

Blues Society of Central Pennsylvania www.bscpblues.com

BLUES NEWS Jan - Mar 2025

the blues society of central pa Winter Show



Opening act The Gayle Harrod Band



MONSTER MIKE WELCH

Doors open **12:30 PM** Show starts **1:30 PM** Advanced **\$20** Door **\$25**



CHAMPIONS SPORTS BAR 300 2nd St. Highspire, PA 17034

> Tickets for sale online at BSCPblues.com and BSCP Thursday Jam at Champions



Poster design by Jay McElroy

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From your President...

The Blues Society of Central PA is such a beautiful organization because it reflects the values and strengths of blues lovers in Central PA. So many talented people who come together out of love for blues music and for each other to enjoy and celebrate the true American art form and to support and care for each other.

I can't tell you how moved I am at the dedication and the generosity of so many people, each contributing in their own ways, with their own resources and unique talents. To learn more about all that BSCP does, see the 2024 Annual Report posted on About BSCP on our website BSCPblues. com. The BSCP Board of Directors presented the report at the Annual General Meeting December 12. The membership also elected officers at the meeting for 2025: President - Kathryn Gregoire; Vice-President - Mike Knott and Secretary - Lewis Bechtold.

As President, I am privileged to witness many acts of kindness and the results of hard work and dedication. One way BSCP recognizes hard work and dedication is with the Sonne Award which was given to Karen Fetterolf and Ken Rimondi at the 2024 Christmas Party for their exemplary service to BSCP (p. 6). Congratulations!

Sometimes we all need affirmations from others to help us appreciate what we have. We have heard from the Central PA Music Hall of Fame that we have the Best Jam in our area. And here is a note of appreciation from Bonnie Tallman, Vice-President and Events Chairperson of the Billtown Blues Society, after the Celebration Jam on October 31st (p. 9):

"Good morning all. Just a note as I reflect on last night's jam and the overall experience with BSCP. We all had a wonderful time! Jams can be boring, disorganized and a basic mess for the attendees and the musicians. As mentioned some organizations do not know how to separate an 'open mic' from a real, professionally run 'jam'. You all get it! As I mentioned, I have been to many and this one was THE BEST EVER!; including several that I have attended for other blues societies and also post major event jams in Memphis, the Hard Rock Cafe, and other prominent venues run by well-known professional musicians. I remember one year I was with Gabe in Memphis and we waited 4 hours on the sidelines waiting for him to be called up for 1 song -at 1 am. AND, the jam organizers invited him to come!!!! Your jam is a gift to the area musicians, to blues fans...and I am sure you have provided the fodder to expose the blues art form who may not otherwise know about it. Personally I found the evening relaxing (which I sorely needed), interesting, educational and just plain fun. And the kindness you all expressed in raising and donating some funds for the BBA?? ; is above and beyond! My most sincere thanks to all involved."

Thank you, CPMHF, for the Best Jam of 2023 recognition, and thank you, Bonnie, for taking the time to share your reflections!

Lovin' 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.

BSCP WINTER SHOW: Monster Mike Welch Band with



BSCP is honored to present Monster Mike Welch and his band to our membership for the Winter Show on Sunday, February 23, 2025. Welch is a celebrated American blues guitarist whose skill and passion for the genre have earned him a place among the top modern blues musicians. Known for his emotive and technical playing, he has built a successful career performing alongside blues legends and recording multiple albums.

Monster Mike Welch was born in 1979 in Boston, Massachusetts. He was drawn to music early on, picking up the guitar at just 9 years old. His musical influences were the blues greats like B.B. King, Albert King, Freddie King, and Stevie Ray Vaughan, whose playing styles shaped his technique and approach. By his early teens, Welch had already begun playing professionally, gaining a reputation for his mature, expressive guitar work despite his youth.

Welch's breakthrough came when he began performing with the Sugar Ray Norcia Band in the early 1990s. This collaboration helped establish

opening Gayle Harrod Band

By John "JD" Drudul

him as a rising star in the blues scene. At just 16 years old, he became the guitarist for Sugar Ray & the Bluetones, further honing his craft in a professional setting alongside veteran blues musicians. His work with respected artists such as Ronnie Earl, Duke Robillard, Nick Moss, Johnny Winter, Darrell Nulisch and the Knickerbocker All-Stars featuring Jimmie Vaughn has further cemented his place in the legacy of American blues.

Over the years, Welch has released numerous albums, each showcasing his growth as both a musician and songwriter. He has recorded on multiple labels including Tone-Cool Records, 95 North Records, BGB Records, Delta Groove Productions, and Gulf Coast Records.

He was nominated for a Blues Music Award in 2017, 2018 and 2019 and was the 2019 Blues Music Award Winner for Instrumentalist - Guitar.

