



Blues Society of Central Pennsylvania
www.bscpblues.com

BLUES NEWS

Oct - Dec 2023

BSCP 25th Anniversary Year



Sunday, December 10, 2023

Doors Open 1 pm
Food 2 pm | Music 3 pm
Desserts Welcomed

Hummelstown Fire Department
249 E. Main St.

FREE for BSCP 2023 Members
\$20 at the Door for Non-Members

www.johnnemeth.com

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From your President...

Like many births, the seed for the Blues Society of Central PA was planted and grew slowly as discussions occurred among area blues lovers and musicians, including, but not limited to, Carrie Baker, Tony Formica, Gary Harrington, Mitch Ivanoff, Beverly McCormick, Dot Mowers, Jimmy "Jimmo" Mulholland, Bill Wasch and Dale Wise. Then on June 6, 1998, at 3 pm, a group came together at the Best Western Courtyard in Harrisburg, PA, to create the Blues Society of Central PA.

At the next meeting, the group elected Dave Snyder as President, Mike Easton as Vice-President, Cecilia "Beulah Mae" Jankura as Secretary and Kathy Robinson as Treasurer. With much enthusiasm, BSCP then held the first Little Buffalo Blues Festival in Newport, PA, on July 19, 1998. On September 28, 1998, BSCP filed our Articles of Incorporation with the state as a non-profit corporation. These blues society volunteers had the vision and foresight to lay the foundation for an organization that is thriving 25 years later.

Simultaneously the Thursday Night Blues Jam, a keystone of the Blues Society, evolved at the Lochiel Hotel where owner/manager/bartender, Dushan "Sonny" Mudrinich, strongly supported BSCP. After the Lochiel closed due to flooding in 2004, the jam moved to the 40&8 Club and then to the Liquid 891. When Liquid closed in 2013, the jam moved to Champions, where it has operated for the past 10 years.

The BSCP Thursday Night Blues is undoubtedly one of the longest operating jams in the U.S. Even during covid, BSCP continued to have Thursday Night Blues, albeit temporarily on Zoom/Facebook. Many thanks to Gary "Rocky" Rothrock, current Jam Coordinator, and generations of blues musicians who have played for us, hosted, and even served as jam crew members, along with non-musicians and the

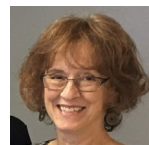
sound people, especially Don Intrieri, and to all of you who support the jam.

Celebrating our 25th anniversary has made this an extraordinary year adding an additional dimension to our annual events and activities. BSCP had fun winter and spring shows, a 10 year Champions anniversary show, our annual picnic and an outstanding MS RR master class and show. Now we are looking forward to our October 1 Fall show (p. 4), our November 2, 25th Anniversary Jam, and our December 10 Christmas Party where we will have an amazing door prize donated by Travis Bowlin (p. 5).

Our BSCP merchandise has a new look with our 25th anniversary logo and a nod to the past honoring the Lochiel Hotel – where it all began. Thanks to John Rignani, our Merchandise Committee Chairperson, and Rocky Woodling, our designer, we have t-shirts, hoodies, beer cozies, and Fender guitar picks that celebrate and serve as memorabilia of this special year.

When I turned 25 years old, it really struck me that I was undeniably an adult. And recent scientific findings have pronounced that our brains are not fully developed and matured until we turn 25, so I guess I was onto something. All this to say BSCP has reached a major milestone turning 25.

Keep on celebrating the blues!



Kathryn Gregoire
bluesmunga@gmail.com

Mission Statement

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

In Memoriam

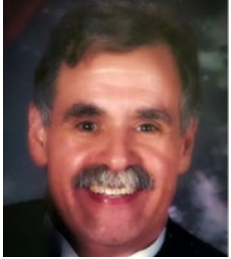
by Jackson Fogel



Tony McPhee

March 23, 1944 - June 6, 2023

Tony McPhee was best known as a founding member of the Groundhogs, the British blues trio which rocked the UK charts in the 60s and 70s. In addition to his work with the Groundhogs, Tony played with a number of other bands, sang duets with Jo Ann Kelly, and released several solo acoustic blues albums, including his experimental 1973 piece "The Two Sides of Tony (T.S.) McPhee."



Philip Rosen

January 28, 1953 - June 9, 2023

Philip Rosen was a man who had music in his soul. He made his name as a blues staple in central PA as the lead singer of Rosey and the Naturals, where he gained a following around Harrisburg, Camp Hill and beyond. The band played their own headline shows and opened for bigger acts like Johnny Winters.



Tom Webb

July 8, 1971 - June 30, 2023

Tom Webb began playing the drums in his late teens with a few high school friends. For the past 30 years, he has been an integral part of the Central PA music scene, hosting several open mics and playing in bands, such as The Dave Holt Band, Sonic Tonic, Amy Ash and the Volcanoes, Killin the Blues, Little Leroy's, Band of Llamas, and Little Buddy.



James Yancey "Tail Dragger" Jones

September 30, 1940 - September 4, 2023

James "Tail Dragger" Jones got his nickname from his hero, blues legend Howlin' Wolf, and used it during his time as a Chicago blues singer. A regular performer in the 70s and 80s, James put out his debut album, *Crawlin' Kingsnake*, in 1996, followed by three more albums in 1998, 2009, and 2012. With a low-down style inspired by several Chicago blues legends, Jones became known for his interesting and engaging performances in the club scene.

BSCP CONDUCTS HARMONICA YOUTH WORKSHOPS AT LITTLE BUFFALO FESTIVAL OCTOBER 7, 2023

The Little Buffalo Festival will be held Saturday, October 7, 2023, from 12 pm – 6 pm at Little Buffalo State Park in Newport, PA. The free event features local and regional performers on multiple stages, including a youth performance stage, a stage for poetry readings and the Moore Performance Pavilion for larger acts.

The Moore Pavilion schedule includes ADDI GRACE (CPMA Award Winning Youth Artist) at 12:15 pm, CORINNA JOY BAND (Sweet & Soulful Songwriter) at 1 pm, TANGLED UP IN

DEAD (Grateful Dead & Bob Dylan Tribute) at 2 pm, SONS OF PITCHES (Cowboy Jazz) at 3 pm and FUNKTION (CPMA Award Winning Funk Band) at 4:30 pm.

The completely volunteer-coordinated festival also presents workshops on creative and environmental topics throughout the park, a marketplace for fine artists and crafters, a writer's nook, food concessions and a children's art activity area. Highlights include a Kids' Parade, Drum & Dance Circle and Youth Workshops with free harmonicas by the BSCP.

For nearly 40 years, the Little Buffalo Festival has served as Perry County's annual arts and cultural festival. Bringing these components together in a state park setting creates an enjoyable, unique, and experiential learning environment for visitors and allows us to provide a fully immersive experience that not only tells but shows firsthand the power of our natural environment through performances, demonstrations, and workshops.

