



Blues Society of Central Pennsylvania
www.bscpblues.com

BLUES NEWS

Jan - Mar 2024

**BLUES SOCIETY OF CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA
& SUSQUEHANNA FOLK MUSIC SOCIETY**

PRESENT



SUNDAY, JANUARY 28, 2024

Concert: 7:30 pm Doors: 6:30 pm

- \$26 General Admission
- \$22 SFMS & BSCP Members
- \$10 Students

Workshop: 4:30-5:30 pm Doors: 4 pm

- \$14 General Admission
- \$10 SFMS & BSCP Members
- \$7 Students

Fort Hunter Centennial Barn, 5300 N Front St, Harrisburg, PA 17110

**Get tickets at www.sfmsfolk.org and
at BSCP Thursday Blues Jam at Champions in Highspire**

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From your President...

As BSCP begins the process of reflecting over the past year and preparing for the next, one word keeps coming to my mind: CONNECTION.

As human beings, we increasingly recognize that at the most minute to the largest units of existence, we are one. We are all connected. The simple, yet profound and powerful, Lakota prayer, Mitakuye Oyasin (All are Related or All My Relations), petitions God on behalf of everyone and everything on Earth with a focus on oneness, reminding us that we are not alone and that everything we do affects not only those we know, but those we have never met.

The death of Red Paden of Red's Lounge in Clarksdale, MS, has jolted our blues' world (p. 3). His connections with BSCP are so strong and numerous that it is impossible to even begin to describe them all.

Many BSCP members had their first memorable experience of going to Red's while they were attending the annual Juke Joint Festival. Others stopped there while traveling, such as Professor Mike Heiman with students from Dickinson College on study trips and, more recently, John "JD" Drudul, on his cross-country RV tours.

Particularly notable was his relationship with The Cornlickers, who played regularly as Red's house band with Big Jack Johnson and recorded *Katrina and Big Jack's Way*. Bobby Gentilo posted on Facebook that The Cornlickers have performed over 1,000 hours at Red's and declared that "There's nothing like being home!!!"

Hannah Sherman estimates she has made 36 trips to Clarksdale where she manages the band and merchandise at Red's. Building on this connection, the Mississippi Railroad project was born. BSCP and The Cornlickers bring MS blues musicians to Central PA every year so our members can enjoy live Delta music without having to travel.

In 2023 BSCP celebrated the past 25 years of our society through events such as our 25th Anniversary Jam night November 2nd (p. 12). Thirteen of the

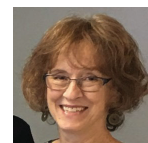
musicians on stage reported that they played at the Lochiel Hotel when the jam first started. Several of the BSCP members in attendance were also there 25 years ago supporting the musicians and enjoying the music, as they do today.

BSCP's rich heritage gives us the confidence to build upon the past to carry out our mission to preserve, promote, support and enjoy the Blues. During 2023 BSCP gave Sonne awards, board member emeriti designations, and certificates of appreciation to long-time members, recognizing their contributions to each of us and to our larger blues community. An In Memoriam slide show created by John "DJ" Drudul for the 25th Anniversary Jam honored our deceased local blues musicians.

Thank you to all BSCP members and everyone on the BSCP Board of Directors who worked together so creatively and tirelessly to carry out our mission in 2023. BSCP ended the year with 345 members, put on 6 events, provided 3 master classes, sponsored 4 Blues Camp teachers in France, held 12 Book Club meetings and jammed 51 Thursday evenings. A full description of the events and activities is available on our website bscpblues.com under More – About BSCP where our 2023 Annual Report is posted.

I look forward to seeing the expanded and new connections that 2024 brings!

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



Russell Batiste

December 12, 1965 - September 30, 2023

Russell Batiste was a staple of New Orleans funk for decades. Batiste learned how to play the drums when he was 4 years old, and was an accomplished keyboardist, saxophonist, guitarist, and bassist by the time he joined the family band at age 7. He left college to play in Charmaine Neville's band and was a key part of the revived Funky Meters, PBS, the Krown Washington Batiste Trio, and his very own Russel Batiste and the Orkestra from 'Da Hood.



Gregory "D C" Bellamy

03/8/49 - 11/03/23

Kansas City Bluesman

Singer/guitarist Gregory "D.C." Bellamy grew up in the West side of Chicago with his half-brother, Curtis Mayfield. In the late 90s, he moved to Kansas City where he found a home for his fresh and original blues music. Artists such as Coco Montoya, Otis Clay, Jimmy Burns, and several Chicago soul groups recorded his music. He recorded his own songs on *Water to Wine* and *America's Most Wanted* albums and toured with the Staple Singers, Bob Seger and others.



Willie "The Touch" Hayes

August 20, 1950 - November 5, 2023

Willie "The Touch" Hayes struck fame when he was only 9 years old by playing drums on a televised talent show. By 14 he was playing with Mighty Joe Young and Koko Taylor, and at 16 he went on tour as Magic Sam's drummer. The Grammy winner and Chicago Blues Hall of Famer's talent was undeniable and his storied career paired him with Muddy Waters, B.B. King, the Temptation, Tina Turner and more.



R L Boyce

August 15, 1955 - November 9, 2023

Learning from country blues legends R L Burnside and Mississippi Fred McDowell, R L Boyce spent decades as a Hill Country blues drummer. He got his start in the 60s in his uncle Othra Turner's band, played for Jessie Mae Hemphill in 1990, and released his debut album in 2013. His second album, *Roll and Tumble*, had Boyce on vocals and Cedric Burnside and Calvin Jackson on drums. The 2017 album was nominated at the Grammys for the Best Traditional Blues Album category. He was a 2023 NEA National Heritage Fellow. RL Boyce provided a Master Class workshop and played with The Cornlickers for the BSCP Mississippi Railroad show July 9, 2023.



Dessie Carolyn Kelly

11/20/51 - 12/23/23

Lead vocalist of the Carolyn Kelly Band from Syracuse, N.Y., her band was the headliner for the BSCP Fall Show in October of 2016. Early in her career she performed with the Roosevelt Dean band but took a break to raise a family. She returned to performing in 2006 with Dean's band The Soul Doctors until his death in 2009 at which time she formed the Carolyn Kelly Band. In 2009 she won a SAMMY (Syracuse Area Music Award) for her solo album *Slow Cooking on Hot*. She was inducted into the New York State Blues Hall of Fame in 2015 and the Sammy Hall of Fame in 2023.



Cornelius "Red" Paden

November 30, 1956 - December 30, 2023

Backed by the River, Fronted by the Grave... you will find Red's Lounge, one of the few remaining authentic Juke Joints, at 295 Sunflower Avenue in Clarksdale, Mississippi. Cornelius "Red" Paden, the self-proclaimed "King of the Juke Joint Runners" spent a lifetime hosting the best of live blues and serving as an icon who introduced the rich Delta culture to the world. News media discovered Red's and did the rest taking his story worldwide. Red is featured in the 2012 film *We Juke Up In Here*. The Blues Foundation awarded Paden with the 2012 Keeping the Blues Alive Award. Esquire Magazine designated Red's Lounge as the top place in the United States for blues.





MEET YOUR BOARD MEMBERS

In the Spotlight...

John "JD" Drudul



JD, Ricky Skaggs

a drum machine. "We played live gigs with it," JD told us. Later bands were Last Call and Ronjonni and recently played guitar with Roger Hammer.

