



Blues Society of Central Pennsylvania
www.bscpblues.com

BLUES NEWS

Apr - Jun 2024

THE BLUES SOCIETY OF CENTRAL PA SPRING SHOW

VANESSA COLLIER BAND



with Slim & the
Perkolators

SUNDAY
APRIL 28, 2024

CHAMPIONS SPORTS BAR

300 2nd St. Highspire, PA 17034



Doors open **1:00** \$20 Advance
Show **2:00** \$25 Door



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



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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 Blues Jam receives "Best Jam!" Spot Award

CONGRATULATIONS to the Blues Society of Central PA for receiving a Spot Award for "Best Jam!" as announced on March 25, 2024. Spot Awards are winners outside of the traditional CPMA nominees/winners that acknowledge unrepresented categories. Each Spot Award winner will receive a special certificate from the Central Pennsylvania Music Hall of Fame (CPMHOF) for their outstanding work in 2023!

The BSCP Thursday Night Blues Jam celebrated its 25th year in 2023. The BSCP Jam Committee is chaired by Gary "Rocky" Rothrock. Thank you to the many volunteers that make the jam such a success!

From your President...

Like many others, when I first started coming to the jam, Greg Hogg warmly welcomed me. I appreciated his friendly face and willingness to share blues information with me. The last message I received from him was on Feb 6, 2024, three days before he unexpectedly died. It was "Remembering Red Paden, Mississippi blues royalty – WXPN/Vinyl," a tribute to the legendary "Red," owner of one of the few remaining juke joints.

Greg is one of our own local legends who could often be found listening to or promoting blues music, photographing bald eagles at the Conowingo Dam, joining in with Lancaster's horse shoe players headed by his good friend Dave Costello, or driving around in his red 1967 Camaro, which he painstakingly restored. Greg will long be remembered for his passion for the blues and his many contributions to keeping the blues alive (p. 4).

Sister Blue speaks for many musicians. She writes, "I had heard Greg passed. He was a great friend to the blues community. It's how I got in contact with the Central Blues Society. He came out to several of my shows when I played in the area. I knew he had health problems. I'm sorry for the loss to everyone."

Thank you to all who attend the weekly blues jam and contribute to the Tip Jar. That money goes towards keeping our equipment and instruments up-to-date and well-maintained. Currently BSCP is in the process of purchasing two amps to replace the ones that recently suffered severe damage. BSCP is fortunate to have the money needed to afford a good working backline for our jammers and visiting bands. Kudos to Rocky who drove

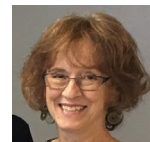
to Maryland where he could get a good price on amps. He always takes prompt care of everything jam related.

With our new amps, BSCP will be well-prepared to host our next big event, the Spring Show. And when I say BIG, I am not exaggerating. Vanessa Collier, a multi-Blues Music Award winner nominated this year for three awards, will be taking the stage on April 28. Slim and the Perkolators from Philadelphia will open the show (p. 4).

As usual, the last Sunday in May will be our annual fundraiser Mom I picnic (p. 4). A special thank you to the members of the six bands who will be contributing their talents to support BSCP: Bag O'Nails, Ol' G and the Moneymakers, Blues on the Loose, Bobby Gentilo Band, Nate Myers Band, and Tom Lowry Blues Band. The generosity of the bands and of all those who attend the event makes it possible for BSCP to afford to bring in outstanding award-winning musicians throughout the year.

Congratulations to Alex Warner and Soul Sunrise for making it to the semi-finals in the Youth Showcase at the International Blues Challenge! They did a great job earning a score well above the average. Alex and his family greatly appreciate all the support he received with BSCP sponsoring the band and contributing to the experience (p. 6).