BSCP Fall Show: Dave Keys and Benny Turner with Opening Act, *Switch FU*

By Sallie Bengston



Jeff Anderson, Dave Keys, Frank Pagano



John Putnam



Benny Turner, Sallie Bengston, Dave Keys

Our 2023 Fall Show and Master Class features two bluesmen of distinction with whom I am fortunate to know and work with Dave Keys and his very special guest, Benny Turner.

Four time Blues Music Award nominee (Pinetop Perkins Piano Player) Dave Keys is a native New Yorker and 30 year veteran of the Blues and American Roots music scene. Throughout his career, this keyboardist, singer and songwriter has toured the world and worked with some of the most iconic figures in music.

For much of the last decade, in addition to his own gigs, Dave has worked with bluesman Popa Chubby and R&R queen Ronnie Spector (until her passing). Prior to that, he has performed with a variety of artists including Odetta, David Johansen, Bo Diddley, rockabilly legend Sleepy LaBeef and gospel great Marie Knight. His Broadway and TV music credits include associate conductor and keyboardist for the 6 year Broadway run of the GRAMMY winning show *Smokey Joe's Cafe*, in addition to his recent stint as music director for *Rock and Roll Man*, a show based on the life of trailblazing DJ Alan Freed.

In an interview on the Great Minds podcast (<https://advertisingweek.com/great-minds-dave-keys/>), Dave noted that he likes to get guys who are better than him to play with, because not only does it make the band sound great, it also drives him to raise his game. He'll be bringing band members Jeff Anderson (bass), drummer Frank Pagano (Bruce Springsteen) and guitarist John Putnam (Madonna, Cher) with him.

Joining Dave and his band for part of the show is Blues Music Award Nominee Benny Turner, a sixty-plus year veteran of the gospel, R&B, soul and blues music scene. Born in East Texas in 1939, Benny and his older brother, the late Freddie King, learned to play guitar from their mother. His family moved to Chicago in 1950, where he was immersed in the emerging electric blues scene. He has performed everywhere from the Chitlin Circuit to the Apollo Theater to the far reaches of the globe, as a career sideman to iconic musicians, such as Dee Clark, The Soul Stirrers, Mighty Joe Young, Marva Wright-Blues Queen of New Orleans and his brother, the late Freddie King.

Benny was with Freddie King when he played his first note on the guitar and he was with him when he played his last. If you've watched any Freddie King videos from the 1970's on YouTube, then you've seen Benny holding down the bottom during the height of King's career. Following the untimely death of his brother in 1976, it took Benny a long time to face the stage again. It was Windy City bluesman Mighty Joe Young who finally convinced him to return to performing and they spent eight great years together on the road. When Joe's health declined and he was unable to continue playing, Benny made the move to New Orleans, where he was bandleader for Marva Wright for more than twenty years. After her passing in 2010, it was time for Benny to take his place on center stage at last. Today he stands tall as one of the few remaining bluesmen of his generation. Singer, songwriter, producer and author, Benny's work is highly-acclaimed and second only

to his electrifying live shows. One taste of his authentic blues will leave you wanting more!

Benny's 2014 album, *Journey*, was released on his 75th birthday and marked the birth of Nola Blue Records. Six years later in 2020, Blue Heart Records was formed in partnership between Nola Blue and Blind Raccoon. Dave Keys' seventh career album, *Rhythm Blues and Boogie*, was released in 2022 on the Blue Heart label. When the two artists performed at the Reading Blues Fest in 2022 and were introduced, seeds were planted for future collaborations. We are very fortunate to be the first to experience these two world class masters of their craft, together on stage at our fall show. For more information on both artists, visit www.davekeys.com and www.bennyturner.com.

Opening band Switch Fu, a 2023 nominee for Best Blues Band Award in Central PA, is a dynamic, versatile, experienced foursome who came together in 2015 in Harrisburg, PA. They have a combined 100 plus years of blues, funk, soul, and gospel recorded over the past 50 years in four different countries. Band members include John Merx (Vocals/Harmonica), Bill Wasch (Guitar/Vocals), Eric Slaughter (Drums) and Jay Kirssin (Bass/Engineer). For more information on Bill Wasch, see BSCP BLUES NEWS Oct – Dec 2022 (p. 7) at www.BSCPblues.com and on Eric Slaughter, current issue, p. 9. For more information on Switch Fu, visit www.switchfu.com.



Benny Turner with Freddie King in France (1973)



John Merx



Bill Wasch

THE BLUES SOCIETY OF CENTRAL PA
FALL SHOW
SUNDAY OCTOBER 1, 2023

with BMA Nominees
Dave Keyes Band and very special guest **Benny Turner**

Opening Act **Switch Fu**

\$20 Advance \$25 Door

“Boogie Woogie and Blues”
 Master Class **12:30–1:30** Show **2:00**

Advance tickets available at weekly jam and BSCPblues.com

CHAMPIONS SPORTS BAR
 300 2nd Street Highspire, PA 17034



Eric Slaughter



Jay Kirssin

TRAVIS BOWLIN DONATES CUSTOM MADE CIGAR BOX GUITAR TO BSCP



Travis Bowlin, a singer-songwriter, guitarist, and record producer, has created and donated a custom made three-string electric cigar box guitar that celebrates the 25th anniversary of the Blues Society of Central PA. Inspired by the Cigar Box guitars of the early 1900s, it's got a modern twist: it is made of 100% reclaimed wood.

The body is built like a box with sides/top/back but in a more modern single cutaway guitar style with an opening at the end to add resonance to the guitar. It

has a 3 piece fretted neck, chrome tuners, nut bridge, Michael Breedlove Pickup with output jack, custom paint, and vinyl BSCP logo decal. It has a piezo pickup that works on vibrations under the cover. It can be tuned, make sounds and played with a slide. With the right EQ, it can be played quietly through an amp. Valued at \$200.

Members attending the BSCP Christmas Party on Sunday, December 10, will be eligible to register FREE for the drawing for the playable art piece to be held during the

intermission of the John Nemeth show.

Travis started Bowlin's Box Instruments in 2015, specializing in custom Cigar Box Guitars, Bases, Lap Steels. Ukuleles, Stomp Boxes, Harmonica Microphones and Cajons (Box Drums) which are sold in the U.S., France, Australia and Canada.

Seeking to give back, he holds an annual Travis Bowlin's Cigar Box Guitar Music & Art Festival to benefit Toys for Tots in Blue Ridge, GA, which draws over 2000 attendees.