Early influences were The Beatles, Johnny Cash, Dean Martin and, of course, Hendrix. Talking about his influences, JD said "John McLaughlin also blew me away. I also attended some awesome guitar concerts with Carlos Montoya flamenco, the Great Guitars jazz, Joe Pass and Oscar Peterson jazz, and a lot of the rock gods when I was younger. I saw Sonny Terry and Brownie McGee playing at a local Amherst bar and again in NYC."

"I took lessons during grade school up through Mel Bay Book 4, lessons in Amherst, MA, from an excellent local guy going through Aaron Shearer Scale Pattern Studies for Guitar, classical guitar in college for a couple of years going through Carcassi and more recently online bluegrass picking from Jake Workman, the guitarist with Ricky Skaggs." JD also does a lot of his own guitar work including setup, nuts, bridges, frets, pickups, etc.

"I heard about the Lochiel jam from a friend and went for the first time but brought my guitar the next week. The first person I met was Gary Harrington and when I opened the case for my 65 SG, Gary said, 'There's one!' I've been jamming with BSCP ever since. My favorite thing about BSCP is meeting all the great musicians we bring in and all the great members. It's fun seeing the new players – they're good and it's fun to watch them evolve."

JD was approached by the board to help with the website, but Dan Mowery took over and now JD is our IT person, developing the message board and the jam and writing for the newsletter. Since he retired, he has traveled the country (and into Canada) and enjoys going to jams all over and sharing his experiences in the newsletter.

Hannah Sherman: When JD was young and playing in a band, his fellow musicians coined a nickname for him that came from the song, "Wang Dang Doodle". Since his name is Drudul, his name became Johnny Wango, which I think is one of the coolest blues handles I've ever heard.

Pete Netznik: JD is a great guitarist, lover of all styles of music, and a friend. He is very supportive of live music and has encouraged me personally many times with his always-positive attitude. It's always great to see his smiling face in the crowd at our shows or, even better, when I look across stage and see him tearing it up on guitar (or bass!) at the Jam or Grotto! Thank you for being a bro, JD!!!

Roger Hammer: I met JD at the BSCP jams and we had quite a run together as the Roger Hammer Music duo. In particular, he deserves a huge note of thanks from me for being so supportive of my songwriting. We played probably a hundred gigs or so around Harrisburg, including several BSCP picnics, and the Cape May (NJ) songwriter conference. Besides being an agile improviser on electric and acoustic guitars, he is tech savvy and an all-around great guy to have known. These days we are no longer in the same time zone, but those times remain alive in my memory.

Jammin' with JD The Free Man, Dallas, TX

By John 'JD' Drudul

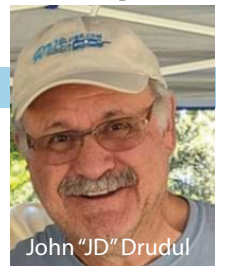
Hanging around Texas led me to a few jams around the Dallas, Fort Worth and Austin areas. The Dallas jam at The Free Man in Deep Ellum caught my attention. It was advertised as a Super Blues Jam for the Tuesday night Catalog Sessions. The host was Nick Snyder, a young up and coming guitarist and vocalist. Nick has played with countless musicians around the Dallas area. For this gig, Nick had a three piece band with bassist Jeffery Grits Lewis and drummer Luke Calaway, both frequent players around Dallas.

The Free Man listed this as a Super Blues Jam, but I soon found out it was more of a host band playing some blues. There wasn't a sign-up sheet

or a spare guitar amp. I appeared to be the only person there wanting to jam.

Nick and the boys played an excellent first set. He invited me up to play a couple tunes in the second set and let me strap on his SG. That was fun. I hadn't played an SG since I sold my 1965 SG Special. I jammed a couple tunes with Nick singing. The vibe was as good as the musicians.

I left after the second set and headed back to the RV south of Austin. Thanks Nick, Jeff and Luke for some great memories at The Free Man in Deep Ellum!



John "JD" Drudul

The Free Man
www.freemandallas.com

Nick Snyder
<https://www.google.com/search?q=Nick+Snyder+Dallas+Guitarist>

Jam Video
<https://youtu.be/QSKGeAr2qlc?si=f7w1wtF35GvMux9s>

SFMS and BSCP present Piedmont Blūz Acoustic Duo

By Lauri Brandenburg



WORKSHOP: Intro to Piedmont Style Fingerpicking (60 minutes)

Learn an easy arrangement of a blues song that focuses on the Piedmont style fingerpicking technique. The workshop will move at an easy pace but, if time allows, we will explore how to dress up the arrangement by adding things like more melody notes, syncopation, slides, hammer-ons and pull-offs.

Although this workshop will be taught by ear, participants will have the opportunity to make an audio or video recording at the end of the class — with the caveat that such recording is only for personal use and will not be shared on any social media. Tablature will also be provided at the end of the class.

This workshop is open to beginner and advanced players alike and is aimed at folks who are new to the style.

The Susquehanna Folk Music Society and Blues Society of Central PA team up to bring you a workshop and concert with the Piedmont Blūz Acoustic Duo. Valerie and Benedict Turner are delightful ambassadors for roots blues music and the African-American culture from which it springs.

The duo's repertoire encompasses Country Blues music, the Piedmont style of fingerpicking, and roots percussion. Their mission is to help bring awareness to these unique aspects of African-American culture, and to the contributions of early blues artists, through performing and teaching.

They feel that "there are stories to tell, people to remember, and things that must be said" so they weave a bit of history into the presentation of each song. A Piedmont Blūz concert isn't just music — it's an experience, as they transport you back to the 1920s and 1930s, the hey-day of acoustic Country Blues music. In addition to performing songs from that time-frame, they introduce each piece with an interesting anecdote about either the composer, the time period or the song itself.

This husband-and-wife duo have been entertaining audiences both domestically and abroad and are much loved wherever they go. In addition to a host of domestic venues and festivals, these tradition bearers have traveled as far as Europe and the Middle East to share their music.



Valerie Turner is a native New Yorker with southern roots in Virginia and Georgia. She plays finger style Country Blues guitar and specializes in the Piedmont style of fingerpicking. She has taught at major guitar workshops including the Port Townsend Acoustic Blues Workshop, Augusta Blues Week, and Blues in the Gorge.

An inductee into the New York Blues Hall of

Fame, and Co-President of the Mississippi John Hurt Foundation, Valerie is also the author of Piedmont Style Country Blues Guitar Basics, an independently published book acquired by the Library of Congress. Her eclectic repertoire is heavily influenced by the years spent studying with John Cephas (a world-renowned Country Blues musician in the Piedmont style) and Woody Mann (a Juilliard trained student of Rev. Gary Davis). Valerie's guitar playing is reminiscent of traditional blues greats like Mississippi John Hurt, Etta Baker, and Elizabeth Cotten. (Photo by Linda & Sidney Danz)



Benedict Turner is a roots percussionist specializing in lap-style washboard. Occasionally, he also chimes in on bones or harp for added accents, and his subtle touches add just the right amount of texture.

As a professional Graphic Designer and Senior Art Director, Benedict curates vintage washboards and bells from around the world and uses these artifacts to create his unique line of Darlington Washboards which feature detailed carvings and sculpted attachments.