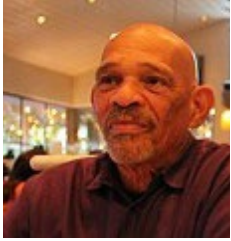
Celebrating the Blues,



Kathryn Gregoire
bluesmunga@gmail.com

In Memoriam

by Jackson Fogel



Kester Smith

05-14-41 / 01-14-24

Kester Smith's life was full of music even before his iconic run as Taj Mahal's main percussionist. Born in Grenada, Smith was raised in Trinidad with his five sisters. He met Taj Mahal in New York City and began an illustrious career that would take him to all 50 states, Europe, India, Russia and other countries. He played at Carnegie Hall three times, performed on SNL and served as conductor of New York's Lincoln Orchestra.



Ralph Kinsey

04-26-52 / 01-16-24

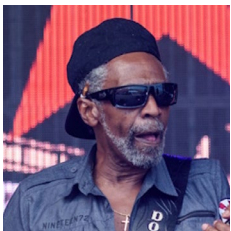
Ralph Kinsey was best known for his work as a drummer for The Kinsey Report, the band he started with his brothers Donald and Kenneth Kinsey, joined by family friend Ron Prince and harmonica player Lester Davenport. His impressive musical career started early; he was playing the snare drum before he was six years old. It wasn't Kinsey's only creative pursuit. He also had a series of visual works, titled "Sound Impressions," on display at Pleasant Grove Studio in Hobart, Indiana.



Dick Waterman

07-14-35 / 01-26-24

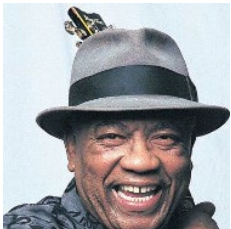
Dick Waterman was a consistent figure in the background of the blues scene since the 60s. He started Avalon Productions, the first blues-specific booking agency, working with Son House, Lightnin' Hopkins, Bonnie Raitt and others. In the 90s, Waterman balanced his producing career with taking care of late blues musicians' estates and publishing photos he had been taking for 20 years. In 2000 he became one of the first non-performers to be inducted into the Blues Hall of Fame.



Donald Kinsey

05-12-53 / 02-06-24

Donald Kinsey was a renowned guitarist in the blues arena. He was the lead guitarist for The Kinsey Report, the band he played in with his brothers Ralph and Kenneth. Kinsey was heavily inspired by reggae music and toured extensively with both Bob Marley and the Wailers and as part of The Wailers Band. In 2020, Kinsey, along with The Wailers Band, won a Grammy for Best Reggae Album.



W.C. Clark (Wesley Curley Clark)

11-16-69 / 03-01-24

W.C. Clark was born and raised singing gospel in Austin, Texas. In the late 60s he joined the Joe Tex Band, an R&B group and toured outside of Austin. When the band came back through town he fell back in love with the R&B scene there and cemented himself as the "Godfather of Austin Blues" by shepherding a new generation of Austin musicians. As part of the W.C. Clark Blues Revue, Clark played with legends like James Brown, B.B. King, Elvin Bishop and Jimmie Vaughan and helped teach future stars like Charlie and Will Sexton.



Rhett Tyler

February 11, 1952 - March 12, 2024

Rhett Tyler was born in San Antonio, Texas and attended both Mannes College of Music and Berkley School of Music in the 70s. In the mid-80s, he formed the power trio, Early Warning, with whom he recorded and released three CDs. Tyler worked with a range of notable artists on numerous projects both live and in the studio, such as Johnny Winter, Lonnie Brooks, Elvin Bishop, Delbert McClinton, and John Hammond, to name a few. He opened for B.B. King's final performance at the Palace Theatre in Albany, NY.



Paul Nelson

Died 03-10-24

Paul Nelson was born in New York City (Date Unknown), raised in Connecticut, and attended Berklee School of Music. He is an American Grammy award winning blues and rock guitarist, arranger, record producer, mentor and songwriter. A Blues Music Award winner for Best Rock Album and a Blues Foundation's "Keep The Blues Alive Award" winner, he was inducted into the Blues Hall of Fame. Renowned for his collaborations with Buddy Guy, Eric Clapton, the Allman Brothers and over 20 years with the late Johnny Winter. Nelson has performed on stages throughout the world, multiple TV shows and award winning documentaries and was a guest performer on countless recordings.

