



Blues Society of Central Pennsylvania
www.bscpblues.com

BLUES NEWS

Oct - Dec 2024

THE BLUES SOCIETY OF CENTRAL PA GOSPEL SHOW



DEDICATED MEN OF ZION

SUNDAY NOVEMBER 3, 2024



with
Spiritual
Messengers
Warriors for God

CHAMPIONS SPORTS BAR

300 2nd St. Highspire, PA 17034

Doors open **1:00** \$25 Advance

Show **2:00** \$30 Door

Tickets for sale online at BSCPblues.com or at BSCP Thursday Jam at
Champions Sports Bar, Highspire, PA



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From your President...

Autumn brings us relief from Summer's heat, which especially hit blues festival goers hard this year. On Saturday, June 22, attendees of the Billtown Blues Festival appreciated the generous supply of water and the big tent sheltering them from temperatures in the mid-90s. Unexpectedly, however, that evening the heat created intense microbursts with 70 miles an hour winds and rains that pummeled everything in its path (p.11).

While I loved the Summer music, I am grateful that Fall brings us cool evenings, sunny days, colorful leaves and blue skies. Turns out that as the sun gets lower and lower in its annual journey in the sky, the angle of the sun's light hitting the atmosphere causes even more blue light to scatter.

Not only do we have bluer skies, but this Fall it feels like there is more blues music in the air. Thanks to the hard-working dedicated board members and other volunteers, BSCP is finishing 2024 with lots of great music.

Sunday, November 3, we will be enjoying the unique sounds of the soulful rhythm and blues gospel songs of The Dedicated Men of Zion and the Spiritual Messengers Warriors for God (p.5).

Thursday, October 31st, we will not only be celebrating Halloween (get out your costumes) but also paying tribute to our Central PA musicians who have been jamming, some as long as 26 years, on Thursday evenings for our listening and dancing pleasure. This will be the BSCP official celebration of the Central PA Hall of Fame Spot Award for the first "Best Jam" in the area (p.16).

On Sunday, December 1, the Darrell Nulisch Band will start out the Holiday season with the annual BSCP Christmas Party at the Hummelstown Fire Department (p.4).

BSCP is also supporting other

organizations bringing us both local and national blues acts. We are thrilled that the Lancaster Roots and Blues Festival has returned with 80 acts over September 27-29.

BSCP will be partnering with the Pennsylvania College of Art & Design and Nola Blue, Inc. for First Friday, October 4, in Lancaster to bring Daryl Davis to talk about race relations and to play dynamic music. A special thank you to BSCP member Keshav Rao for his generous contribution in support of the event (p.7).

The next day, October 5, BSCP will be sponsoring Nate Myers and the Aces at the free Little Buffalo Music Festival in Newport, PA. Mike Easton and Lewis Bechtold will be providing a Harmonica Class for Youth (p.4).

To help the membership and other blues lovers keep up with all the events going on, BSCP is always looking for ways to improve communication. Our new Public Relations Chairperson Sallie Bengtson is expanding our posts on Facebook. A creative designer, she is using a feature on our Wix.com software to send out our promotional emails rather than using my personal email. With this change in the delivery method, if you find that you are no longer receiving emails about events, please feel free to contact me.

Celebrating the blues!



Kathryn Gregoire

bluesmunga@gmail.com

Mission Statement

The Blues Society of Central Pennsylvania is a non-profit corporation dedicated to the preservation, promotion, support and enjoyment of the truly original American art form, the blues.

In Memoriam

by Jackson Fogel



Henry Carvajal

June 19, 1968 – June 24, 2024

Henry Carvajal was best known for his work as the powerful guitarist in Rod Piazza & the Mighty Flyers. His presence on stage was mostly attributed to his skill in jump blues tunes, but his real skill was being able to effortlessly blend jump, West Coast, and Chicago blues on stage and on record.



John Mayall

November 29, 1933 – July 22, 2024

John Mayall was as close to a kingmaker as the blues scene could ask for. His band, John Mayall & the Bluesbreakers, helped launch the careers of Eric Clapton, Walter Trout, Peter Green, Jack Bruce, Mick Tyler, John McVie - the list goes on and on. His storied career as a guitarist, harmonica player, singer, keyboardist, songwriter, and producer over nearly seventy years has left an indelible mark on the community, rightfully earning him the title of "Godfather of the British Blues."



Joey Gilmore

July 6, 1944 – July 29, 2024

Joey Gilmore, perhaps best known for his track "Blues All Over You," was a lifelong singer, songwriter, and guitarist. Self-taught, Gilmore was leading bands and playing in clubs before he could even enter them legally. Moving to South Florida in the mid-60s, he played with several major tours as they came by before regularly releasing his own music in the 90s. In 2006, he won Best Band in the International Blues Challenge, and in 2015 was honored with a Latin World Talent Lifetime Achievement Award.



Carl Weathersby

February 24, 1953 – August 9, 2024

A titan of Chicago blues, Carl Weathersby was a vocalist, guitarist, and songwriter who never stopped thinking of his birthplace of Mississippi as his home. Growing up in Chicago, he learned guitar as a teenager, where he impressed Albert King - a friend of his father's at the time - who invited him to play on tour. His collaborations also included playing with Sons of the Blues for decades, followed by 30 years of headlining as a solo act.



Mark May

September 29, 1961 – August 12, 2024

Mark May came from a musical family. His older brother, Ken, taught him to play the guitar and introduced him to inspirations like the Beatles and Jimi Hendrix. His uncle and mother were country and bluegrass singers and songwriters, and he followed in their footsteps with his blues performances, mainly with the Mark May Band and as a guitarist for the Dickey Betts & Great Southern.



Nick Gravenites

October 2, 1938 – September 19, 2024

A Chicago blues, rock, and folk singer, songwriter, guitarist and producer, Nick Gravenites was a founding member of Electric Flag, along with his old Chicago pal, Michael Bloomfield. Later in life, he lived in the San Francisco Bay Area. His best known song, "Born In Chicago," was honored by the Blues Hall of Fame in 2003. He was a major influence on the career of Janis Joplin and a frequent collaborator with Big Brother and the Holding Company, the Paul Butterfield Blues Band, Taj Mahal, Huey Lewis and John Cipollina of Quicksilver Messenger Service. He also wrote for Pure Prairie League, Tracy Nelson, Roy Buchanan, Jimmy Witherspoon, Howlin' Wolf, Otis Rush, and James Cotton. He has appeared on some 40 albums as singer, songwriter, guitarist, and producer. He released his last album *Rogue Blues* in 2024.

**SAVE
THE
DATES**

Daryl Davis Show – 10/04/24 Pennsylvania College of Art & Design, Lancaster PA
 Gospel Show – 11/03/24 – Dedicated Men of Zion w/ The Spiritual Messengers
 Warriors for God
 Christmas Party – 12/01/24 – The Darrell Nulisch Band
 Winter Show – 2/23/25 – TBA
 Spring Show – 4/27/25 - TBA

Please visit our website @ <http://www.bscpblues.com/news&events.html>
 for further details

BSCP Celebrates the Holidays with the Darrell Nulisch Band



By Kathryn Gregoire

The Darrell Nulisch Band is composed of exceptionally talented musicians, with Nulisch as the lead vocalist, songwriter, and harmonica player. A Texas Blue-Eyed Soul Bluesman, he was born in 1952 and raised in a home full of blues, honky-tonk and soul music, with his parents listening to artists such as Otis Redding and Al Green. He lists Jimmy McCracklin, Freddie King, and his neighbor, Jimmie Vaughan, as his early favorites, with Little Walter and Sonny Boy Williamson influencing his harmonica playing. He was a founding member of Anson Funderburgh and His Rockets and was with them until 1985.

Nulisch sang with such legends as Kenny Wayne Shepherd, Hubert Sumlin, Otis Grand and James Cotton. He played and/or sang with several bands, including the Crawl, Sugar Ray & the Bluetones, and Ronnie Earl & the Broadcasters

In 1991, Nulisch formed Texas Heat, a tightly-knit high-energy band that created a fresh hybrid of Chicago blues, Memphis soul,

albums. He has received multiple Blues Music Award nominations, including one for Best Traditional Blues Album in 2007 for *Goin' Back to Dallas*. In total Nulisch has nine of his own albums and has appeared on several other albums.