To learn more about Monster Mike Welch, stream a Friday, July 21, 2023 interview with him by Wes Britton where he introduces Welch as a kick-ass blues guitarist and vocalist who got his nickname from a gent named Dan Aykroyd some 30 years ago. Since then, Boston based Monster Mike has been playing blistering leads and pumping out powerful blues vocals which we'll talk about in between knock-out samples of his recent work! <u>https://media.artistfirst.com/</u>



ArtistFirst FlashBack 2023-07-21 Romero and Welch.mp3

Gayle Harrod shares her Gayle Harrod Band bio with us: "The Gayle Harrod Band gives you Blues the way it was intended, with gritty honesty, raw emotion, and a story rooted in experience." Band leader, vocalist, and songwriter Gayle Harrod weaves a musical story so vivid that you wind up in the middle of it. She achieves a rare, honest, and spell-binding level of performance with vocals that are thrillingly rocket-powered, a signature blend of grit, gravel, and pure defiance, yet can summon warm, smoky, velvety tones and the finesse to draw the listener in with a heartbreaking quiet, confessional intimacy.

The Gayle Harrod Band's Debut CD, Temptation, was released in February 2023 and is a beautiful showcase of Gayle's musical influences: a melting pot of Blues styles from Chicago to New Orleans, Memphis to the Mississippi Delta and Muscle Shoals. With the influences of Motown, R&B, and Soul. Temptations was selected as one of the five finalists for the 2024 Best Self-Produced CD at the International Blues Challenge in Memphis, TN and is also a 2024 Wammie Award Finalist for Best Blues CD."

In Memoriam

by Jackson Fogel



Johnny Neel June 11, 1954 – October 6, 2023

Johnny Neel, a singer/songwriter/keyboardist born in Wilmington, Delaware and based in Nashville since 1984, was a former member of the Allman Brothers and the Dickey Betts Bands. Neel wrote and co-wrote several of their recorded songs, as well as those of other musicians such as John Mayall, Gov't Mule and The Oak Ridge Boys. He also performed as a studio musician with multiple artists and has an extensive solo discography.



Blake Rhea

January 15, 1976 – November 6, 2024

Blake Rhea, a Memphis bass player, was formerly with bluesman John Nemeth and most recently with Grammynominated soul blues group Southern Avenue. He performed as part of this past summer's Outlaw Music tour with Bob Dylan, Willie Nelson and John Mellencamp. He was a part of the School of Rock since it opened in 2012, having a profound impact on countless students.



Jim Gaines

October 2, 1941 - November 9, 2024

Multiple-Grammy winning record producer and engineer Jim Gaines was born in 1941 in Arkansas, moving to the Memphis area in the early 1950s. After living on the West and East coast, he eventually returned to Memphis where he was inducted into the Hall of Fame in 2022. He collaborated with artists such as John Lee Hooker, Otis Redding, Stevie Ray Vaughn, Carlos Santana, George Thorogood, Steve Miller, Coco Montoya, Van Morrison, Hewy Lewis and the News. On the forefront as an engineer and producer, he became known for the Jim Gaines Sound.



Flashback *with* Wes Britton

BSCP welcomes one of our newest members, Dr. Wes Britton, who currently lives with his wife, Grace, in Harrisburg, PA.

Dr. Britton, please share with us a little of your personal background.

I grew up in Mechanicsburg and attended Cumberland Valley High School. After picking up a few credits at H.A.C.C., I went to California, Pa where I got my B.A. at the Univ. of Pa at California. Getting my B.A. in English, that's where I first got some radio experience in the newsroom and interviewed folks like Geraldo Rivera and Lily Tomlin.

I moved to Dallas, Texas in 1977 and I lived in and around Big D for about 20 years, earning my M.A. and doctorate at the Univ. of North Texas. I moved back to Harrisburg in 1998 where I got married. My first wife passed in April, 2018. I married Grace two years ago. Along the way, well, lots of tales I can tell, like teaching college English in three states for about 33 years.

Dr. Britton, you are a man of many interests and talents. I would love to hear more about your writing and media careers.

Well, in terms of writing, my main talent has been in non-fiction. I began pumping out scholarship in American lit back in the '80s, especially on the life and works of Mark Twain. Next I pumped out a long list of encyclopedia articles for Salem Press on everything from Danish poets to Spanish explorers to rock legends to censorship followed by five years getting a pretty good record for my poetry. Then I started writing on spies and published three books for Praeger Publishing including Spy Television (2004), Beyond Bond: Spies in Fiction and Film (2005), and Onscreen and Undercover: The Ultimate Book of Movie Espionage (2006). After compiling the Encyclopedia of TV Spies for a different publisher, I turned my energies to writing sci-fi including 6 novels and 3 collections of short stories.

Wes Britton's <u>spywisesecretdossier.com</u> Espionage files: <u>https://www.spywisesecretdossier.com/</u>

Could you explain how you got into the world of radio and television and have used your position and experience to advocate for persons with visual impairment?