Gregory W. Hogg Tribute



Gregory W. Hogg

03-16-52 – 02-09-24

Gregory W. Hogg, Gordonville, PA, graduated from Octorara High School class of 1970 and then attended Lebanon Valley College. He worked as an equipment operator for the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation for 30 years, retiring in 2001. Greg served several years on the board of the Central PA Blues Society as a Member-at-Large and as International Blues Challenge Committee Chairperson. He frequently wrote newsletter articles, provided numerous photos for the Blues News and the BSCP website, shared information about blues musicians and events by email and online, and attended numerous blues events locally and regionally.

BSCP SPRING SHOW

April 28, 2024 (music starts at 2 pm)

Champions @ 300 N. 2nd St, Highspire, PA

VANESSA COLLIER BAND



Vanessa Collier

(Excerpts from Vanessa Collier Bio on www.vanessacollier.com/bio)

"There's a young lady (Vanessa Collier) came onstage with me, I forget where I was, but she's playing an alto saxophone, and man, she was amazing."

Those are the words of Buddy Guy in a recent issue of American Blues Scene, describing an impromptu performance with Vanessa Collier on the Legendary Rhythm & Blues Cruise.

Like Buddy Guy, be prepared to be blown away by this master musician and multi-instrumentalist. Vanessa Collier weaves funk, soul, rock and blues into every powerful performance and she is downright impressive. With soulful vocals, searing saxophone and witty songwriting, she is becoming a legend in her own time.

Having first picked up the saxophone at the age of nine, Collier embarked on her road to recognition earning dual degrees in Performance and Music Production & Engineering graduating in 2013 from the prestigious Berklee College of Music. While still completing her degree, Collier landed a position touring with Joe Louis Walker for a year and a half before Joe encouraged her to strike out on her own.

Full of energy and enthusiasm, Collier tours nationally and internationally, particularly in Europe. In 2017 she was selected as the most popular Briggs Farm Festival act. An inspiration for young people, she is active with Blues in the Schools programs

Collier earned First Place award for lyrics in

the International Songwriting Competition; she has released four critically acclaimed albums that spent months on the charts.

Vanessa Collier is a 3-time 2024 Blues Music Awards (BMAs) nominee: "Horn Player of the Year", "Contemporary Blues Female Artist of the Year", and "B.B. King Entertainer of the Year". This gives her a total of 12 BMA nominations since 2017. She is already a 3-time BMA winner, with two BMAs for "Horn Player of the Year" and a third BMA for "Contemporary Blues Female Artist of the Year."

Collier is the 2022 and 2023 Blues Blast Award Winner for "Horn Player of the Year." Early in her career, she won the Jammingest Pro Award bestowed by the Legendary Rhythm & Blues Breaker, Best of 2014 Blues Breaker on Dan Aykroyd's BluesMobile.

Check out Vanessa Collier and her band on YouTube and on her website www.vanessacollier.com.

Slim and the Perkolators

Slim and the Perkolators has two front men who both sing, write and produce. Remarkably, both are members of the Pennsylvania Blues Hall of Fame, as is the band Slim and the Perkolators.

Born and raised just outside of Philadelphia, Derek "Harmonica Slim" Matteson started his blues journey at the age of 24 strongly influenced by local masters Steve Guyger and Mikey Junior. Hearing tunes by Little Walter, Sonny Boy Williamson, and Junior Wells brought Slim home to the blues. He is now the youngest member of the Pennsylvania Blues Hall of Fame.

Fellow bandmember and experienced guitarist, Tim "The Perkolator" Perks, grew up in England in the sixties, introduced to blues via John Mayall's *Beano* album with Eric Clapton.

He credits a long list of influences, among them B.B., Freddie and Albert King, T Bone Walker, Little Walter, Junior Wells, James Cotton, Robert Nighthawk and the great Magic Sam. He loves different styles of blues and New Orleans music and "good old rock and roll". Tim Perks was inducted into the Pennsylvania Blues Hall of Fame in 2016.