In 2006 James Cotton unexpectedly invited Nulisch to join his band on tour after Cotton lost his voice to throat cancer. He considered the opportunity to be on stage with one of his lifetime idols to be an honor and continued to play with him until Cotton's death in 2017.

A worldwide concert performer, Nulisch reflects on his life "When I consider everything I've been lucky enough to accomplish, I feel humbled. Today I'm exactly where I want to be, making the music I want to make, which I'm happy to do for the rest of my life."

The band's guitarist, Chris Vitarello, has played with multiple master blues musicians, such as Bruce Katz, John Hammond, Tad Robinson, Vanessa Collier, Chris O'Leary, and Dennis Gruenling.

Dave Limina is a contemporary pianist, Hammond organist, keyboardist, composer, producer, educator, and chair of the Piano Department at Berklee College of Music. He has performed or recorded with such notable artists as the award-winning Ronnie Earl and the Broadcasters, Bernard Purdie, Chuck Berry, B.B. King, Gloria Estefan, Scott Hamilton, and many more.

Lorne Entress has produced over twenty-five albums for artists as diverse as Lori McKenna and Ronnie Earl. In addition to recording his own music he's been the drummer for many artists, including Mary Chapin Carpenter, Big Al Anderson, Susan Tedeschi, Junior Wells, Erin McKeown and Freddy Johnston, just to name a few.

Mike Law is a first call bass player who prides himself on playing with first-rate blues harmonica players like Preston Hubbard, Marty Ballou, Ronnie James Weber, John Bazz, Larry Taylor, Mudcat Ward and more. In just a few years Mike has played in some of the biggest blues festivals in the world with some of the best players on the scene.

BSCP is thrilled to be bringing in the holiday season with great music by a band with unstoppable energy. See you at the Christmas Party!

Little Buffalo Music Festival October 5, 2024

By Kathryn Gregoire

The 41st Little Buffalo Festival will be held Saturday, October 5, 2024, from 12–6 pm at Little Buffalo State Park in Newport, PA. The completely volunteer-coordinated free event features local and regional performers on multiple stages.

The Moore Pavilion Performances include Copper Sun (12:15-12:55), Nate Myers and the Aces (1:15-2:15), Knorrwood (2:45-4:00), and Blitz Dynette (4:30-6:00). The BSCP is proud to be sponsoring the Nate Myers and the Aces performance.

The Acoustic Stage performances include Wes Hoke (12:30-1:30), Sara Markowitz and Ned Allis (1:50-2:50), Jessica Batz (3:10-4:10), and Bobbi Carmitchell and Friends (4:30-5:30).

The Writer's Nook includes Maria James-

Thiaw (12:30), Jeff Schmidt (1:30), Lynne Reeder (2:30), and Awards Ceremony and new Poet Laureate announcement (TBA).

The Buffalo Youth Performance Tent includes Welcome & Rhythm and Dance warm up (12:00), BSCP Kids Harmonica Workshop (12:10), Native American Storyteller Kymm Myers (12:30), Youth Arts Showcase (1:00), All in Theatre (2:00), Nick DiSantos One Man Band (3:00), Parade to Main Stage (3:55), and Community Drum Circle at Main Stage (4:00). There will be a variety of activities going on in the tented Children's Area.

Two BSCP Board Members will be providing lessons to youth ages 6 and older at the Kids Harmonica Workshop from 12:10 – 1 pm. Lewis Bechtold is the

lead singer and harmonica player for the Blues on the Loose band, who participated in the International Blues Challenge in Memphis in 2020. Mike Easton has been playing harmonica in bands since age 19. He has been in the harmonica repair business for 25 years and is the North and South American repair technician for Lee Oskar Harmonicas company. BSCP will be providing harmonicas for new students when needed. Students are encouraged to bring their own harmonicas if they have them.

For additional information see <https://littlebuffalofestival.org>.

BSCP GOSPEL BLUES SHOW

By Kathryn Gregoire



Antwan Daniels, Marcus Sugg, Dexter Weaver, Anthony Daniels (seated); Photo: Bill Reynolds

Time for BSCP to go to church! Two amazing groups will be at Champions, Sunday, November 3, at 2 pm to take us there: Dedicated Men of Zion and Spiritual Messengers Warriors for God.

The Dedicated Men of Zion

The Dedicated Men of Zion (DMZ) from the Greenville, North Carolina, area initially formed in 2014 and reformed in 2018 after the death of one of the original members, Trevoris Newton. DMZ has four harmony trained vocalists, Anthony Daniels, Antwan Daniels, Dexter Weaver, and Marcus Sugg, all related through blood or marriage and backed by five talented instrumentalists.

Anthony Daniels, the eldest of DMZ, previously led a career in R&B down in Atlanta, backing up the likes of Bebe Winans, Toni Braxton, and Elton John. Antwan Daniels, the youngest member and son of Anthony, was playing keyboards and organ in church while simultaneously injecting his hip-hop production work with traditional gospel roots.

But the church was always the backbone. Weaver, whose grandmother managed several gospel groups around Greenville, had sung with elder quartet groups for years, running into Anthony Daniels around the gospel circuit. When they both found themselves without a group, Weaver turned to Daniels and said "I don't know what you're gonna do but if you do something, I'm on board with you. I want to be with you."

The Dedicated Men of Zion caught the attention of the Music Maker Relief Foundation co-founder Tim Duffy, and

began reaching new audiences, both sacred and secular. Tim introduced the group to Bruce Watson of Fat Possum Records, who sought to deliver that soulful sound of deep-rooted country gospel, the joyful sounds of survival, emotional truth and purposefulness, to beyond the church circuits through his newly formed Bible & Tire Recording Co.

DMZ's debut album [Can't Turn Me Around](#) was recorded in Memphis at Bruce Watson's Delta-Sonic Sound, backed by Watson's all-star studio band, in 2019. Their music has a classic soul sound with horns and funky beats but set to gospel harmonies.

Tim Duffy, coined the term "sacred soul" to describe their music which connects soul and church music. When DMZ appeared in 2020's virtual version of globalFEST, the critical praise began to flow. NPR music critic Ann Powers said DMZ's music met at the "nexus of secular soul music and gospel." "You hear it all in here, right?" she said. "It's got a little Hi Records flavor, it's definitely got the Temptations kind of flavor, it's very Southern at the same time. If you like that kind of secular music, you're gonna love this even if you have not found Jesus."

In 2022 DMZ released *The Devil Don't Like* offering more sacred music. The Memphis-based Sacred Soul Sound Section features GRAMMY-winner Matt Ross-Spang (guitar), George Sluppick (drummer), Will Sexton (guitarist), Mark Edgar Stuart (bassist), and Al Gamble (organist).

Spiritual Messengers Warriors for God

What a thrill it will be to see the Spiritual Messengers Warriors for God in performance; for many BSCP members, it will be the first time seeing them playing live. The two times the Spiritual Messengers performed for BSCP previously was during covid, they were on Zoom via Facebook headlining our online Christmas Eve show on December 24, 2020 and playing again on June 10, 2021.

The recorded shows can be viewed on [BSCPblues.com](#) under Videos – Virtual Jam (our Thursday evening online show

during Covid). The Spiritual Messengers also have music on YouTube and on their website.

Spiritual Messengers, a contemporary gospel male ensemble, began as a First Spirit Filled Missionary Baptist church choir 33 years ago in Harrisburg. The founding members, Rev. Moses Jackson (vocals), his son Anthony Jackson (drums, percussion), James "Mac" MacFarland (vocals, tambourine) and Wayne Boulware (vocals, bass guitar) grew up in the Deep South post-World War II.

Their musical roots are steeped in the traditional African American church and the radio: blues, R&B, with touches of soul, country, bluegrass, reggae, and pop. Today the group also includes Tom Cook (mandolin, banjo), Daniel Stern (saxophone), Jim McGroarty (keyboards), Ian Blynn (guitar) and Mark Ward (guitar).

