Living." So, regardless of the multiple variations of these numbers already out there, Allman Brothers aficionados and archivists will have a real field day with this set. The package is dedicated to the memory of Gregg Allman, certainly one of the world's finest blues singers. The Allman Brothers Band as a whole deserves high accolades for advancing blues music with fertile representations like no others have ever attempted.

— Tom Clarke

#### ROBERT FINLEY

##### *Goin' Platinum*

Easy Eye Sound



The amazingly eclectic *Goin' Platinum* is the second release for Robert Finley, the deep voiced, intensely soulful sexagenarian Louisiana singer who came to national attention two years ago with his debut *Age Don't Mean A Thing* (Big Legal Mess). The ten originals were written or co-written by producer/guitarist Dan Auerbach of the Black Keys and were recorded in "Simulated Stereo" at his Easy Eye Sound studio in Nashville.

Each tune is different and all are imbued with Finley's

gritty baritone vocals, which evoke the likes of Wilson Pickett, Otis Redding, and especially James Carr (except for the transcendent closer "Holy Wine," which Finley sings in an otherworldly falsetto).

The infectious hooks and intricate arrangements reveal Auerbach's vast knowledge of and appreciation for just about every type of popular American music since the ascension of rock. I've listened repeatedly to *Goin' Platinum*. There is a dizzying myriad of influences: Northern soul (i.e., Motown), Southern soul, folk-rock, blues, gospel, *et al*, and to my ears, hints of artists (a partial list) like the Stones, the Turtles, sweetly cooing Sixties girl groups, Simon & Garfunkel, the Holmes Brothers, Link Wray's Reprise recordings of the Seventies, as well as the aforementioned soul music legends.

It's difficult to cherry pick favorites because I liked every tune. Nonetheless, several immediately stood out: the ear-grabbing opener "Get It While You Can," bruising soul-rock extolling *carpe diem* with Dylanesque lyrics referencing Rudyard Kipling's poem "Gunga Din," the lurching "Three Jumpers," the only straight blues tune with cryptic lyrics evocative of Sonny Boy Williamson II, and the forlorn "Empty Arms," deep soul about love, loss, and loneliness suggestive of James Carr's best Goldwax tunes, but also had me thinking of Elvis' "Heartbreak Hotel" and Ray Charles' "Lonely Avenue."

Special kudos to the nimble interplay of keyboardists Ray Jacildo, whose organ ranges from cheesy to churchy and eerie to ethereal, and Bobby Wood, who augments his sparkling acoustic and electric pianos with glockenspiel on six tunes, vibraphone on five, and marimba on one. Special guests include legendary guitarist Duane Eddy and renowned session drummer Gene Chrisman (who spells drummer Jeffrey Clemons for two tracks). *Goin' Platinum* is one of the most pleasant surprises of the last ten years and is certain to be a candidate for best soul-blues album of the year. Highly recommended.

— Thomas J. Cullen III



26th Annual



# CHENANGO BLUES FEST

August 17 & 18

**ELVIN BISHOP'S  
BIG FUN TRIO**

**Toronz Cannon**

**AJ Ghent [j-ent]**

**Cash Box Kings**



**Chenango County Fairgrounds  
Norwich, NY**

**SAMANTHA FISH**

**Prestage Brothers**

**John "Papa" Gros**

• **Keeshea Pratt Band** • **Hubby Jenkins**

• **Brandon Santini** • **Nate Gross Band** • **Angel Forrest Trio**

**TIX: \$25 ADV • \$35/GATE • 17 & UNDER FREE**

• **2 STAGES • CAMPING ON-SITE WITH FACILITIES • KIDS FUN**

• **FREE SUPERVISED ACTIVITIES • FOODS & CRAFTS**

**PLUS! EVERY WEEK - JULY 5 - AUGUST 30**

**NBT BANK FREE THURSDAY**

**SUMMER CONCERT SERIES!**



This program is made possible with public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts, which is administered by the Chenango County Council of the Arts, with support from Governor Andrew Cuomo and the NYS Legislature.

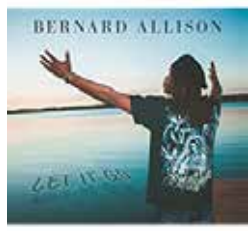
Like us on facebook • Follow us on twitter & Instagram [chenangobluesfest.org](http://chenangobluesfest.org)



## BERNARD ALLISON

### *Let It Go*

Ruf Records



Like Josh White, Jr., Bernard Allison is the offspring of a famous musician who inherited his father's musical and vocal chops while not copying his father's style or repertoire. While Bernard nevertheless possesses the inherited musical chops of the senior Allison, he performs in a style that is uniquely his, without copying or mimicking his father's work. The two covers of songs by Luther prove that point.

The album opens with the wall-shaking and well-received "Cruisin' For A Bluesin'," featuring smoking guitar solos and smooth, soulful vocals by Allison, who plays lead and slide guitar and B-3, with John T. McGhee (rhythm guitar), George Moyer (bass), and Mario Dawson (drums). Moyer and Dawson are an excellent rhythm duo that provides sonic enhancements dovetailing nicely with Allison's vocals and exceptional guitar playing.

While the final two tracks on this CD, "You're Gonna Need Me" and "Castle," are his father's songs, Bernard manages a reinterpretation that gives props to Dad while working the songs in a wholly different manner. In fact, some have compared his interpretations closer to the Muddy Waters' style than to Luther's, and that may be a fair assessment. "You're Gonna Need Me" is a slow and sensuous blues that offers props to Dad's music. However, the CD, with Bernard's masterful playing and arrangements, is one that brings comparison to other musicians, including his father, only so far.

Of his 19 albums recorded to date, *Let it Go* is probably his most ambitiously funk-laden blues album with an unusual cover of "Kiddo," a Brook Benton/Clyde Otis piece rendered sublime courtesy of a mesmerizing sax solo by Jose Ned James. There's lots of fun stuff on this CD, surprising in the way it mixes styles and motifs, daring the listener to figure out what might be coming next. "Blues Party," for example, opens with a surprisingly deft Elmore James' guitar riff followed throughout by the band's rhythm section, Allison's smooth guitar, and vocals that sound a lot more like Finis Tasby on this track than on the rest of the album.

Other notable tracks include "Backdoor Man" and "Hey Lady," the latter featuring a Stax-like guitar funk that, once again, breaks up the CD with variety, musicianship, and surprise. "Hey Mabel" is an upbeat percussion-driven tribute to a woman we'd all like to know, with Allison's B-3 offering a special, almost loving touch to the piece.

All in all, this CD creates a unique mixture of Allison's favorite funk grooves, some hard blue guitar, 1970s soul, fine vocals, and wonderful tributes to the late Luther Allison and Brook Benton.

— Michael Cala



# JAMES ARMSTRONG & JOHNNY RAWLS on Catfood Records

JAMES ARMSTRONG

JOHNNY RAWLS

In Record Stores, at  
Amazon.com and CD Baby

 **Catfood Records**  
El Paso, Texas

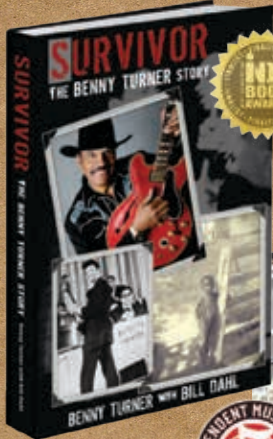
 

**catfoodrecords.com**



# NOLA BLUE CONGRATULATES our award-winning artists!

## BENNY TURNER



*"Even though it's taken him awhile to receive the recognition he deserves as a blues man, Benny Turner is making up for lost time these days... This is a great introduction to Benny Turner, and a great reminder of the powerful music that Freddie King left us."*  
- BluesBytes



Booking:



booking@bluzpik.com

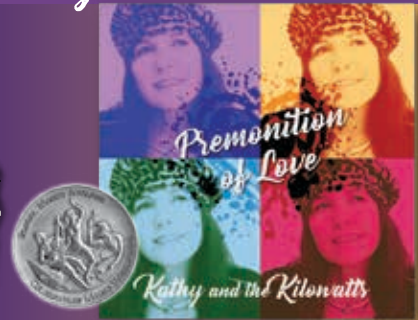
WWW.BENNYTURNER.COM

Publicity/Promotion:



info@blindraccoon.com

## Kathy and the Kilowatts



*"One listen will make it clear why Kathy Murray's name is used in the same sentence as those of Marcia Ball, Angela Strehli and Lou Ann Barton in some parts of Texas to this day... This is solid blues from start to finish."*  
- Bill Wilson, Reflections in Blue

www.kathymurrayandthekilowatts.com

## Five-Star Service for Award-Winning Artists

ALSO ON NOLA BLUE RECORDS:



www.nola-blue.com

## BEN LEVIN

### Ben's Blues

1-2-3 Records



Listening to Ben Levin's hands roll across the piano keyboard on the opening track of his debut recording, "Floyd's Blues," it is immediately apparent that he definitely feels the music. Once he starts singing in a clear, laid-back style, you figure he has been hiding out in juke joints for several decades, an undiscovered gem. When he follows with two spot-on renditions of Professor Longhair tunes, "Willie Mae" and "Hey

Now Baby," Levin undoubtedly will have your full attention, especially on the latter number as he captures the essence of the Professor's vocal phrasing.

At this point, listeners will probably have to remind themselves that Levin is an 18-year-old from the Cincinnati area, who started out taking piano lessons from Ricky Nye, who reverts back to playing his first instrument, drums, for this project. Chris Douglas plays the upright bass and Levin's father, Aron, handles the guitar parts. Stevie Snyder plays harmonica on several tracks, getting a chance to stretch out a bit on "Cold Chills," with Levin's right hand spinning out plenty of magic. Big Maceo's "Chicago Breakdown" is a hearty stomp that makes it clear that the young man has a solid left hand as well. He sounds like a well-seasoned pro on "Take Out Some Insurance," playing Jimmy Reed's signature rhythm as an simmering, earthy shuffle.

Having lived through one failed love affair, Levin managed to use that experience as the inspiration for three tunes. "Little Girl" finds him caressing the keys, his mournful voice describing his viewpoint, "...You think you're a woman, but you're acting like a little girl." The band takes a more forceful approach on "Have You Lost Your Mind," as Levin struggles to grasp the situation,

then father and son use their instruments to get some emotional relief. "Mr. Blue" portrays plenty of the Mose Allison style over a sprightly, swinging beat. All Levin's abilities are on display on the two-fisted romp, "Tribute To Mr. Perkins," and the instrumental title track, written by Nye, with Levin turning in a contemplative solo performance that leaves a lasting impression.

The phrase "old soul" certainly applies to Ben Levin. It is remarkable that he has managed to learn much of the essence of the blues piano traditions at such a young age, sounding thoroughly at home on every track. Traditional blues fans should grab a copy of this highly recommended recording!

— Mark Thompson

## BISCUIT MILLER

### Live At The North Atlantic Blues Festival

Self-release



Folks at the 2017 North Atlantic Blues Festival in Rockland, Maine, were treated to a terrific performance by vocalist-bassist Biscuit Miller and his always-lively band, The Mix, along with special guest guitarists Anthony Gomes and Christone "Kingfish" Ingram.

There ain't a bad song on the nine-track disc — all originals — which resonates with Miller's fun, happy style.

The band is known for its high energy live shows, and it's about time we got a live CD. Adding to the day were two standout songs paying tribute to recently-passed Lonnie Brooks, "Watch Dog," the last track, is actually a cool jam featuring great guitar solos by the teen-aged "Kingfish" (outstanding!) and Gomes; and to James Brown, who is saluted with a 12-minute outstanding funk-o-rama called "Biscuit Gets Funky for Mr. James Brown." [Note: "Watch Dog" is titled "Tribute Jam For Mr. Lonnie Brooks" on the CD.]



Miller, who refers to the late Brooks as his old boss, was reunited at the seaside festival with Gomes, with whom he played for several years. "Kingfish," who performed earlier, was sitting backstage watching Biscuit's set and wanted to be part of it all. For a live recording, this disc has just the right amount of crowd background noise. The songs are clearly heard, yet you get that live feel when Biscuit interacts with his flashy drummer Myron "Dr. Love" Robinson about the Maine venue ("we not in Iowa here") and praises the crowd for getting up on "the biggest dance floor I've ever played for."

"She Use To Love Me," is a smooth slow blues with great horn by The Mix's Elijah Easton and equally good guitar by another Mix regular, Bobby B. Wilson, who shines throughout the record on slide and back up vocals. "Black Eyed Peas And Cornbread" is another funky, upbeat winner about dining while traveling through Mississippi and Rockland – even if it did make me hungry, particularly when Biscuit starts listing off the side dishes (turnip greens, hush puppies, hot sauce) culminating with the dessert, sweet potato pie, shouted out by Dr. Love after a suspenseful buildup.

Other standouts are the opener, "She Likes To Boogie" one of the band's better known songs; the up-tempo, danceable "Let's Go Fishing," and "AG And Funky" which showcases Gomes. The one ballad, "Blow A Kiss," is sexy and romantic – perfect for slow dancing.

The disc gives everyone a chance to hear one of Miller's wild live shows, and likely put a smile as big as his on all of our faces.