Benedict has studied with Washboard Chaz of Louisiana fame, as well as with Newman Taylor Baker of the Ebony Hillbillies. Inspired by these two talented percussionists, Benedict has his own style of washboard playing, which is influenced by the melodic and percussive sounds of the steel drums of his birthplace, Trinidad and Tobago. (Photo by Linda & Sidney Danz)

**BSCP WISHES YOU
A HAPPY NEW YEAR**

BSCP Supports Blues Education in France

By Kathryn Gregoire



Bobby Gentilo and Voice Students

Invited by the Stage et Rencontres Blues Camp 2023 organizers in Masquières, France, Bobby Gentilo (vocals and guitarist), Carlos Elliott (vocals and guitarist), Tony Ryder (bassist), Dale Wise (drummer) and Dave Groninger (guitarist) participated as teachers in the annual week-long blues music program on the campus of Lycée Professionnel L'Oustal from October 24 - 28, 2023.

Sixty French students, ranging in age from 8 - 87 years, came with a variety of instruments, including harmonicas, drums, keyboards, horns, basses and guitars. Their skill levels ranged from beginner to professional. The teachers, who hailed from France and several other countries such as Spain, Belgium, United Kingdom and the USA, worked with them to learn 14 songs to present on the last day at a Stage Music Blues Concert attended by over 500 people.

Following the student performances, the

teachers took the stage and performed songs that highlighted their individual talents. The headliner for the concert was Bobby Gentilo and The Cornlickers with guest Carlos Elliott. Gentilo described the Blues Camp faculty as exceptional and super talented. He was impressed with the strong community that developed among the students and teachers, with many returning every year.

BSCP contributed to support Bobby Gentilo and The Cornlickers band members with guest Carlos Elliott in serving as Master Teachers at the Blues Camp as part of our Blues Education Program. Gentilo noted that the teachers and students at the camp were very appreciative for their contributions. In turn, The Cornlickers were grateful for all they learned from their experience and the warm reception they received.

In addition to the time spent at the Blues Camp, Bobby Gentilo and The Cornlickers with Carlos Elliott spent two weeks traveling around France participating in various Blues Festivals. They spent 4-5 days in Switzerland playing at sold-out night clubs. Anthony "Big A" Sherrod joined them for the last week of performances, under the name The Juke Ambassadors.

During their touring and teaching time, the band members wore BSCP 25th Anniversary T-Shirts and gave out BSCP stickers and picks. They talked on stage about BSCP and the support they received.

Originally RL Boyce was scheduled to be part of The Juke Ambassadors, but a final decision was made shortly before the group went overseas that Boyce was too ill to travel. Right before they were to go on for the first show that he had been scheduled to appear in, they got the word that he had died. The loss of this man from Como, MS, who had mentored and taught them so much was profound.

The group immediately set about to raise money on the tour and online. As soon as Carlos Elliott returned to the US, he went to MS to host a covert / fundraiser at Reds Lounge, Clarksdale's famous Juke Joint. It included many of Mississippi's most famous artists, all of which were RL's friends.

RL Boyce played with The Cornlickers for the BSCP Mississippi Railroad show on July 9, 2023, at Champions in Highspire, PA. They also held a Master Class for guitarists before the show began. Warm and inviting, Boyce asked several musicians to join them to play on stage throughout the second set.



Blues Camp Faculty and Students

Alex Lee Warner Representing BSCP at IBC Youth Showcase

The Blues Society of Central PA is sponsoring 15 year-old local guitarist, Alex Lee Warner, from York, Pennsylvania, to represent the region at the International Blues Challenge (IBC) Youth Showcase on January 19, 2024, in Memphis, TN. He has also been invited to Ground Zero in Clarksdale, MS, to play on Jan 20.

Alex's passion for blues music and commitment to honing his craft have set him apart in the local music scene. He won his first Central PA Music Award from the Central PA Music Hall of Fame for 2022 Best Youth Instrumentalist and was recognized as one of Central PA's Top 10 youth artists in 2021. Alex is a member of the Central PA Youth All Star Band and a Twin Dix Guitar Artist.

With school on winter break, BSCP

invited Alex to participate in the January 11, 2024 Thursday Blues Jam at Champions. Underground Live, 1104 Carlisle Road, Camp Hill is hosting a benefit jam for Warner on Wednesday, January 10, at 7 pm.

His band, Alex Warner & Soul Sunrise, has performed at several local venues and events, such as the Rock Hill Music Festival.

The International Blues Challenge being held January 15-20 is hosted by The Blues Foundation. The event brings together the best emerging blues talents from around the world playing primarily on Beale Street.

Follow Alex Lee Warner's journey at the International Blues Challenge on social media through:



Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/AlexWarnerofficial>

Instagram - <https://www.instagram.com/alexleewarner/>

Website - <https://www.alexleewarnerofficial.com/>

PERCY MAYFIELD

By David "Dr. Mo" Moyer



Often when fans and musicians talk about the blues, they refer to guitar breaks, harp solos, piano runs, or other instrumental or vocal parts. Musicians and vocalists are usually the focus, they are the elements that bring the excitement, the emotional expression to the songs. Often the songs themselves take a secondary role, known primarily as a vehicle for the musicians to ride upon, perhaps remembered for an inventive turn of phrase or a repeated chorus. With the exception of a few well-worn workhorses like "Stormy Monday," most popular blues songs performed at jams or even in band performances do not veer far from the standard I-IV-V, 8, 12 or 16 bar format.

Some might say that this is because blues songs, as a whole, do not deviate from this standard format, and with few exceptions most song lyrics follow the tried and true "Woke up this mornin'" mold. Some would argue there is little to point to as far as poignant lyrics. Is there a "poet laureate" of the blues?

Minden, Louisiana, seat of Webster Parish in Northwest Louisiana in the 1920s, was not exactly fertile territory for a young black child to express himself in the pursuit of poetry. As a boy, Percy Mayfield wrote poems and set them to music, but his mother forbade

him to write blues. By age 13 he had gained a local reputation for singing and writing Gospel songs for his local church. He left home at age 15, hopping freights and taking odd jobs to support himself while continuing to write and perform his own songs. By 1942 he landed in Los Angeles, making a name for himself with his smooth delivery style and often dark self-penned songs. As his popularity grew, he was signed by Swing Time Records in 1947 to record his smooth blues "Two Years of Torture." It was recorded in a big band setting with musicians that included Chuck Norris on guitar, saxophonist Maxwell Davis and led by pianist Willard McDaniel. Other recordings for Swing Time included "Half Awoke," "How Wrong Can a Good Man Be" and "Leary Blues."

By 1950 Percy's popularity both as a live performer and a recording artist caused Specialty Records to buy his contract from Swing Time. The new label used its higher visibility to market him as a sophisticated, charming and handsome crooner in the style of Charles Brown, but focusing more on a black audience. Among the hits he had on Specialty at this time included his most famous song, "Please Send Me Someone To Love." Reviewer Bill Dahl wrote in *Downbeat Magazine* that the song is "a multilayered musical lament" and described Mayfield as "a true master at expressing his innermost feelings, laced with vulnerability and pathos."