When I moved to Dallas, it wasn't long before I became a weekend "broadcast engineer" for NTRB (North Texas Radio for the Blind) from which I branched out into many broadcast projects. During the International Year of Disabled Persons (1979), I became a VISTA volunteer and arranged a series of radio and TV interviews with members of the local Association of Individuals with Disabilities. Ever since, every once in a while I'm interviewed on one podcast or another, including just 3 weeks ago, to talk about how blindness has affected my life. For 14 years, I served on the Board of Directors of Vision Resources of Central PA, including two terms as president. I can look back on a wide number of accomplishments.

Could you tell us about your love of the blues and the highlights of the interviews you have done with blues musicians.

Well, my love of the blues started in 1965 when I heard "House of the Rising Sun" by The Animals. Masculine, earthy, primal, it was quite a contrast from the tenor-voiced pop bands of the era. Next I got into The Stones, John Mayall, The Yardbirds, and Cream followed by a deep dive into all the founding fathers when I worked at the radio station in California, including Muddy, Howlin'Wolf, Willie, and Hound Dog Taylor. When I moved to Dallas, I was immersed in live Texas blues from the T-Birds to Anson Funderburgh and the Rockets to Stevie Ray...

If you look through my show archives, you'll see I've interviewed a number of blues players, including Kim Wilson to Mud Morganfield to John Lee Hooker Jr. to Darrell Nulisch, who BSCP featured at their 2024 Christmas Party.

What two questions would you like to be asked?

Yikes. Let's try- What do you like most about interviewing older artists and creators?

One thing I've learned about interviewing most actors and performers now in their 70s and 80s is how much they like to keep at it-creators who love their craft see no reason to quit even if they have to slow down and get off the road. They love what they do and love the responses they get from their fans. Money isn't the main motivator, most of the time, but continuing to be active and vital and energetic is. Plus, creators with positive attitudes share very affirming interviews with a lot of world experience and wisdom that can only come from lifelong perseverance, patience, taking the hits and misses, and taking the bitter with the sweet. If you're in this generation, you can learn a lot from those who have given us so much over the years.

What's the value of keeping the past alive?

As Benny Turner tells us, we need to know history to know why things are the way they are and the seeds and roots to the important parts of our lives. We need to celebrate the Old Masters to celebrate those who helped shape our lives in so many ways. Plus, history is a lot of fun a lot of the time, at least in terms of entertainment history.

Thanks for reading all this and I hope you'll drop by "Flashback" and dip into your past with the guests you can meet anew there.

How can we hear your archived "Flashback with Wes Britton" shows?

For "Flashback with Wes Britton", download or stream FWB anytime you like at the FWB webpage:

https://www.artistfirst.com/flashback.htm.

Here are a few recent blues archived shows:

Sat. Nov 16. Marshall Chess. Back in the '50s, Leonard, Phil, and Marshall Chess created a record company that changed the world. Chess Records gave us Muddy Waters, Willie Dixon, Howlin'Wolf, Sonny Boy Williamson, Chuck Berry, Bo Diddley, Buddy Guy... who all influenced the Stones, Yardbirds, Cream, Johnny Winter, Stevie Ray Vaughn... In 2024, Marshall Chess is back at it again with his new "Chess Project" album on Czyz Records and his new Chess Records Tribute Channel on YouTube. On Sat. Nov. 16, Marshall sat down with Wes Britton to talk about his new projects and history of both Chess and Rolling Stones Records—along with generous samples from "Chess Project."

Sat. Nov 23. Benny Turner. "Up all night with Freddie King/ I got to tell you, poker's his thing. Booze and ladies, keep me right/ As long as we can make it to the show tonight." Freddie King's brother and frequent bass player tells the

story about the night those Grand Funk lyrics were composed along with personal memories of Muddy Waters, Jimmy Reed, and Sonny Boy Williamson from back in the '50s. Now, this blues veteran, one of the last survivors of the vibrant 50s Chicago scene, has a new album to share with you called BT and we got a generous

In the Spotlight... **Bob Wineland**

sampling of his tunes to play for you!

Darrell Nulisch Band."

Sat. Dec 14. Darrell Nulisch. Nulisch is the

star vocalist for Anson Funderburgh and the

Rockets, Ronnie Earl and the Broadcasters, not

to mention the James Cotton Band and now the

Sun. Dec. 15. Nola Blue Record Artists. We

frame the lively conversation with Christmas

blues from the Nola Blues record label including

Happy Holidays - All of Them!

Jim Koeppel, Gregg Martinez, and Joel Astley!



Growing up outside of Camden, NJ, Bob's dad listened to LPs of Hank Williams, Ray Charles and others. Always being asked if he wanted to take music lessons, Bob settled on guitar after seeing the Rolling Stones on Ed Sullivan at ten years old. Today Bob has 17 guitars and 1 mandolin.

Playing in bands all through high school and college, he had to curtail the music after he became a father to two sons. However, in high school Bob discovered the Third Street Jazz in a Philadelphia record store where he had a summer job. He had always loved Cream, Johnny Winter, Allman Brothers and Led Zeppelin but asked himself, "Who are Chester Burnett and McKinley Morganfield?" and that was when he seriously started learning about the blues. He listened to and studied Otis Rush, Elmore James, Howlin' Wolf, and others. Later influences were Eric Clapton, Duane Allman, and Ry Cooder. He later made forays into Punk Rock and New Wave but always came home to the blues.