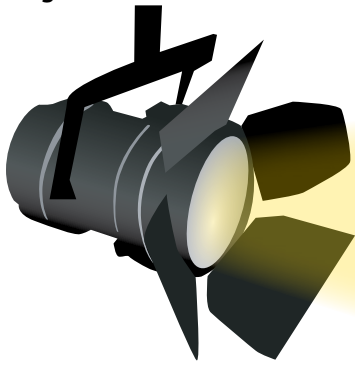
Spiritual Messengers perform in Central PA, opening for groups such as The Campbell Brothers and Mighty Clouds of Joy. They are known for their original songs and getting a good groove going. In 2012 they released a CD *Lord, I Want to Talk to You*.

They seek to provide healing and connection through their music, plus create social change through their originals that draw upon their experiences of the Civil Rights Movement.

Says member Daniel Stern about the Spiritual Messengers "There's a difference between learning it from books and then learning it from the source. This is part of a living community. This is not repertory music; it's a living culture that's produced a living music."



L/R Back Row: Ian Blynn, Mac MacFarland, Anthony Jackson, Dan Stern, Wayne Boulware
L/R Front Row: Tom Cook, Rev. Moses Jackson, Jim McGroarty



In the Spotlight...

Gordy Keeney



By Hannah Sherman

steady. Their last show was at the Hershey Starlight ballroom.

One night at the Likens Ballroom, the bass player from the Intentions approached Gordy and said they were starting a new band and wanted to know if he was interested. He gave 2 weeks' notice but wondered what he had gotten into when they were practicing in a wet basement, the singer started down the wooden steps, the first step gave out, he landed on his knees, grabbed the mike and went right into it. He figured that band was ok then. It was 1969, he was still in school and playing 6 nights a week.

His hair was getting longer but not below his ears so he was called before the school board with his mother. They said "No" to everything that was discussed and Gordy stated to his mother, "let's get out of here." He was placed on 3 days detention. It made the paper!

This band, Humble Gathering, had 3 singers, 3 horns, etc. and Gordy stayed with them for 16 years. On the first day of his senior year he walked into school, saw the vice-principal coming down the hall, and by that time he had longer hair, a mustache and a goatee. The VP said, "Where are you going?," Gordy said, "I'm going to quit" and the VP said, "GO!"

That was the end of school, the band got a hearse and a limo and traveled up and down the east coast. They opened for Jefferson Airplane, the Temptations, Gladys Knight and the Pips, the Chamber Brothers and the Magnificent Men. They recorded an album, made 20,000 copies and you might find one for \$400. "We were playing music, making money and having a good time!"

Eventually that band fell apart and in 1980 he joined the Silver Fox Band who played 130 times a year. "It was a real money maker!" They did Elvis shows and had dancing girls. It was a real variety show. After that it was Soul House for 10 years (Rocky played for 5 years). Now it's the Lowry Blues Band who will be opening for the Cinelli Brothers at Champion's on September 22.

Gordy remembers, "I'm 71 now and I've been drumming for 60 years. Biggest

influences are Ringo and Gene Krupa. He doesn't go to many concerts anymore but still likes to catch live music. Probably not too many people know Gordy likes dirt track racing and helps work on a Limited Late Model. He also donates money and Lowry Blues Band is sponsored on the car (which got smashed but fixed).

When asked what he likes about BSCP he said, "I kinda like an awful lot of things about it. I like the people I met that come in there week after week and hang out. I like to come in and jam, the society takes care of us with nice equipment. I like the whole set-up, the stage, patio and the storage. I like putting equipment away at the end of the night. My mother taught me to help people out."

Gary "Rocky" Rothrock: Gordy is a crazy guy and a great drummer! His off the wall comments during the jam keep us all laughing. Playing a set with Gordy is always fun! And he is a strong worker for BSCP, helping with set up and tear down at all our events and jams. His energy, many years of experience and knowledge of musical gear are invaluable at our events. He is always ready to help!

Bill Wasch: Gordy is one of the many people I had the privilege to meet because of the jam. At first, I recognized him as a really solid drummer and was always really happy to play with him. As time (years, I guess) passed, it became more evident that Gordy is a great drummer and a wonderful musician. He really gets how music works and how to make a song sound as it should. Finally, I found that Gordy has a wonderfully twisted sense of humor and I had found another kindred spirit. I've had a few opportunities to play with Gordy outside of the jam and they have always been great musically and, even more importantly, a great deal of fun. If you don't know Gordy, do yourself a favor and introduce yourself at the jam. He'll try to appear aloof and perhaps even prickly but just laugh it off, Gordy is definitely worth the effort.

Described as a "South Lebanon boy", Gordy grew up with a dad who was a swing nut and a mother who loved to dance and enjoyed soul music. When he was six, he watched his older neighbor practice with the nearby school marching band and was mesmerized by the drummer. He was always banging on pots and pans and their hassock. By the time he was nine or ten he had a neighbor down the street who had a band that practiced in their kitchen and they let him stand there and listen. One day the drummer asked him if he wanted to play and he took to it because he knew he could do it.

When the Beatles came out, he saw the girls screaming for Ringo. He told his mom, "I can do that!" He and his friends made look-alike instruments and played air band and the small local theater actually recorded them. Someday we may get a surprise viewing!

By the time he was 12 he played in an actual band, learned a couple of songs ("Money" and "Twist and Shout") and played for a wedding reception! Soon after that he knew two older guys who would pick him up for practice. They had 3 horns, 2 girl singers, keyboard, drums, bass and guitar. They named themselves the Sol-Ars, got a manager and were making \$50 a week

BSCP, PCA&D and NOLA BLUE, INC. PARTNER TO BRING DARYL DAVIS TO CENTRAL PA

By Kathryn Gregoire

PENNSYLVANIA COLLEGE OF ART & DESIGN
PRESENTS
THE VOICE AND MUSIC OF
* DARYL DAVIS *FIRST FRIDAY OCTOBER 4, 2024

KLAN-DESTINE
RELATIONSHIPS:
A BLACK MAN'S ODYSSEY
IN THE KU KLUX KLAN
3:30-4:45 PM

BOOGIE-WOOGIE
BLUES
ROCK N' ROLL
6:00-7:00 PM

* FREE EVENT *
PCA&D ATRIUM
204 NORTH PRINCE STREET
LANCASTER, PA 17603

Pennsylvania College of Art & Design IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE BLUES SOCIETY OF CENTRAL PA * NOLA BLUE, INC.

Poster design by Joe McElroy

Daryl Davis's appearance begins at 3:30 pm in the Atrium of PCA&D, where he will share his life experiences that led to his 1998 book *Klan-destine Relationships: A Black Man's Odyssey* and the 2017 Independent Lens documentary film screenplay directed and produced by Mathew Ornstein *Accidental Courtesy: Daryl Davis, Race & America*. The documentary film (95 minutes) originally aired on PBS and is currently available on 3 streaming services. He speaks about the power of conversation to ignite positive change, how to understand hate groups in America, and how music broke down racial barriers in the 1950s and 1980s.

Daryl, whose parents were in the U.S. Foreign Service, traveled extensively as a child. At the age of 10 when the family moved to Massachusetts, he encountered racism firsthand. The question created from his initial experience, "How can you hate me when you don't even know me?" stayed with Davis for decades. As an adult, he sought the answer to the question by interviewing Ku Klux Klan members, some of whom ended up becoming his close friends, leaving the Klan and presenting him with their robes and hoods.

As a race relations expert, Davis has received numerous awards and high acclaim

for his book *and documentary*. He is the recipient of numerous awards including the highly prestigious Elliott-Black Award and the Bridge Builder Award presented by the American Ethical Union and Washington Ethical Society respectively, to name a few. Post University awarded him an Honorary Doctorate in Humane Letters for the unique work he has done in the field of race relations.

At 6 pm Daryl will be providing an hour of the energizing boogie-woogie piano playing that is part of what initially attracted many clan members to him and opened the door for them to get to know a black person. Davis believes that music is a powerful uniting force.