Percy now was at the height of his popularity, performing at the 7th Annual Cavalcade of Jazz concert held at Wrigley Field in Los Angeles on July 8, 1951, produced by Leon Hefflin Sr. along with Billy Eckstine, Lionel Hampton, Jimmy Witherspoon and others. Continuing to release songs and tour, tragedy struck in 1952 when he was involved in an automobile accident while riding in the front seat of a chauffeur-driven car. Debris from the wreck lodged in his forehead, and his injuries were so severe that he was pronounced dead at the scene. On the way to the hospital he showed signs of life, and a long recovery

period followed. Always a vain man concerning his appearance, he continued to write and record, but refused to appear live. Songs that he wrote during this period showed a more sophisticated style both lyrically and musically, utilizing more jazz influenced chord changes and introspective lyrics. He wrote of themes that included suicide, self-loathing, the highs and lows of love affairs in both direct and symbolic ways.

Some of his more popular titles at this time included: "The Voice Within," "The River's Invitation," "Two Hearts are Greater Than One" and "Hit the Road Jack," the latter catching the attention of Ray Charles in 1961, who immediately hired Mayfield as his personal songwriter for his label, Tangerine. Mayfield wrote for Ray Charles and recorded on Tangerine, keeping some of his best songs for himself. When his contract with Tangerine ended in 1969, he moved to Atlantic where he continued to have hits throughout the 70s, both on his own and by other artists, including Johnny "Guitar" Watson, Elvis Presley, Nancy Wilson, Johnny Adams, B.B. King, Junior Parker, Brook Benton, Esther Phillips and many others.

The 1980s found Percy enjoying semi-retirement, performing regularly in small Bay Area clubs with keyboardist Mark Naftalin, releasing a few live recordings and a video documentary, "Percy Mayfield Poet Laureate of The Blues." In an interview with *Living Blues Magazine*, Percy said, "I am a poet, and my gift to the world is love." Percy Mayfield died one day before his 64th birthday, August 11, 1984, leaving his gift of love for all of us to enjoy.

Here is a partial discography of Percy Mayfield's singles: Louisiana/Two Hearts are Greater Than One; Double Dealin'/ Are You Out There? When Did You Leave Heaven?/What Must I Do? Stranger In My Own Hometown/ Maybe It's Because Of Love; The Bottle Is My Companion/My Love; Loose Lips; My Mind Is Trying to Leave Me Too.

Harmonica Master Class at Little Buffalo Festival 11/02/23

Photos by Christina Beusch, Dylan Drudul



Handing out free harps



Lewy B., JD, Mike E.



Teachers w/ student



Aidan Drudul,
Hudson Drudul



Class in session

MEET CENTRAL PA BLUES BANDS:

SOUL MINERS UNION

By Drew Withum



Ben Brandt

What is Soul Mining? For singer and guitarist Ben Brandt of the Soul Miners Union it's a never-ending quest to find his voice along with bassist Liam Galiano. Ben mentions, "We came up with the name thinking of guitars as picks and axes. If you're mining for music internally, you're soul-searching." This quest has taken Brandt down a path that started when he was young and has led to a forming group of musicians that are expanding what the idea of the Blues-Rock and its influence can become. Brandt is leading this power-trio with 20-years of experience into the future of an ever-changing style, and they're just getting started.

Always evolving within the journey, Brandt and the Soul Miners has been the sounds that inspire the group. Both Brandt and the band have become very well known for having a great tone and unique sounds as a trio. When asked about a love of finding tone, Brandt explained, "I love history. I love old guitars and old amps, but not just old stuff. I have certain things I like and that are inspirational." With a 1959 Les Paul Junior in hand, Brandt also explains there's a responsibility of writing songs on gear that inspires the player. Much of this love of gear comes from the inspiration of other players. "They have a great tone, but you can hear what they're playing. Articulation is a good way of putting it really. Finding players who are articulate."

If you go song by song on either of their albums, "Back to Life" and "Brothers from Different Roots," you get a myriad of articulated sounds that's part of the band's genius. "Having the arsenal of gear that I

have has been influential. Being able to come up with tones, grab different guitars and different pedals leads you down different paths." From traditional Electric Blues sounds on "Where Do We Go" to the dynamic sonic differences in "Mad Hatter," it seems like there's nothing the trio won't try if they know it sounds good.

This knowledge of finding a musical voice has given Brandt and the Soul Miners Union a voice that's nothing short of uniquely articulate.

Listening to the Soul Miners Union, you can clearly hear the blues among the influences of many different tones and sounds. But by no means is this trio sticking to a traditional 12-bar structure. Brandt's and the band's playing honors many heroes we all love but takes their influences on to the next level. Especially in the world of dynamics. Their style is, as they put it, "Soulful ballads that give way to soaring guitar solos from veteran blues-shredder Ben Brandt before dropping into pocket funk grooves."

Having worked with Josh Smith on their first album *Back to Life*, Brandt and the rest of the Soul Miners know firsthand what it is like to be in a room with musicians that push one another to find the best they can be. Brandt says, "That was an awesome experience. We worked 12-hour days every day. It was good to have someone (Josh Smith) who was passionate about extracting the best out of us, and working around a guitarist you can't fake around was very cool." It allowed Brandt and the rest of the band to channel a deeper level of playing.

By digging deep, the musical peaks and valleys created by the Soul Miners, especially live, allow listeners to join them in mining their own musical soul.

When it comes to the Blues and Blues-Rock influence Brandt says, "You can definitely hear it more in the second album... but we're not a shuffle band." The solos on *Brothers from Different Roots* especially features Brandt's ability to tell a story with his instrument strongly influenced by the likes of



Joe Shattis (drums),
Liam Galiano (bass, vocals)
Ben Brandt (guitar, vocals)

Soulminersunion.com

players like Robben Forde and Jimi Hendrix to Alex Lifeson of Rush. The commitment of the Soul Miners Union to keeping their audiences intrigued by always exploring their own musical voice provides a one-of-a-kind Blues-Rock. The Soul Miners' Blues.

Sitting across from Brandt as we play riffs and talk, he says, "What it (the Blues) really is is finding a way to put feeling to music at a time and doing it authentically in a certain time. It's the realest form of music. There are not many other music styles that talk about the person as themselves in the songwriting. Blues is always about the person and emotion."

You understand this when listening to this band.

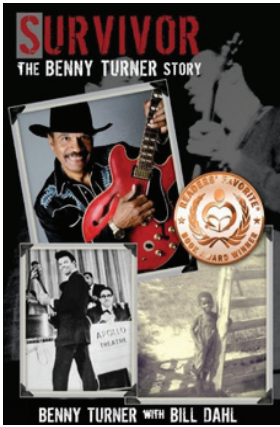
The combination of passion, forward-thinking tone and playing of the Soul Miners Union is best experienced live and earned the band a CPMA Award for Best Blues-Rock Band. Along with a long list of feature shows in Pennsylvania and Maryland, Soul Miners Union have opened in the area for groups such as the Record Company and Bluesman Larry McCray. But they don't plan to stop there. Spring 2024 will see several trips for the group. "If everything goes the way I'm hoping it does, it should be a pretty good run," Brandt explains.

As we ended, the discussion focused on a fact all guitarists know but may not think about. Guitar is one of the only instruments that all players get to voice in a way that is uniquely their own and sharing that passion and voice in an authentic way.

It brought our conversation full circle. Back to a modern Power-Trio mining for a musical voice that's helping us all to consider what's possible in the future of Blues-Rock.

BLUES BOOK CORNER

By Kathryn Gregoire



After reading about Lightnin' Hopkins, the BSCP Blues Book Club members kept with the theme of Texas country blues musicians by reading *Survivor: The Benny Turner Story* for their October meeting. Since he was visiting Lancaster, the members invited Benny Turner to a birthday luncheon for him at the Folklore Coffee Company restaurant in Elizabethtown, PA, followed by a discussion of the book. Benny is a spell-binding storyteller with a warm, charismatic personality; it was a memorable experience for all of us.