Bob lived in Chicago for six years from 1987-1993 and got to see Albert King, Otis Rush, Buddy Guy, Son Seals and Otis Clay. "There was always blues going on. I was all over the West Side and the South Side listening to lots of bands."

Bob remembers his first night at the 40&8's BSCP jam around 2004. He said, "The first time I walked into the 40&8 I thought 'This is what I imagined heaven to be." And it was also Bob Schell's first night. He remembers playing "Shake for Me," the version by John Hammond, Jr. with Duane Allman playing along and Frank Mercurio was on drums and they hit it off. Bob continued to play with Frank until his passing. He started a duo with Mike Easton and they eventually hooked up with Danny Kreiger and Dr. Mo and that became the Humblers. They played frequently at the Blue Front in Steelton and all over regionally.

Later he met up with Rocky Rothrock and Marianna Schaffer and was invited to join Acoustic Stew, which has been going strong for eight or nine years. Bob is also in a duo with Marianna called Pair of Aces and between both groups, he plays over 50 gigs a year. Another remembrance was "One of the earliest times I saw Krypton City Blues Revue. I had already met Mitch at the jam and he called me up to play and handed me his beautiful Les Paul and the strap was so long the guitar hung down to my knees so I had to sit down to play. I'll always remember his graciousness."

Bob's favorite thing about the BSCP is, "I love to jam and love to meet people who love the blues as much as I do. And the jam is where I met the people that I play in bands with now."



Winter Show (02/23/25): Monster Mike Welch w/ the Gayle Harrod Band Spring Show - 4/27/25Mom | Picnic – 5/25/25 Mississippi Railroad – 7/13/25 Fall Show – 9/21/25 Christmas Party -12/TBA/25

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



By Hannah Sherman





2024 Christmas Party

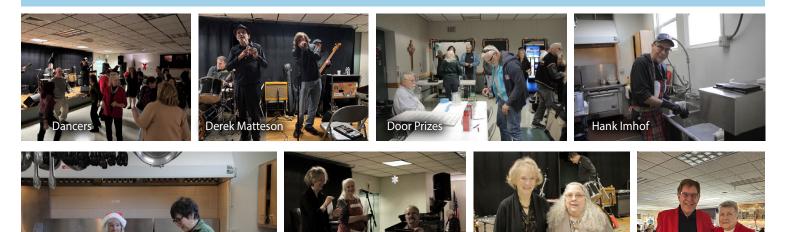
Dec 1, 2024 Photos by Larry Fogelson

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Photos by Mike Easton

ill Smith, Betty Knott



K. Gregoire, H. Sherman, K. Rimondi

L. Bechtold, Mom Ivanof

K. Gregoire, K. Fetterolf



Growing up in Central Manor, Lancaster County, Lewy went to school in the Penn Manor School District. His first job as a junior in high school was as a dishwasher at the Travel Lodge where he worked his way up to a cook. Upon graduation in 1969 his interest in cooking sent him to New Haven, CT, to the Culinary Institute of America.

While there, he roomed with a guy who played guitar and had been to Woodstock. Having played drums in band and orchestra, he wasn't able to take them to New Haven, so his roomie suggested he take up harmonica. While in school he worked part-time as a soda jerk and ran a 1930's style soda fountain. Lewy became known as the Egg Cream King. As the king, he remembers, "I met so many musicians. Many went to Yale and all were steeped in the hippie culture so I became very interested in the music of the time." Back in Lancaster two years later, he realized he wasn't able to pay off his school loans as a cook so he moved to Columbia, PA, to work at Grinnell (world known for pipe fittings). He then worked at Jones and Laughlin ("where the money was") in Lancaster as a crane operator moving tons of steel. He was there nine years.

His first experience at an open mic was at the Alley Cat in Columbia. Around 1979 he joined a southern rock cover band called *Hunter*. Radio Starview 92 promoted local bands and they were chosen to be on a "Homegrown LP" two years in a row. *Hunter* evolved into

MEET YOUR BOARD MEMBERS: Lewis "Lewy" Bechtold

by Hannah Sherman

a heavy metal band and after five years Lewy was ready to evolve in a different direction. Meanwhile, having moved back to Lancaster, he joined AWOL whose rhythm section had come from the West Philly Speed Boys. A club had opened on N. Queen St. and there was a garage in the back called the Back Room which opened as a jam club. It was run by a drummer named Blair King and eventually taken over by Rich Ruoff (of Lancaster Roots and Blues fame) who started the Chameleon Club. AWOL was the first band to play there.

The class of '68 had their 20 year reunion and hired the band *Seagrams* but their vocalist couldn't make it and they asked Lewy to sit in. It was so well received that the next reunion class asked them to play again. This combo, called the *Silver Hawks*, lasted from 1989-2010. Again, Lewy was ready to evolve – he'd had enough of oldies, pop, etc.