Bowlin is the 2022 Jazz/Blues Artist Josie Music Award winner and is a 2023 JMA nominee for Duo of the Year with Meg Williams, who was on the BSCP virtual show July 16, 2020 and January 7, 2021 (see BSCPblues.com – videos – virtual jam) . He was also awarded Best of Huntsville, AL, in 2022 for his singing. He plays weekly at Nashville's top blues club Bourbon Street Blues & Boogie Bar with Meg Williams. For a sample of Travis's videos visit <https://www.youtube.com/@TravisBowlin> or [travisbowlin.com/videos](https://www.travisbowlin.com/videos).

BSCP CHRISTMAS PARTY FEATURES JOHN NEMETH

By Sallie Bengston



BSCP is both fortunate and thrilled to present Nola Blue recording artist John Nemeth and The Blue Dreamers for our 2023 Christmas Party, with music starting at 3 pm on Sunday, December 10, at the Hummelstown Fire Hall!

Having returned from a frightening and potentially career-threatening surgical procedure to remove a benign but aggressively growing tumor in his jaw during the summer of 2022, John is resilience personified. His recovery is ongoing, and not without setbacks, but he continues to persevere and adapt, sharing his dynamic performances with delighted audiences around the world.

A native of Boise, Idaho, John was first introduced to the Junior Wells and Buddy Guy classic *Hoodoo Man Blues* as a teenager in the early '90s. He began playing harp and singing in local bands, as well as forming the Fat John & the 3 Slims band, which is still regarded as a legendary Boise band to this day.

By 2002, John's debut album, *The Jack of Harps*, was released and soon followed

by *Come and Get It* (2004) featuring Junior Watson. He also performed in Watson's band. After relocating to San Francisco that same year, John began a two-year stint with Anson Funderburgh and the Rockets, filling in for the ailing Sam Myers. It was during that time that he immersed himself in what he calls "the early East Bay grease" sound of the Bay Area. By 2007, John had signed with Blind Pig Records and released his label debut, *Magic Touch*, to overwhelming response. In 2008, Elvin Bishop invited him for some live performances, as well as contributing vocals for four tracks on his GRAMMY-nominated album, *The Blues Rolls On*.

John released two more albums for Blind Pig, both of which charted in the Billboard Blues Top Ten and began what has been a long line of Blues Music Award nominations and wins. As of now, he has amassed 33 nominations and 5 wins, including two nominations for his side project, The Love Light Orchestra. At the 44th Annual Blues Music Awards, John received his two most recent wins for Traditional Blues Album (*May Be The Last Time*, Nola Blue 2022) and Instrumentalist-Harmonica.

His 2013 relocation to Memphis, Tennessee, was pivotal in the continued development of his sound and career. It is there that he met and teamed up with Scott Bomar and his Memphis Soul band, The Bo-Keys, to create the *Memphis Grease* album (Blue Corn 2014), which debuted at #4 on the Billboard Blues Chart. In 2017, he released *Feelin' Freaky*, produced by Luther Dickinson, which was a genre and style-defying album including contemporary sounds of hip hop and rock 'n' roll, in addition to his blues and

R&B influences. It was later that year that his Love Light Orchestra side project was born, in collaboration with guitarist Joe Restivo and arranger/trumpeter Marc Franklin.

In 2019, John returned to the studio with his seasoned band of young guns, The Blue Dreamers, to record his tenth album and Nola Blue Records debut, *Stronger Than Strong*. Featuring the creative input of his band, including 19 year-old guitarist Jon Hay (from Philadelphia), drummer Danny Banks and Matt Wilson on bass, the album continued John's ability to combine retro and modern blues sounds into compelling new music with strong listener appeal.

His award-winning *May Be The Last Time* album followed in 2022, and in February 2023, *Live from The Fallout Shelter: Celebrating 20 Years*, was released in celebration of his career milestone. It was skillfully mixed under the care of our own Central PA musician extraordinaire, Bobby Gentilo, at Right Coast Recording.

Recently, The Blue Dreamers have included some new and exciting players, filling in when the original band members are unavailable. John continues his tradition of supporting and showcasing rising young artists in much the same way he was supported in his early career. He anticipates that Sean "Mack" McDonald will be along on guitar and background vocals when we see them in December, which will be a treat in itself. It is possible that multi-instrumentalist Yates McKendree will also be on the tour.

No matter the configuration, a magical, memorable holiday celebration is in store at this not-to-be-missed event. Mark your calendars today!

Celebrate the 25th Anniversary

of the Blues Society of Central PA with merchandise through our improved on-line Store at

www.bscpb Blues.com.

When you click **SHOP** you can order and enjoy our latest gear, become a BSCP Member, or pick up a clearance item that you missed out on from one of our past live events!

**Keepin' the Blues alive in
Central PA!**

In Case You Missed It!

Mississippi Railroad Show – Sunday, July 9, 2023

Jammin' with RL Boyce & The Cornlickers Photos by Mike Easton



John "JD" Drudul, Dave Groninger, Dale Wise



Scott Reda



Dale Wise, Tony Ryder, Lewis Bechtold, RL Boyce



Tony Ryder, RL Boyce



Dipen Gupta, Dave Groninger, Dale Wise, Tony Ryder, RL Boyce



Warren Prescott, RL Boyce



Luke Graham, Dave Groninger, Dale Wise, Tony Ryder, RL Boyce



David Shultz, Dale Wise, Tony Ryder, RL Boyce



Gary "Rocky" Rothrock, Dave Groninger, Dale Wise, Tony Ryder, RL Boyce

Billtown Festival

Photos by Kirk Hansen



Ben Levin, Lil Jimmy Reed, Aron Levin



Laurie Morvan



Calistra Mahoney

In Case You Missed It!



Jimmy Carpenter



Ben Brandt



Anson Funderburgh

Billtown Festival Photo by Roy Maddox

Chenango Festival Photos by Mike Knott



Anne Harris, JP Soars, Chris Peet



Guy Davis @ Chenango



Tommy Castro @ Chenango



Charlie Musslewhite @ Chenango



Curtis Salgado @ Chenango BF



John Primer @ Chenango BF



John Nemeth @ Heritage Music Blues Festival, Wheeling WV



Sonny Landreth/ Cindy Cashdollar @ Longs Park



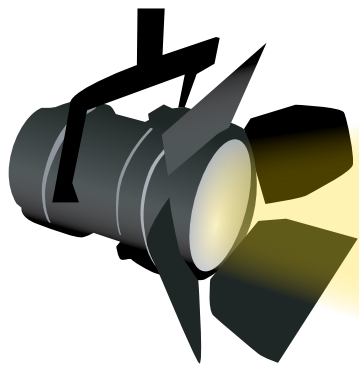
Kilborn Alley @ Bucks County BF



Super Chikan @ Briggs Farm BF



Brandon Santini @ St George's BF



In the Spotlight...