– Karen Nugent



Benefiting the Jacobs & Cushman  
San Diego Food Bank



**Sept. 8**

On the downtown  
San Diego waterfront  
noon to 8 p.m

**Billy Gibbons  
& Friends**

- » **Tommy Castro  
& the Painkillers**
- » **Kenny Neal**
- » **John Nemeth &  
the Blue Dreamers**
- » **Lightnin' Malcolm  
and more**

[AimLoan.com](http://AimLoan.com)

**SAN DIEGO  
BLUES  
FESTIVAL**

[sdbluesfest.com](http://sdbluesfest.com)



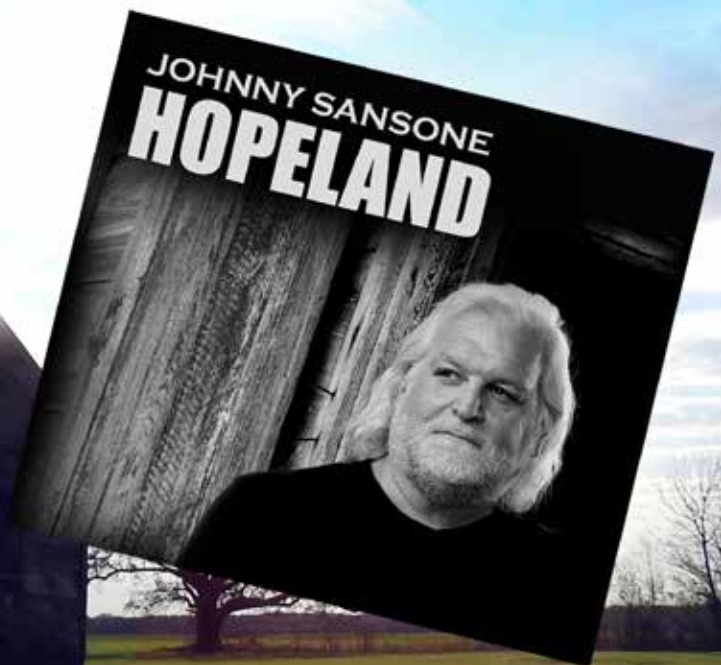
# JOHNNY SANSONE'S NEW RELEASE: HOPELAND

PRODUCED BY  
ANDERS OSBORNE

FEATURING:

NORTH MISSISSIPPI  
ALLSTARS

ANDERS OSBORNE  
JON CLEARY



FOR BOOKING, TOUR DATES, MERCHANDISE & CONTACT INFO:  
[WWW.JOHNNYSANSONE.COM](http://WWW.JOHNNYSANSONE.COM)



**Ally Venable Band**  
**Puppet Show**  
 Connor Ray Music



Still in her late teens, Lone Star state singer/songwriter/guitarist Ally Venable and her band, Bobby Wallace (bass) and Elijah Owings (drums) come on like a raging Texas twister tearing up the local turf and surrounding states with their raucous blues rock show.

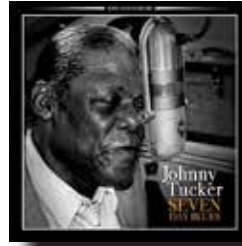
On her sophomore release, *Puppet Show*, Venable enlists friend and mentor Lance Lopez (a great guitarist in his own right) to play guitar for the track "Bridges To Burn," Pelham, New Hampshire, resident Gary Hoey on blazing slide guitar for the album opener "Devil's Son," Eric Steckel on keyboards for a trio of tunes, "Puppet Show," "He Caught The Katy," and "Survive," Steve Krase on blazing harmonica for "Backwater Blues" and "He Caught The Katy" to add their substantial talents to an already stable outing.

Capably penning eight of the album's tracks along with covers of Taj Mahal's "(S)He Caught The Katy" and Bessie Smith's "Backwater Blues," Venable proves to be a songwriter beyond her years. Songs of particular note include the album's title track "Puppet Show" where Venable's voice and guitar playing comes together in perfect unison, the heartfelt, smoldering slow blues of "Comfort In My Sorrows," the funky indigo jive of "Survive," and the backwoods jangle of "Waste It On You."

Ally Venable may be based in Texas for now, but it's only a matter of time before the entire planet hears her song.

— Brian M. Owens

**JOHNNY TUCKER**  
**Seven Day Blues**  
 HighJohn



Veteran vocalist Johnny Tucker has been active on the SoCal blues scene since he joined the late Phillip Walker's band as a drummer and singer in 1964. *Seven Day Blues* is only his third album and first since 2006's *Why You Lookin' At Me?* (also on HighJohn). Label head Bob Auerbach recruited old school guitarist Big Jon Atkinson to produce the album. Atkinson leads a group of savvy West Coast stalwarts comprised of bassist/

harpist Troy Sandow, guitarist Scot Smart, and drummers Marty Dodson and Malachi Johnson. Guests include harmonica ace Bob Corritore (five tracks), organist Bob Welch (two tracks), guitarist Kid Ramos (one track), and bassist Kedar Roy (one track).

Tucker's vigorous and virile vocals are a puissant blend of Big Joe Turner's sledge hammer shouting and Howlin' Wolf's grit and gravel. Tucker's 15 originals include shuffles, grinders, and slow blues that are deliberately, and delightfully, redolent of the Chess recordings of Howlin' Wolf, Muddy Waters, Sonny Boy Williamson, and Little Walter. The first two tracks set the old school tone for all that follows: the jagged rumbler "Talkin' About You Baby" which evokes Howlin' Wolf and the bouncy "Tired of Doing Nothing" which is reminiscent of Little Walter's "Everything Gonna Be All Right."

There are four compelling slow blues including the title track. The best of these is saved for the last track: "You Can Leave My House," featuring Sandow's fiercely raucous harp. One tune that is a bit of a departure from the main body of tunes is "Love And Appreciation (To Georgia)," a mid-tempo Southern soul strutter

**THE 18<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL  
 HERITAGE MUSIC  
 BLUESFEST**

Presented by *Yuengling*

[heritagemusicfest.com](http://heritagemusicfest.com)

**August 10, 11, 12**  
**Wheeling, WV**

**Delbert McClinton**  
**Southern Hospitality**  
**Eric Gales**  
**Rick Estrin and the Nightcats**  
**Monster Mike Welch**  
**& Mike Ledbetter**  
**Rev Peyton's Big Damn Band**  
**Southern Avenue**  
**Paul DesLauriers Band**  
**Ghost Town Blues Band**  
**Mindi Abair & the Boneshakers**  
**Eden Brent**  
**Heather Newman**  
**Miss Freddie**  
**The Keeshea Pratt Band, IBC Band**  
**Kevin "B.F." Burt, IBC Solo Duo**  
**Felix Slim**



**TYLER MORRIS BAND**

"The first time I heard Tyler Morris play I was astounded at how young he was and the vastness of his feel and lick repertoire... I hate him. Hahaha."  
— Phil X (Bon Jovi, The Drills)

"When you close your eyes and listen to his guitar playing you hear what sounds like a lifetime of experience."  
— AJ Wachtel, Blues Music Magazine

**VizzTone**  
label group  
\* WORLD-CLASS BLUES \*

TYLERDMORRIS.COM

with lilting organ by Bob Welch which recalls the Sixties recordings of James Carr and Clarence Carter.

There is no doubt that Johnny Tucker is the star here. That being said, 11 of the tunes feature the incredible harp playing of either Sandow or Corritore, and should interest harmonica fans. *Seven Days Blues* is an exemplar of the still vital and much appreciated old school style. This potential contender for Traditional Blues Album of the year sounds like it was a lifetime in the making because it was.

— Thomas J. Cullen III

#### KARA GRAINGER

*Living With Your Ghost*

Station House Records



If you are unfamiliar with Australia's Kara Grainger, this is the perfect album to meet her. Thought born and bred in the land down under, Grainger has been living in the L.A. area since 2012. In that time, she has recorded two engaging CDs, *L.A. Blues* in 2011 and *Shiver & Sigh* produced by David Z on Eclecto Groove in 2013. That impressive recording opened doors for Grainger to tour the U.S. and world honing her craft

as singer, guitarist, and songwriter.

Blessed with a youthful voice that is part Bonnie Raitt, part Teresa James, Grainger is one of the genre's brightest singer-songwriter voices. Of the dozen tunes, 11 are original songs, four co-written with producer Anders Osborne. The lyrics capture snapshots of relationships from her position of empowerment. Her first three tunes seem to weave together like the opening chapters of any woman's search for the right love. Her title cut opens the

**BratGirlmedia** A FULL SERVICE MEDIA COMPANY.  
CONNECTING YOUR BLUES WORLD

**Proudly Representing**

- Kenny Neal
- Cyril Neville
- Shemekia Copeland
- Samantha Fish
- Alastair Greene
- Bob Corritore
- Billy Price
- Victor Wainwright
- Tyler Morris
- Too Slim and the Taildraggers
- Katy Guillen & the Girls
- Bernard Allison
- North Mississippi Allstars
- Albert Castiglia
- Long Tall Deb & Colin John
- Mike Zito
- Chris BadNews Barnes
- Bob Margolin
- Ruf Records
- VizzTone label group
- and many more...

**bratgirlmedia.com**



# MATT ANDERSEN & THE MELLOTONES



## LIVE AT OLYMPIC HALL

Matt at his best....LIVE, with a big band, to accompany that big voice.

**CD | 2LP | Digital Available May 25, 2018**

Canada



record with a gritty blues-rock anthem that speaks of the ghosts of past relationships that happened when she was "too young to know"; with a foundation of slide guitar, "Working My Way Back To Home," speaks of one's continuing journey to acceptance of self; "Man With Soul" speaks of contentment with a man who "takes me as I am."

Throughout the record, Osborne (guitar and vocals), Ivan Neville (keyboards and vocals), and an assortment of horns provide Grainger arrangements that spotlight her distinct vocals and spot on guitar. The co-writing with Osborne produced "You're In New Orleans," part nostalgia for leaving her L.A. home, part wonder at the magic of the Crescent City. That New Orleans magic continues on the pair's funk up "Groove Train." Both are awash with horns and percussion. The soothing spell of three chords is explained in "Reason To My Verse," which has subtle melodic similarities to John Hiatt's "Have A Little Faith In Me."

"Favorite Sin" allows Grainger the space to blast her full throated devotion to that "bad boy"; "Nobody But You" is a beautifully crafted song that humanizes the simple feelings in relationships; "Freedom Song," the longest track, closes the CD with her tender vocal delivery and delicate slide guitar elevating into a statement of her continuing personal journey. Kara Grainger is more proof that the blues and its sub-genres have been embraced by the world.

— Art Tipaldi



E-mail: [Service@BluesMusicMag.com](mailto:Service@BluesMusicMag.com)

# DEB RYDER

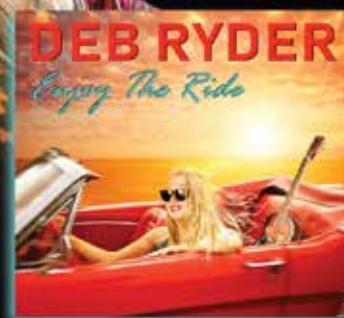
*Enjoy The Ride*

Special Guests

Chris Cain, Debbie Davies, Kirk Fletcher  
Big Lou Johnson, "Big Pete" van der Pluijm,  
Coco Montoya

"This is an artist that deftly combines polished musicianship with a deep respect for blues tradition. Deb Ryder deserves a spot on every blues fans radar." - Jon Kleinman

Produced by Tony Braunagel  
Executive Producer - Ric Ryder



VizzTone  
Label Group

BratGirlmedia

PIEDMONT  
RECORDS

[DebRyder.com](http://DebRyder.com)

AVAILABLE AT: MUSIC



**New Release - *Pacing The Floor***  
**BLUE & LONESOME duo**  
*Li'l Ronnie & Gordon Harrower*

*In stores Now!*  
*and online at all the usual sites!*

BLUESAPHONIC SOUND

...drop down to the bottom with some extremely strong, raw electric duets reminiscent of early John Lee Hooker. Li'l Ronnie and Gordon Harrower team up for a joyful journey through some deep, lowdown country blues. In the tradition of great guitar/harp duos like Sonny and Brownie and Cephas and Wiggins... - Mark Wenner (The Nighthawks)

Songs sound great Ronnie, love them - Anson Funderburgh

**Ronnie Owens** - vocals, harmonica and foot drums

**Gordon Harrower** - vocals and guitar

- Free downloads - Visit our web store for more great CDs
- Free Streaming on web site JukeBox - [ellersoulrecords.com](http://ellersoulrecords.com)



- Publicity - EllerMedia, contact: [info@ellersoulrecords.com](mailto:info@ellersoulrecords.com) (804) 306-1302
- Radio Promotions - Todd Glazer Promotions: [toddg@gci.net](mailto:toddg@gci.net) (907) 279-8546

**EllerSoul**  
 RECORDS®

**DANY FRANCHI**

***Problem Child***

Station House



Imagine a youthful Italian guitarist testing his mettle on the blues of Magic Sam and Eddie Taylor, or writing and singing a soul ballad like he thinks he is Arthur Alexander at Muscle Shoals. A recipe for disaster, right? Not if you are 28-year-old Dany Franchi of Genoa, Italy.

*Problem Child* quickly eases any concern about the ability of Franchi to write, sing, and play the blues like he was born into it. Franchi masterfully

demonstrates that he knows what blues is all about even if he grew up in an Italian seaport that is most famous for giving a guy named Christopher Columbus his start.

Self-assured Franchi struts from the start with "Back To The River," on which he sings of his kinship to the Mississippi River aura that pervades life in the American South. The track really is a love song to blues history and the impact it's had on him. Produced by guitarist Anson Funderburgh, the album has a strong Texas tilt. Franchi obviously has listened to Funderburgh and Jimmie Vaughan, whose clean, crisp guitar solos left their mark on Franchi. And, Franchi's fearless in his guitar playing, and understands the subtlety of dynamics that escape far more established musicians.