An internationally performing composer, vocalist, pianist and guitarist, Daryl Davis earned his BA in Music (1980) from Howard University. Mentored by Pinetop Perkins and Johnnie Johnson, he mastered the boogie-woogie piano blues in the Delta and Chicago style. Today he, in turn, mentors young musicians through the Artist in Residency program at the Strathmore Institute in Bethesda, MD. He was awarded "Best Traditional Blues/R&B Instrumentalist" at the 2009 Washington Area Music Awards and served for several years as the artistic director

of the Centrum Acoustic Blues Festival. Daryl has been to 56 countries on six continents, lecturing, playing music and acting on stages in various venues.

Daryl Davis has performed extensively with Chuck Berry, Jerry Lee Lewis, The Legendary Blues Band (formerly The Muddy Waters Blues Band), and Elvis Presley's Jordanaires. He has played with artists such as The Platters, The Temptations, The Drifters, The Coasters, Bo Diddley, Bruce Hornsby, Percy Sledge, Sam Moore, Little Richard and B.B. King.

Daryl was at the keys when Bill Clinton was blowing his saxophone on *The Arsenio Show*. He has performed with the U.S. Army Band, the U.S. Navy Band, and appeared on multiple television shows, such as *The Tonight Show*. He has released several albums including *Rockin' My Blues Away* (1982), *American Roots* (2000), *Alternate Routes* (2008) and *Greatest Hits* (2011). In addition to his career as a performing musician, Daryl is the owner of Lyrad Music, a music publishing and licensing business.

As an offshoot of his work, Daryl is adjunct professor for Johns Hopkins University's Osher Lifelong Learning Institute & Community as well as Oasis. Both are autonomous Adult Continuing Education programs that give Daryl the latitude to teach on a variety of subjects he cares about most in the arenas of music and race relations. Daryl is a board member of FAIR (Foundation Against Intolerance & Racism) and is a cofounder, board member, and Global Ambassador of the Prohuman Foundation.

Daryl received rave reviews for his stage role in *The Time Of Your Life* and has played several film and television roles including HBO's acclaimed series *The Wire*. As of February 2022, he has had over 12 million views for his Tedx Talk. Daryl runs a podcast called *Changing Minds* with diverse guests, such as former Ku Klux Klan Imperial Wizard Scott Sheperd, blues guitarist Bob Margolin, and documentary film director and human rights activist Deeyah Khan.

PCA&D is a 4-year private art college at 204 N Prince Street in Lancaster, PA that offers BFA degree programs in animation and game art, fine art, illustration, graphic design, live experience design, or photography and video. NOLA BLUE RECORDS Inc. is a Lancaster-based company dedicated to supporting the Blues. The mission of the Blues Society of Central Pennsylvania is to preserve, promote, support and enjoy the blues. The lecture and music are also being supported through the generous contributions of a BSCP member, Keshav Rao, a strong supporter of blues music.

MEET YOUR BOARD MEMBERS: Mike Easton

by Hannah Sherman



Mike currently serves as our Archives Chair but some of you may remember when he was the first vice president. He attended the first meeting at the Sheridan East and helped organize the meetings with Jim Mulholland. Mike had had twelve years' experience working with the Friends of Jazz and Jim had worked with the Steelworkers Union. He also helped write the by-laws with Cecelia Jankura. He was the original jam host for three years, followed by Gary Harrington who did it for two years. They then decided to have a rotating schedule of weekly jam hosts, which holds to this day. He currently helps keep track of our historical records and also organizes bands for our Mom I picnic.

Mike calls himself a "Central PA Boy" and grew up with music in the house, especially big band music. His dad played piano and organ and won on clarinet on the Ted Mack Amateur Hour. His oldest brother got him into jazz when he was twelve and another brother was a child guitar prodigy. Mike wanted his own identity and after listening to the Beatles "Love Me Do" he decided on the harmonica. He still has that 45 and I know for a fact he's not the only one. He also enjoyed playing the saxophone and played briefly in a band but decided to stick with harmonica.

He wasn't much into rock and roll but liked horns and enjoyed Blood, Sweat and Tears and Chicago. In high school he sat in with his brother's band and at 19 he

was invited to join Don Intrieri's band as sound and light engineer and sat in on "Stormy Monday". He remembers it took him a while to get over his stage fright. In the 80's, at 22, he joined a country band playing harmonica and sax. In the late 90's he was playing out again and met Dane Paul Russell and Bill Frederick at Kokomo's. It was the first time he had met other harmonica players. They encouraged him to practice and get out and play more. He also played with Jimmie and The Late Night Boys and briefly in the Lancaster band Blue Attitude. He formed a duo with Bob Wineland which eventually led to playing with Dr. Mo and The Humblers who made a CD after 5 years. In 2004 he joined Krypton City Blues Revue.

Mike started his harmonica repair business in 1998 and was recently contacted by Lee Oskar to be harmonica tech for North and South America. He has repaired harmonicas for Rick Estrin, Gary Primich, Jason Ricci, Paul Oscher, Steve Guyger, Mikey, Jr. and Charlie Musselwhite.

His favorite concerts featuring harmonica players have been Gary Primich at Eppers and Joseph Cotton at the Pocono Blues Festival and the jazz player Toots Theilmans, considered one of the best in the world, who played on the Sesame Street Theme Song.

His favorite thing about the BSCP is the camaraderie among musicians. "We take care of each other. It used to be musicians would come to the jam who wanted to be stars – pick their own times, etc. We take care of each other now and let the band leader know if a solo is skipped. It really does feel like family." Mike likes all BSCP events, but especially the concerts and the jam. He enjoys working with the board now because there's no in-fighting.

People may not know that Mike is a sci-fi nerd who believes in UFO's, UAP's and aliens. He also loves to cook. He likes Indian food and enjoys experimenting with spices, herbs and marinades and coming up with creations from scratch. After growing up with meat and potatoes PA Dutch style food he looks at cooking as chemistry. He had been dating his wife, Christine, for two years and made a

chicken dinner a couple of times when she started to cry – he never realized that she was vegetarian!

Christine enjoys crafting and they both attend fairy festivals as she makes items such as wings, jewelry and hats. They also enjoy Longwood Gardens.

Sit down with Mike sometime if you want to discuss sci-fi shows and movies!

David "Dr. Mo" Moyar: Of all the harmonica players, and for that matter musicians I have had the privilege to play with, Mike Easton is definitely one of them! Besides being a consummate musician, he is a fine individual and a true and trusted friend. How he stepped up and helped Gary Harrington in his time of need shows his generosity and compassion. His knowledge of music in general and specifically harmonicas is encyclopedic. I am proud to call him my friend and feel honored anytime I get to share a stage or just hang out with him.

Greg Hoover: When I think of Mike Easton, I think of a blues harp player. He can get a tone like you hear from old blues harp legends!

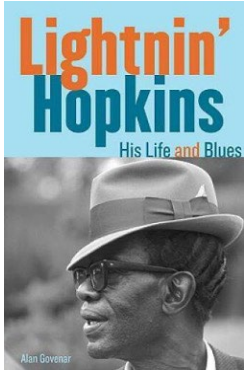
Mike had been kind to me early on while just getting to know people within the blues society. He always made me feel comfortable when in a set with him. I have him to thank for the opportunity to play at this year's Mom I Picnic, and I am quite grateful!

I absolutely love playing and leading a slow blues song when I have Mike on Harp! He really digs deep and puts his heart into his playing! Add to that that he is a respected harp technician; he knows his instrument! He can play it and fix it!

Marianna Schaffer: Mike is one of those musicians who keeps his talent undercover until he takes the stage. Even then, he patiently waits until it's his turn to solo, supplying tasty musical color in between the lines, then cuts loose with an explosion of awesome harp riffs, playing for the song with both soul and technical expertise. Mike's quiet demeanor belies his sharp wit, which I absolutely love!

BLUES BOOK CORNER

By Kathryn Gregoire



Lightnin' Hopkins: His Life and Blues by Alan Govenar

One of the musicians Samuel Charters wrote about in *The Country Blues* was singer-songwriter and guitarist, Sam "Lightnin'" Hopkins. He considered him to be "one of the last of the great blues singers in the grand style." Charters's description inspired the book club members to read more about Lightnin' in the extensively researched biography authored by Alan Govenar in 2010 (352 pages) and to watch the 1968 film *The Blues According to Lightnin' Hopkins*.