Eric Slaughter



By Hannah Sherman

from working at Dale's Drum Shop, who randomly mentioned the open stage jam at the Lochiel and it's been a staple for him ever since. Speaking of the Lochiel, and this year being the 25th anniversary of the BSCP jam, I have spotlighted jammers who began jamming at the Lochiel who are still jamming with us through the years. It must be fun to keep it up for a quarter of a century! Eric remembered that he would come in, sign in, order food, and sometimes would only get a song or two in before he had to start his night shift at work, but could stay until the last minute as he worked next door.

The band he had been playing with, *Black in Style*, became the band *Due Process* and he is currently still playing with them. They were playing at River City Blues Club around 2016 when he was approached by John Merx to play with *Switch Fu*. Happily, they're still going strong, and we're looking forward to their show at Champions on October 1st, opening for the Dave Keyes Band with special guest Benny Turner.

Recently Eric signed up for a casting call on Facebook and ended up getting a spot on the movie "21st Century Band" which opened in August. 21st Century Band opened for *Earth, Wind and Fire* and their guitar player is the same player for Positive Force which played "Rapper's Delight." Made over the course of five years, Eric enjoyed walking the red carpet. Who doesn't want to be a movie star!

Remembering his favorite concert, he talked about the gospel group Commission at a show in Delaware. Looking to the future, Eric would be interested in other movie roles and other musical opportunities.

Christy Lerch: Eric is one of the most positive, upbeat and supportive musicians I know. I follow him in a couple of bands and see him at different jams. He's always a joy to talk to and I think he can play literally any song in the universe. He's fantastic and gives the best hugs!

Chris Holben: Eric is the big smiling teddy-bear of groove! He plays with a controlled style and has a great sense of when to step out or lay back. Eric is one of the most genuine people I know. It's been a pleasure to get to know him over the past few years, and I always appreciate the way his presence elevates the room.

Bill Wasch: Eric is a BIG guy and he needs to be that big to hold his heart! As talented as Eric is (vastly), he is one of the most genuinely kind and caring people I've had the pleasure to know. Now, about the music. Eric is always busy with multiple projects for a reason. He's a great player who listens to everything and plays just what the music needs to be right. No more, no less. He is really easy to work with and offers creative input during song writing and development. Eric is a very active and committed father for his kids. His life goal, he says, is to be the all-time champ at consumption of fried chicken.

JAMMIN' WITH MULEMAN by Kathryn Gregoire



Photo by Ken Swartz

The blues train stopped by the BSCP Thursday Blues Jam at Champions on August 17 with a very special friend from Holly Springs, Mississippi: Mark "Muleman" Massey. He sang and played in several of the sets joining in with several different musicians. His high energy, strong voice, and infectious enthusiasm kept the crowd on their feet and the edges of their chairs.

Massey, singer/songwriter/guitarist, learned to play the blues in the Parchman Prison band and has performed in juke joints, clubs, and festivals with the likes of B.B. King. Muleman, who received his moniker from his mentor, Big Jack Johnson, is honored on one of the prestigious Mississippi Blues trail markers.

Previously Massey played for BSCP about the jam at the 2017 Mississippi Railroad picnic. He brought us blues when we really needed music during the pandemic by giving us virtual shows on July 16, 2020, December 24, 2020, and May 13, 2021. These memorable performances are on BSCPblues.com. Click on VIDEOS, then Virtual Jam.

Muleman writes to BSCP about the jam: I can't tell you how much I appreciate the love that was given to me from BSCP, the birthday cake and playing with all those guys - I had so much fun. It was great seeing all the dancers - much nicer than folks just sitting there looking like a dog watching a ceiling fan! It sure was a blessing and I won't forget it either. I can't thank y'all enough!

A PEEK AT THE PAST: Early BSCP Years

Rusty Nail Tavern Photos courtesy of Beverly McCormick



Krista Jones and Barry Siple



BSCP Sgt. At Arms Mitch Ivanoff and Beverly McCormick



Gary Harrington and Mitch Ivanoff

Lochiel Hotel Photos by Dan Mowery



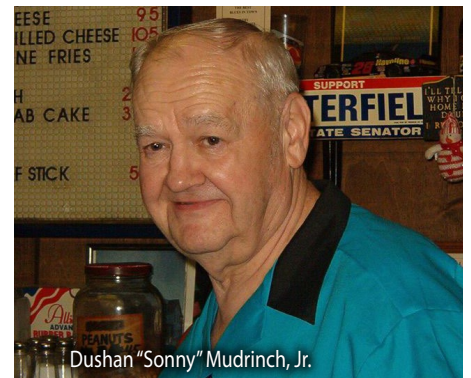
Kenzie Johnson, Tony Formica, Gary Harrington, Jason Suter



Dan Mowery and Bob "Doc" Creed



Joe Lamb, Mitch Ivanoff, Kenzie Johnson



Dushan "Sonny" Mudrinch, Jr.



John "JD" DeRenzis, Mitch Ivanoff, Jimmy DePalma, Don Johnson, Gary Harrington, Eileen Creed



Photos courtesy of Clark "Buster" Grubb

Virginia "Mom I" Ivanoff and Beverly McCormick



Photo courtesy of Pete Netznik

Gary Harrington, Pete "Cheese" Netznik, Dan Mowery



Mitch Ivanoff, Mike Easton, Kenzie Johnson



Gary Harrington, Dan Mowery, Keith Kanoff, Jimmy DePalma, Jeff Lynch



Paula and Mike Heiman



Richie Zamito, Marilyn Eckley, Mike Noll, Dave Harris



Kenzie Johnson, Sandy Johnson, Dot Grubb, Jo Brown, Tony Ryder...



Jeff Lynch, Joe Lamb, Gary Harrington, Juan Myices

Jammin' with JD

A Night of Music at Nate's Seafood and Steakhouse in Addison, TX

By John "JD" Drudul

In the last newsletter, I had an article on ChatGPT AI. For this jam article, I decided to use ChatGPT to show an example of how it can be used to edit my original text. As you can see it adds a lot of flair to my original text, almost to an extreme. I recently had the pleasure of discovering a hidden gem in Addison, Texas, just outside Dallas – the Sunday night jam session hosted by none other than Jackie Don Loe, a renowned guitarist in the Dallas area. This musical gathering isn't confined to a single genre; it's a harmonious fusion of various styles, making it a standout event in the local scene. Jackie Don Loe has been curating this extraordinary jam for the past 14 years, and it's safe to say that his passion for music shines through every note.

Upon arriving at Nate's Seafood and Steakhouse, I quickly realized how popular this event was. The bustling crowd left no available tables, leading me to find a spot at the bar. The place was abuzz with excitement and I was eager to experience the jam's magic firsthand. Unfortunately, due to the packed house, there was no room for setting up a camera.