He also isn't intimidated by taking on chestnuts from the best bluesman. Franchi shows considerable knowledge of West Side Chicago blues with his version of Magic Sam's chilling "Everything Gonna Be Alright." His strong-minded solos echo Magic Sam, but ring and sting with his own conviction. Similarly on

his remake of Eddie Taylor's "Big Time Playboy," Franchi finds a way to re-energize the song without losing the sauntering beat the defines it. His feel for the blues is unmistakable by the soul ballad, "Real Love," and the gulf Coast-styled "You Don't Want Me." Both songs are bolstered by the graceful aesthetics of keyboardist Jim Pugh, but "Real Love" features a warm and emphatic vocal from Franchi that is timeless. "You Don't Want Me" screams with a Houston ghetto authenticity from the Duke-Peacock era.

Even with a talented backing band (Funderburgh and Andy T on guitars; Pugh on piano and organ; Kaz Kazanoff's Texas Horns, and drummer Wes Starr), it is Franchi's talents that rise above all here. His intuitive drive and love of the blues is what stands out most here. Franchi is only scratching the surface of where his talent will take him.

— Michael Kinsman

**GHOST TOWN BLUES BAND**

***Backstage Pass***

Self-release



It's what the Beatles might have sounded like in their early amphetamine-fueled gigs in underground Berlin dives, a throat-shredding rendition of "Come Together" at breakneck speed punctuated with a horn section that wandered in from Memphis to get in on the action. Right in the middle of all the cacophony, the band hunkers down into a soulful, Allman-esqe Dickie and Duane take on "Norwegian Wood."

But before the last note fades away, the band strips the gears, roaring into Led Zeps' "Whole Lotta Love" weaving slide guitar-fueled dribs and drabs of "Norwegian Wood" in and out of the Page/Plant redo frenzy.

# The 2018 Music Festivals

*at The Marshfield Fair*

140 MAIN ST. (RT.3A) • MARSHFIELD, MA



## **The 22nd Anniversary GREEN HARBOR ROOTS FESTIVAL**

**Sunday, August 19th**

12 to 8 pm

**Honey Island Swamp Band**

**Dennis Brennan Band**

**The Eastwoods**

**The Rampage Trio**

**Ghost Train**

**Jeffrey Allen Shaw & Company**

## **The 23rd Annual**

## **NORTH RIVER BLUES FESTIVAL**

**Saturday, August 25th**

12 to 8 pm

**Ronnie Earl**

**Biscuit Miller & The Mix**

**Luther Junior Johnson**

**Michelle Rockwell Band**

**The Accelerators**

**45 RPM**

**Sunday, August 26th**

12 to 8 pm

**Southern Avenue**

**Nikki Hill**

**Sonya Rae & Ryan Taylor**

**Basic Black with Sam Gentile**

**Tyler Morris Band**

**Johnny C & Double D'S**

Presented by



For more info call (781) 834-6629 [www.marshfieldfair.org](http://www.marshfieldfair.org)

General Admission \$10.00 (Includes admission to the entire fair)

And that was just the opener. The Ghost Town Blues band calls Memphis home, but their sound is well traveled. This live performance from Lafayette's Music Room in Memphis last summer showcases the band blasting off with a mix of originals and covers that wander from blues to funk to boogie to jazz to soul, often in the same tune. Kevin Houston's sax and Suavo Jones' trombone provide jazzy funk as well as Memphis soul for a spicy stew. Led by the cigar box guitar-wielding Matt Isbell, who is also the band's lead vocalist and songwriter, the Ghost Town Blues Band zips around the country paying aural tribute to the best feet movin' fodder they can latch onto.

The second line strut of Isbell's original "Tip Of The Hat" is a horny showcase in the Trombone Shorty mode for Jones, keeping the band in a New Orleans party down lockstep. "Shine" is an unusual critter, guided into a mellow Southern rock slot by Isbell's guitar, then jumping the tracks to Motown with the backing horns. The band once again visits the Allmans for guitar inspiration on "Givin' It All Away," snippets of "Blue Sky" slipping in before Jones takes over once again, changing the tone to funky, free jazz with a Fred Wesley flavored triple-tongued slowdown.

For pure Beale Street boogie-woogie, "Big Shirley" gets the job done with the help of Tim Stanek's rattly keys, Isbell croakin' like a fonky frog 'til he suddenly gets a Plant transfusion, bustin' out into with throat-searing screams on Zep's "Rock And Roll," riding it to a sweaty conclusion that's more James Brown soul than Plant shriek. The band tackles the Allmans head-on with a 16-minute version of "Whippin' Post," taking liberties that Greg never dreamed of, leading off with a smidgen of "Summertime." Stanek's B-3 burbles more like Jimmy Smith than Allman. Just when you think the group has jammed it out as far as it'll go, co-lead guitarist Taylor Orr breaks it down to a slower, more soulful blues guitar solo before jacking it back into familiar Allman territory, Isbell croaking out the last chorus in a phlegmy Joe Cocker rasp.

The band once again shows off their fearlessness on

"I Need More Love," interrupting the Hill County vibe midway by dropping in a rocky chunk of the Spencer Davis Group's "Gimme Some Lovin'." Here's a backstage pass that'll get you as close to the music as you can stand and survive. Beware, and enjoy.

— Grant Britt

## **MICK KOLASSA Double Standards Swing Suit Records**



The man was born in Michigan, but he is now "Mississippi Mick," and his devotion to the blues has led to a fine album each year since his eponymously named debut release in 2014. Each album has been produced by Jeff Jensen, who has also lent his adept guitar skills. Past album guests have included, among many impressive musicians, Reba Russell, Brandon Santini, Mr. Sipp, Watermelon Slim,

Annika Chambers, and Victor Wainwright. The latter two reappear here, with Tas Cru, Sugaray Rayford, and a slew of lesser known artists who deserve, on the basis of this outing, further recognition.

Kolassa's previous release, 2017's *You Can't Do That!* with Mark Telesca, reinvented eleven Beatles songs in the blues mode. This time Kolassa has put his spin on a baker's dozen of classic blues tunes. Furnishing polished back-up on the series of vocal duets is an ensemble of musicians familiar to Kolassa: James Cunningham on drums, Chris Stephenson on organ, Jeremy Powell on piano, and Eric Hughes on harmonica. Alice Hasan contributes some delicious violin, and guitarists Colin John and David Dunavent make one appearance each.

The songs are well chosen, including three each by two masters of the blues, Willie Dixon and Hudson Whittaker ("Tampa



Red"). We're truckin' from the get-go, with Dixon's "300 Pounds Of Heavenly Joy," modified to "600 Pounds" with the addition of vocalist Rayford. Sugaray's powerful singing meshes well with Kolassa's raspier delivery, reminiscent of Dr. John's, and Kolassa and Jensen deliver sprightly guitar interplay. Dixon's "I Just Want To Make Love To You," sung lasciviously innumerable times by Muddy Waters, benefits from the sultry pipes of Heather Crosse. It's followed by Tampa Red's "It's Tight Like That," treated as a jaunty shuffle with Kolassa and Wainwright trading talking vocals.

"Fever" is distinguished by Chambers' singing, with nice interplay between Jensen and Stephenson, leading next to one of the highlights of the set, "Nobody Knows You When You're Down And Out," replete with tasty violin. Jensen and Stephenson reprise their synergy on "Don't You Lie To Me," this time with Gracie Curran sharing vocal with Kolassa.

Rather than cite each track, let's just summarize by saying that there is not a ringer in this bunch: each classic tune is tweaked creatively from the original version, the musicianship is skillful, and the vocal duets with Kolassa are uniformly excellent. The nearly hour-long set ends with an extended version of "Ain't Nobody's Business," a hoary tune covered by myriad blues performers, including many terrific 1920s blues women. The slow version here brings each of the album's vocalists together in a seven-minute-plus tour de force that appropriately concludes a fine album.

— Dan Stevens



E-mail: Service@BluesMusicMag.com

## LUKE WINSLOW-KING BLUE MESA

"Like Ry Cooder, Gary Clark, Robert Cray, and Walter Trout, he's keen on tapping tradition without letting it bind him..." —GLIDE MAGAZINE

"Steeped in the muddy Delta blues, but prickles with the raunch of a more Mid-Western take on the genre." —CONSEQUENCE OF SOUND

ORDER NOW!

LUKE WINSLOW-KING  
BLUE MESA

CD/DIGITAL/LP

WWW.BLOODSHOTRECORDS.COM

BLOODSHOT  
RECORDS

NOVEMBER 16, 17, 18

SECOND ANNUAL

# READING BLUES FEST

presented by



hosted by



All major concerts will be held in the DoubleTree Grand Ballroom and Crossroads at DoubleTree (small ballroom)

FEATURING ...

**BOOKER T. JONES**

RUTHIE FOSTER

**LIL' ED & THE BLUES IMPERIALS**

CHICAGO PLAYS THE STONES  
featuring RONNIE BAKER BROOKS,  
BILLY BRANCH

**VANESSA COLLIER**

TOMMY CASTRO & THE PAINKILLERS

**SHEMEKIA COPELAND**

JOHN NEMETH & THE BLUES DREAMERS  
WITH THE BERKS HORNS

**BLIND BOY PAXTON**

TINSLEY ELLIS

**JAZZ GETS THE BLUES:**

CLARENCE SPADY & NICK COLIONNE

CRAIG THATCHER BAND

**G.E. SMITH ... AND MORE!**

**Tickets on  
sale now!**

• readingbluesfest.com

• Santander Arena Box Office (no fees!)

Seventh & Penn streets, Reading, PA

• Ticketmaster: 1-800-745-3000 or ticketmaster.com



Boscov's

SMG  
Berks County  
Convention Center  
Authority

Mama Lucia  
MEATBALLS

LAND  
Diplomats  
Lights, Action, Billboard!

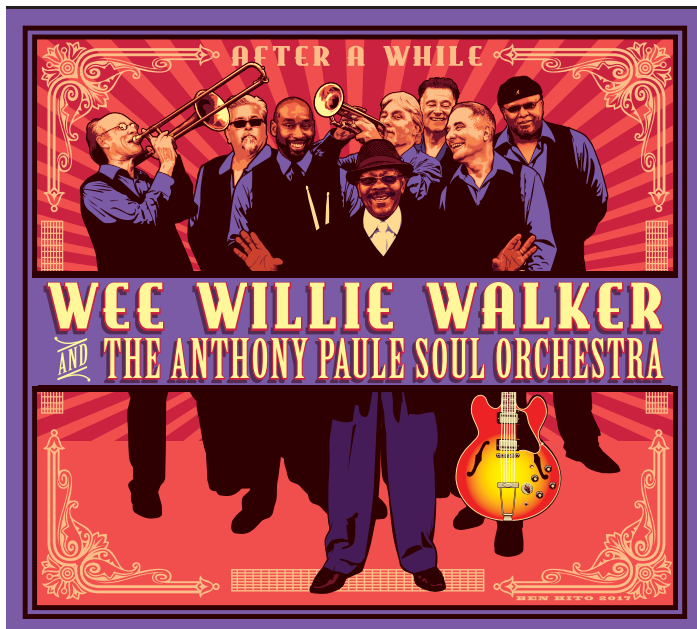
READING EAGLE  
COMPANY

PERFORMANCE  
TOYOTA

WDIY  
88.1

ARTS  
pennsylvania  
COUNCIL ON THE ARTS

googleWorks  
WORKS FOR THE ARTS



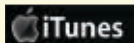
### \*\*\* Five BMA Nominations \*\*\*

"Wee Willie Walker is keeping the Soul flame burning bright and effortlessly killing it on, *After A While*." – Mike Kappus, Rosebud Agency

"I love the *After A While* CD with some excellent new songs. Can't take it off the deck. I'm spreading the word, too!" – Ray Ellis, Juke Blues

www.anthonypaule.com

media contact: Christine Vitale - queenie@christinevitale.com





**Biscuit Miller "Live"**  
At The North Atlantic Blues Festival

---

**2017 BLUES MUSIC AWARD WINNER**

---

**Management - Paul Benjamin**  
Email: BluesMan@Midcoast.com  
Telephone: (207)-596-6055

---

**Booking - Casey Scott**  
Email: Hwykey@gmail.com  
Telephone: (773) 743-9546

### ROY BUCHANAN *Live at Town Hall 1974* Real Gone



It took until after guitar master Roy Buchanan's tragic, untimely suicide in 1988 for the guitarist to be fully appreciated. Although moderately popular during his lifetime with albums that ranged from pretty good to pretty great released on Polydor, Atlantic, and Alligator, Buchanan – who wasn't much of either a singer or songwriter – never made it to the top tier of blues rock guitarists like Stevie Ray Vaughan, a

place he surely belonged.

Look no further for proof than 1975's *Live Stock*, his first authorized concert recording. Released as something of a contract fulfilling item (it was his final record for Polydor), the original seven songs were cobbled together from two November 27, 1974 shows at New York City's Town Hall. Even at a conservative 35 minutes, this showcased Buchanan's enormous faculties at arguably the peak of his career. From the opening cover of Roy Milton's rollicking "Reelin' And Rockin'" to a jaw dropping closing featuring the "I'm A Man" blues lick of "I'm Evil" where the guitarist pulls out his entire bag of tricks, Buchanan and his four piece band locks together with precision and power. His stinging Telecaster lines explode in a fireworks display of frantic staccato notes and just as quickly shift into a sorrowful, creeping moan that will break your heart. That stunning album though was just a smattering of his two sets that night. Now, a mere 43 years later, we finally get to hear the entire evening's music.

Why it took so long to rescue these tapes is unclear. But this double disc finally presents all 21 songs played in order across two shows. It's not just a stunning example of Buchanan at his most intense and powerful, but perhaps the finest item in his inconsistent catalog. It also makes the previous cherry picked single disc immediately outdated.