In 2012, open mics became popular and Lewy found himself going to three jams a week. Finally, he got interested in the blues. He started seriously studying the music and history of the genre. Blues on the Loose started in 2015 when he met Doug Porter and their first real job was in the Marriott lobby during the first Roots and Blues Festival. They were playing at the East Petersburg Blues Festival where another band had a keyboard player who asked to be in their band. His name was Tom Lowry. At this point, it could be said that the rest is history. It is, but there is still more to relate.

The first year Lewy came to Champion's was 2015. *Blues on the Loose* started writing their own material and playing all over the area while pushing into the Philly market. They competed in Billtown's IBC in 2019 but were beat by Ben Vo, another Lancaster band. They tried again in January 2020 at the Sound Bank, a club in Phoenixville, PA, at the IBC competition against six other bands put on by the Steel City Blues Society and won! They made it to Memphis, had a great time, and then Covid. After playing for many years, they are now focusing on recording more.

There are many things most of us probably never knew about Lewy (a drummer, a crane operator, a chef) but he was also a caretaker for an artist's estate which led to his own business, Lewis Unlimited, and he became an exhibit director for museums and colleges, etc., he got into antiques, folk art, building exhibits and selling. He became interested in reenactments in high school and has participated in Revolutionary War and Civil War reenactments up and down the Eastern Seaboard. He played field drum and fife with the 93rd volunteers from Lebanon from 1988-1993. From 1993-1996 he took a U-turn and started stock car racing with his dad at the Susquehanna Speedway. Lewy has many other interests - hit him up for more!

His great harmonica influences are Richard Newell from Ontario, the "King Biscuit Boy" from the Ronnie Hawkins School of Music, and Steve "West" Weston of London.

Lewy's favorite thing about BSCP is that we promote the totally American art form, the blues, which is respected all over the world. "BSCP is a great community of people who have the same thing in mind."

Lewy does a great job as secretary on the Board of Directors and we can all be thankful for his dedication and talent.

BLUES BOOK CORNER

By Kathryn Gregoire



Sweet Soul Music: Rhythm and Blues and the Southern Dream of Freedom

By Peter Guralnick (1986, 1999)

A prolific and scholarly author, Peter Guralnick spent nearly five

years researching and interviewing over 100 individuals connected to the soul music industry. The result is a masterpiece describing and analyzing Southern soul in its historical context. He describes secular Southern soul music as rising out of religious gospel music, paralleling the Civil Rights movement. He views the music as deriving from the Southern dream of freedom.

The author recognizes Ray Charles as the one "who started it all." Guralnick claims that Charles "gave Cooke and an entire generation the courage to make the leap into the corporal world." He took gospel music and adapted it with secular lyrics but brought it with the power and the energy of a Pentecostal delivery. He made an impact on the American music community, including a young Elvis Presley.

The R&B explosion of 1953 and 1954 proved that black artists could reach a white audience. The doors opened for black recording artists like Big Joe Turner, Little Richard, Chuck Berry, Fats Domino, the Coasters, and the Platters.

Guralnick provides detailed, rich descriptions of the soul singers and studios that many of us remember so fondly from the 60s. Sam Cooke, born in 1931 in Clarksdale, Mississippi, grew up in Chicago. He became the first of the big gospel stars to cross over. In the Fall of 1957, his "You Send Me" reached #1 on the pop charts. He became the model for most, if not all, of the early soul singers. He also wrote, recorded and produced.

Guralnick devoted several early book chapters to the legends of Ray Charles, King Solomon, Rufus and Carla Thomas, Otis Redding and Isaac Hayes. He describes the early story of Southern soul as being written in Stax Studio, with Otis Redding considered to be the sound and soul of Stax. The stream of singers and hit songs continued. In 1966 "A Man Loves A Woman" established Muscle Shoals as a national recording center, bringing Jerry Wexler to fame with the first Southern soul record to top the pop charts. Percy Sledge had wandered into the little-known Quincy studio, operating under the genius of Dan Penn, and recorded a multimillion-selling record his first time out. A month later, Jerry Wexler brought Wilson Pickett to Muscle Shoals to continue the stream of successful records coming from there.

Wexler also promoted Solomon "King of Soul" Burke at Atlantic studios. Solomon and other singers on the Atlantic label, such as Joe Tex, Wilson Pickett, Otis Redding, Don Covay, Ben E. King, and Arthur Conley were deeply connected, calling their group the *Soul Clan*. They considered themselves to be the heirs to the legacy of Sam Cooke who died in 1964.

Sweet Soul Music continues to be peppered throughout the rest of the book with names from the soul era, both the musicians and those in the recording business. Notably James Brown came on the scene in 1965 with "Out of Sight" and "Papa's Got A Brand New Bag." The album *Live at the Apollo* was on the charts for 14 months. Called "our number one black poet" by LeRoi Jones. Brown's music was "declared the new age both in its lyrics and in its rhythms." Charismatic and galvanizing, Brown became an international star that Mick Jagger called "the best there was."