However, there was a silver lining – Jackie live streams the jam on Facebook every Sunday via his iPhone. I had the opportunity to introduce myself to him and engage in a delightful conversation. Jackie, like many Texans I've encountered, was exceptionally welcoming and friendly.

The stage at Nate's is tucked into a cozy corner of the restaurant, creating an intimate and vibrant atmosphere for both musicians and patrons. As the night unfolded, I noticed

a group of talented horn players scattered around the stage, eagerly waiting to join the musical fray. The jam was brimming with the soulful sounds of horns, adding an extra layer of richness to the performance.

When Jackie Don Loe took the stage, he treated the audience to a mesmerizing set that seamlessly blended blues and other genres. His seasoned guitar skills were evident in his intricate riffs and compelling melodies, showcasing his distinctive and aggressive playing style that captivated the crowd.

As the night progressed, Jackie generously invited fellow musicians to join him on stage. It was during this part of the jam that I had the privilege of taking the stage myself. Together with the other musicians, we jammed to our heart's content, creating a dynamic musical synergy that resonated with everyone in the room.

Throughout the evening, more talented musicians and vocalists were welcomed to the stage, including some phenomenal female vocalists, horn players, and other instrumentalists who contributed their unique flair to the jam. The energy was electric, and the music was undeniably infectious.

Nate's Seafood and Steakhouse provided the perfect setting for this musical extravaganza, and it was a true pleasure to connect with the friendly people of Addison, Texas. If I ever find myself in the area again, there's no doubt that I'll be returning to Nate's for another unforgettable night of jamming with the locals.

So, if you're ever in the Addison, TX area on a Sunday night, be sure to drop by Nate's for a memorable evening of music, camaraderie, and soulful jamming. You won't be disappointed!

For those curious about Nate's Seafood and Steakhouse or Jackie Don Loe's musical talents, you can find more information and links below:

Nate's Seafood and Steakhouse:

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

Jackie Don Loe "Music" - Facebook

[https://m.facebook.com/p/Jackie-Don-Loe-](https://m.facebook.com/p/Jackie-Don-Loe-Music-100045936021351/)

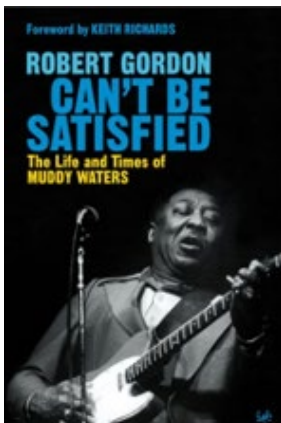
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Check out the jam video here:

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BLUES BOOK CORNER

By Kathryn Gregoire

CAN'T BE SATISFIED: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF MUDDY WATERS by Robert Gordon (2002)

Author Robert Gordon does an exceptional job of combining in-depth research about Muddy Waters and his blues music world with vivid descriptions and story-telling about his life experiences. Book club member Annunciata Marino notes that Gordon went into detail to capture the rural and urban landscapes in varied times in the life of Muddy, mostly in recognition of the poetics of place that seemed to influence his unique musicality.

The book opens with a Foreword by Keith Richards who talks about the great Muddy Waters and how he first heard about him through Mick Jagger who played *The Best of Muddy Waters* repeatedly for him for 10 hours. When they got to "Still A Fool" and "Hoochie Coochie Man," Richards declared it to be "the most powerful music I've ever heard. The most expressive." On the first side of Muddy's album was "Rollin' Stone." Richards took that name for his new band.

Who was this man that Keith Richards idolized? McKinley A. Morganfield, born April 4, 1914, in a tiny Mississippi Delta settlement called Jug's Corner to Berta Grant and Ollie Morganfield. His father was known to "sing, blow a jug, play guitar, beat a washboard" while playing old-timey blues at local parties.

McKinley Morganfield's mother died during a Mississippi flooding episode soon after he was born. His grandmother, Della Grant, took over his care, giving him the name "Muddy" reportedly because he loved playing in the muddy water of nearby Deer Creek. Years later when he began performing, his friends added Water which was transformed into Waters when he moved to Chicago.

Growing up on the Stovall Plantation near Clarksdale, MS, Muddy Waters learned about music in church. He taught himself the harmonica and how to play guitar from watching local legend Son House. Other major influences in his youth included Robert Johnson, Tommy Johnson, Robert

Lockwood Jr., LeRoy Carr, Skip James, Joe Willie Wilkins, Houston Stackhouse, Rice Miller (Sonny Boy Williamson II), Robert Nighthawk and Big Joe William, most of whom played in the same circle as Muddy Waters.

John Work III of Fisk University, Nashville, TN, and Alan Lomax, Library of Congress, Washington D.C., discovered the incredibly gifted Muddy Waters in the Delta in 1941 while they were on their initial field recording trip. When Muddy heard himself for the first time on a recording they made, he recalls his thought, "Man, I can sing." This inspired him to a music career.

After Muddy moved to Chicago, Big Bill Bronzy had him open his shows. His Uncle Joe bought him an electric guitar, encouraging him to take on the urban blues. In Chicago, Muddy became acquainted with the Chess brothers and developed a life-long professional and personal friendship with Leonard Chess that reflected his sharecropping background.

Muddy had a contentious rivalry with Howlin' Wolf. Willie Dixon, with the exceptional blues songs he wrote, often got caught in between them as they both wanted Dixon's songs for themselves. Willie Dixon did an outstanding job building on Muddy's persona, supporting his sexy image with songs such as "Mannish Boy," "Just Make Love To Me," "I'm Ready," "Natural Born Lover," and his top-selling single "Hoochie Coochie Man."

Muddy's reputation as a womanizer was built on the fact that he had several wives throughout the years and many "outside women." He fathered many children; the actual count is believed to be unknown.

A trip to England in 1958 "sowed the seeds of the British invasion" which was pivotal for the second half of his career when he became the "father of modern Chicago blues" and the "godfather of rock and roll." In his honor, Bob Dylan titled his first rock and roll record "Like a Rolling Stone."

In 1972, Muddy Waters won his first

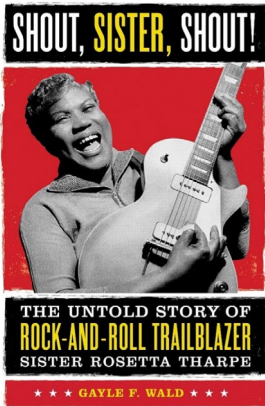
Grammy Award and then went on to win five more. In 1992 he got the Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award, and in 1998 he was inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame. In 1980 he was inducted into the Blues Foundation Hall of Fame and in 1987 into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. The U.S. Postal Service honored him in 1994 on a 29-cent commemorative stamp.