Even though seven tunes from the nearly two hours of music are repeated, you won't mind because Buchanan's solos are so creative, electrifying, and unique that the shows have their own groove. Singer Billy Price makes a great frontman, especially on the soulful cover of "Can I Change My Mind" and the slow blues of "All Over Again (I've Got A Mind To Give Up Living)." But this is Buchanan's showcase as he bends, tweaks, cajoles, caresses, and twists notes in a style that none, not even his student Robbie Robertson, have duplicated. His focused touch and sense of dynamics that shifts from roaring clusters of notes to softly plucked patterns is dramatic and dynamic, especially on a particularly sizzling and vibrant, nine minutes of Neil Young's "Down By The River." A throbbing take on Al Green's "I'm A Ram" shows his innate understanding of funk and soul too, punctuating the chorus with stabs of notes atop bubbling keyboards and Price's testifying.

This is simply a mind blowing, lightning in a bottle document; a perfect place to start for those new to Roy Buchanan's talents and a must for long time blues rock fans who have been looking for this album for decades. It was worth the wait.

– Hal Horowitz





## HOWELL DEVINE

### Howl

Little Village Foundation



What if you took songs by bluesmen like Sonny Boy Williamson, R. L. Burnside, Blind Blake, Hound Dog Taylor, and Robert Johnson and had them re-imagined by a trio of deft musicians who possess among them pristine vocals, stinging blues harp, envious slide and guitar skills, spot-on stand up bass playing, and a percussionist who detours from the usual drum kit and conjures up sounds that include washboard, deep

jug sounds and oh-so-perfect timing? This is a description of the combined talents of Joshua Howell on vocals, guitars, and harp, Pete Devine on all things percussive and Joe Kyle Jr. on bass. This northern California band was the first new group to be signed by Arhoolie Records in 27 years, and *Howl* was recorded by Jim Pugh's Little Village Foundation, a non-profit that plows all the revenue back to the artists.

Their fourth CD is a real blues find. Recorded at Kid Andersen's Greaseland Studio, the Kid himself plays organ on Don Covay and Steve Cropper's "Sookie-Sookie" and the Meter's "Funky Miracle" (I didn't know the Kid has so much talent on the keys as well as his guitar). The traditional "Boats Up The River" has Howell playing an open-tuned resonator guitar live and takes you back to the '30s, '40s, or '50s. I'd love to hear an all live Howl Devine for their next recording. Howell's guitar slide work on Robert Johnson's "Come On In My Kitchen" is articulate and a delight to the ears as each note is perfect.

The common thread among the trio is a passion for playing as Howell started on harp at 14, played as a solo artist for part of his career and even was involved in guitar lutherie. Devine was beating on Quaker Oats boxes as a child, has played on 40 albums, and was a founding member of Lavay Smith & Her Red Hot Skillet Lickers. Kyle has performed with the Waybacks and backed several roots music bands in his career. Devine is quoted as saying, "I played in dozens of bands but Howell Devine is the best!"

Please enjoy the ten great songs on *Howl* with your friends as their musicianship is well worth sharing.

— Pete Sardon

## ERIC HUGHES

### Meet Me In Memphis

Self-release



Whether visitors will flock to Beale Street to copy the Abbey Road style shot on the cover of *Meet Me In Memphis*, the latest release from the Eric Hughes Band, is debatable. What is less debatable though is that Hughes and his band have produced an album that is a perfect example of the sounds that those visitors will hear emerging from those Beale Street bars that continue to support Memphis music, seamlessly

mixing the blues, soul, R&B, and gospel that have immersed the city over many years.

Whilst juke joint blues is the band's natural territory and in evidence throughout the album, it is the band's forays into other styles that supply the stand out tracks. "Meet Me In Memphis" is a soulful, horn driven love letter to Hughes's adopted town – "if there's a better town I ain't been there yet" – that wouldn't be

out of place on a Robert Cray or John Nemeth album. And the Americana of "The Day They Hanged The Kid" is a 'he got what he had coming to him' cowboy story with a wonderful trumpet solo that could have been lifted straight from the soundtrack a spaghetti western. Elsewhere, Hughes draws on a number of blues staples with songs about love, pain, fishing, and boogie men, as well as his take on Midtown's hipster community where the inhabitants feeling the blues all the way "from my man bun and all the way down to my thrift store shoes."

The Memphis theme exists not only in the album title and several of the songs, but also in the making and production of the album. It is not unusual nowadays to see a recording part funded by fans and friends, as this release was, but Hughes was the first recipient of a Slim's Front Loan, a Memphis initiative providing financial and business support and consultancy for local musicians. With so much affection for the town expressed in *Meet Me In Memphis* the payback has already begun.

If you want to listen to a history of Memphis music then dig out those old blues and soul albums. If however you want to hear how that music has influenced today's Memphis musicians and is giving the city its current sound then *Meet Me In Memphis* is a great place to start.

— Chris Kerslake



## MARIE KNIGHT

### *The Gospel Truth Live*

M.C. Records



In 2002, I had the joy of seeing Marie Knight, one of the last of the classic 1940s gospel singers, perform in New York City's late, lamented venue, Greenwich Village's Bottom Line. Sharing a bill with the Holmes Brothers and Maria Muldaur, she was an unbelievable 82-years-old who looked and acted 60, and definitely held her own as she roused the audience into a frenzy with classic gospel and R&B tunes.

Knight will always be connected to her singing partner, the rousing guitarist/singer Sister Rosetta Tharpe. Though equally vocally talented, Knight has always been lesser known than Tharpe, and that's probably because Tharpe's rock-style guitar pyrotechnics often took center stage. The two teamed up in 1946, touring, writing, and studio recording for five years before Knight went solo in 1951. During their time together, Knight and Sister Rosetta released a number of call-and-response gospel songs that ranked high on gospel charts and managed to cross over into the rhythm and blues charts, a feat that few gospel performers had achieved. She would return to secular music as well as straight-up church gospel for the remainder of her successful career.

*The Gospel Truth Live* is an amazing solo performance, considering that Knight was then 87 with a successful career still in progress. She sounds as spry as ever for this live session, originally recorded during a 2007 concert in North Adams, Massachusetts. The CD shows the octogenarian in top form, backed solely by the

great keyboardist Dave Keyes, who gives her plenty of headspace to belt out the tunes with her beautiful contralto voice.

On this live CD, she sticks mostly to the songbooks of Reverend Gary Davis and Tharpe. In between songs on this CD, she gets in a little preaching to the delight of her audience. However, some may find, as I did, that the preaching can be intrusive in spots.

There are 20 tunes on the 60-minute album, with seven covers of Reverend Davis' compositions, including superb renditions of "12 Gates To The City," and "I'll Fly Away." However, it's probably the Tharpe tunes, some written with Knight, that will strike the most familiar chords in fans and forever binding Knight to Tharpe. The duo will always be known for rollicking R&B-inflected gospel and R&B including "Up Above My Head," "Didn't It Rain?," "This Train," "Beams Of Heaven," "Precious Memories," and "Nobody's Fault But Mine." One especially beautiful tune on this CD, the mellow "How I Love Jesus," covers a Fred Whitfield composition.

Knight's manager and the owner of her label, M.C. Records, Mark Carpentieri, has said that with the 2018 posthumous induction of Sister Rosetta Tharpe into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, this re-release is perfectly timed to introduce the work of Knight and Tharpe to a new generation of classic gospel and R&B fans.

This album is for die-hard fans like me of the Golden Age of Gospel (1940-1960). For those who need an introduction, this fabulous album will have you rocking your buds off with its blended house-shaking religious fervor and highly entertaining down-and-dirty R&B and classic gospel.

— Michael Cala

# ALASTAIR GREENE

## DREAM TRAIN

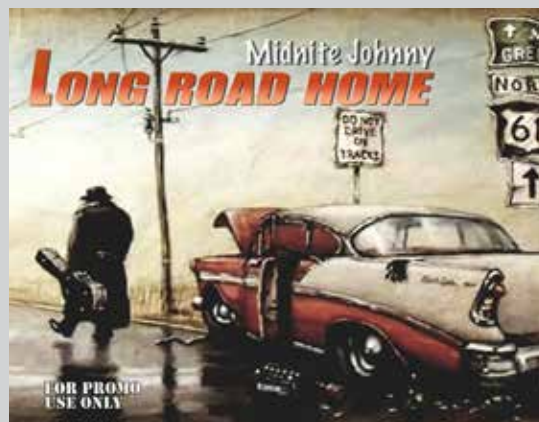
Produced by David Z, with guest appearances by:  
Walter Trout, Debbie Davies, Mike Zito, Dennis Gruenling, Mike Finnigan

"Fronting a power blues-rock trio, guitarist Alastair Greene breathes in sulfuric fumes and exhales blazing fire. Greene is doing his best songwriting and singing ever."  
— Frank-John Hadley, Downbeat

## Mosher St. Records

New Release

Available at cdbaby, Amazon and iTunes



Powerful Blues and Rock

Mosher St. Records Showcasing The Blues



The Blues Foundation  
MEMBER

[www.parklaneprod.com](http://www.parklaneprod.com)



**MICHAEL DINALLO**  
**Crooked Road Songs**  
 Black Rose Records



This is a pretty cool release and a bit different than Michael Dinallo's past recordings with his previous band The Radio Kings. *Crooked Road Songs* is his first solo CD as an artist and is strictly rural blues and squarely on the mark.

Interestingly, there are two different formats used on these four original songs and two traditional melodies reinterpreted by this great guitarist. The first, sparser structure has Dinallo on

electric and acoustic guitars, soul screamer Barrence Whitfield superbly singing, and Ducky Carlisle, who also produces the music in his studio Ice Station Zebra in Medford, Massachusetts, behind the kit. Dinallo also uses a full band with Tim Gearan on vocals and guitar, Kevin Barry (The J. Geils Band, Peter Wolf And The Midnight Travelers) also on guitar, John Packer on upright bass and vocals, and powerful pounder Marty Richards (The J. Geils Band, Peter Wolf And The Midnight Travelers). With both groups the integrity is integral, the passion is prevalent, and the authenticity is unquestionable. In each band the vocals and guitars are extraordinary, emotional, and eloquent.

My favorite cuts include the instrumental opener "Blue Bonnet Lullaby," with the nice guitar tone that belongs on a movie soundtrack, and his great arrangement of Lightnin' Hopkins' "Lonesome Road Blues," done by everyone from The Greatful Dead to Joe Bonamassa. Check out the Leadbelly song "In The Pines," and Dinallo's own melodies "Waiting For A Better Day," "Mr. Johnson," and "Tennessee Blues." It's all real rural blues done with a scared, sad delivery that make them sound new and true in today's desperate world. A great effort by a great guitarist.

— A.J. Wachtel

**THE ROCKWELL AVENUE BLUES BAND**

**Back To Chicago**  
 Delmark Records



The Rockwell Avenue Blues Band has assembled itself from the shared musical and recording histories of the five band members and good friends. The guys in the band have worked collectively and apart with stellar blues artists including Sunnyland Slim, Walter Horton, Otis Rush, and Albert Collins among many others. The performers have recorded extensively with Delmark over the past decades, so *Back To Chicago* is in a

sense a reunion CD.

Recorded in 2017 at the prolific Delmark Records' studio on North Rockwell Avenue in Chicago, this CD represents a tribute to each member's successful career, as well as the fact they're all good friends who have a shared history recording for Delmark. The band is composed of guitarist/vocalist Steve Freund, keyboard player/vocalist Ken Saydak, harp player/vocalist Tab Robinson, and a nice rhythm section composed of drummer Marty Binder and bassist Harlan Terson. Robinson, Freund and Saydak rotate as principal vocalists and instrumentalists on each of the tracks, with Binder and Terson adding percussive tension throughout. These versatile musicians rotate vocals and leads and are allowed to shine on 13 well-chosen originals and two cover tunes.