Accompanying him was Sallie Bengston, President of NOLA BLUE Records and the editor and publisher of *Survivor*, which was awarded Five Stars by Readers Favorite. She wrote the Foreword which really captures the essence of Benny Turner's story and she gave us permission to publish it here.

FOREWARD

The music we call blues emanates from the African American people of the south, who worked in oppression as slaves and sharecroppers on the plantations. While there isn't a person alive who hasn't experienced "the blues" in some fashion, the blues which define the genre results from a lifestyle most would find very difficult to imagine, let alone endure.

This was the lifestyle Benny Turner was born into, the heritage from his immediate ancestors. Although slavery was officially abolished during the Civil War, his paternal grandmother would tell you that it just went underground, speaking from her experience with a life of servitude. His mother and father both picked cotton and worked in the fields, their souls indebted to the proverbial company store. The American History I learned in school is the family history Benny lived and breathed.

Benny's mother, Ella Mae King, was born in 1918. Raised in rural East Texas in the pre-depression era, Ella Mae had no choice but to be strong. Surviving typhoid fever without access to modern medicine is a

testament to her resilience. By the time she reached age 16, the Great Depression was in full force and rationing was in effect. John Dillinger and Bonnie & Clyde were robbing banks. Ella Mae even saw the procession of their dead bodies and the bullet-riddled car on the road to Dallas, Texas after the ambush in Louisiana! She was unwed and pregnant at that time with her first born son. The boy's father didn't stick around for very long. Times were very, very tough.

Ultimately, Ella Mae met and married Ben Turner who vowed to raise her child and treat him as his own. Born on September 3, 1934, that child was Freddie King, who grew up to be one of the "Three Kings of the Blues" as we know him today. Although the effects of the Depression were easing by 1939 when Ella Mae was pregnant with her second son, it was the dawn of a new era as World War II began. A sign of the times, ration books and paper coins were still in circulation. On October 27, 1939, Ella's second-born, Benny (Ben Turner Jr.), entered the world. Times were still very, very tough.

Today, the blues and its variations are performed and enjoyed mostly for entertainment value. For Benny, the blues are something entirely different. He is one of very few performers still living who have such a history and link to the origins of the blues. His band name, "Real Blues" is a reflection of that history. A reflection of the generations of strife in his family, and the depths to which that pain pervades.

Born into oppression during the days of Jim Crow laws and uprooted at age 11 when his family moved to the big city of Chicago in search of a better life, Benny has walked the walk. His early days as a touring musician on the Chitlin Circuit were at the height of segregation and the civil rights movement. And then at age 37, the unthinkable happened when his big brother and best friend died unexpectedly.

To paraphrase one of Memphis Slim's signature lines, "Speaking of bad luck and trouble, well, you know he had his share."

Freddie King's untimely death was life-changing for Benny, but turned out

to be the first of a series of life events that knocked him down and forced him to reinvent himself and his career. Intensely loyal, he went on to enjoy a close friendship with Mighty Joe Young while playing bass for him until Joe's health deteriorated.

After that, he moved to New Orleans for a fresh start with not much more than the clothes on his back, and ultimately worked with Marva Wright as her bandleader and bass player for more than twenty years until her death. Hurricane Katrina and its long-term effects was an unwelcome guest in his life during the New Orleans years and continues to present challenges more than ten years later. I don't know if Benny inherited strength from his mother, or if his fortitude comes from years of necessity, but he continues to persevere and move forward with his music and his life. When Marva Wright passed away in 2010, Benny decided to take destiny into his own hands and step into the spotlight fronting his own band. The gem that had been hidden in the shadows of great rhythm sections for decades finally started to share its sparkle.

This is a story of adversity. This is a story of triumph. This is the story of a survivor.

- Sallie Bengston



Blues Book Club enjoys Birthday luncheon with Benny Turner at the Folklore Coffee Shop in Elizabethtown, PA.

BSCP WINTER SHOW

The Chris O'Leary Band w/ Barrelhouse opening



Chris O'Leary

The Chris O'Leary Band

A dynamic harmonica master and gifted vocalist/songwriter, Chris has been playing professionally since the 1990's. Chris's musical background includes duties as lead singer and front man for rock and roll hall of famer and Grammy award winner Levon Helm's band, The Barnburners. During the 6 years that Chris and Levon played together, they toured across the US and Canada lighting up stages everywhere they went. Chris has also toured extensively in Europe.

Chris has appeared on stage with legendary Rolling Stones sideman Bobby Keys, The Fabulous Thunderbirds, Jimmy Vivino, Jeff Healy, Dan Akroyd, Albert Lee, Dave Edmunds, Dave Maxwell and the great James Cotton. Chris has also recorded with Bill Perry and Hubert Sumlin, among others.

The Chris O'Leary Band's debut CD *Mr. Used to Be* won the 2011 Best New Artist Debut CD Blues Blast Award and he was nominated for best new artist debut at the 2011 American Blues Music Awards.

His sixth and latest album *The Hard Line* is being released by Alligator Records on Friday, January 12, 2024.

The Chris O'Leary band will feature five of his regular bandmembers: Chris O'Leary (vocals, harmonica), Pete Kanaras (bass), Mike Lynch (guitar), Chuck Cotton (drums) and Brooks Milgate (piano/organ).

BARRELHOUSE

Hailing from Delaware since 2007, Barrelhouse will be opening for The Chris O'Leary Band on Sunday, Feb 25, 2024 at 2 pm at Champions in Highspire, PA. They

have opened for many well-known national blues acts such as Victor Wainwright, John Primer, Bob Margolin, Albert Castiglia and the Nighthawks. To hear their rockin' blues music, listen to their two originals on our BSCP Backyard Blues CD, go on their website barrelhouse.rocks or search for them on YouTube.

Charlie Rickner, a native of Philadelphia, has called Delaware his home since 1969. He identifies his influences as the early masters, such as Sonny Boy Williamson, Lee Oskar and Paul Butterfield. Modern day players that grab Charlie's musical soul are Dustin Arbuckle and Harrisburg area's Nate Myers. His vocals are sometimes gritty, sometimes almost mellow, but always from the heart.

John McGovern, also a Philadelphia area native, currently resides in Lebanon, Pennsylvania. He plays bass, guitar, trumpet, trombone and keyboards. He is a Berklee School of Music certified Pro Tools audio engineer and owner of JAM Studios Inc.

Tom Nowland was basically born with a 6 string in his hands. Playing guitar from a very early age, he played in various bands around his home town of Delaware City, Delaware. Tom's influences are the likes of Jeff Beck, John Petrucci, Robin Trower and Steve Vai. As Tom developed his love for the blues, he immersed himself in the search for his own style and sound. His passion for playing has taken him on the path to his signature sound of today. Tom has a terrific ability to interpret a song and develop a lead that is spot on. Tom Nowland is easily one of the more influential guitarists in the area, displaying a style that is often complimented by his accomplished peers.



Photo by Shauna McVey
John McGovern, Tom Nowland, JT Whiteley,
Charlie Rickner

**SUNDAY
FEBRUARY 25, 2024**

Advance \$20 Door \$25

Doors open: 1 pm.