Throughout his life, Muddy Waters shared the stage and/or studio with such blues legends as Junior Wells, Little Walter Jacobs, Jimmy Rodgers, B.B. King, James Cotton, Otis Spann, and Herbert Sumlin. In the second half of his career, the circle grew wider and more diverse, including such notables as Charlie Musselwhite, Johnny Winter, Michael Bloomfield, Bob Margolin, Elvin Bishop, Buddy Guy. Memphis Slim, Sister Rosetta. Michael Bloomfield, T-bone Walker, Bo Diddley, Bobby "Blue" Bland, Pinetop Perkins and Eric Clapton, who served as his best man at his wedding in 1979 and with whom he gave his last public performance in 1982.

Towards the end of his life, Scott Cameron managed Muddy's career, including filing a lawsuit on Muddy and Willie Dixon's behalf for royalty payments and salaries. The suit was settled out of court for an undisclosed amount. Since Muddy's death from cancer-related complications in 1983 in Chicago, there have been decades-long court battles between his heirs and those of Scott Cameron that are still unresolved.

The blues book club members thoroughly enjoyed discussing the book, watching the YouTube documentary based on the book and listening to our club member, Hank Imhoff, play "Sweet Home Chicago" on his 2014 National Rezo-Rocket wood bodied guitar.

Tom Cook recalls "I saw Muddy Waters at the Cellar Door in D.C. Maybe 1972. I was impressed with his timing. Nothing was hurried. He was languid but dynamic and he had a great band."



BLUES BOOK CORNER

By Kathryn Gregoire

Shout, Sister, Shout!: The Untold Story of Rock And Roll Trailblazer Sister Rosetta Tharpe by Gayle F. Wald

This dynamic influencer was born Rosa Etta on March 20, 1915, on a farm just outside of Cotton Plant, Arkansas, to Katie Harper and her husband, Willis B. Atkins. After her father left when she was six, her mother became an evangelical preacher, cutting Rosetta's formal education short so she could accompany her. Tent meetings and revivals shaped her musical development.

In 1934, Rosetta married an itinerant preacher, Thomas J. Tharpe, and the two became a traveling team. Four years later, Rosetta left her husband and the church and joined the Cotton Club entertainers in New York City. There are no clear reasons behind the move, but the journey from Cotton Plant, Arkansas, to Cotton Club, NYC, was a remarkable one. Audiences loved Sister Rosetta, who made them feel not only with her voice, but with her guitar which talked in ways they had never heard before.

Rosetta worked hard to integrate her conflicting worlds of Pentecostal church and secular stages. Embracing the musical value of emotional expressiveness, Rosetta's deep spirituality and religious fervor are powerfully exhibited in her secular performances, as is her vulnerability, joy, lack of inhibition and sense of humor.

Gospel scholar Horace Clarence Boyer credits her, "Sister did more than anyone else in introducing the music of the Negro church to the world." She believed God gave her the talent and responsibility to bring her music to everyone and she resolutely faced the many challenges she encountered due to race and gender discrimination.

Sister Rosetta mesmerized audiences with her voice and played ground-breaking guitar that influenced musicians, such as Chuck Berry, Elvis Presley, Johnny Cash, Jerry Lee Lewis, Red Foley, Etta James, Little Richard, Bonnie Raitt, Ruth Brown and Isaac Hayes for decades to come. A rock and roll trailblazer, her 1945 crossover hit "Strange Things Happening Every Day," is considered by some to be the first rock and roll song.

BSCP member Bill Wasch posted a *Guitar World* article by Matt Parker on Facebook titled "5 times Sister Rosetta Tharpe led the way in the development of rock guitar" which helped me understand her contributions. Thanks, Bill! Parker describes how Sister Rosetta developed a distinctive fingerpicking playing style earmarked by a strong string attack. She was a pioneer in the use of distortion and retrofitted pickups and sang the praises of the solid body. She was an enthusiastic adopter of the electric guitar and a major contributor to the popularity of instruments used by the early rock musicians, including the Les Paul and the Gibson SG.

Book club member Hank Imhoff performed the instrumental version of "Motherless Child" for us, demonstrating just how talented Sister Rosetta was. This haunting 19th century spiritual song is the cry of a child being sold at a slave auction, taken from her mother to become the property of another owner.

Rosetta's charisma and talent brought in record-breaking crowds. In 1951 Rosetta married Russell Morrison, a valet. Thousands attended their extravagant wedding ceremony combined with "the world's greatest spiritual concert" at Griffith Stadium in Washington, D.C. The couple moved to Nashville, where she recorded with Decca and continued touring, experiencing some ups and lots of downs with the music industry.

Then, like many of the blues musicians of the day, Europe discovered her when she toured England and Scotland in 1957. This visibility created her "comeback years" (1957-1959) in the United States, especially among younger crowds. The author, Gayle Ward, states "No other American woman was as central to the transatlantic flow of sound that we know today as the British Invasion as Sister Rosetta Tharpe."

Rosetta returned her focus to gospel music. Her recordings flourished with five

long-playing albums released between 1959-1961. Creed Taylor, who produced *The Gospel Truth*, recalls, "I just remember her guitar filling that whole large area with such great blues stuff, wow, gospel blues – whatever you want to call it.... She was a blues shouter just like Esther {Phillips}...."

Sister Rosetta was a hit on the festival circuit, including The Newport Jazz Festival, The Folk Blues and Gospel Song Festival (France), the 1967 Newport Folk festival and the 1970 American Folk Blues Festival. She continued performing and recording, slowing down only after her mother died.

Book club member Beverly McCormick shared her experiences of seeing Rosetta perform in Cleveland and New York City in the late 60s and early 70s. "There was an aura of love around her; she took us with her. Every time I saw her, she brought me to tears. It was cleansing. You could feel the otherness of her being – you start to cry – let it out. The spirit moves you – cleanses the soul."

Rosetta's last public performance was in 1972 at the Lincoln Center, where she shared the billing with Marion Williams. Her health was failing her and she died on October 9, 1973, following a stroke. Her husband buried her in Northwood Cemetery in Philadelphia in an unmarked grave.

The author notes how symbolic her unmarked grave is "of the way African-American women have been so relentlessly and profoundly swept under the carpet of history." *Shout, Sister, Shout!* goes a long way towards bringing the recognition to Sister Rosetta Tharpe that she so clearly earned.

Book club member Hannah Sherman recommends: "Check out YouTube for loads of videos. Great stuff"

The Blues Book Club members discuss the readings on Zoom on the third Monday of each month from 11 am – 1 pm. To join, please contact Kathryn at bluesmunga@gmail.com.

BLUES ROADHOUSE BY JIM WHITE



Monster Mike Welch
Nothing But Time
(Gulf Coast Records)

Mike Welch, who became “Monster” Mike Welch when comedian/actor/“Blues Brother” Dan Aykroyd hung that nickname on him because of his guitar prowess when he was just 13 years old.