The album's first three tracks showcase the vocal styles of Robinson, Freund, and Saydak, respectively, on "Blues For

# CLIFF STEVENS

"A great artist...a lot of talent"  
 - BLUES MUSIC MAGAZINE

MODERN  
BLUES-ROCK

NEW ALBUM  
"LIVE IN GERMANY"

"Live in Germany is a great live album"  
 - CONCERTMONKEY (Belgium)

www.CLIFFSTEVENS.com

Specializing in Performance Photography  
 Festivals, Clubs, and Dark Old Bars



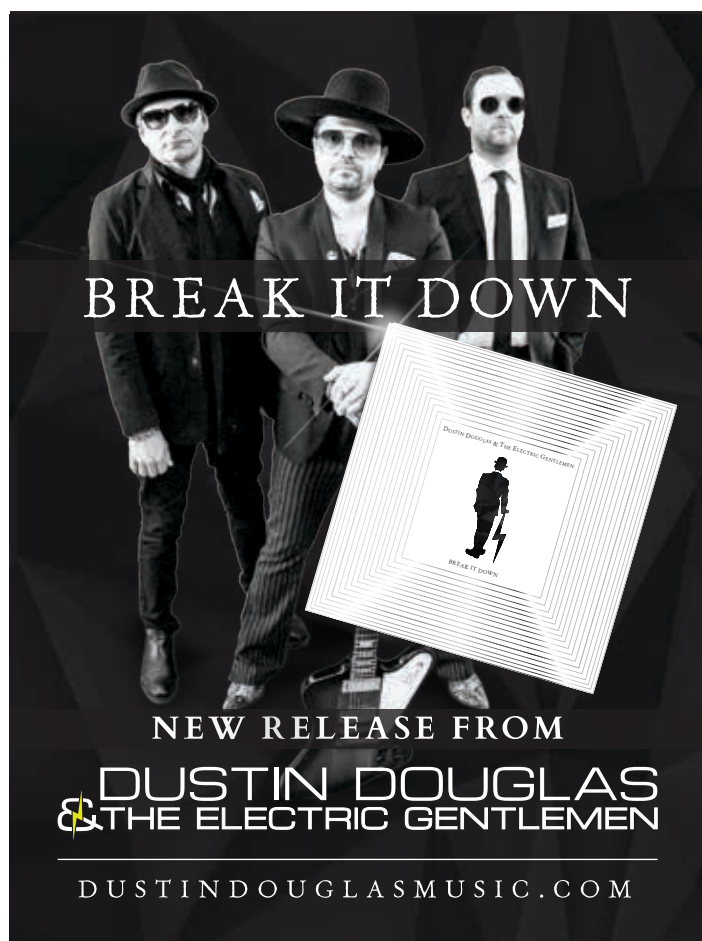
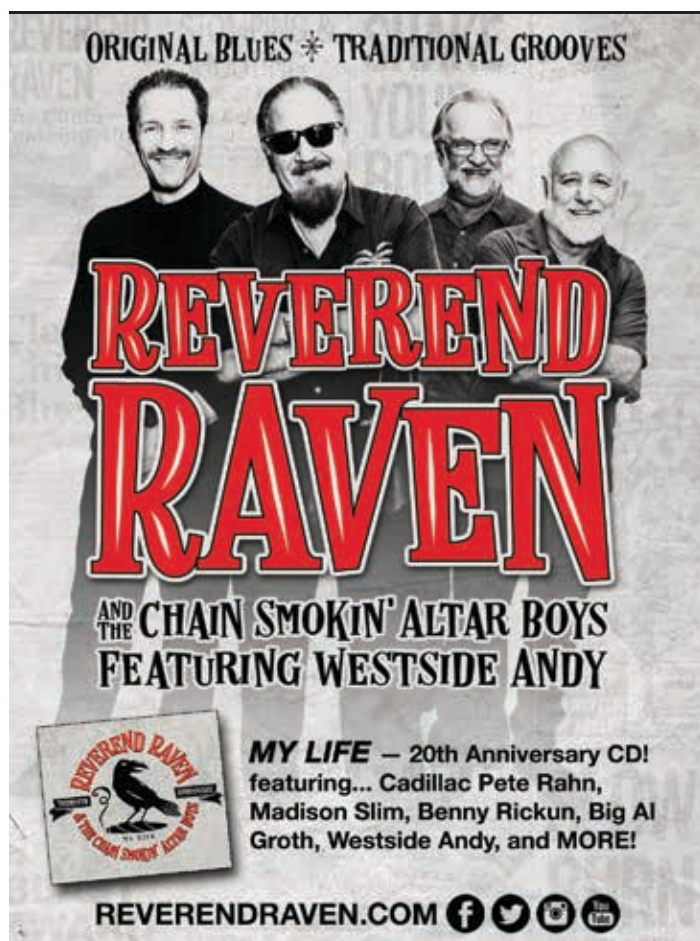
*Jim Hartzell*  
 EVENT PHOTOGRAPHY

Digital Downloads Available  
 Email - jhartzell@verizon.net  
 941-447-8011

Jim Hartzell - Event Photography

@bhartzell





Hard Times." "Boogie In The Rain," and "That Face." Each has a distinctive vocal style, from smooth tenor to raunchier Chicago-style vocals. Freund's lead guitar work is exceptional, as are the instrumental performances of Robinson on harp, and Saydak doing some exceptional work on electric piano and organ. Saydak's voice is the grittiest, with straight ahead work on tracks like "Free To Love" and "Chariot Gate." His soulful performance on the blues ballad "We Believe," by Mary-Ann Brandon, demands repeated listening. His gifted work as a keyboard virtuoso on piano and organ adds to the CD's tension and originality. Freund's singing is pleasantly nasal, and he performs some nice cliché-free licks that counterpoint nicely with the rest of the band's instrumental work.

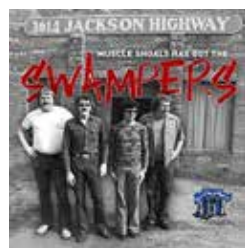
This is an album worth owning, as it certainly adds to the Delmark legacy and with any luck a follow-up album may well be in the band's future. The label was sold by owner Bob Koester, now age 86, in May 2018 to Chicago musicians Julia A. Miller and Elbio Barilari. If this CD is any example, the new owners will keep up the legacy of Koester's 65 years of recording some of the best blues performers in Chicago and elsewhere.

— Michael Cala

## SWAMPERS

### *Muscle Shoals Has Got the Swampers*

Muscle Shoals Sound/Malaco



The story behind the Muscle Shoals musicians that comprise the Swampers is nearly as legendary as the music they recorded. The abridged version is that the basic foursome (keyboardist Barry Beckett, drummer Roger Hawkins, bassist David Hood, and guitarist Jimmy Johnson) joined at Rick Hall's FAME Studios in Muscle Shoals to back up James & Bobby Purify's session that yielded 1967's "I'm Your

Puppet." The quartet, then known as the Swampers, also backed Aretha Franklin on "Respect," the Staple Singers for "Respect Yourself," and dozens of others until splitting and starting their own Muscle Shoals Sound studio. That was where the Stones famously recorded "Brown Sugar" and "Wild Horses," although the Swampers did not contribute to those sessions. However, they had generated so much work, a move to larger quarters at 1000 Alabama Ave was needed. There are lots more details, most covered in the comprehensive 19 page book accompanying this CD.

Unfortunately neither that nor the packaging informs us of what the music is on this hour long disc. These 14 instrumentals were tracked sometime in the '70s, '80s, and '90s, but we have no idea who played on what, when each was recorded or under what circumstances. The selections have composing credits but beyond that, NO NOTES.

Musically, this is somewhat like a soulful, Southern rock version of New Orleans' Meters, but not as tight or focused. Most songs sound like backing for a singer that never appeared, probably why they were kept in the vaults. The musicianship is never less than professional – taken for granted with this talented group – but the performances, many in the jazz/soul fusion genre, seldom catch fire.

Two nine-plus minute entries anchor this compilation. The better one, entitled "Sunday Morning R&B" is a gospel-styled vibe with a lovely slow, soulful touch and subtle guitar and organ work from...well, we're not really sure...But since Hawkins and Johnson are given authorship, it's probably them. On the flip side is the head scratching prog-jazz of a percussive tune simply called "Muscle Shoals." It meanders without much direction, breaking down into a spacey mid-section that almost finds a groove. And



while it's never less than listenable, there's not enough intensity to justify its nearly ten minute length.

The 12 other tracks fare somewhat better with shorter playing times and a tauter attack, but it's hard to imagine anyone except hardcore Swampers fans returning to play this again. These pieces edge close to bland, even boring, something that could never be said of the work Swampers did supporting other artists.

– Hal Horowitz

#### PETER KARP

##### *Blue Flame*

Rose Cottage Records



One good thing about the shift back to vinyl, besides the possible warmer sound of analog, is that musicians don't have to come up with as much material to fill out an album. The approximate 40-minute limitation of vinyl, compared to the 80 or so minutes on a CD, means fewer filler tracks and a presumably better listening experience – or to vary an old expression, less can be more but more is sometimes way *too much*.

Peter Karp's latest CD, *Blue Flame*, might benefit from an LP release. It's strong across its nearly 55-minute running time, but there is a sameness to some tracks, particularly where he is backed by a large ensemble. Also he tends pack songs with a volcanic flow of lyrics, reminiscent of the days when Bob Dylan had those "Subterranean Homesick Blues." The A&R guys who used to be employed at large records labels – when there were such entities – tended to reign in such impulses.

But to Karp's credit, all 13 tracks on *Blue Flame* are played with verve, and some shine with the polish that years in his repertoire has given them. Some of them date back to 2004 *Turning Point* release. He also knows how to vary the pace. He tends to sequence his set with pairs of speedsters, followed by something slower, before cranking up the beats-per-minute again for another fast two.

Karp goes for a big sound on most tracks, with more than a dozen musicians listed in the credits, including ex-Rolling Stone Mick Taylor and the Fabulous Thunderbirds' Kim Wilson, the latter providing Little Walter-esque harmonica to several tunes including "The Arson's Match," a song which served as the title track on a previous Karp release.

But even with this added ensemble muscle, Karp handles much of the heavy lifting, playing electric resonator and acoustic guitars, organ, piano, accordion, and harmonica. About the only thing missing is Sue Foley, with whom Karp recorded two excellent albums a few years ago. Had he saved a couple of songs for his next release, this would be just the right size album-wise.

– Bill Wasserzieher

#### CLIFF STEVENS

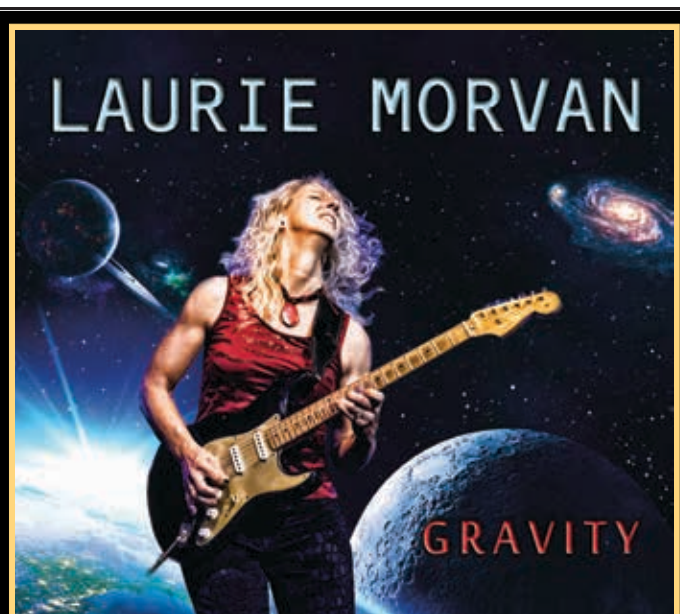
##### *Live In Germany*

Self-release



Recorded at two shows in Germany Nearly last year, the third release from Cliff Stevens presents him in a trio format, the focus squarely on his guitar playing on an all-original set list. Serge Dionne on bass and Dan Dyson on drums are a solid unit that provide powerful rhythms at every turn.

While Stevens has received



2018 Independent Blues Award nominee!



"Rousing, fist pumping good... Another killer set from one of the genre's leading lights... Sounds like a big time commercial project while retaining its organic roots and feel." – Midwest Record

Buy it now! [LaurieMorvan.com](http://LaurieMorvan.com) [amazon.com](http://amazon.com) [iTunes](http://iTunes)



Roger "Hurricane" Wilson  
&  
The Hurricane Homeboys  
**LIVE AT MADLIFE**  
Woodstock, Georgia

2018 CD NOW AVAILABLE  
[www.BluestormRecords.com](http://www.BluestormRecords.com)  
[amazon](http://amazon) [iTunes](http://iTunes) [cdbaby](http://cdbaby)

Booking: Backroads Booking Agency - Denver, CO - [brbagency@gmail.com](mailto:brbagency@gmail.com)





**Big Harp George**

**uptown cool**

**ORDER YOURS NOW!**

Big Harp George is redefining the role of chromatic harmonica in blues while commenting perceptively — and often, hilariously — on life in the twenty-first century. Seriously fun music!

"Big Harp George remains an absolute master of the chromatic harmonica, blowing brilliantly sculpted, richly melodic solos and obbligatos throughout..."  
*Lee Hildebrand, Living Blues Magazine*

For booking inquiries: [www.bigharpgeorge.com](http://www.bigharpgeorge.com) or 510-912-4424


cdbaby iTunes

acclaim for his Eric Clapton tribute show, listeners will detect other influences throughout the disc. The opener, "I Know," makes it clear that he has incorporated a few lessons from Stevie Ray Vaughan in his playing. The following track, "Don't You Say," rolls along in a similar vein right through a blazing coda. "Finger Swinging" is an up-tempo instrumental with Stevens firing off hot licks at every turn, then he switches to slide guitar, riding a familiar boogie riff while issuing a forthright plea for reciprocal feelings on "Need You To Love Me." He delivers one his strongest vocals on "Don't Walk Away," another slide showcase that conjures up memories of Johnny Winter over a robust rhythm.


"Said The Wrong Thing" is a solid, generic shuffle while the aggressive instrumental, "Finger Express," highlights Stevens' mastery of his guitar fretboard. The slower pace on "Crying My Heart Out" leaves Stevens struggling a bit vocally, but his fluid solo is a highlight. "Running" finds the singer wanting to get far, far away from a bad relationship while "Price You Pay" introduces some funky elements into the proceedings. The wah-wah pedal makes an brief, effective appearance on "I Want You To Tell Me," a hard rocking anthem.

Despite his lengthy career, this Canadian musician has been flying under the radar of most blues fans. While he isn't offering any unique takes on the blues, Cliff Stevens has plenty of talent and fans of hard-edged blues guitar will find plenty to enjoy on this exciting live set.