Sam "Lightnin'" Hopkins, born in 1912, grew up with four brothers and sisters in a musical family in Centerville in the middle of Texas, raised by his mother after his father was murdered when Sam was 3 years old.

Lightnin' first met Blind Lemon Jefferson when he was eight years old and he spent a lot of time following him around, rapidly developing his musical skills. As a young teenager, he served jail time, did farm labor, got married, had his daughter, Anna Mae, and played music on the streets for tips.

In the 1930s, he met Texas Alexander who showed him how to make a living with a rambling, improvisational style of blues music. He also learned from Alexander "that it wasn't necessarily the truth of the song that mattered so much as the emotions it evoked."

Lightnin' moved to the Third Ward of Houston in 1945 where he made his debut

recording on the Gold Star label with "Short Haired Woman" in 1946, quickly gaining popularity alongside his contemporaries, Muddy Waters and John Lee Hooker. He recorded for multiple labels, usually operating independently. His preference was to be paid \$100 for a song which he would record and that would be the end of the relationship and financial arrangement.

Lightnin' exemplified the country roots of Texas blues, reflecting its urban directions in the years after WWII. He was a force in the folk revival and its impact on white audiences. Playing both acoustic and electric guitar and steeped in the Texas country blues tradition, he sang whatever was on his mind, usually male-female relationships.

Much of the book consists of detailed descriptions of the songs Hopkins recorded: when, where and with whom. His playing, particularly his timing, was idiosyncratic, making it difficult for others to play with him. He focused on the essence of blues, rather than the structure. He had this readily identifiable "feel" which set him apart from other blues masters with an uncanny sense of drama.

Mack McCormick, Sam Charters, Alan Lomax, Chris Strachwitz and Dr. Cecil Harold played managerial roles and brought awareness of Lightnin' Hopkins to the eye of the public, particularly as part of the folk revival movement. His work contributed to the civil rights era, adding a white audience to his admirers.

He mostly traveled around Texas, California and New York City. After much persuasion he did European trips, but those required that he

fly, which traumatized him. Strachwitz took him to the Newport Folk Festival where he played the day before Bob Dylan.

As his success grew he made more money, but it went quickly with his voracious addictions to gambling and drinking. An immaculately sharp dresser, with his classic hat, patent leather shoes, gold tooth and trademark pair of sunglasses, this charming man had a reputation with women, but the main love of his life was Antoinette Charles.

The years of his life were eventful, with Lightnin' receiving his one and only Grammy nomination for Best Ethnic or Traditional Recording for *Lightnin' Strikes* in 1972. He toured Japan in 1978, sharing the stage with Jimmie Vaughan and Stevie Ray Vaughan. He did an Austin City Limits television show which included the Neville Brothers and Barrelhouse blues pianist Robert Shaw.

In 1979, he played his fourth and final Carnegie Hall show, *Blues 'n' Boogie*. The mayor of Houston issued a proclamation to celebrate "Lightnin' Hopkins Day" as part of the Juneteenth Blues Festival. He was a headliner at the Chicago Fest and played in NYC.

After a lifetime of recording more blues albums than any other musician, Sam "Lightnin'" Hopkins died in Houston, Texas, at the age of 69 of esophageal cancer.

"Lightnin' Hopkins was a man of all colors and classes, and of all times. He was an eloquent spokesman for the human soul which dwells in us all." - Les Blank (filmmaker)

12 Bar Blues for the Novice By John "JD" Drudul

Many blues fans are not musicians and may not understand how musicians can sit in and play the blues together. It all comes down to understanding how the 12 Bar Blues pattern works. This is the common thread among musicians at the BSCP weekly blues jam.

Let's say we are in the key of G. The 12 Bar Blues chords will be G, C, and D. We'll translate this to numbers 1, 4, and 5. 1-G, 2, 3, 4-C, 5-D. So we'll end up having a pattern of 1, 4, and 5 chords regardless of the key we are playing. For example, the key of A chords will be 1-A, 2, 3, 4-D, 5-E.

A bar can be defined as a measure of 4

beats, 1,2,3,4. A 12 Bar Blues pattern will have 12 measures of 4 beats each. The common 12 bar/measure pattern in the key of G is: G, G, G, G, C, C, G, G, D, C, G, D. The generic representation regardless of key will be: 1, 1, 1, 1, 4, 4, 1, 1, 5, 4, 1, 5. The pattern then repeats over and over until the song is finished.

There can also be variations on this pattern, but it will still be 12 bars.

1, 4, 1, 1, 4, 4, 1, 1, 5, 4, 1, 5
or 1, 1, 1, 1, 4, 4, 1, 1, 5, 4, 1, 1
or 1, 4, 1, 1, 4, 4, 1, 1, 5, 4, 1, 1
etc.

There are also other blues patterns that are 8 bar and 16 bar. The song "Key to

the Highway" would be an example of this pattern, 1, 5, 4, 4, 1, 5, 1, 5.

The 12 bar pattern isn't exclusive to the blues. It can also be found in country, folk, rock, and jazz music much of which was derived from the blues. Muddy Waters penned the phrase "The Blues Had a Baby and They Named It Rock and Roll."

So there you have it, the musicians little secret to playing blues with each other. Next time you, the novice, are at one of our BSCP jams, count 1, 2, 3, 4 and follow along. I hope this gives you the blues fan a little better insight to the great American art form, the Blues.

In Case You Missed It!

Iron Bridge Music Festival June 15, 2024

Photos by Christy Lerch



Joan Lenker



Mikey Jr. Band



Dancers

Mississippi Railroad July 14, 2024 Photos by K. Gregoire



Mark "Muleman" Massey



Dave Groninger & Tony Ryder



Dale Wise



Hank Imhoff, Paul, "Muleman"

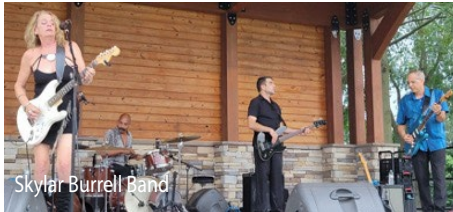


MS RR Audience

East Petersburg Blues Festival August 31, 2024 Photos by Nancy Lee Jones



Buzzard Luck



Skylar Burrell Band



The Blues Reincarnation Project



Moe Blues

BSCP Fall Show September 22, 2024 Photos by Larry Fogelson



Audience



Marco Cinelli



Tom Julian-Jones



Alessandro Cinelli



Stephen Giry

Billtown Blues Festival

Photos by Kirk Hansen, Black Kat Blues Photography



Bonnie Tallman, Bob Margolin



Paul Deslauriers, Annika Chambers



Annika Chambers

I was fortunate this year to be able to attend the Billtown Blues Festival in Hughesville, PA, to enjoy being with great blues friends listening to outstanding musicians. Little did I know that a storm early Saturday evening, June 22nd, would make it an especially memorable one, with many people saying it was the worst storm they had ever experienced.

After the festival was over, attendee Donna Placco posted a picture and video on Facebook that drew a lot of attention. I found her through Facebook and she graciously agreed to share with our newsletter readers a little about herself and her experience at the Billtown Blues Festival. Donna writes:

"Hi, Kathryn....I grew up in Rockland County, NY. I lived in Piermont, NY from 1988 – 2000 where I saw Tab Benoit, Johnny Clyde Copeland, Pinetop Perkins, Lonnie Brooks, Clarence 'Gatemouth' Brown, Albert Collins, James Cotton, Koko Taylor multiple times at The Turning Point Café in Piermont, which deepened my love for the genre. From there I met a man named Roland Carson at work who would hear me listening to blues music at work. I call him my blues mentor. He started introducing me to Blues festivals in 1997. He took me to The Pocono Blues Festival run by Michael Cloeren. I was hooked! My friends & I became avid festival goers from there on in. I just came from the tenth anniversary of The Big Blues Bender in Vegas in September; I had been to eight of them. I will be going on my tenth Legendary Rhythm & Blues Cruise this month. My friend, Pamela, lives in Williamsport. She has been an avid goer

of The Billtown Blues Fest for years. This is how my friends & I discovered it.