The heart of the band is Gordon Grottenthaler on drums. He played for many years with Bluestime. Prior to that he was with the Duke Robillard Band and Doug Deming and the Jewel Tones. He has toured extensively in the U.S. and overseas. Tom Donovan provides background vocals and bass. He has toured with many different bands, such as Serial Killers and Throttle over the years, although not all in the blues idiom.

Slim and the Perkolators!, their 2019 debut album, received high praise in the review by John Mitchell for Blue Blast Magazine. The CD was nominated for a Blues Blast Music award.

Slim and the Perkolators represented Central Delaware Blues Society in the 2020 International Blues Challenge in Memphis. They advanced to the semifinals where they lost to the eventual winners of the competition, Hirojo Trio.

They have toured Florida and played the Blues Bash at the Ranch Festival and the Camping with the Blues Festival in Brooksville, Fl. They have also played many of this areas Blues festivals as listed on slimandtheperkolators.com.



Tim Perks, Gordon Grottenthaler, Derek Matteson, Tom Donovan

MEET YOUR BOARD MEMBERS: Kathryn Gregoire

by Hannah Sherman



What is your background?

I was born and raised in South Dakota, along with 8 younger brothers and sisters. After living as an adult in Nashville, San Francisco and Berkely, I moved to PA, eventually ending up in Lancaster, raising my daughter, Michelle, working in child protective services and then became a social work professor and administrator at Millersville University.

What is one thing people don't know about you?

That I was once a Deputy Coroner. When I was living in Luzerne County (PA) in the 70's and working as the director of Project Outreach, a Mental Health program, I was appointed as a Deputy Coroner and was the principal investigator for all suicides, doing psychological autopsies. I learned a lot from the experience.

What are your early experiences with music?

My Mom, who grew up on a farm in South Dakota, was an excellent piano player. Music in the house, especially ragtime and boogie-woogie, is one of my favorite childhood memories. I took lessons off and on but couldn't come close to playing like her. I loved music so much that when it was time to pick my confirmation name, I choose Cecelia because St. Cecelia is the patron saint of music. I heard music mostly on the radio, especially station KOMA out of Omaha, which I could do every Saturday while I was ironing the clothes for the 11 of us. Wasn't crazy about my assigned chore but I loved being able to listen to music.

I also loved dancing to it. We had our own local TV Station, Channel 12, which had a small town version of American Bandstand. In 9th grade, my partner, Harvey Liedle, and I entered the Bandstand dance contest. He stood there all cool-like and twirled me around. We went home with first place prize – a case of "pop". I live by the motto, "When Troubles Trouble You, All You Gotta Do is Dance."

With the blues?

I've always loved blues. Living in Nashville gave me the opportunity to hear musicians like Janis Joplin, who really moved me. I also was crazy about Lightnin' Hopkins and just missed seeing him in Colorado when he cancelled his show for health reasons. I still feel the disappointment!

People sometimes wonder about my email moniker: bluesmunga. It refers to the two loves of my life - I am a blues grandmother. As an infant, my oldest grandson, Jackson, called me "munga" and it stuck.

I am very grateful to have learned about the Blues Society of PA from Jimmy "Blue" Phipps of the Blue Light Special Band. I came across my 2006 BSCP Membership Card the other day so I know I have been attending events and the jam for a while but work got in the way of me doing it as much as I wanted.

When I got ready to retire, one of my two main motivations was to be able to participate in the blues society and to go to blues festivals. The other motivation was to be able to see my family more. I also love walking trails and being in book clubs.

What is your favorite thing about the blues society?

My favorite thing is being able to spend time with so many people who share my passion for blues. The society has a family feel to it – guess our blood runs blue. People are so loyal, caring, supportive and welcoming. I love our jams and events with dedicated, talented musicians and the opportunity to dance all we want. I also love our Board of Directors, one of the hardest working dedicated boards around.

What do you see as the future for the blues society?

BSCP has a strong foundation based on the previous 25 years of hard work and enthusiasm of members. I see the BSCP as continuing to support the blues and blues musicians through the jam, events, and educational activities. I think collaborating with other likeminded organizations and people is strengthening our ability to carry out our mission to honor and share the blues.