— Mark Thompson

**New From  
Rip Cat Records**



**JOHN CLIFTON  
NIGHTLIFE**

STEREO

George Ladd  
Earl Marshall II  
Lauri Linn  
Young As I Have You  
Round Your Way To Me  
Dancing, Dancin'  
How About That  
Bill & Paul  
Nightlife  
World Wide  
No Better Love Than Mine  
Bearly Mine and Yours

"Nightlife" is a fine and varied blues album with five original Clifton songs that proves he is an excellent musician / harpist. We look forward to hearing more!  
[www.rootstime.be](http://www.rootstime.be)

"Nightlife", is outstanding. The whole thing reeks of fun. Made me smile out loud when I first listened. Hey, Rip Cat Records!! Youz guys got a winner here."  
<https://bluespalaceblog.wordpress.com/>

**Now booking 2018-2019 Festivals and Club dates worldwide  
for more info [www.JohnCliftonMusic.com](http://www.JohnCliftonMusic.com)**

amazon.com  
iTunes

**WWW.RIPCATRECORDS.COM  
AND OTHER FINE RETAILERS**

## HEATHER NEWMAN

### *Burn Me Alive*

VizzTone



Singer/songwriter/bassist Heather Newman is an Omaha native who grew up in a blues loving family. She relocated to Kansas City in 2015 to join the band of former Trampled Under Foot guitarist/vocalist Nick Schnebelen and toured with him until striking out on her own in late 2017. *Burn Me Alive* is her powerful and self-assured debut. It is filled with 12 variegated originals that include blues, funk, soul, ballads, and blues-rockers. Her originals demonstrate not just her passion for the music, but also her knowledge of the related genres, which is quite impressive for a 23-year-old.

Her tight and versatile band of guitarist Keith Ladd, keyboardist Ryan Flemmer, and drummer Cole Dillingham provide impeccable support for Newman's sometimes gritty, yet always sultry, vocals. The title track, an incendiary mid-tempo mix of jazz and blues about lost love, swells with yearning and desperation that reminded me of Tracy Nelson's "Down So Low." Except for the bristling swamp-rocker "Willie James," a tale of a mercurial hard-drinking Alabama guitarist who "still has something to prove," Newman's songs are about good love, new love, and love gone bad, all sung with soul-baring intensity.

In addition to the title track, other particular favorites are the Diddleyesque come-hither thumper "Bring The Swing," the rumba-rocker (featuring guest guitarist Nick Schnebelen's piercing licks) "High Mountain Blues" about the anxiety of a relationship that may be going bad, and the jeremiad "Dirty Blues," which is not



about salaciousness but mistrust and betrayal; guest saxophonist Michael Lefever's bellowing tenor sax underscores the song's murky mood.

In the last 20 years, the ranks of nationally touring female blues, soul, and blues-rock performers have greatly increased. Add the name of Heather Newman to that ever expanding list. *Burn Me Alive* is a stellar accomplishment for a debut album and deserves to be a contender for best debut album of the year.

— Thomas J. Cullen III

## BIG SHOES

### *Step On It*

Biglitttle Records



**B**ig Shoes is a seven-member band hailing from Nashville and Muscle Shoals and is a band that owes a lot to the New Orleans blues/R&B tradition, recalling the greats like Professor Longhair, the Neville's, and others from the great era of New Orleans rocking blues and R&B. The band is distinctly Southern-sounding, recalling the Allmans, Little Feat, the Neville Brothers, Fats Domino, and Allen Touissant, although many more influences pervade this excellent eleven-track CD.

Eclectic would be the word to describe this band, because you will hear echoes of everyone from The Band to stride pianists like Fats Waller. All members have earned their bones playing with blues, rock, and R&B greats including Bonnie Raitt, Van Morrison, Taj Mahal, Etta James, Bobby "Blue" Bland, and Delbert McClinton, and these multiple musical partners have left a mark on the band members' musical direction.

The vocals, including a number of ensemble tracks, recall Levon Helm on "Bad For You" and the guitar work of B.B. King in the opening riffs of "Too Early For The Blues. The singing here is superb if understated multi-part group harmonizing for most of the tracks, but when lead singer/guitarist Rick Huckaby lets go, the inflections recall Levon Helm at his best, as well as Gregg Allman and Ronnie Van Zant. Another interesting aspect is the use of at least three and sometimes four guitars when drummer Andy Peake strips off the skins and takes to rhythm guitar on a couple tracks.

"Ain't Nobody Loves You Like Me" and "Give It To Me Now" sound like tributes to The Band circa their second album, with what some have called "a hint of an 'Ophelia' vibe" carrying the tune. The horn section plays understated but tasty licks, mixing classic Southern rock and country on "Give It To Me Now," which, like "Honey Pie," features a jumping piano groove. The sequencing of these 11 tracks keeps things moving apace, as does the continuity provided by the superb guitar work throughout and Huckaby's morphing ability to give vocal and instrumental tribute to some of his no-doubt favorite artists.

For those who miss bands like Lynyrd Skynyrd, Little Feat, The Band, the New Orleans greats, and the musicianship of the Muscle Shoals, this is an album destined for a lot of replays. The best parts of Southern rock, blues, Americana, New Orleans, country, and roots music have coalesced to create a fresh sounding yet nostalgic aural potpourri that recalls the best of this kind of music from decades gone by.

— Michael Cala

# RORY BLOCK

## A Woman's Soul

*A Tribute to Bessie Smith*



Photography by Sergio Kuthajec

Rory Block, as five-time Blues Music Award winner, is the most celebrated living female acoustic blues artist.

This kicks off "Power Women of the Blues," Rory Block's latest series of recordings dedicated to blues pioneers.

Rory's unique acoustic blues interpretations of "The Empress of The Blues" Bessie Smith's material remind us how powerful the songs are and how talented Rory is.

Discover Sue Foley's *The Ice Queen*, Eric Bibb's *Migration Blues*, Ronnie Earl's *The Luckiest Man* and much more at

**stonyplainrecords.com**

or call 780-468-6423







**MULTIPLE BLUES MUSIC AWARD WINNER**  
 including the 2018 Blues Music Award For Acoustic Album  
 Of The Year 'Break The Chain'





[www.doug-macleod.com](http://www.doug-macleod.com)




**IN CONCERT, STUDIO AND PERCUSSION WORKSHOPS**



**A great new recording  
from ManHaTone  
Available now  
at iTunes, Amazon,  
CDbaby, and**

**BradVickers.com**

# BRAD VICKERS & HIS VESTAPOLITANS



## Self-release



Like the city he now calls home for part of the year, Billy Thompson's eighth CD is a New Orleans gumbo of blues, funk, rock, soul, shimmy, and shake. It's refreshing to hear songs constructed outside the all-too-typical I-IV-V blues pattern, while still retaining the essence of the blues. Recorded in seven studios from his other part time home in West Virginia to Florida to California, the CD still comes off as an organic whole, mixing the various

The eclectic cast includes drummers Eric Selby and Tony Braunagel, bassist James “Hutch” Hutchinson, and keyboardist Mike Finnigan, with the secret weapon being Michael Leroy Reed, who shines throughout with his soaring piano lead runs and shimmering organ fills. Thompson’s tasty guitar and harmonica are cherries on top of the cream, with his prowess on both augmenting, rather than dominating the mix. His partner, Kirsten Trump, provides insightful lyrics throughout.

The CD kicks off with the second line stomp of “Burn It Down, Bernadette,” and the race is on. The punchy “Phoine” continues the groove, and “Mud Island Woman” is a new Memphis classic with its syncopated guitar/harp riffs, walking bass line, and flurries of unexpected chord changes. “Black Rain” asks “how do we stop it?” regarding gun violence across the U.S., while “Stranger” explores how disconnected we’ve become in an increasingly connected world. The punchy “That Devil” ruminates on how she’ll “burn me like a chunk of coal” while she takes his soul. The topical “Silent Warrior” uses bomb blasts synched with the bass drum beats to pay homage to our military as they “knock on the devil’s door” while fighting for all our freedoms. Invoking Jimi Hendrix’s “Angel,” the dreamy tune “Hourglass” pays homage to women everywhere. The Doobie Brothers classic “Long Train Running” gets a Crescent City makeover with a Papa Legba groove, and the CD’s closer, “Reason For Going Fishin’,” makes you yearn for a lazy day by your favorite secret fishing hole with your significant other.

In a career long on accomplishments: representing D.C. in the 2009 International Blues Competition, appearing on *The View* and NPR, playing lead guitar on Broadway for a Tony Award winning play, and performing with the San Diego Symphony and B.B. King's NOLA All-Stars, it's time for Billy Thompson to become more of a household word among blues aficionados. Hands down, the freshest blast of contemporary blues I've heard in awhile.

– Charlie Frazier

### ***Little Red & The Renegades***

Azalea City Recordings



“Little Red” (née Tom Corradino) is and has been *the* Zydeco music force in the Nation’s capital since maybe 1986. In fact, he – with impresario Marc Gretschel (of Twist & Shout Club fame, celebrated in Mary Chapin Carpenter’s hit song) – is responsible for creating the scene. Don’t believe me? Check George Pelicanos’ novel, *Nick’s Trip* where the detective protagonist goes to see Little Red’s “hot D.C. Zydeco band.” That was published



around 1993. This disc, their first in 25 years, pronounces them still hot.

Preponderantly populated with original songs, the subject matter for some is, shall we agree, unique. How about "Haywire," an alluring slot machine? With its mesmerizing, soca rhythm instrumental middle, steel drums/pans propel listeners and of course dancers ever onward. Its clever bass figures are the work of Little Red founding member Dave Peterson. Carol Arthur is the wizard of the pans. Hubby Jon Danforth's drumming makes things hum throughout, especially on the jazzy, bluesy driving instrumental, "East Side Drive." Harry Rado's been Red's guitarist since its college days at Syracuse; now his son, Allen, also mans the guitar. How many songs have been written about the prescription drug Prednisone? There's one here. Turns out it's autobiographical: "I can't drink, I can't get stoned/the only thing I'm living on is Prednisone" Red wails.

As if these topics aren't curious enough, how about "Brand New Pope"? Yes, that would be Francis. "He's got no rules, no written text/You never know what he'll say next." Don't know if it'll chart on Radio Vatican (if there is one), but if souls can be moved, so will the soles of your dance boots. There's also a rapping homage to the cultural richness of New York City that name checks many of Red's favorite spots. If you appreciate Zydeco and are enchanted with the ways in which it can be used to interpret just about anything, get yourself a copy of *Little Red & The Renegades*. Play it often and aggressively and dance yourself silly.

— M.E. Travaglini

#### JOHNNY NICHOLAS & FRIENDS

##### *Too Many Bad Habits*

People's Label



Veteran singer/songwriter/multi-instrumentalist Johnny Nicholas is a native of Rhode Island. He moved to Ann Arbor in 1970 and was part of that college town's bustling blues scene until 1975 when he relocated to Austin to join Asleep at the Wheel. This well-received album was released on Blind Pig in 1977 and was out of print until Nicholas reissued it on his People's Label and added a second disc of previously

unissued tunes.

A trio of legends, Walter Horton, Johnny Shines, and Boogie Woogie Red join Nicholas on this varied set of traditional blues. Nicholas performed with them as part of the Boogie Brothers in Michigan venues and also at the 1972 and 1974 Ann Arbor Blues & Jazz Festivals. Sessions were recorded in Austin (with members of Asleep at the Wheel including guitarist/leader Ray Benson) and in Detroit and Farmington, Michigan with the assistance of drummer Martin Gross and bassist E.P. Jones.

Nicholas performs on guitar, mandolin, and piano and sings on all tunes except the instrumentals "Gettin' Outta Town" and "Apple Grove Rhumba," Horton's original "West Wind," Shines' original "Blues Came Fallin' Down," and Jay McShann's "Hootie Blues" with vocals by Boogie Woogie Red. Shines contributes clean and concise lead guitar on 12 tracks, Horton's inimitably warbling harmonica graces 15 tracks while Boogie Woogie Red's rollicking piano is heard on only three tunes.

Horton's performances are among his last recordings as he died in 1980; he is the not-so-secret hero of this album and harp fans should seek this album out. Nicholas' 15 originals were mainly inspired by pre-WW II masters whom he covers like Tommy Johnson ("The New Canned Heat Blues"), Robert Johnson ("Hellhound On My Trail"), and Son House (an amazing a capella

version of "Grinnin' In Your Face").

Nicholas' vocals are plaintive, self-assured, and unpretentious with a bit of a country twang; he performs with panache whether solo, in duos, trios, or with a band. Nicholas is a consummate blues player, which is reflected by the variety of his originals. My favorite is the self-deprecating title track, a languidly lurching rumba listing his bad habits and bemoaning the one habit he doesn't possess: "self-control." Blues fans are fortunate that this fine album of traditional blues is available again.

— Thomas J. Cullen III

#### JEFF TURMES

##### *The Sun Never Went Down*

Tight Shoes



Jeff Turmes' name first turned up among album credits in the 1980s when those early James Harman records came out that claimed to be so greasy that the label included extra napkins beneath the Cellophane wrap. Turmes added a fair amount of what seemed like KFC fryer goop with his baritone sax. Subsequently his name appeared on a wide range of releases, sometimes still for sax but just as often for bass and

other instruments. These last few years he's also been the bassist in Mavis Staples' band.

At the same time he has written and recorded a series of excellent solo albums. His latest, *The Sun Never Went Down*, has him playing acoustic and electric guitar, five-string banjo and electric banjo-guitar, acoustic and electric bass, saxophone and clarinet, a variety of keyboards, drums and other percussion instruments, a bowed string instrument called a rebab, and a Vietnamese Jew's harp. Plus singing.

If that sounds like a *solo* solo album, it's not. Drummer Jim Doyle, vocalists Julie Christensen and Claire Holley, several horns players, and his Mavis Staples bandmates Rich Holmstrom and Stephen Hodges join him on this 16-song, 55-minute release.

*The Sun Never Went Down* is not straight blues, folk, Americana, or ram-a-lam rock. Call it alternative or otherworldly folk with trace elements of these other genres. If Stanley Kubrick were alive and inclined to make a 2001 sequel, some of these songs would work for scenes where a lonely cosmonaut entertains himself while enveloped in the vastness of space.