It was my third year at this fest. Always a great line-up! I was very excited to see Jason Ricci & The Bad Kind this weekend. Everything was crazy as his van broke down on the way. The band was gonna be late. They put the act up after him first to give them time to get there. By the time they arrived our mostly gorgeous sunny day had turned dark & the wind picked up hard! His band was supposed to be taking the stage when all hell broke loose! They took refuge in their van.

We started heading toward the tent. I took a five minute video of what was going on under the tent. We were having fun, not thinking things would get so out of hand. But, in my video you could see the set-ups of vendors across the way getting toppled, I could see legs falling down from the wind. Most of us still thought we were safe under the tent. I was swirling my camera slowly when suddenly the wind picked up BIGGG!!! We were calling it a monsoon by now.

That is when my video caught the guy flying in the air as the tent poles all pulled from the ground and he went flying up as he was hanging on to the pole!! His name is Dan Sain & thankfully we can laugh now. He hit the ground hard but nothing serious thank God! I screamed when I saw him as this was also when the giant tent started to collapse on us due to the tremendous amount of water on top. I went running from under the tent and just as I was about to escape the water fell on me and my camera, turning it off. I

was happy to see the phone automatically saved what it recorded.

The best part was when the weather cleared up and the festival promoters were figuring how to keep the music going even though many of the crowd had left. Jason sent his band away to deal with the broken van. Bob Margolin set his band aside. We were treated to a fantastic jam with Jason Ricci, Bob Margolin, Gabe Stillman, and Skylar Sauflay (he was awesome!) It was an epic end to a crazy day. Thank God everyone was safe!"

Thank you, Donna, for sharing your experience and love of blues.

Interestingly, the BBA Events Chairperson tells us that at least 10-15 people have reported to her that they were the person hanging onto the rope. The facial features in the picture are not identifiable and the t-shirt, brown shorts, and sandals were common festival attire. Apparently, a lot of people identified with the man flying in the air.

At BSCP, our bet on the mystery man is on Ken Rimondi, a long-time member of the Blues Society of Central PA. Ken regularly attends the BSCP jams and events and always helps in any way needed, like directing traffic, putting on wristbands, and removing trash. As a former medic in the military, it was no surprise that he had stepped right up to protect people by trying to keep the tent from blowing away.

Whether the person holding onto the rope in Donna's photo was Dan or Ken doesn't matter. I appreciate the risks they both took to keep us safe. Bluesmen care

Billtown Blues Festival Cont...



Mary Ann Casale, Tas Cru



Soulful Femme



Jason Ricci

about their community!

I asked Ken what the experience was like for him. He responded: "The wind took me up down up down and eventually threw me to the ground. Glasses got lost and found. Beverly was scared for me and wanted to pack up and leave NOW. She thought I might have a concussion."

I asked Beverly McCormick, who was with Ken at the festival, what her thoughts were. She shared her recollections: "Just as they announced Carolyn Wonderland was taking the stage (in place of Jason Ricci who was delayed because his van broke down), the first part of the rain and wind started and then it slowed down. Moving our chairs back, I was helping make room for a family with children coming into and under the tent.

Ken called my attention to the guys getting ready to stand on the tent stakes to the right of us as the wind and rain had picked up. He ran to the left hoping to get some others to help hold down the tent stakes on the other side. Ken's only thought was the people's safety. Once he got on the pole he held on as long as he could and then he was slammed down to the earth. I watched him overnight because I was afraid he had a concussion. Twenty-four hours later Ken came to the realization of what had happen and he was glad we both were there to help. In this life we witness scary stuff and come through scary weather...hopefully you get through it and are very thankful you did. It was an experience you can add to the list of living this life."

So true, Beverly!

Next I talked with Bonnie Tallman, the BBA Events Chairperson and asked her several questions:

Bonnie, what had been done to prepare for dealing with stormy weather? We have had an emergency plan in place since the 1st year we went to the Lycoming County Fairgrounds in 1994. Prior to that the 1st three years, the fest was held on the private property of a County Commissions in Williamsport along the Susquehanna River. Our Emergency plan consists of directing various groups of people where to go. Each of our "CORE" members (the 10 people within the organization who do all the planning and execution of everything - all non-paid volunteers), oversees a group of people and the location of where they are to go and get them there.

As far as the storm...the area was completely clear of any storms all day according to multiple weather services... then..whamooooo, it hit. Previously Bob Margolin is the only show we ever had to cancel because of a storm. The sound company would not let us continue due to the danger of lightning and their potential damage to their equipment. Bob asked me about an hour before he was to go on..."Any storms this year?" I said (honestly), "not a chance Bob...everything is looking great weather-wise!" He smiled from ear to ear.

Any details you think people may not have known about what happened Friday and/or Saturday evenings that you would like to share?

Friday went 100% as planned. We

did have a brief rain situation, but it was appreciated due to the heat. All the bands performed on time and to completion. Our stellar stage crew and sound company are the world's best. We always start on time and end on time...no matter what might happen in the middle. They are truly amazing. Our stage manager, Kevin Mix has been with us since the first fest in 1990.

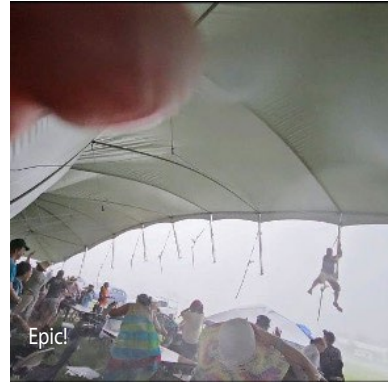
Saturday was going along perfectly... and literally within minutes a 70 mph "micro-burst" came out of nowhere. The destruction on the stage was unbelievable. We tried to tarp everything - all the rented backline and PA gear, monitor boards, a Hammond organ and Leslie.. it was impossible. We were laying on the tarps trying to keep the gear safe. The wind ripped the backdrop curtains off the horizontal pole where they were attached and they were flapping in the wind - knocking the drum gear from the riser.

Our emergency plan kicked in and people got sheltered. The bus that transported people from the hotel to the Fest stepped up and hauled people to a protective building on the grounds. Many people headed to the 120 x 40 large tent - -only to watch it become airborne. Thankfully we provided the means for the tent rental company crew to be on the grounds in a provided RV - and they were able to get their staff to come and disassemble the tent before it took off or injured someone.

Jason Ricci had called me earlier in the day at 11 am from Wilmington, DE, four hours away to let me know of his

Billtown Blues Festival Cont...

Photos by Donna Placco



transmission problems. Knowing that he was driving very slowly and that his van might not make it, I contacted Carolyn Wonderland who was in Syracuse asking her to be on standby. She graciously agreed to do so and arrived exactly when Jason should have arrived, did her line check, and started her set.

Jason eventually pulled in but the storm had started. Can you imagine - after what all he had been going thru already - then to be hit with the possibility of not playing when he got here? As all of this was going on...I had three of the four closing headliners all under the stage. Carolyn Wonderland's set was cut short about 20 minutes....so she and her band, Jason Ricci's band, Bob Margolin and Skylar Saufley were all sheltered in the green room area under the stage, along with older patrons, children, and those with disabilities. All the artists were very gracious and were truly making the best of a difficult situation. I was running back and forth between under the stage talking to the musicians about what to do and above on the stage trying to help the sound crew.

Ultimately Bob Margolin stepped in and offered some guidance...the storm had passed and he suggested doing a jam session on the carpeted thrust portion of the stage (where we present solo and acoustic acts). So we got some basic gear set up and while that was happening Bob and Jason Ricci walked all the way down to where the big tent was and started singing acapella to the folks who stayed on. Precious memory. Once they got back

to the stage the "All Star" jam took off and it was a beautiful thing. Bob led the jam and it went off like it was a planned part of the fest.