The name stuck, and fortunately for us, the prowess has just gotten better.

In 2001, the Boston-based Welch joined the fine New England blues band, Sugar Ray and the Bluetones, where he stayed until 2017. He left to focus on his partnership with vocalist Mike Ledbetter, which became the Welch Ledbetter Connection.

That led to seven Blues Music Award nominations, which resulted in winning Best Traditional album in 2018, and Welch won the BMA for Guitar (and Band) in 2019. Welch has received three consecutive Blues Music Award nominations. Sadly, Ledbetter died unexpectedly in January of 2019. *(Personal note: I was on the LRBC cruise that Ledbetter was to have been on with Welch later that month. There were many tearful tributes, all beautiful to witness.)*

Welch then contracted COVID, which kept him out of pocket for a year and a half. “At its worst,” he says, “long Covid was completely debilitating, and I spent most of 2022 genuinely unsure whether I’d be able to play music full time ever again. Kid Andersen and Mike Zito inspired me to take a leap of faith and make a new start; they both had my back and gave me the support and freedom to make the most personal record of my career.”

That record, of course, is the superlative “Nothing But Time,” recorded at Andersen’s California Greaseland Studios and released on Zito’s Gulf Coast label.

The supporting cast here is drawn from Andersen’s outstanding studio players including two-time Grammy winner bassist Jerry Jemmott, pianist Bob Welch (no relation), drummer Fabrice Bessouat, plus horns and backup singers. The 14 tracks include ten originals, two Robert Johnson classics, one from Buddy Guy, and one from George Harrison.

Welch opens the album with fierce guitar licks on “Walking to You Baby,” backing up a tough vocal turn that sets the tone for the entire session. Welch hasn’t been known for his singing, but this album shows off his considerable vocal chops. Robert Johnson’s powerful blues, “If I Had Possession Over Judgement Day,” switches gears and kicks in with Rick Estrin’s

sharp harp work. The title track, “I’ve Got Nothing But Time,” shuffles in nicely, adds horns, backup singers in a little call and response, and a stinging guitar solo.

Harrison’s “I Me Mine” is an eloquent take on that familiar song, leading into “Offswitch Blues,” a hard-charging tune with wicked guitar, horns, and keys all leading the way. “I Ain’t Saying” powers into place, followed by the rugged group of “In Case You Care,” “Time to Move,” and “Losing Every Battle.”

“Hard to Get Along With” is pure straight-ahead blues, “Jump for Joy” makes jump blues more than just a name, and then Welch’s guitar soars on the scorching “Ten Years Ago.”

“Afraid of My Own Tears Parts 1&2” is a simply gorgeous instrumental — eight-minutes-plus of razor-sharp guitar work leading a brilliant musical ensemble in an exuberant display of Welch’s “monster” talent. This one alone is worth the price of admission.

Welch then closes quietly but elegantly with another classic, Robert Johnson’s “Kind Hearted Woman Blues,” steeped in authenticity with acoustic guitar and falsetto, and giving it a personal touch by inserting his own name into the lyrics.

This is an outstanding album, bringing back to life the passionate guitar work of Mike Welch, and adding the revival of his considerable vocal skills. Enjoy it soon. And often. It’s great music. American music.



Joel Astley
Seattle to Greaseland
(Blue Heart Records)

If a picture is worth a thousand words, what do you get when a visual artist trades his images for blue notes?

In this case, the answer is the very excellent, rocking debut album of Seattle singer / songwriter / harmonica-wizard Joel Astley.

It was only about 10 years ago that Joel Astley formed his first band, after working for years as a visual artist. He soon began to garner an impressive list of multiple “Best Of The Blues” awards over the last six years from the Washington Blues Society for Best Harmonica Player, Best Male Vocalist, Best Songwriter and Best Performer.

He’s in fine company for this sparkling session of 11 finely crafted originals — Chicago’s Johnny Burgin on guitar; Charlie Musselwhite’s rhythm section of drummer June Core and Randy Bermudes on bass, plus backup singers Marina Crouse and Jill Dineen. Kid Andersen, whose nearly omniscient Greaseland

Studios produced, adds keyboards and electric guitar.

And maybe because of his artistic background, Anderson says: “Joel Astley is the Picasso of the Blues.”

Everything kicks off with one of album’s sharpest tracks, the bluesy “Born Cryin’,” — “The blues has been around from the dawn of time, that’s why everything that’s born was born cryin’,” featuring a deliciously swampy harp solo. Next is the furious fun of a little jump tune, “Candy Shop,” with sweet guitar licks and romping B3.

“Just Right” follows with a touch of roadhouse rockabilly, and then “Karma Wheel” takes a philosophical turn on revenge behind a stinging guitar. “Secondhand Kid” features slyly self-effacing lyrics highlighted by Burgin’s guitar work and Astley’s soaring harp. “Takin’ It With Me” swings easily in defiance of the traditional thinking of “you can’t take it with you.” The smoking “Hot as Hell” rocks hard in tribute to a young lady who’s caught his lyrical eye.

“Down To The Rims” is another tough rocker about getting the most out of life, and “Work With You Got” is musically self-explanatory with a little response from backup vocals. “Bobby’s Place” is an ode to the former 88 Keys, known as Bobby’s Place, a woodshed for Astley’s earlier years.

The closer is “No Brighter Gold,” a gospel-flavored call-and-response with backup singers joining in an enthusiastic finale that leaves your feet tapping and your hands clapping in a joyous celebration.

Astley says of his music: “Every work of art has its ideal vessel; some creative statements are rendered in clay or oils, some are pounded out on the keys of a typewriter, and some are belted out in tiny blues clubs through a cigarette haze. The aim is always the same: to forge a human connection.”

The human connection here is Astley’s creative songwriting, his swinging harp work, and the genuine musical joy from the entire cast. You should make that connection and enjoy the excellent music of Joel Astley.



The Nighthawks
Slant Six
(VizzTone)

That terrifically tough quartet, the Nighthawks, have decided to kick off the second half of their first century of hard-driving blues with approximately half of a new album.

The band celebrated its first 50 years last April, with Established 1972, a hard-charging exit from the Covid shutdown that kept alive the “Hawks

BLUES ROADHOUSE BY JIM WHITE

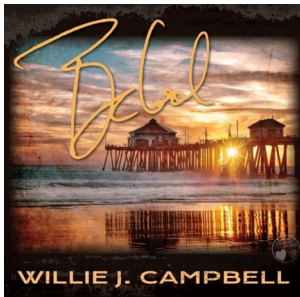
reputation for scorched-earth roadhouse blues."

Their latest, "Slant Six," is a mini-album, or EP, of six fine blues tracks that leave you wondering what became of the other half. The six songs on this session are all covers, mostly from a handful of blues giants, that allow the band to deepen its musical roots in the blues.