Whether Turmes is singing about "Shenandoah" or "Mexico City," "Men Of His Time," the "President Of Dreamers," or even fantasizing in one tune that Andrew Jackson is cutting an album in Nashville while on horseback, he is pushing past conventional boundaries of story-songs. It's a fascinating and well-executed collection, and listeners craving something different, yet tuneful, will find it here.

—Bill Wasserzieher



**BLUES MUSIC**  
*Magazine*

CALL TOLL FREE  
1-(855) US BLUES  
Or Email:  
[Service@bluesmusicmag.com](mailto:Service@bluesmusicmag.com)

# DAHL'S DIGS

by Bill Dahl

The chitlin' circuit couldn't contain Otis Redding by 1966. That April, the Big O was hobnobbing with the Hollywood hoi polloi on the swinging Sunset Strip, introducing the young glitterati to searing Southern soul, and Stax Records had the foresight to record three nights of his earthshaking engagement for a live album that didn't happen at the time. Concord Music/Volt's **Live At The Whisky A Go Go – The Complete Recordings** magnificently commemorates the occasion with six CDs that make you feel like you're right there in the front row. Redding and his horn-leavened road band blast through his Volt catalog at warp speed: "I Can't Turn You Loose," "Respect," "Mr. Pitiful," and a slew of heartrending ballads that showcase his pleading delivery at its finest. There were a few surprises the last night – a mistitled "Your One And Only Man," covers of "Papa's Got A Brand New Bag," and "A Hard Day's Night" – but Otis mostly stuck to his hits and gave the hipsters more than their money's worth.

Rufus Mitchell's Baltimore-based Ru-Jac label is enjoying deluxe reissue treatment from the folks at Omnivore Recordings. Four fresh anthologies trace the label's output from beginning to end under the shared banner of **The Ru-Jac Records Story; Something Got A Hold On Me – Volume One: 1963–1964** kicks off the tale with 28 soul-searing tracks by Jessie Crawford, Little Sonny Daye, Celestine, Brenda Jones, Jeanne Dee (she reworked "Every Day I Have The Blues" into a sizzling soul workout that's all but unrecognizable), and flagship artist Winfield Parker. **Get Right – Volume Two: 1964–1966** is every bit as potent, its 22 hard-grooving selections highlighted by more Jones and Parker, Washington, D.C. veterans the Mask Man & the Cap-Tans, and some of Arthur Conley's earliest efforts with saxist Harold Holt.

Kitty Lane, Sir Joe Quarterman, Gene & Eddie, Leon Gibson, the Caressors, and a passel of Parker demo tapes impress on **Finally Together – Volume Three 1966–1967** (the Shyndells, one of Ru-Jac's house bands, get a chance to shine on the aptly titled instrumental "Lightning"), and the series wraps up with **Changes – Volume Four: 1967–1980**, with Parker, Gene & Eddie, and Sir Joe encoring along with the Fred Martin Revue and Willie Mason. Mitchell's feisty little enterprise never nailed a national hit, but as a solid Southern soul source, it scored huge. Expertly curated by Ian Saddler, Ace's series of southern Louisiana-themed anthologies is up to 19 releases with no diminution in its superlative quality. **Rhythm 'n' Bluesin' By The Bayou–Livin' Lovin' & Lyin'**, the latest entry in the series, is no exception, boasting obscure gems by Cookie & the Cupcakes, Tabby Thomas, Lonesome Sundown, King Charles, Joe ("Mr. G") August, Little Victor, Charles Sheffield, Tal Miller, and three primordial efforts by Lonnie "Guitar Jr." Brooks, including his 1958 Gulf Coast smash "Family Rules (Angel Child)." **Bluesin' By the Bayou–Ain't Broke, Ain't**

**Hungry**, the previous volume, features Polka Dot Slim's clattering 1964 title track and its torrid flip side "A Thing You Gotta Face," joined by marvelous lowdown blues by Leroy Washington, Jimmy Anderson, Lightnin' Slim, Lazy Lester, and Mercy Baby and zydeco craziness by Boozoo Chavis, virtually all of it extremely rare.

Ring up RWA's **Blues, R&B And Gospel Talking on the Telephone Vol. 1** and you'll hear 28 vintage sides dealing with precisely that – Muddy's "Long Distance Call," Floyd Dixon's "Call Operator 210," Lightnin' Hopkins' "Give Me Central 209," T-Bone Walker's "Long Distance Blues," and John Lee Hooker's "Just Me And My Telephone" are joined by Lloyd Price, the Treniers, Slim Gaillard, Slim Harpo, and Mary Wells. Pee Wee Crayton's "The Telephone Is Ringing" contains one of his flashiest solos ever; there are pre-war items by Joe Pullum, Jaydee Short, and the bawdy duo of Tampa Red and Georgia Tom. Even comic Pig Meat Markham gets in on the action with a swinging "Your Wires Have Been Tapped."

First as a songwriter/producer and then as a million-selling artist, Isaac Hayes was one of Stax Records' stars for much of the label's existence. Craft Recordings' four-CD **The Spirit Of Memphis 1962–1976** avoids the usual chronological ordering of a boxed set by separating the keyboardist's career into four phases; disc one showcases Hayes as the creative mastermind (usually partnering with David Porter) of '60s classics by Carla Thomas, Sam & Dave, Johnnie Taylor, Mable John, and others, including a handful of non-Stax artists (Charlie Rich's original "When Something Is Wrong With My Baby" is a stunner).

The second disc presents Isaac's own singles for Volt and Enterprise, including his immortal funk workout "Theme From 'Shaft,'" while the third CD offers a dozen covers, all recast in Hayes' own image including six from a '72 concert in Chicago. The final disc consists of extended jams (the full-length "Do Your Thing" runs 33 minutes). Collectors will be especially thrilled with the bonus 45, a repro of Hayes' incredibly rare '62 debut on Youngstown, the loping harp-laced blues "C.C. Rider."

Rhino Records celebrated the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Jim Stewart jumping into the record business with their Memphis-based Satellite label, soon to be renamed Stax, with ten separate CDs under the **Stax Classics** banner, each disc devoted to one of the company's star acts during its '60s/'70s heyday. At a dozen tracks per disc, they don't dig very deep, but the four submitted collections on Otis Redding, Sam & Dave, Carla Thomas, and house band Booker T. & the MG's get the job done as budget-minded introductions to some of the most seminal southern soul music every laid on tape (mono singles masters are primarily but not exclusively utilized). Far more adventurous is **More From the Other Side of the Trax – Stax-Volt 45 rpm Rarities 1960–1968**, Kent's second splendid compilation of unjustly

overlooked B-sides from the Memphis label's early days. The 24-tracker is especially strong on gems by William Bell, Rufus Thomas (his rendition of Billie Holiday's "Fine And Mellow" is utterly sublime, while "All Night Worker" is brilliant in its gliding, multi-layered groove), and his daughter Carla. Steve Cropper's slashing guitar and Al Jackson, Jr.'s crackling drums are all over the sparkling set.

Nashville boasted its own share of R&B luminaries as well as a host of unsung producers and arrangers. Kent's **Bob Holmes' Nashville Soul** pays tribute to one of them; its two dozen tracks highlight Holmes' contributions to Music City's soul and blues scene, many of them from the Excello and Ref-O-Ree vaults, including Slim Harpo's grooving "Tip On In Part 1," Jimmy Church's "Right In The Palm Of Your Hand," and Gene Allison's horn-fueled remake of his own "Somebody Somewhere." Peggy Gaines, Sandra King, the Hytones, the Avons, and the Paramount Four contribute one fine entry apiece.

The combination of Wilson Pickett's gospel-steeped voice and Bobby Womack's writing prowess proved magical on a fairly regular basis during the late '60s at Chips Moman's studio in Memphis. Kent does both a service with **Wilson Pickett Sings Bobby Womack**, bringing together 17 brilliant Womack compositions from Atlantic's archives done as only the Wicked One could, notably the elegant "I'm In Love," a stunning "Jealous Love," and a lowdown blues-soaked "Something Within Me." Both sides of Womack's rare '67 Atlantic single close the disc.

Informally taped over two evenings in December of 1965 and January of '66 at a Hackensack, New Jersey club, Experience Hendrix's **Live at George's Club 20** captures a moment in time when Jimi Hendrix provided the fret fire for singer Curtis Knight's soul combo. R&B hits were the order of the day – Knight pounded Marvin Gaye's "Ain't That Particular" and Don Covay's "Mercy, Mercy" – along with plenty of blues ("I'm A Man," "Sweet Little Angel") showcasing Jimi's speedy attack, stunningly spotlighted on the instrumental "Driving South" and a tough reprise of Earl King's "Come On." Sound quality isn't the greatest, but there are no extraneous overdubs, and the music's fine.

From the moment it launched in 1965, Warner Bros.' Loma subsidiary was a prime source for splendid soul. Real Gone's two-CD **The Complete Loma Singles Vol. 1** starts at the beginning and takes it through the rest of '65, presenting both sides of the label's first 25 singles. The Olympics' pre-Young Rascals "Good Lovin'" is here; so are Little Jerry Williams' pre-Swamp Dogg "I'm The Lover Man," Ike & Tina Turner's Motownesque "Somebody Needs You," Smiley Lewis' Allen Toussaint-anchored remake of his classic "The Bells Are Ringing," stunners from the Apollas, Kell Osborne, Billy Storm, and the Enchanters, and gems from three of James Brown's lieutenants. Lucky Carmichael adds a sweet taste of swinging Chicago blues.



# D V D S

## ERIC CLAPTON

### *Life In 12 Bars*

Eagle Vision



This isn't the first documentary about the extensive life and career of Eric Clapton, and it likely won't be the last. But between the artist's involvement and approval, a new clutch of interviews with those involved, along with rare, seldom seen footage/still photos, it's arguably the best and certainly the highest profile one.

*Life in 12 Bars* is directed by Lili Fini Zanuck who conducted exclusive,

remarkably candid, and detailed discussions with Clapton. She edited those into voiceovers giving the viewer a rare glimpse into not just what the guitarist was going through (his 2008 autobiography already provided those basics), but a clearer vision of his thought processes at the time. Whether that's about forming, then leaving, a succession of bands including Cream, Derek and the Dominos, and Blind Faith, or his long and disturbing history of drug and alcohol addictions, the combination of visuals with the audio reminiscences (there are no traditional talking head shots) provides a unique personal edge other documentaries lack.

But those looking for insights into Clapton's guitar style, changing approaches in his bulging catalog of music (nothing on his Tulsa, country, or reggae influences), or even association with key musicians (the Delaney and Bonnie period is ignored, zilch about JJ Cale, Pete Townshend, Phil Collins, Steve Winwood, or Derek Trucks) will be disappointed. About three quarters of the movie is devoted to the years through *Layla*, but the dozens of albums that followed are mostly MIA. Instead, there are long stretches about his girlfriends, including plenty – arguably too much – on his unhealthy infatuation with Pattie Boyd Harrison which leads into a long segment about the drug fueled *Layla* sessions. The film's first half hour focusing on Clapton first experiencing the blues is tightly edited, absorbing, and well worth your attention.

But director Zanuck gets distracted, spending inordinate time exploring Clapton's long history of heroin and alcohol addiction, showing footage at his worst during interviews and concerts from the '70s and '80s. One section showing him snorting cocaine from a knife during an interview is difficult, and sad, to watch. Her style of flipping back and forth through his childhood and adult years, while trying to tie the two together, can get irritating. There is no insight into how Clapton's addictions reflected in his albums since they are hardly mentioned, and plenty on his ruined relationships, a recurring motif throughout. While the tragic death of his first son is integral to the story, and yielded his biggest hit "Tears In Heaven," it too is covered in excruciating detail.

Meanwhile happenings of the past decade or so such as 2005's Cream reformation and 2008 dates with Steve Winwood aren't even referred to. Since those clearly show Clapton trying to tie up career loose ends, that's a major omission. Perhaps we need a "Part 2."

The DVD includes a 30-minute bonus interview hosted by Jools Holland with the always articulate Clapton and the less interesting Zanuck. Some holes are filled here, such as the guitarist's connection with B.B. King. It's well worth watching but too short and, like the rest of this well-intentioned documentary, a bit scattered and frustratingly incomplete.

A double CD "Official Soundtrack Companion Album" has also been released. It includes some music from the film, lots that isn't in it and a handful of new mixes and rarities in addition to the usual Clapton suspects ("Tears In Heaven," *again*).

– Hal Horowitz

## JOE BONAMASSA

### *British Blues Explosion Live*

J&R Adventures



No one goes to a Joe Bonamassa show to bask in the glow of subtle, intricate guitar work.

Nope, Joe's MO is of the more notes per minute variety, with volume cranked up to 11 as he prowls the stage with his expensive suits and tight, talented, well-rehearsed band. That and aggressive, some might say head-spinning, marketing with dozens of products in addition to a voluminous

catalog of DVDs, CDs, and diverse merch (what other bluesman has an entire line for dog apparel?) that also finds his music on most Public Broadcast Stations' yearly fund drives has made him perhaps the most popular purveyor of electric blues currently touring. He's one of the few in the genre who can consistently sell out large arenas, sometimes for multiple night stands. There are few in the blues-rock world who have worked harder or more aggressively to achieve success.