As I was watching it, I get a text that the Bywater Call band was 20 minutes away! They had NO idea of what had just transpired...and honestly, my mind was gone, I was loving the jam and I forgot they were on their way as the closing act. I got back to our stage manager and said..."well we've got a seven piece closing act 20 minutes away due to hit at 9:30pm. Can you get the rest of the stage back together for them?"

So while the jam was going on - the drums were being re-assembled, all the other gear dried off and put in place and we are all hoping the stuff worked. The band arrived and was amazed at the localized damage as they saw nothing that indicated a storm anywhere driving in and around Hughesville to the Fairgrounds. It was truly a bulls-eye isolated hit. Soooo, after all of that, Bywater Call started right on time and the Fest ended as scheduled, right on time.

What were some of the repercussions of the storm that you had to deal with?

We got word of one woman from NY who suffered a hip injury. We have kept in weekly contact with her and are pleased to report she is doing great. In fact she came in for the Cinelli show and was dancing up a storm. The biggest repercussion is a serious financial loss. Saturday was bad financially, 1st because of the heat (95 degrees) people who would have normally come at 12noon when we

started waited to come later in the day. But "later in the day" 5pm - proved to be a problem due to the storm. We lost 100% of our afternoon/evening gate sales. The biggest repercussion is how to handle that financial loss going forward.

What were some of the good things to come out of it? The blues art form has immense power. It is truly a uniting force. The cooperation between Bob and the other musicians who initially were in a real funk thinking they came from Louisiana, Texas, Alabama and North Carolina to sit "under" the stage and perhaps not play, turned it all around and with Bob developed a plan to continue. It was a beautiful thing to experience. Bob pulled them together and together they came up with a plan to best serve their music, serve the attendees and serve the BBA. Then our head sound engineer, Nick, and our stage crew who instead of saying "we have to stop the show" instead said "how can we get this stage back in order and get his show going?"

At one point as we were still undecided about what was possible... I got on the mic and asked the people, "IF we can get this show going again, will you stay?" The applause and cheering told me all that I needed to know. We must try to get it fired back up and we did.

What do you remember the most? It was the folks who stayed, the respect shown to the musicians who returned to the stage, their encouragement and participation until the very end is what I most remember that brings me and my BBA colleagues the greatest joy.

BLUES ROADHOUSE BY JIM WHITE

See more of Jim Whites album reviews at
<https://bluesroadhouse.com>.



Shemekia Copeland
Blame It On Eve
 Alligator Records

Shemekia Copeland needs no introduction. She's the multi-award-winning, powerhouse blues singer who's taken her music in new directions while she has climbed effortlessly to the top of her game — all by the tender age of 45.

She is the daughter of the great Texas bluesman Johnny Copeland, toured with him as an opening act, and released her debut album, "Turn the Heat Up!" in 1998, at the age of 18. And that's just a bare outline of the beginnings of her musical career, filled with ten albums that have established her as simply one of the best blues singers on the planet.

That brings us to her latest album, "Blame It On Eve," a departure in content and style from her last three albums, themselves a departure from much of her earlier work. Those albums — "America's Child," "Uncivil War" and "Done Come Too Far" — all carried strong political and social themes, with Copeland tackling sensitive contemporary issues with her blues sensibilities.

While "Eve" doesn't take a step back, it at least shuffles sideways without losing any of Copeland's power and passion. "My last three records have dealt with breaking news," she says. "This record is for people like me who want a break from the news."

While Copeland may be taking a break from the news, she's definitely not taking a break from the blues. The dozen songs here, chosen from a variety of sources, still hit hard, whether she's deep in the blues, or sharing thoughts on contemporary issues, or both. Producer Will Kimbrough and executive producer John Hahn are responsible for much of the smartly conceived original content.

This doesn't mean that Copeland has suddenly given up her social conscious. "There's serious business on the new album," Copeland says, "but there are a lot of smiles here too, a lot of joyous moments. It's my blues for sure but it's the brighter side. Issues are always important to me, but so is rocking, dancing and just having fun. And that's something we all can all agree on."

And "Eve" is certainly filled with great music from a cast of fine musicians, including Luther Dickinson and Kevin Gordon on guitar; jazz guitarist Charlie Hunter; Jerry Douglas on guitar and dobro, DaShawn Hickman on pedal steel and guest vocalist Alejandro Escovedo, all produced by Kimbrough in his fourth repeat performance.

The session opener is the title track, as it should be, with a tough musical vibe and a thematic wink and a nod protesting a historical tendency to blame the woman: "Since the Garden of Eden they have you believin' / When somethin' goes wrong / You can blame it on Eve." That sly sharpness expands into a

biting contemporary conclusion: "Wanna know how it feels to have the blues / just try losing your right to choose."

"Tough Mother" follows, with a Mississippi hill country twang behind a sharply autobiographical story, "Only Miss You All the Time" is a powerfully sung emotional ballad' followed by the rousing climate-change anthem "Broken High Heels," stomping out another powerful message with a dance-floor beat.

"Wine O'Clock" is a tough, slow-drag-blues tribute to Copeland's version of mother's little helper. Escovedo shares the vocals on "Is There Anybody Up There?" a fervent plea for heavenly intervention in worldly problems. "Cadillac Blue" is color of Copeland's true love's eyes, a tale of interracial romance told to a slinky lap-steel background.

Copeland shifts into a tender moment with the haunting "Belle Sorciere," a sad lover's tale with the haunting melody composed by Pascal Danae of the Paris-based band Delgres. "Tell the Devil (To Go to Hell)" is glorious foot-stomping gospel. "Tee Tot Payne" gets an old-timey country blues feel from Douglas on dobro in a lightly swinging ode to black street musician Rufus "Tee-tot" Payne. He was a bluesman who became a mentor to an itinerant white youngster named Hiram Williams, a would-be singer shining shoes and selling peanuts in a railroad station. Lessons learned, Hiram went on to become country superstar Hank Williams.

Copeland always includes a song from her father on every album; here it's a scorching version of the deep blue "Down On Bended Knee," a fierce musical highlight. The closer is the soulful "Heaven Help Us All," a thoughtful early Stevie Wonder song with Copeland's voice soaring over the not-so-optimistic message.

"Blame It On Eve" is another impressive outing for Shemekia Copeland. She matches her powerful vocals, rich with stylish vibrato, to the needs of each song. Whether her music is sly, sensuous or soulful, she's always deeply serious, with meaningful emotional content. This compelling collection helps cement her lofty position atop the world of blues singers. And best of all, it's a pleasure to hear!



Willie Buck
Live at Buddy Guy's Legends
 Delmark Records

Every once in a while, I like to reach back into the blues for an experience that reminds me of my days hanging out in blues clubs, listening to tough, honest old-school blues. Muddy Waters, Albert Collins, John Lee Hooker, Albert King all come to mind. It's live music, played with great enthusiasm amid all

the raucous, sweaty appreciation that blues fans provide.

If you're anything like me, that's as close to blues heaven as you can get. (And if you're anything like me, you have my sympathies...!)

This new album, the fourth by veteran Chicago bluesman Willie Buck, and a stellar group of backers known here as the Delmark All-Stars, takes me back to just the right place. It was recorded live at Buddy Guy's Legends, also just the right place for some vintage blues, a handful of six originals, and three classic covers.

Buck was born William Crawford in 1937 (yes, he's still going strong), in the small town of Houston, Mississippi. The closest "big" town was Tupelo, about 40 miles away. He left for the big town in 1953, becoming one of the regulars at Chicago's legendary Maxwell Street scene, and gradually worked his way into the club circuit.

Since then, it's said Buck has played with everybody and knows everybody. Guy has told his club audiences when he and Buck appear together, "When I started playing in Chicago, Willie was one of the guys that was already here."

The new album launches with a rollicking 6 1/2-minute instrumental blues jam by the All-Stars, all worth a very honorable mention for their solid work: Scott Dirks, harmonica; Billy Flynn, lead guitar; Thaddeus Krolicki, 2nd guitar; Johnny Iguana, piano, and Melvin Smith, bass. This was also the last recording from the drummer, the late Willie "The Touch" Hayes.