Music starts: 2 pm

**Champions Bar & Grille,
300 2nd St., Highspire PA**

John "JT" Whiteley, originally from Upper Darby, PA, currently lives in Wilmington, DE.

Barrelhouse is self-described as "A festival seasoned high energy band that puts 'yo' feet on the dance floor!" playing "a different kind of blues." Gene Fontana describes them as "some serious straight forward rockin blues in a style all their own? Guaranteed to bring you to your feet!" Sounds like a great match for blues lovers in Central PA.

SAVE THE DATES

By Mike Knott

SFMS/BSCP Show

01/28/24 – Piedmont Bluz

Winter Show

02/25/24 – Chris O'Leary Band
w/Barrelhouse

Spring Show – TBA

Mom I Picnic – 05/26/24

Mississippi Railroad Show
07/14/24 -TBA

Fall Show – TBA

Christmas Party - TBA

Please visit our website @
[http://www.bscpblues.com/
news&events.html](http://www.bscpblues.com/news&events.html)

for further information when
artists are confirmed and for
additional details on each function

In Case You Missed It!

2023 Christmas Party

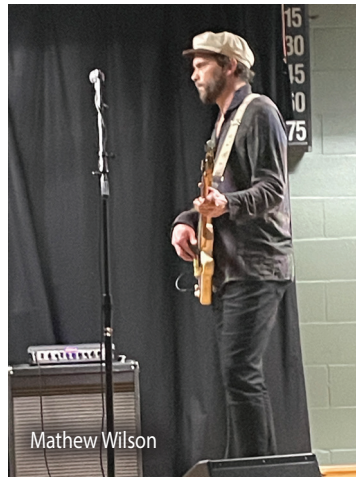
Photos by: Michael Easton, Brenda Bechtold, Kathryn Gregoire, & Michael Heiman



Sean "Mack" McDonald



Dancing with Ms. Santa Claus (Ruth Harvey)



Mathew Wilson



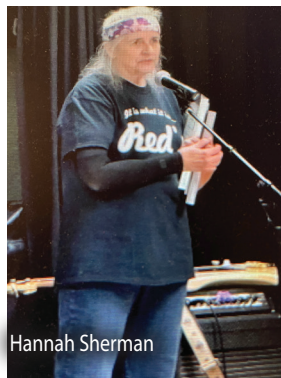
Danny Banks



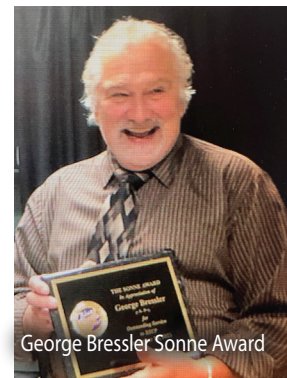
Kathryn Gregoire presenting Beverly McCormick Sonne Award



Sean "Mack" McDonald, Danny Banks, John Nemeth, Benny Turner



Hannah Sherman



George Bressler Sonne Award



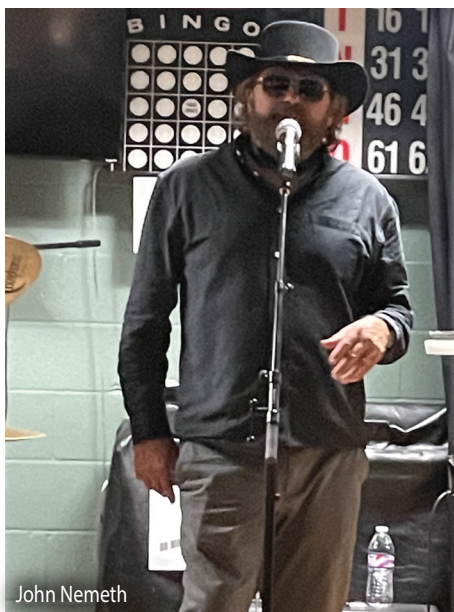
Buster Grubb, Kent Seidel, John Rignani



Party Goers



Party Goers



John Nemeth



Certificates of Appreciation: Mary Mammola, Kathy Zeiders, Al Mammola

In Case You Missed It!

25TH Anniversary Jam - November 2, 2023 at Champions

Photos by Kathryn Gregoire, Marianna Schaffer, Ken Schaffer



Jamie Hess



Jam Host Gary "Rocky" Rothrock



David Shultz, Blaine "Chip" Byers



Mike E. Danny, Dr. Mo, Jamie R., Drew W.



Brian S.



Russell, John Stover, Jesse



Gordy Keeney, Warren Prescott



Bill Wasch, Dean Cook



Melo



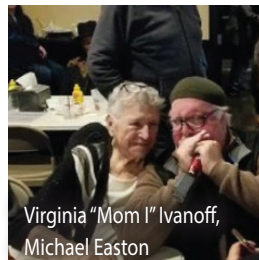
Dane Paul Russell, Ben Brandt



Brian S., Dan G., Jim B, Rick T, George B., Chris M.



Fred, Steve, Rocky, JD, Russel



Virginia "Mom I" Ivanoff, Michael Easton



Shawn M, Jim B, Lewy B., Fred, Dipen G., Greg H., Eileen C., Marianna S., Doc C.

In Case You Missed It!

FALL SHOW: DAVE KEYES BAND and GUEST BENNY TURNER; SWITCH FU Opening Act
Photos by: Larry Fogelson & Kathryn Gregoire



Sallie Bengtson, Benny Turner



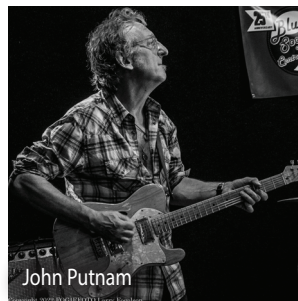
John Putnam, Frank Pagnano, Benny Turner, Dave Keyes



Dave Keyes



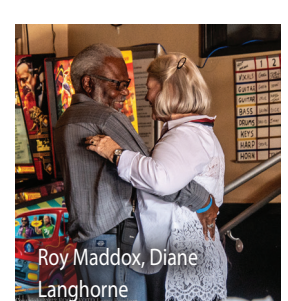
Valerie McCaffrey and Mike Rhinehart



John Putnam



Kevin Jenkins



Roy Maddox, Diane Langhorne



Frank Pagnano



Dancers



John Merx, Bill Wasch, Eric Slaughter



Keshav Rao



Benny Turner



John Merx



Linda Wagner, Betty Knott, Mike Knott, Brian Wagner



BLUES ROADHOUSE BY JIM WHITE



Roadhouse Album Review: Albert Castiglia and Mike Zito bring a special energy to "Blood Brothers Live in Canada"

Bob Corritore, the master of blues harp and keeper of his blues-filled vault, is at it again.

He's brought still more fine Chicago-style blues from his vaults for our listening pleasure. This time though, he's focused on the massive blues talent from his adopted home of Phoenix, Ariz.

Corritore moved from Chicago to Phoenix in 1981, and began to make music with local bluesmen such as Tommy Dukes, Chief Schabuttie Gilliame, Big Pete Pearson and Dino Spells. He later persuaded Chico Chism to move from Chicago, and Sugaray Rayford eventually moved nearby.

Corritore opened the Rhythm Room club and started bringing blues artists to Phoenix for performances and recording sessions. Those sessions eventually provided the copious material for his "From the Vaults" album series.