Michael Heiman - A Match Made in Heaven: There I was at the Thursday night Champion's jam with a woman I did not know well, Professor Kathryn Gregoire, sitting at the table behind me, and Buster at his usual roost next to me. Kathy was explaining that she recently retired from serving as Chair of the Dept. of Social Work at Millersville University and now had time to pursue her true love of the Blues and she wondered if she could volunteer, perhaps working in the kitchen at events. Buster, literally on the other hand, had been complaining that the Blues Society was still looking for a new President and was at a loss for candidates. Aware of the duties of academic chair ship and the skill and patience required to settle ruffled egos and navigate diverse agendas, it was an Ahaa moment, and I introduced the two. The rest became history!

Sallie Bengtson - The Blues Society of Central PA is so fortunate to have the leadership of Kathy Gregoire. She is tireless in all of her efforts for the organization. Her dedication and commitment to the music and the membership is second only to her warmth and kindness.

Mike Knott - Without Kathy the Blues Society of Central Pa. wouldn't be what it is today. Period! How far we've come and what we've accomplished is directly related to her vision and guidance. Rivals don't exist. We are extremely fortunate to have her as our president.



BSCP MOM I PICNIC TO BE HELD SUNDAY, MAY 26, 2024

By Mike Easton

This year's BSCP Mom I picnic will feature some new faces and new lineups. We are going back to the early days of the picnic by having both gigging and pick up bands perform. I have played in both settings throughout the years at the picnic. Some of the longtime jammers have band leader skills but may not be in a working band right now. This gives them the opportunity to entertain at the picnic. Several well-known bands have prior commitments so can't perform this year but we look forward to seeing them in the future.

The line up this year starts with the

core members of the Humblers. The blues trio "Box of Nails" features Dr. Mo, Danny Kreiger and Mike Easton at 1 pm. Up at 2 pm in the 2nd set is longtime jammer Greg Hoover with "Ol'G and the Moneymakers." 3 pm welcomes back Lancaster based blues band "Blues on the Loose" with Lewy Bechtold leading on harp and vocals. 4 pm has another blues based band, "Bobby Gentilo Band." 5 pm has the longest running blues act in Central PA coming back to bring it on back. "Nate Myers and the Aces." The picnic closes out at 6 pm with the upbeat blues and New Orleans sound of "Tom Lowry Blues Band." Tom

has played the picnic numerous times as a sideman but I think this is his first time that he is fronting his own band.

The picnic will take place Memorial weekend, Sunday, May 26, at the Mechanicsburg Club picnic grounds. Grounds open at noon. Food will be ready at 2 pm. Dessert donations will be appreciated. Hannah Sherman oversees the kitchen. Please contact her at (443) 617-6693 if you wish to volunteer. Mike Easton is coordinating the bands and Gary "Rocky" Rothrock is heading up the sound system.

Blues, Snow, and Soul: The Epic Journey to the IBC

By Alex Lee Warner

The stage was set, and the excitement palpable as my Nashville bandmates and I geared up for the International Blues Challenge (IBC) in Memphis, Tennessee. The journey was not just a musical expedition; it was an adventure filled with unexpected twists and turns, camaraderie, and, of course, soul-stirring blues.

Kicking off our adventure on a high note, our band, Alex Warner and Soul Sunrise, unleashed our musical prowess at Papa Turney's Juke Joint. With Hayden Everding's vocals and harmonica, Eli Dranow's electrifying keys, Brandon "BB" Nelson's powerhouse drumming, Luke Jakubik's bass lines, and my lead guitar, the audience was begging for more in Nashville.

But Mother Nature had other plans. An impending snowstorm threatened to derail our journey, leaving us snowed in for two unexpected days. Yet, undeterred, we seized the opportunity to explore Nashville, visiting iconic spots like Gruhn's Guitars and sharing stories over dinner with fellow local musician Ben Brandt and Joanne Iskandarani who were also visiting Nashville.