Then Buck takes over, as he winds up the R&B classic "Kansas City," with the All-Stars percolating rhythmically behind him. (*Permit me a little digression here, since "Kansas City" has always seemed to me to be an improbable creation. It was written in 1952 by Jerry Lieber and Mike Stoller, two 19-year-old white R&B fans from Los Angeles who had never even been to Kansas City, but said they were inspired by Big Joe Turner records. They wrote the song especially for West Coast piano man Little Willie Littlefield as "K. C. Loving," but it wasn't until 1959 that Wilbert Harrison turned it into the monster hit "Kansas City," eventually covered by more than 300 versions. And, of course, Lieber and Stoller went on to become giants in the creation of blues, R&B and rock 'n' roll music.*)

That's followed by a set of Buck originals: "Tried To Work Something Out" with fine honky-tonk piano from Iguana and lyrical harp from Dirks; the very tough shouter "What We Were Talking About"; the down-home, slow-burning "Let's See if We Can Come Together"; a slow-blues turn on "Snow"; and then a few remarks from Buck about a book he wants to write about his storied life.

Buck follows with a hard version of the Muddy Waters chestnut, "Rock Me," then

BLUES ROADHOUSE BY JIM WHITE

See more of Jim Whites album reviews at
<https://bluesroadhouse.com>.

the original, slow and bluesy “Walking and Swimming.” The closer is Buck’s rugged take on “Hoochie Coochie Man,” Waters’ memorable version of the always-fine Willie Dixon creation.

This is one of those albums that captures a musical snapshot in time — a gritty veteran of Chicago blues reaching deep for a piece of his heart to proudly share. Get it while you can.



Jontavious Willis *West Georgia Blues* Strolling Bones Records

The first time I saw Jontavious Willis, he was performing on the January, 2020, Legendary Rhythm & Blues Cruise. I was impressed.

He was young, enthusiastic and obviously a student of the classic acoustic blues era. His knowledge easily moved beyond dry history into joyful story-telling and music-making. His acoustic guitar style was a tribute to the old masters, his personal style was lighthearted and friendly, and he had stories to tell – the stories of some of the earliest blues.

Willis already had two fine albums to his credit, and now his third and self-produced album, “West Georgia Blues,” effortlessly combines those traditional styles with an updated musical sensibility on 15 originals, without losing their essence. “Some folks sing the blues cause they know the song / But we singing these blues just to carry tradition on.”

Willis has his own origins in Greenville, Georgia; his family goes back generations — you can hear that story in the church-like, hand-clapping title track. Like many blues singers before him, he started singing in church, but got hooked on a Muddy Waters video, and his life took a new direction. His joyful determination to celebrate this blues history is obvious in his music.

What you’ll hear throughout is a masterful blend of blues guitar styles — Piedmont, Delta, Texas with fingerpicking, slide, and resonator. — that bookend original lyrics that run from the slyly lighthearted “Charlie Brown Blues” to the deep blue lament of “Broken Hearted Moan.”

“Keep Your Worries On the Dance Floor” is a joyous invitation to lose yourself on the

dance floor, with rhythms made for moving your feet. “Rough Time Blues” and “Lula Mae” update old-timey sentiments with guitar licks that rock into another time.

Then there’s the lilting melody and gentle lyricism of “A Lift Is All I Need,” which Willis describes as “a song based in jump blues and early R&B in the key of F, with a full band and myself only on vocals. The song draws inspiration from Amos Milburn. The tune is meant to motivate you in whatever you are in the mood to be motivated for – whether that’s doing sprints or sitting on a couch with the munchies watching cartoons.” Those kinds of thoughts pervade the spirit of the entire album. It’s a direct pipeline to the universal emotions of the blues.

It all wraps up with the raucous instrumental “Jontavious’ West Georgia Grind,” filled with rollicking piano and fuzzy guitar (that’s a good thing). West Georgia musicians Jay Hopp and Lloyd Buchanan share the musical honors here, adding depth and variety to Willis’s stylings.

I’ve touched on just a few of the album’s highlights for me, but that doesn’t mean that I’m in any way opposed to the rest of the tracks! This is a fine and fun session, filled with music that invokes the spirit of early blues music, and combines it with the joy and enthusiasm of an artist who’s willing to add an eclectic touch to the blues without disturbing its essence.

If you’re a blues fan, you need this music. If you’re not a blues fan, you may need it even more!



Sonny Gullage *Go Be Free* Blind Pig Records

Keepers of the blues flame sometimes just seem to keep disappearing. Then someone like 25-year-old Sonny Gullage comes along, with a little help from an equally 25-year-old Christopher “Kingfish” Ingram, and just like that, the blues flame gets turned up a notch.

“Go Be Free” is Gullage’s debut album, a 12-song collection from the New Orleans native, showing off his considerable songwriting and keyboard skills. Also know that this impressive first effort was produced by the bluesily (well, that *should* be a word!) omniscient Tom Hambridge.

On a related optimistic musical note, this release helps mark the revival of the Blind Pig record label, originally launched in 1977, and which quickly became one of the best blues and roots labels in the known universe. Welcome back!

The basic message of this exuberant note-perfect album comes in its title song, with a reference to his family’s role in his musical sensibilities. The title track opens with the kind of stomping beat you’d hear in a Southern church. Accompanied by a propulsive groove, Sonny sings: *I remember back when I was young/Daddy called me and said, “Come here my son”/He said, “If you want to be like me/You gotta learn to keep your mind at ease”/Said, “Go be free.”* The song swells with a euphoric feeling that’s equal parts gospel salvation and blues-based self-realization.

The opener is a gorgeous little exercise in funkiness — “Just Kiss Me Baby” — extremely listenable and quite danceable. Just the right beginning for this thoroughly enjoyable first album.

The title track opens with an urgent hand-clapping beat and a moaning backup chorus filled with elation that drives hard as Gullage explains: *I remember back when I was young / Daddy called me said, “Come here my son” / He said, “If you want to be like me / You gotta learn to keep your mind at ease” / Said, “Go be free.”*

“Things I Can’t Control” keeps the beat throbbing behind a strong message of focusing on what you can change, not what you can’t control. “Separate Ways” is a delicate lost-love ballad with a beat. “Worried About the Young” means what it says, as Gullage is joined by Ingram providing a fiery guitar background. The fact that they’re both relative youngsters themselves (at 25) adds a note of urgency.

“Blues All Over You” is tough Chicago-blues with piano that’s equally tough and tasty. Lessons from his grandfather shine in the gentle rhythms of “I’ve Been There.” Rollicking boogie-woogie piano pushes “Stop That Stuff” to a higher level of pure joy, then shifts back to the steamy blues of “Tattooed Wings,” before entering the “Hot House” with stark rhythmic feeling. “File It Under Blues” is an upbeat ending to a relationship, as he’s “gonna close this case of love and file it under blues.”

The fitting close is the plaintive ballad, “Home to You,” a tender spot of soulful longing that highlights yet another aspect of Gullage’s exceptional talents.

“Go Be Free” is an album overflowing with the multiple talents of Kevin “Sonny” Gullage. The songwriting is smart and bright. The music is deliciously inspired. The vocals reflect a maturity of an old blues soul.

Gullage describes his music thoughtfully: “It was almost a revelation when I discovered I could sing the blues — it just flowed out of me — and I realized that’s how I wanted to connect with people,” he says. “When I sing, I don’t sing for people to understand me, I sing for people to understand themselves.”

If that sentiment, and this album, is not at the heart and soul of the blues, nothing is.



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A Halloween-themed event poster. The background is orange and yellow with a large white full moon, spider webs, and silhouettes of trees and bats. At the bottom are several glowing jack-o'-lanterns. In the top left corner is the CPMAs Awards logo, which includes a "Spot Award" ribbon. The text in the center reads: "BEST JAM OF 2023", "7 pm - 10 pm", "THURSDAY, OCTOBER 31, 2024", "@ CHAMPIONS SPORTS BAR", "300 2nd STREET, HIGHSPIRE, PA", "NEW & USED CDs GIVEAWAY", and "TREATS & EATS".

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