"Rumble" is the fifth album in the "Vaults" series this year, and as its title suggests, it focuses on the blues talents of Phoenix area musicians, recorded between 1987 and 2017. Corritore tends to specialize in working in the traditional Chicago blues style, adding his sharp harp work to the mix.

"Rumble" is no different, as it opens with Chism's rollicking "Big Fat Woman 480 LBs" with Corritore's harp soaring over a steady rocking beat. "Come To Me Baby" is another tough blues featuring the rugged vocals of Gilliame. King Karl strolls along with old-fashioned rock 'n' roll on "Walking In The Park," with still more harp lines, then Karl returns with "Mathilda," and piano reminiscent of Fats Domino, backed here by N'awlins-flavored harp.

Spells is next, checking in with a hard-driving tribute to the V8 Ford that takes on the road in his quest to find his "Jennie Bea." George Bowman provides powerful vocals on the soulful "I Was A Fool." Searing Corritore harp opens "Real Bad Day" by Dukes, offering a taste of Jimmy Reed-style blues with piercing guitar work. Next, Bowman returns with "Nine Times Out Of Ten," another rough-and-tumble blues, again laced with fine harp solos.

Gilliame again brings his gritty vocals to "Leopard Speckled Baby," wrapped inside harp with equal grit. Dave Riley rides out the "Laughing Blues" with an evil chuckle.

Rayford is up next, bringing his magnificent vocal chops to the seven-minute, gently swinging, light-hearted opus of a three-legged horse they call "The Glide" ("I saw him jump over the Grand Canyon and he didn't miss a beat ... jumped the Grand Canyon

without a runnin' start ...") My favorite cut, this epic horse tale is worth the price of admission!

Pearson brings it on home, closing with his fierce vocal turn on "I'm Evil," a wicked slow blues, scorched by malevolent Corritore harpwork, a powerful finale to this rough and tough album of traditional blues.

"Phoenix Blues Rumble" is yet another excellent session from the seemingly endless supply of fine recordings mined from Bob Corritore's mother lode of blues. If you haven't sampled this "Vaults" series, you don't know what you're missing. If you have, this is another blues gem that begs to be heard.

Albert Castiglia and Mike Zito separately are two of the best blues-rockers around these days.

Put them together in an album, and you have the excellent "Blood Brothers" studio effort from last March. Put them together on stage and create a live album, and you've added the ingredients for this special high-energy session.

"Blood Brothers Live in Canada" takes 10 of the 11 songs from the Blood Brothers album and adds two more, and when you add them all up, it's an exciting live show, doubling down on the raw musical energy you've come to expect from each of these artists.

This show was recorded in a single session at Blue Frog Studios, which does double duty as a performance venue, providing a live venue without having to make the audio compromises needed to produce a concert recording.

They open this set with the pile-driving rocker "Hey Sweet Mama," complete with a taste of the fiery guitar work that's roaring down the line. "Tooth & Nail" is a scorching back-and-forth effort; "In My Soul" is a gentle acoustic-sounding track with orchestral overtones. "Fool Never Learns" takes a soulful vocal turn, and "A Thousand Heartaches" is indeed a slow-burning heartache. "No Good Woman" exudes toughness and the sharp lyrical observation: "A no good woman needs a no good man."

John Hiatt's "My Business" gets an edgy treatment as the pair trades vocals amid raw guitar riffs; "Hill Country Jam" throws intense organ riffs into an expansive musical tapestry. "You're Gonna Burn" is a torchy blue flame of a song, and the rollicking "Bag Me, Tag Me, Take Me Away," is introduced as a happy love song, but with devilish overtones. "Gone To Texas" is rich with guitar and vocal byplay, and the album closer is an appropriately soaring cover of Neil Young's classic "Rockin' In the Free World."

If you've ever heard this dynamic pair individually, as I have, you already know they are both exciting performers. But it's hard to match the sheer exuberance of this combination live, especially the obvious energy and chemistry that takes it all to another level.



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



Roadhouse Album Review: Jason Ricci creates harmonica magic in "Behind the Veil"

Jason Ricci is simply one the best harp players on today's music scene.

His latest, and very fine album recorded with his band, the Bad Kind, is "Behind the Veil," and it provides ample evidence of Ricci's prowess in both its musical excellence and its heady eclecticism.

This edition of the Bad Kind includes Brent Johnson, who replaces John Lisi on guitar, Jack Joshua on bass and vocals, and drummer John Perkins. Singer (and Ricci's wife) Kaitlin Dibble wrote two of the songs, handles a couple of vocals, as well as backing vocals. Joe Krown guests on piano and Hammond B3, Lauren Mitchell provides backup vocals, and guitarist Joanna Connor shows up on Dibble's "No Way." And, of course, Ricci on harp and vocals, as well as songwriter on two tracks.

The album opens with an unusual but elegant waltz, Ricci's original "Casco Bay," with a gently swinging harp intro and which gives us the title: "I set sail cross the water dark and black from behind the veil..." Dibble's background vocals give it a majestic choral feeling.

That's followed by "5-10-15," a tough version of the 1952 R&B classic "5-10-15 Hours," written by Rudy Toombs and recorded by Ruth Brown. Dibble's vocals with Ricci's soaring harp solo take no prisoners on this rocking remake.

Ricci says that "5-10-15" was the spark for this entire album: "Singer Kaitlin Dibble has been singing this number for a few years and the wheels in my mind started turning on how to capture it the way I heard it so many times on Bob Murrett's WWOZ show. I love the New Orleans R&B feel and I really think we captured it here thanks to Tony Daigle, Kid Andersen and the band, of course. The whole reason we recorded this CD live in one room was centered around this number."

That's really a sweet inspiration!

"Baked Potato" is another Ricci track, an instrumental that gives him a chance to stretch his considerable harp skill. "Cirque du Soleil" is another rolling R&B cut, richly flavored with the sound of Ricci's current home, New Orleans.

"Wrong Kind of Easy" is a Dibble original, sparkling with her vocals, offering more New Orleans flair. That's paired in a medley with "Nobody But You," with a tasty Ricci/Dibble duet. "Ain't She Fine" is a funky take on the Bobby Rush tune, with strong Ricci vocals.

The dirge-like classic, "St James Infirmary" is eloquently done here, with heartfelt Ricci vocals, and a sensitive guitar solo. Of this track, Ricci says: "This old

BLUES ROADHOUSE BY JIM WHITE

standard is almost the 'Mustang Sally' of New Orleans music, so if I didn't think we had something really special here I would have never let it on stage – much more this record." And it is indeed special.

"Why Don't We Sleep On It" is an enthusiastic vocal romp with Ricci and Dibble trading lines over a sharp guitar solo, adding some B3 power to the mix. Ricci says: "Kate and I were having a rare argument and the band was in need of some more music. So I sat down to write a tune about how much better I would be doing without her and then kept hearing her voice or my own telling me the truth or her side... So I wrote both our parts; she loved it; we made up and had this fun duet."

"Terrors Of Nightlife" is a powerful ballad, again with Dibble's tasteful backing phrases completing the ethereal sound. "No Way" is another excellent contribution by Dibble, both writer and singer; her wordplay conjures a potent tapestry of images. "Shipwreck" ("Can I shipwreck on you some night") rides a stinging guitar behind Ricci's vocals.

"Hip Hug-Her," takes the Memphis soul of Booker T. & The M.G.s. chestnut, adds Ricci's melodic harp lines over the deep bottom, and rides this session to a rousing close.