Wednesday night another obstacle emerged. A busted sprinkler system forced us to relocate to another building due

to the rooms being flooded. But nothing could dampen our spirits as we embarked on the next leg of their adventure heading to Memphis.

Arriving in Memphis amidst freezing rain and snow-covered streets, we dove headfirst into the blues scene. At the Blues Cafe, we indulged in delicious Southern cuisine and jammed with Youth Challengers from around the globe, forming bonds that transcended borders. We met peers from Croatia to Washington State. Also running into a familiar face from the BSCP 2022 Christmas Party, I got to catch up with King Solmon Hicks.

Friday was filled with enriching workshops and memorable encounters, including a chance to jam with Mr. Sipp at the Rum Boogie Café, talk with fellow youth musicians and build lasting relationships across the US.

Alfred's On Beale St was packed to the brim with blues enthusiasts. Our band brought the blues live and loud! Giving a solid performance, we opened on stage with a powerful jam, unleashing our raw talent, leaving an indelible mark on the audience. Our performance was a testament to our passion for the blues and the unwavering support of the Blues Society of Central PA.

Saturday our band ventured to the Ground Zero Blues Club for the Youth Open Jam session in Mississippi. Surrounded by peers from across the country, we shared stories, swapped licks, and soaked in the essence of the blues.

A surprise visit from Big A - Anthony Sherrod - added an extra layer of excitement to their final day, while encountering young prodigies like 8-year-old drummer Beckum reminded us of the blues' enduring legacy.

As we bid farewell to Memphis and headed back to Nashville, then eventually for me back to York, Pennsylvania, these are the memories and an amazing experience that would last a lifetime for all of us. Our journey to the International Blues Challenge was more than just a competition; it was a celebration of music, friendship, and the universal language of the blues.

Thank you again for the love and support during this journey by encouraging me to achieve my dreams and believing in me. I hope to continue making the blues live on and strive to always inspire new people to grow and love the blues. Keep the blues alive!"

In Case You Missed It!

International Blues Challenge Photos by Bambi Warner



Beale Street



Sunset Soul @IBC



King Solomon Hicks & Alex



Anthony "Big A" Sherrod

PEIDMONT BLUES Photos by Kathryn Gregoire, Mike Heiman, Joe Kambic



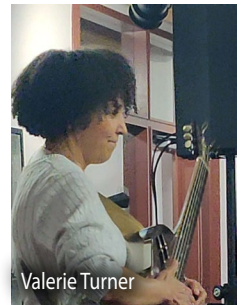
Master Class



Valerie and Benedict Turner



Audience



Valerie Turner

Winter Show: Barrelhouse Blues Photos by Kathryn Gregoire, Larry Fogelson



Charlie Richner



Barrelhouse Blues



John McGovern



Audience

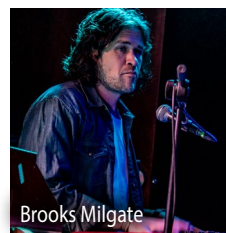
Winter Show: Chris O'Leary Band Photos by Larry Fogelson



Chris O'Leary Band



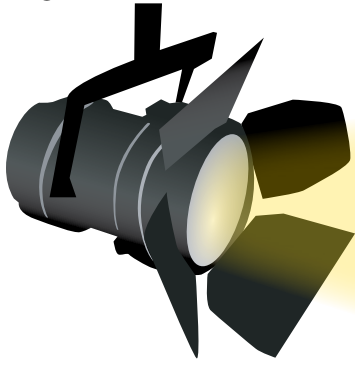
Chris O'Leary



Brooks Milgate



Audience



In the Spotlight...

GREG HOOVER



By Hannah Sherman



Describing himself as a late starter, Greg didn't start playing guitar until his late 30's. Growing up in Hershey in a non-musical family, he got his first taste in music listening to his dad's favorites, Willie Nelson and Ramsey Lewis. He says, "In the late 70's my older brother had a killer hi-fi system in the basement and a lot of albums. He let me play them because I respected the equipment. I was heartbroken when he moved and took it with him, so I saved up for my own killer hi-fi. It was at that time I discovered my favorite band, the Rolling Stones."