Guitarist Dan Hovey takes the lead vocal on "Motor Head Baby," originally recorded by Johnny "Guitar" Watson in 1953 when he called himself "Young John Watson." Original Nighthawk Mark Wenner scorches through two Muddy Waters chestnuts, "Forty Days and Forty Nights" and "Standing Around Crying," adding fierce harp solos.

Drummer Mark Stutso gives Little Milton's "You're Welcome to the Club" a soulful kick, and then shuffles nicely into NRBQ founder Al Anderson's "Poor Me." The album finale, "Don't Know Where She Went," pairs Hovey and Stutso with some tough Wenner harp. Bassist Paul Pisciotta doesn't sing but pours himself in to the deep end of the Hawks' rootsy effort.

The hard-working Nighthawks, who make Bob Dylan's Never Ending Tour look like a weekend gig, are on the road again with their brand of tough, rootsy blues. Check them out when you can and see just how tasty well-aged blues can be.



Willie J. Campbell
Be Cool
(Blues Heart Records)

Willie J. Campbell was one of those all-purpose musicians who was a bass player, singer, songwriter — and in his 50-year career he became an essential ingredient of several great bands, including the James Harman Band, The Fabulous Thunderbirds, the Mannish Boys and the Proven Ones.

That heady career was interrupted in March of 2022, when Campbell was diagnosed with ALS (amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, sometimes known as Lou Gehrig's disease).

Knowing that his time was limited, Campbell planned a final album of the music he loved, created with the musical friends that he loved. And just eight weeks before he died, he recorded his final music.

That joyous final session is this album, "Be Cool," whose title is based on words Campbell was fond of using, and includes as guests guitarist Kid Ramos, Campbell's co-producer Brian Templeton, plus Fabulous Thunderbirds frontman Kim Wilson, Sugaray Rayford, Los Lobos' David Hidalgo, Joe Louis Walker, Janiva Magness, Jimi Bott, Jimmie Wood, Jason Ricci,

Anson Funderburgh, Mike Morgan, Shawn Pittman, Johnny Ramos, Condron Hampton, Mondo Cortez, Pat McDougall, and Brooks Milgate. Blue Heart Records worked with the Campbell family in preparing the release to ensure that this album accurately reflects the impact Campbell had on those around him.

The album opens with the funky-tough "You Better Let Go," featuring Rayford on massive vocals, then Milgate's piano sparks the rocking "No More," featuring Funderburgh. Hidalgo provides vocals and guitar and joins Wilson on harmonica for a cover of Los Lobos' easy-riding "This Time."

"Can't Stay Away" powers up next, with Magness soaring emotionally and vocally on the torchy blues. "Drone" evokes a Mississippi Hill Country trance with Ramos on guitar and swampy harp by Ricci. The rollicking instrumental "Docksidein," plays Campbell's bass off Funderburgh's guitar with tasty B3 licks.

"My Fault," originally performed by Rod Stewart and written by Stewart, Ron Wood, and Ian McLagan, bursts its hard-rocking seams with Rolling Stone riffs, and "Forever Shall Be" is rich with soulful gospel tapestry. A snappy horn chorus welcomes Rayford back to the vocals on "Standby," with an assist from Walker on guitar. Pittman gets down and swampy with vocals on "Devil on My Shoulder" featuring a stinging Funderburgh solo, and harp work from Wilson.

"She's A Twister" is hard-driving, old-fashioned rock 'n' roll with guitar and Milgate's barrelhouse piano. "One Man Chain Gang" features Wood on haunting vocals pleading for rescue. Wilson is back on vocals and harp for a sparkling cover of Huey P. Smith's "You Can't Stop Her," a New Orleans classic. Templeton pours his heart out in the plaintiff love ballad, "Use as Needed."

The closer belongs to Fleetwood Mac's Peter Green, whose eloquent instrumental "Albatross" is a spirit-lifting finale, pointing to Campbell's final thoughts in the liner notes: "Love fully in the moment. Enjoy everyone and everything that you can, while you can."

"Be Cool" is an uplifting album, a fitting musical tribute to the great talents of Willie J. Campbell, overflowing with the music that filled his heart and his life.



Cash Box Kings
Oscar's Motel
(Alligator Records)

You want some tough, old-school-fee Chicago-style blues, but with a contemporary vibe?

Then you should check out the latest album from the Cash Box Kings, featuring the massive voice of Oscar Wilson, and the massive talents of everyone else involved.

Harp man, vocalist, songwriter and band founder Joe Nosek has brought together a razor-sharp ensemble of Wilson on lead vocals, Billy Flynn on lead and baritone guitar, Kenny "Beedy Eyes" Smith on drums, John W. Lauer on upright and electric bass, and Lee Kanehira on piano and organ. There is also a handful of special guests who add just the right amount of icing on the blues cake.

Special guests include vocalists Deitra Farr, Cameron Webb, and John Nemeth, guitarists Shoji Naito, Andrew Diehl, Xavier Lynn, and Jon McDonald, drummer Derek Hendrickson, and The C-Note Horns.

Most of the music on their eleventh album is original, with Wilson and Nosek sharing the writing and creating new blues in the same tough spirit as their spiritual predecessors. They also add rugged covers of a pair of blues chestnuts.

The session kicks off with the title track (imagine that, the title track comes first!), featuring Wilson's gritty vocals, a little reminiscent of Howlin' Wolf, in front of Nosek's wicked harp, all shuffling in classic blues harmony. Next, "Down on the South Side" creates an image of a Chicago filled with the characters of the blues, plus one of the special guests, the C-Note horns, adding their own vivid color.

"Please Have Mercy" downshifts the mood, with a mournful harp intro fueling Wilson's slow-burning vocal turn on the Muddy Waters song. "I Can't Stand You" is a light-hearted pairing of the heavy-duty voices of Wilson and guest vocalist Deitra Farr. "Hot Little Mess" is pure Nosek, from the lyrics to the harp to the vocals.

The soulful Cameron Webb shares the vocals on the history lesson in "Nobody Called It the Blues," and then Wilson relives the urgent driving rhythms of "Pontiac Blues," the remaining cover track on the album (a footnote about the original below). "Trying So Hard" is another scorching slow blues, fueled by Nosek's harp and Wilson's potent pipes, with a stinging guitar adding fuel to the fire. "She Dropped The Axe On Me" is another solo Nosek effort. John Németh adds his considerable vocal chops and wry sensibilities to the envious "I Want What Chaz Has."

The closer is a surprisingly out-of-season "Ride Santa Ride," but a rocking good way to giftwrap the package.

"Oscar's Motel" is the latest in a long run of outstanding music from the Cash Box Kings, who continue to create new music that remains faithful to its roots in style and substance. And it sounds great, too.

See more of Jim White's album reviews at
<https://bluesroadhouse.com>.





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