Another great, Al Green, came to Memphis and signed on with Stax. He had a run of success unprecedented in Memphis or perhaps in all Southern soul music history. Plagued with personal issues. he left the music industry and started his own church and faded from the music scene.

In October. 1967, Otis Redding was named number-one male vocalist in the world in a Melody Maker poll (which Elvis Presley had won for the last ten years). Brilliantly composing lyrics and music, Redding was a prolific song writer. He is remembered for his stunning performance at the Monterey Pop Festival on June 17, 1967. He also mentored Arthur Conley whose performance on "Sweet Soul Music" made him a star.

Redding scored 17 Top 20 singles on the R&B charts in less than six years of recording before he died at the age of 26. On December 9, 1967, two days after Redding recorded his composition "Dock on the Bay" at Stax, the plane he was on crashed into Lake Monona outside of Madison, WI.

Otis Redding received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame on Friday, October 4, 2024, a long-overdue tribute to his sweet soul music.

Aretha Franklin, born in 1942 in Memphis, exploded onto the soul scene shortly before Otis Redding's death. In her teen years she had been under contract with Columbia Studios owned by John Hammond. She moved on to Jerry Wexler and greater success with Fame Studio in Muscle Shoals and then with Atlantic studios where her first six singles all made it to the top 10 of the pop charts. Ebony Magazine declared 1967 to be the summer of 'Retha, Rap, and Revolt,'"

By taking Otis Redding's great composition "Respect" and transforming it from "a demand for conjugal rights into a soaring cry of freedom," Aretha Franklin created an anthem of hope for a nation in transition and for people around the world.

The era of Southern soul music seemed to fade with the loss of hope from the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. in Memphis and the concurrent absorption of Atlantic Records into the conglomeration of Warner Brothers who then had ownership of the entire Stax catalog.

Book club member Hank Imhof notes one of the most important points he gained from reading *Sweet Soul Music* was to learn about the distinctions between Southern soul music recorded mainly in Muscle Shoals, Memphis and Macon with the Motown Soul Music wave coming out of Detroit. Imhof states, "I used to think soul was all the same, no matter where it came from."

In Case You Missed It!

DARYL DAVIS @ PCAD (Oct 4, 2024) Photos by Kathryn Gregoire



LITTLE BUFFALO FESTIVAL (Oct 5, 2024) Photos by K. Gregoire, Lara Vracarich, Staycee Callins



BEST JAM CELEBRATION (Oct 31, 2024) Photos by John "JD" Drudul



GOSPEL SHOW (Nov 3, 2024) Photos by Mike Knott



BLUES ROADHOUSE BY JIM WHITE



Benny Turner *BT* Nola Blue Records

Benny Turner is an original. One of the last of the originals.

The long and winding road of the musical career of Turner, the younger brother of legendary blues guitarist Freddie King, has carried him through the highways and byways of gospel, blues, soul and R&B. And Turner's last ten years have seen a renewal of his still soulful 85-year-old pipes, thanks to the prescience and perseverance of Nola Blue label owner Sallie Bengston (you can hear her handclaps and backup vocals on a couple of songs here!).

Turner started his career playing guitar for The Kindly Shepherds, a gospel group that he joined on guitar and background vocals for several recordings. At that time, Turner also started playing with his brother at Chicago clubs, where he later joined Dee Clark's R&B band. Turner then toured with Clark and later the Soul Stirrers in the early 1960s, where he played bass for those legendary gospel quartet pioneers. He eventually rejoined his brother's band and toured on the blues side of the highway.

Bengston launched her Nola Blue label with Turner's album "Journey" 10 years ago on Turner's 75th birthday. The "BT" release celebrates Turner's 85th year, and the tenth for Nola Blue. That's a lot of celebrating, but these new sides are up to the occasion. They run the length of his stellar career and cover a variety of styles that never lose sight of Turner's deep, old-school gospel and blues roots.

He starts it all off with the raucous "Bump Miss Susie," written by the great R&B songwriter Rudolph Toombs and recorded by Big Joe Turner. Benny Turner easily handles the uptempo, blues-shouter style before slowing down for the classic, gospel hued "Goin' Down Slow," first recorded by its composer, St. Louis Jimmy Oden in 1941.

Turner highlights his funky bass work on "The Walk," a reminder of the teens doing the stroll on American Bandstand. Then Clayton Ivey's B3 lends passion to the very soulful "That's When I Call on You," a 1958 Dee Clark tune. Next is a strong cover of the little-known Muddy Waters song, "Born in This Time," with another aching Turner vocal.

Turner adds background vocals behind his own lead to mimic Hank Ballard and the Midnighters' chestnut, "Finger Poppin'Time," with Billy Davis, an original Midnighter, on guitar. "Smoke My Peace Pipe (Smoke It Right)" is an homage to Turner's New Orleans years with a salute to Big Chief Bo Dollis, and Marva Wright on background vocals. (The "big chief" reference is to a group called the Wild Magnolias, which participated in the local "Indian masking" traditions and performed New Orleans Mardi Gras music. The group's lead member was called the Big Chief, and Dollis became Big Chief in 1964.)