After marriage and kids, he and his wife, Sheila, thought it would be a good idea for their son, Dane, to take guitar lessons when he was about eleven. Greg found himself playing with Dane's guitar; tuning it and watching instruction videos of "Smoke on the Water" and Van Halen's "You Really Got Me" and the next thing he knew forty-five minutes had passed. Since Dane at the time was more interested in other things, and they paid for the lessons in advance, Sheila pushed Greg into finishing out the month, even though Greg thought he was too old to learn.

After starting lessons, he was influenced by AC/DC but quickly moved to the blues and the three Kings, B.B., Albert and Freddie. He saw B.B. at the Hershey Theater toward the end of his career. His other favorite concerts have been seeing Tab Benoit, Santana and the Rolling Stones (three times). He's looking forward to seeing them again this June with the whole family: Sheila, Dane, and his daughter, Rachel, who is flying in from California and has sung at our jam before!

Living in downtown Hershey, Greg often sits outside on his patio and plays his guitar. One evening when the acapella group, Pentatonix, were performing at the stadium, a neighbor who was listening to the concert from a block away

approached and said, "I was wondering why Pentatonix were playing with a slide guitar!" His neighbor is the one who told him about the BSCP jam.

At the end of that year, Greg made a New Year's resolution to put himself in uncomfortable situations. It took him until April before he made his way to Champions, and with Marianna hosting and being so welcoming, he played in two sets, one with Rocky and Gordy. He says, "I didn't think - I just played." Eventually, he realized if he wanted to play songs he wanted to play, he would have to sing. Another uncomfortable situation conquered!

Greg's favorite thing about BSCP: "It creates an opportunity for musicians to meet other musicians and develop relationships as well as fostering an environment for people to play and enjoy live music. I've met so many great people through the Blues Society and formed some valuable friendships, (shout out to George, Jamie, Chris, Buster & Dot and many more!). I played on gigs with Don Johnson, (including Tom Lowry) several times.

I must mention Daniel Mendez! Thanks to blues jam I have met one of my best friends. We worked together so much during Covid and he helped me become the player I am and continues to help me grow as a musician. Eventually, I played with him and the Mendez Brothers (and still do). There's nothing better than playing in front of people and that helped me so much!

Mike Easton has given me an opportunity to get a band together for the Mom I picnic. I've always wanted to have my own band. In a "tip of the hat" to BB King where he refers to himself in

song as "Ol' B", I'm calling my band "Ol' G and the Moneymakers!"

George Bressler - Greg Hoover. As close as the BSCP gets to having an actual rock star. Women swoon. Men tremble in fear. Other guitar players just stare and point. When the affable Mr. Hoover takes the stage, the dance floor is instantly packed. His songs are always upbeat, lively and very well put together. Greg is also a hopeless gearhead and always has the coolest guitars and amps. Seriously, he is one of my closest friends at the blues jam -along with Rocky.

Marianna Schaffer - Greg is one of those people who makes the jam better by being there. He's a popular set leader, always prepared to lead his team into a new musical experience. Already a tasteful guitar player, his playing and singing has increased to a new level since playing at the jam over the last few years. Always ready with a smile, Greg has befriended both seasoned and new players in a way that makes everyone feel welcome and valued. I love it when I get to play bass with Greg!

Rocky Rothrock - It has been a lot of fun watching Greg at the jam over the past few years. He has become a confident set leader with a good voice and a solid guitar player who always delivers a great set. Greg had wonderful friends teaching him in Andy Alonso and Daniel Mendez and always brings a positive attitude and kindness to the stage. He picks cool songs to play, too!

Kathryn Gregoire - Greg recently celebrated his birthday at the Thursday Night Blues Jam. His biggest supporter, his wife, Shelia, had a special cake made for him which she brought to the jam to share with everyone. What a great cake!