This is an excellent Jason Ricci outing, drawing not only on his own formidable skills, but adding an excellent cast around him. Its fresh, authentic sound is a tribute to recording the album live, in one room, as Ricci has noted. An outstanding session.



Roadhouse Album Review: Bob Corritore & Friends roll in with real-deal, all-new blues on "Somebody Put Bad Luck On Me"

If you, like me, really enjoy great blues music that sounds just like — well, great blues music — then Bob Corritore's latest release will be great blues music to your ears.

Corritore is a master at pulling together vintage music on his finely executed series "From the Vaults," which digs deep into the blues past from a diverse group of artists.

This time, however, the treats are freshly cooked. And do they ever cook. For his latest and fourth release of 2023, the joyously tough "Somebody Put Bad Luck On Me," Corritore shifts his focus to the present with 16 newly recorded tracks from a sparkling lineup of current blues artists.

Guest artists who add their powerful voices in this diverse session include ageless wonder Bobby Rush, Thornetta Davis, John Primer, Carl Weathersby, Johnny Rawls, Francine Reed, Oscar Wilson, Eugene Hideaway Bridges, Tia Carroll, Dianna Greenleaf, Willie Buck, Jimi Primetime Smith, Sugaray Rayford, and Lurrie Bell.

The one artist who shines throughout is Corritore,

whose solid harp work weaves knowingly on every song, creating sharp down-home solos, or floating eloquently in support of his bandmates and vocalists. That's not to neglect the band here; the music, especially the guitar work. Every note is consistently razor sharp blues.

The album opens with the deep blues of John Primer on the gritty "This Little Voice," with Corritore soaring on harp. This track alone is worth the price of admission; it's a testimony to the heat and drive of traditional blues, complete with a razor-sharp guitar solo midway. Primer is a longtime Corritore partner and together they make real-deal blues more than just a memory.

That's followed by the rough and tumble "I Need A Whole Lotta Lovin'," featuring the big voice of Thornetta Davis proclaiming her lovin' needs. Then Johnny Rawls turns the album soulward with his magical pipes on the searing "Midnight Love."

Oscar Wilson follows on the title track, his vocals wrapped in Corritore harp for another tough outing. (I know I sometimes overuse words like rough and tough, but that's how this music rolls. They're the backbone of this enthusiastic blues. Just listen to Jimi Primetime Smith on the track "Tough Enough.")

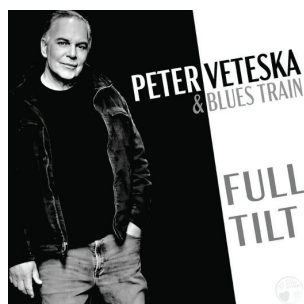
Bobby Rush talks his way into the next cut, "I'm As Good As Gone," then creates Bobby Rush magic with his still-potent vocals amid Corritore's passionate harp moans. Carl Weathersby shuffles along next with the hard-driving "Stranded."

The album continues mining its deep blues vein for ten more delicious cuts. It's hard to omit the fine remaining musical contributions, but I'll leave them to you to listen and enjoy. They're well worth your effort. This is as close to contemporary blues perfection as you would want. The session is immaculately produced, excitingly performed and thoroughly satisfying.

I don't know who to credit for the clever cover art (and that of many previous albums), but it deserves to be mentioned. It's a theme that Corritore has carried through many releases, and adds a distinctive touch that illustrates the musical attitude inside.

Yes, in case you haven't noticed, I love this album. It's pure blues joy.

If it wasn't for this Bad Luck, we wouldn't have no luck at all.



Roadhouse Album Review: Peter Veteska & Blues Train go full-steam ahead with "Full Tilt"

"Full Tilt" is the title of Peter Veteska & Blues Train's seventh release in eight years, but it might just as easily be the musical motto for this hard-charging band of East

Coast rock 'n' blues guys. They've been playing full tilt for enthusiastic fans up and down the coast since they hooked up in 2013.

They've done well. The band's 2021 release, "Grass Ain't Greener On The Other Side," was chosen by Jersey Shore Jazz and Blues Foundation as their entry in the best self-produced record competition at the 2022 International Blues Challenge.

Now, as a followup to last year's highly touted "So Far So Good," the Jersey guys are back on track and headed for a stop near you with "Full Tilt" – loaded with eight crisp new tunes from Veteska and four smartly chosen covers.

In addition to the power Train trio of Veteska on vocals and guitar, Alex D'Agness on drums, and Coo Moe Jhee on bass, they get plenty of help here from Jeff Levine on B3 and piano, Chuck Hearne and Rick Prince on bass, Mike Scott on sax, Tony Perruso on trumpet, Jen Barnes with vocals, and Mikey Jr., adding harp and vocals. It's all tightly packaged by producers Veteska and Joseph DeMaio, of New Jersey's Shorefire Recording Studios.

Everything gets rolling on this energetic session with "Go Find Another Man," a bluesy track filled with tough love advice featuring Mikey Jr's blistering harp throughout, bouncing off Levine's punchy B3 work. "I Wasn't Wrong" follows with Jersey's Jen Barnes taking a fiery vocal turn, once again wrapped in B3 and Veteska's tight riffs.

"Sad and Blue" sounds exactly like what it says, with a torchy Veteska vocal over still more eloquent B3. The first cover turns up as the band soars through Albert King's "I Get Evil" with Scott's sax and Perruso's trumpet laying down strong horn lines. "Pack of Lies" is Veteska fronting a lover's lament about how "those sweet kind words were all just pack of lies." Next, "2:00 in the Morning" is a hard-driving duet with Barnes while a wicked guitar solo highlights two lovers passing unseen in the night.

The Beatles' "One After 909" gets the rocking Train treatment, with Veteska and Mikey Jr. sharing vocals and Mikey adding some train-coming-down-line harp. Barnes returns for another scintillating duet as Jen and Peter swap scorching vocals on "Take Back What You Own." Levine's gorgeously understated piano leads Veteska into a sensitive reading of "Nobody Knows You (When You're Down and Out)" the classic written by pianist James Cox in 1923 and turned into a blues anthem by Bessie Smith.

"Slow Down You" is a searing slow blues that gives Veteska a splendid showcase for his powerful vocals and razor-sharp guitar, adding yet another bluesy B3 solo midway. "Man About Town" is a blazing instrumental that features Scott's sexy sax trading blows with Levine's rocking B3 in a romping album highlight.

The closer is an early holiday (or anytime) treat as Veteska croons the R&B classic "Merry Christmas Baby," written by Johnny Moore, featuring Levine's gift-wrapped piano stylings.

This is a great sounding album, no doubt due in large part to session production values as well as the all talented musicians. As Veteska notes on the album cover, it was "recorded live with minimal overdubs. The goal was to produce a finely tuned studio album without sacrificing the vitality and spontaneity of our live performances. Seeking that balance opened a pathway to honing the Blues Train sound and distinguishing "Full Tilt" from my previous releases."

If that's not enough, he adds: "No guitar pedals were used!"

That should be more than enough to keep this hard rocking blues band running at full tilt until the next Train leaves the station.



P. O. Box 60842
Harrisburg, PA 17106



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- Holiday Blanket/Michael Rinehart*
- National Antique Car Museum Passes/Tom Thomas*

Mike Blantz, Bowlin's Cigar Box Guitar Winner