""Drunk" is a Turner original, a whimsical ode to the bottle, with a tough Jimmy Reedstyle shuffle pouring on the music. Two more Turner songs close the session with his down-home guitar leading the gorgeous instrumental "Sleepy Time in the Barnyard." The fitting finale, "Who Sang It First" is a tribute to the origins of the blues that Turner so obviously cherishes, a paean to all those early bluesmen and blueswomen who actually did sing it first — creating America's classical music.

Speaking about this session, Turner says: "I had a great time working on this album with some of my favorite musicians and reminiscing about my musical history, from picking up the guitar again to revisiting my gospel roots, to finally recording some of my favorites....the songs "Born In This Time" and "Who Sang It First" are a very important reminder of the history of slavery and the roots of the blues that should never be forgotten."

What should also never be forgotten is Benny Turner's own immeasurable contribution to this music. "BT" is an instant classic, with roots that go deep into the heritage of the blues. Ignore it at your peril!



Jovin Webb Drifter Blind Pig Records

Jovin Webb is finally getting a chance to tell the story of his musical life.

The Baton Rouge-based bluesman had just about given up on his dreams when he

got a rousing welcome on American Idol in 2020, and then his newfound fame led to this powerful bayou-drenched debut album.

It's also the emotional story of a young man searching for — everything. "It's me trying to figure out religion, women, my career, and everything I've gone through," Webb says.

"At a young age, the longing and pain expressed by Southern Black Baptist church music spoke to me, but as I experienced my own trials and tribulations, I felt the pull of the blues," Webb says. "I soon realized that gospel and blues are related. Someone with the blues is in a low place, and when you seek salvation you're also usually in a low place."

All of Webb's searching comes together in this splendid 12-song set that features classic down-home blues, soulful ballads and a few hard-rocking tracks, fueled by his eloquent harp work. The mostly original songs here, mainly from Webb and producer Tom Hambridge, speak to Webb's personal and very emotional quest for meaning. Hambridge also plays drums, with Kenny Greenberg on guitar, Mike Rojas on piano and keyboards, and Rob Cureton on bass.

"Drifter" roars to life with "Bottom of a Bottle," a wicked harp riff intro to a down and dirty blues that unlocks the rawness of Webb's vocal grit and personal pain: "Take a shot for my troubles, take a shot for pain, at the bottom of a bottle, I'll wash your sins down the drain.""Save Me" is a gentler take: "I was raised not to judge another of a man by the color of their skin."

"I'm A Drifter" is the title theme, with a percussive feel that pays tribute to The Temptations "Papa Was a Rolling Stone" and Muddy Water's "Rolling Stone." "Drunk On Your Love" is a love song that turns Webb's vocal style into a soulful gem. "Wig on Wrong" is good old-fashioned rock 'n' roll with Rojas on barrelhouse piano, and Little Richard's spirit lurking in the background. "Livin' Reckless" is another sensuous slow blues that Webb's voice, aged beyond its years, was born to sing: "So many mistakes I've made... I've been fearless, foolish, but still here somehow, Lord, help me find my way." "Blues for a Reason" is an uplifting ode that explains why he sings: "I got my own story to tell, I sing the blues for a reason."

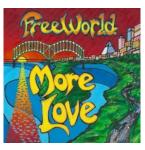
Webb pours his soul into the heartfelt "Mine Someday" — "I have been trying so hard to get your attention / I would do anything to make you my girl." "Hand on the Bible" is laced with R&B rhythms and a vow to gain her love. But the her "Bad Deeds"" is messing with my mind / I bring home the bacon, you feed me crumbs," filled the spirit of classic blues turned out with a funky harp flurry. "It's The Hawk" rocks in on a fierce cold Chicago wind that greets him on his arrival from Louisiana.

BLUES ROADHOUSE BY JIM WHITE

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Everything gets wrapped up nicely with a tough cover of the Albert King classic, Booker T's "Born Under a Bad Sign" with Max Abrams adding sax and Julio Diaz on trumpet. You get the feeling that this is also Webb bringing some of his own personal pain into the mix.

But the pain of the blues is also tempered by its pleasures, and that's what the talented Jovin Webb has graced us with on his superb "Drifter." Let's hope it's just the beginning.



FreeWorld *More Love* Swirldisc

Imagine a band so joyously creative that for 37 years, dozens of its current and former members have perpetuated a magical Memphis musical tradition as a popular Beale Street jam band, filled with multiple styles from funk to psychedelia, offering a spiritual union of Memphis, New Orleans, and San Francisco.

Meet FreeWorld: A musical ensemble that's been evolving since a young bassist Richard Cushing met legendary saxophonist Herman Green in 1987 and formed the band's nucleus. Green passed in 2020, but Cushing remains a driving force as bassist, lead singer and writer or co-writer of most of the songs on this session, along with sax player Peter Climie.