Since Bonamassa has seemingly been influenced as much, and arguably more, by 60s electric British blues rockers than the output of those from his home country, this exploration of that music is a natural fit. The double disc/DVD/Blu-Ray captures one of only five British Blues Explosion shows performed in the UK in July 2016 and is pretty much what you'd expect without hearing a note. The guitarist attacks (there is no better way to describe it) songs from Cream, Eric Clapton, Jeff Beck, Led Zeppelin, and John Mayall, although not the Stones or the Animals whose music is notably absent from the 14-song, 97 minute show. Occasionally licks from other tunes are tossed in and two pieces are combined in a medley of sorts for "Beck's Bolero-Rice Pudding" and "Tea For One-I Can't Quit You Baby."

The rugged band boasts veterans like drummer Anton Fig and Double Trouble keyboardist Reese Wynans. Bonamassa plays with fire and fury (does he know any other way?) but the end result is more exhaustion than exhilaration. Too much is never enough for the guitarist who takes Cream's short "SWLABR" and balloons it to nearly three times its initial length by adding an unnecessary guitar solo. He brings his spin to the Yardbirds' "White Summer" (renamed "Black Winter"), shifting into Jimmy Page's raga mode and while his noodling atop thumping drums is interesting at first, it grows tiresome over six minutes. A closing 16 minutes worth of "How Many More Times," including a requisite and seemingly endless (it's only five minutes) drum solo, will find all but the most staunch Bonamassa fans bailing before it grinds to a conclusion.

The frontman must have been influenced by Eric Clapton's *461 Ocean Boulevard* since two of its tunes are covered (kudos for unearthling the relatively obscure "Mainline Florida"), along with Slowhand's "Pretending," the latter doubled in length from Clapton's version. The recording quality is up to Bonamassa's usual top quality and it's unlikely anyone asked for their money back after witnessing this stereotypical if energetic performance live. But with faceless vocals and relentlessly pummeling music, the overall effect on CD is wearing.

None of these covers come close to besting or equaling the originals. Even though Bonamassa gets points for his sheer stamina firing off clusters of frantic notes and understanding what sells tickets, the lack of modulation makes this another example of the journeyman guitarist's well known overkill.

– Hal Horowitz

# BOOKS

## **SOUL JAZZ: Jazz In The Black Community, 1945 – 1975**

By Bob Porter  
Xlibris



**M**y late father was a knowledgeable and passionate jazz fan. Most of the music I heard as a boy in the 1950s was jazz of all varieties despite the ascension of Elvis and all that immediately followed. I read *Downbeat* regularly into my late teens and devoured the liner notes of my father's albums. Bob Porter, the esteemed producer, writer, and radio host, states in his preface [that] "This book is about black jazz musicians and singers who emerged from the big bands of the swing era – from the end of World War II to the end of the Vietnam War and the coming of disco." Furthermore, "You can find contemporary jazz history texts with no mention of Buddy Johnson, Illinois Jacquet, Gene Ammons, or Donald Byrd: successful jazz musicians whose popularity drew largely from the black community.

*SOUL JAZZ* seeks to correct the imbalance." For me, the hero of this book is tenor saxophonist Illinois Jacquet (1922 – 2004), my father's personal favorite. My father was a major fan of tenor saxophonists including the ill-fated Chu Berry (1908 – 1941) who is referenced five times. Porter's devotes a chapter to the legendary Jacquet whose renowned solo on "Flyin' Home" (from 1942 with Lionel Hampton's Band) is still copied and sampled to this day. For some jazz and funk fans, "soul jazz" refers to the organ led combos of Jimmy Smith, Jimmy McGriff, Brother Jack McDuff, Richard "Groove" Holmes, Charles Earland, *et al*; Porter produced my favorite soul-jazz album, Earland's *Black Talk* (Prestige, 1970). The Hammond B-3 is one of my favorite instruments, and Porter mentions just about every organist, famous and/or lesser known, an incredible accomplishment. There are myriad insights into record labels, producers, and R&B artists as well. *SOUL JAZZ* is an informative and enjoyable read that had me smiling. It's not just for jazz fans.

– Thomas J. Cullen III

## **Blues @ Home: Mississippi's Living Blues Legends**

By H.C. Porter  
Self-published



The irony is inherent in Ms. Porter's title: some of these legends have left the mortal coil years ago; and since the book's initial publication (2014), a few more have joined them. Thus far in 2018, we've lost Terry Evans, Denise Lasalle, Eddie Shaw, and we're still counting. But the images Porter presents in this hefty, gorgeous book live on. They vividly portray 31 Mississippi blues men and women in their own personal environs – their comfort zones. No concert photos here; these are eye-popping, colorful renderings on quality stock, each accompanied by just enough narrative to pull the viewer into his or her world.

The book itself was companion to a traveling exhibit, recently completed. The technique she employs is similar to Andy Warhol's. She shoots black-and-white portraits first. Then she creates five silk screens of each. These, she renders in vibrant color, with different schemes, resulting in five multiple originals, each unique. For instance, the musician's shirt might be green in one; red in another. The details of the settings give us viewers a peek into what it is that these musicians draw upon in birthing their own musical portraits.

For comparison's sake, readers will appreciate the "before and after" aspect: the initial black & white images (the "originals") are also included, so as to appreciate Porter's perspective and creativity.

Take the aforementioned Terry Evans, for example. He's depicted sitting in a box car on a siding outside Vicksburg. While his career blossomed on the West Coast, according to the text, he returned to this scene – in person or in thought – for his inspiration. Some of the portraits are of musicians likely less well known: guitarist (and guitar maker) Bill Abel, of Belzoni; Kenny Brown, of Nesbit, who came to play North Hill Style blues for some 35 years with R.L. Burnside; Jimmy 'Duck' Holmes, of Bentonla, and who still performs in the manner of favorite son Skip James; and the youthful Sharde Thomas, of Senatobia, who began playing the fife at the age of seven with her very well-known grandfather, Otha Turner. Some depict artists of renown, like Jimbo Mathus at home in Clarksdale, B.B. King in Indianola, "Super Chikan" from Darling in Quitman County, and Bobby Rush who came to prominence in Jackson from his Louisiana birthplace. Famous or not, all are beautifully presented pictorially and with graceful narrative by Lauchlin Fields.

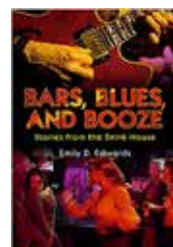
"It's quite a journey to knock on people's doors, to get to know them, to get to share their stories through visual art," Porter relates. "It's a unique opportunity, I think, for viewers." Amen that.

– M.E. Travaglini

## **Bars, Blues, And Booze: Stories From The Drink House**

By Emily D. Edwards

University Press of Mississippi



"**D**rink House" is a mainly Southern term for juke joints (legal or illegal), bars, pour houses, party houses, and after hours clubs. The short sections of each of the 12 chapters with titles like "White Kids On The Chitlin' Circuit," "Juke Joints, Bootleg, And Moonshine," "Piedmont Personalities," and "Baby Boomer Blues: The Crossroads Of Culture") collect personal vignettes from patrons, musicians, bar owners, and others at "the junction of black and white music cultures in the South." Edwards, a native of Alabama and a Professor of Media Studies at University of North Carolina (Greensboro), further states that her intention "is to explore 'the crossroads,' that intoxicated intersection where spirituality, race, and music culture that helped to shape a rich Southern vernacular. The stories reveal what it's like to be drunk, dumped, broke, beaten, and yet to survive with grim determination and humor."

Only a few musicians among the book's many tale-tellers would be instantly recognized (Chick Willis, Mel Melton, Eric Gales, and Roy Roberts) as the bulk of tales come from those denizens partaking in a drink house's various charms (legal or otherwise). This is an enjoyable, easy-to-read book that can be savored in short bursts with a strong drink, several puffs of transcendence, a favorite snack, and some blues playing in the background.

– Thomas J. Cullen III





**STEVEN VAN ZANDT**  
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

*"This is the story of people  
and a town that would not  
give up. Join us."*

**STEVEN VAN ZANDT**

*"I love everything about Notodden.  
Bluestown Rising should be on  
everyone's bucket list - you do  
NOT want to miss this."*

**CHARLIE MUSSELWHITE**

**THE PEOPLE OF NOTODDEN**

*"Notodden is indeed a Bluestown  
Rising. This film will open your  
eyes, and I'm glad that it will  
exist for all to see."*

**KID ANDERSEN**

*"The story of Notodden bringing people  
together with music and peace is a  
sweet story. Please help if you can."*

**BOB MARGOLIN**



# BLUESTOWN RISING

## THE DOCUMENTARY

WATCH TRAILERS, PREVIEWS AND GET THE LATEST NEWS AT [BLUESTOWNRISING.COM](http://BLUESTOWNRISING.COM)  
AND FIND OUT HOW YOU CAN HELP US TELL THIS IMPORTANT STORY BY BACKING OUR  
CROWDFUNDING CAMPAIGN. WITH EXCLUSIVE REWARDS FOR BACKERS.

**BACK US ON KICKSTARTER 15<sup>TH</sup> JULY TO 15<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST**

**NOTODDEN  
BLUES  
FESTIVAL**



**NRK**

**NU**  
Notodden Utvikling



**Notodden Municipality**  
Bluestown



**BLUESCRUISE.COM**  **816.753.7979**

LRBC #31 & #32 are SOLD OUT. Join the Wait List! Which Cruise Hits Your Groove?

## LRBC #31 SEA OF CORTEZ • OCT. 28-NOV. 4, 2018

*The Left Coast Returns! San Diego to Cabo San Lucas, La Paz & Loreto* | Holland America ms EURODAM

**TAJ MAHAL & THE PHANTOM BLUES BAND**

**BOOKER T. JONES PRESENTS A STAX REVUE • LOS LOBOS**

**TAB BENEDIT'S WHISKEY BAYOU** FEAT. ERIC JOHANSON, JEFF MCCARTY & BIG CHIEF MONK BOUDREAUX

**G. LOVE & SPECIAL SAUCE • RUTHIE FOSTER QUINTET**

**TOMMY CASTRO & THE PAINKILLERS • ROD PIAZZA & THE MIGHTY FLYERS**

**BILLY BRANCH & SONS OF BLUES • MINDI ABAR & THE BONESHAKERS**

**THE CALIFORNIA HONEYDROPS • PHANTOM BLUES BAND • THEODIS EALEY**

**ROY GAINES TUXEDO BLUES ORCHESTRA • TORONZO CANNON • MIKE ZITO**

**DEBBIE DAVIES w/ Special Guest ALASTAIR GREENE • REV. PEYTON'S BIG DAMN BAND**

**WILLIE K & THE WAREHOUSE BLUES BAND • SOUTHERN AVENUE • HADDEN SAYERS**

**SELWYN BIRCHWOOD • BROTHER YUSEF • KEVIN "B.F." BURT** IBC SOLD WINNER

*Piano Bar:* MITCH WOODS CLUB 88 • WENDY DEWITT • KENNY BLUES BOSS WAYNE • LEON BLUE

*Rob Rio:* BETTYE JO MILLER • SCOTTIE BONES MILLER *Jam Hosts:* RANDY OXFORD • MICHELE LUNDEEN

## LRBC #32 EASTERN CARIBBEAN • FEB. 3-10, 2019

*Ft. Lauderdale to St. Maarten, St. Thomas & Bahamas Private Island* | Holland America ms NIEUW STATENDAM

**TAJ MAHAL & THE PHANTOM BLUES BAND**

**KENNY WAYNE SHEPHERD • IRMA THOMAS & THE PROFESSIONALS**

**BOBBY RUSH REVUE w/ Special Guest BENNY TURNER**

**ORIGINAL LEGENDARY RHYTHM & BLUES REVUE®**

w/ TOMMY CASTRO, MAGIC DICK, DEANNA BOGART & RONNIE BAKER BROOKS

**TAB BENEDIT • THE LOWRIDER BAND w/ HOWARD SCOTT, LEE OSKAR & HAROLD BROWN**

**JANIVA MAGNESS • TOMMY CASTRO & THE PAINKILLERS • VICTOR WAINWRIGHT & THE TRAIN**

**GOLDEN STATE LONE STAR REVUE w/ MARK HUMMEL, ANSON FUNDERBURGH, DEETRA FARR & OSCAR WILSON**

**LIL' ED & THE BLUES IMPERIALS • WELCH LEDBETTER CONNECTION • DANIELLE NICOLE BAND w/ Special Guest LATIMORE • POPA CHURRY**

**INDIGENOUS • TOM HAMBRIDGE & THE RATTLESNAKES • DWAYNE OPSIE & THE ZYDECO HELLRAISERS • CHRISTONE "KINGFISH" INGRAM**

**VANESSA COLLIER • JONTAVIOUS WILLIS • CHRIS "BAD NEWS" BARNES & HOKUM BLUES w/ STEVE GUYGER & BLUE LOU MARINI**

**DAVE GROSS • KEESHEA PRATT BAND** IBC BAND WINNER *Jam Host:* RANDY OXFORD *Piano Bar:* REV. BILLY C. WIRTZ • EDEN BRENT

**KELLEY HUNT • CARL "SONNY" LEYLAND • BARRY CUDAH • DAVE KEYES • ANDERSON "SONNYBOY" EDWARDS • DEANNA BOGART**

*Looking Ahead! Mark Your Calendar...*

**LRBC #33 Oct. 26~Nov. 2, 2019**

Sailing from San Diego to Mexican Riviera  
Holland America ms Eurodam

**PREBOOK STARTS JULY 26th**

\$500 per cabin fully-refundable prebook deposit holds your spot  
in line to book once band announcement is made



*Don't Miss This Ship... Save This Date!*

**LRBC #34 Jan. 19~26, 2020**

Sailing from Ft. Lauderdale to Curacao, Aruba & TBA  
Holland America ms Nieuw Statendam

**PREBOOK STARTS SEPT. 19th**

\$500 per cabin fully-refundable prebook deposit holds your spot  
in line to book once band announcement is made