"More Love" is FreeWorld's eighth album and showcases the band at a creative high point in musical breadth and originality. There are whiffs of Bob Marley, the Grateful Dead, Frank Zappa, Booker T. & the M.G.'s, Steely Dan, Chicago, and the Meters. But the unique music they weave from this eclectic tapestry belongs only to FreeWorld.

The "More Love" core members are a band of brothers and sisters from many grooves: Cushing, Climie, Cedric Taylor on keyboards, Alex Schuetrumpf on trumpet, Courtney Reid as a lead and backup singer, Frank Paladino on sax, Freedman Steorts on trombone, Walter Hughes on guitar and Matt Sweatt on drums. There are cameo turns by more than a dozen special guests and FreeWorld alumni – including the Tennessee Mass Choir on the title track.

The band roars out of the gate with "Outta Sight," horns soaring and a B3 pulsing, copping an attitude for everything that follows: "So get the message / Just catch the vibe / Take the journey and enjoy the ride." Expressive songwriting makes a statement on the horn-fed "Give Until You Live": "Sometimes you're sure you'll win / Sometimes you're full of doubt / If you don't go within / Then you will go without."

The title song, "More Love," with Jerome Chism as lead vocalist, offers a spiritual and musical hint of Bob Marley with its rich emotional appeal: "Every time you get a chance / Don't leave it to happenstance / Spread your Love to those around you / What'll happen will astound you." For the eloquent instrumental "Red Moon," Cushing brought together five of the six original FreeWorld members from 1987 as a tribute to its composer and band founding father Green, with his spoken words bringing it to a solemn close.

Joyful music highlights the somber plea of "To Arise" — "It's time for justice to arise / We've got to up our eyes / And start listening to the wise." "Rush Hour" is a heart-pounding instrumental musical rush; "Heart On the Table" bids for an open heart: "Lay your heart out on the table / Seek the truth / Stop chasing those fables."

"11:11 on Beale" conjures the spirit of Beale Street and its musical heritage with a musical intro and a spoken ode to its late-night mysteries: "We be Bobby "Blue" Bland's moan, / Aretha's gospel home / We are home of the blues, / Birthplace of rock & roll." The heartfelt "Life for Tomorrow" offers sage advice: "So don't live your life for tomorrow / Live it today."

The instrumental "Who Knew?" soars on a magnificent horn section, then "Nothin' Wrong" adds a little funkified whimsy: "In our world here we belong / We just dance and sing our songs / Ain't nothin' wrong with bein' strong." The jazzy instrumental "Color Trip" takes flight and you can almost see the colors on this effervescent seven-minute trip.

As if all that glorious music isn't enough, two bonus tracks offer an alternate take of the title track featuring Walter White on vocals, and an audio cut from the award-winning video "D-Up (Here's to Diversity)" featuring a soulful vocal turn from Courtney Reid – "Sink or swim, we're all in this together / And there'll be times where it's more than we can weather / With communication, respect, and harmony."

FreeLove members are definitely "all in this together," effortlessly creating the emotional richness of "More Love" with smartly vivid lyricism framed by their joyous music.





Ladyva (Vanessa Guagi *Steam Train Boogie* Independent

I don't know how I could have let this album slip by last December — maybe I was lost in a Christmas haze. I've posted a couple of times about Ladyva's fine boogie-woogie piano music, the first time in June of 2021.

Since then, I've been impressed by the fact that this post has received more page views here at the Roadhouse than anything I've ever published. Someone, or more than someone, visits it almost every day.

And I just happened to be poking around the interwebs recently and noticed that Ladyva (Vanessa Gnagi – (<u>Very useful bio here</u>) released a new album last December. It's filled with her rollicking original keyboard stylings, and adds a couple of delicious classics, plus her vocals on three of the ten tracks. So it seems like it's worth a visit.

She opens with her own sturdy piano/ vocal version of the Muddy Waters classic, "Got My Mojo Working," then chugs along the original "Steam Train" track. A "Lobster Groove 2.0" boogie follows, then she rolls through the Albert Ammons classic, "Boogie Woogie Stomp." (Ammons was one of the founding fathers of that musical piano style, along with Meade Lux Lewis — Ammons' long-time friend — and Pete Johnson in the mid-1930s. Ammonds' "Boogie Woogie Stomp has been described as "the first 12-bar piano-based boogie-woogie, imitated by many jazz bands.)

"To Whom Do I Want to Lie" is a an elegant original, grammatically correct, slow and soulful ballad featuring Ladyva's vocals again, then the original "Quarantine Boogie" stomps through with "Ladyva's Stomp" rocking onward. "Return to the Blues" is a gorgeous, torchy slow blues.

"Jumpin' the 88s," which does just what it says, and "You've Got This," a sly uptempo vocal, close out this session.

Ladyva is not a newcomer to her music. She's been pounding the keys since she was 14 but does not seem well-known on this side of the pond. That's a shame. Her piano work is impeccable, her boogie-woogie style is foot-tapping fun, and her vocals add another dimension to her craft. Listen and tap along.



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