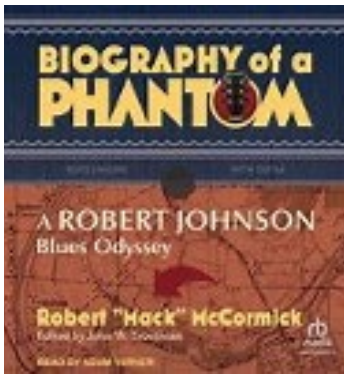
Greg with the Mendez brothers



BLUES BOOK CORNER

By Kathryn Gregoire

Biography of a PHANTOM: A Robert Johnson Blues Odyssey



by Robert "Mack" McCormick. Edited by John W. Troutman. Published by Smithsonian 2023 (195 pages)

With the renewed interest in the blues in the '60s, curiosity rose about Robert Johnson, the song writing guitar legend from Mississippi who died so young and whom little was known about.

The phantom of Robert Johnson drove McCormick to conduct fieldwork and write about him in the early 1970s. However, he was never able to bring himself to take the materials to publication during his lifetime. That job was done 50 years later after McCormick's death by John Troutman.

The interest in Robert Johnson was renewed again in the 90s with the release of *Robert Johnson: The Complete Recordings in late 1990*. The 41 songs were recorded in two sessions for the American Record Company during 1936 and 1937, including songs such as "Kind Hearted Woman Blues," "Come On in My Kitchen," "Terraplane Blues," and "Hellhound on My Trail." The album sold more than 1 million copies and won a Grammy Award in 1991 for "Best Historical Album." It was reissued in 2011.

Blues aficionados continue to want to know who Robert Johnson is, this legend in the blues world, and why did Robert McCormick (1930-

2015) not publish his extensive research on Johnson during his lifetime?

The Biography of a PHANTOM becomes two stories wrapped up into one. First is a carefully detailed description of what McCormick learned about Robert Johnson during his extensive journey through the South as he searched for the family, friends, and acquaintances of a man who died 30 years prior after living a short life of 27 years.

McCormick is gifted at drawing pictures of places and people on his journey with his highly visual words. His ability to connect with people who knew or knew about Johnson was honed from his years of fieldwork experience. One particularly touching scene was when he drew out the memories of friends and families by playing some of Robert Johnson's records.

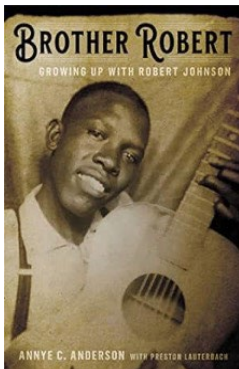
Throughout the journey McCormick shares extensive information with the reader about the history and the current events of the areas he visits and the people he meets and his interactions with them. John Troutman's analyses in the Introduction and the Afterward add another layer of understanding of Robert Johnson and the family and communities he lived in.

The second story is about musicologist

Robert "Mack" McCormick who was obsessed with learning about early blues singers, and he was not alone in this passion. He was a highly regarded member of the "Blues Mafia," formed in the 1950s by individuals, exclusively white males, who researched and wrote about those musicians whom they considered to be authentic bluesmen from the Delta region. The book illustrates some of the perils of obsessive collecting of information, driven to learn more.

McCormick's journey was a long one with his initial travels focused on just trying to find out where Johnson was born and raised. McCormick faced many personal challenges when seeking information about early blues singers and their stories, including poverty and his bipolar disorder. He was keenly aware of racial and cultural differences as he carefully approached and interacted with the people he interviewed.

The book also explores some of the interaction between the Blues Mafia, the music industry, and the family of Robert Johnson, addressing issues of ownership and profit making. This has been a familiar theme with the blues artists that the book club members have read about. The battles over family photographs are particularly poignant.



Brother Robert: Growing up with Robert Johnson

by Annye C. Anderson with Preston Lauterbach 2020

(150 pages)

So many people have written about Robert Johnson, but this author has a unique perspective, framing Robert Johnson by his place

in his family and community. Annye Anderson shares her memories of Robert that she made while she was growing up until his disturbing and untimely death at age 27. The writing is clear and thoughtful, full of vivid descriptions of their many relatives and friends. She transforms Robert Johnson from a mythical creature to the guy next door.

Annye Anderson's father was married to Robert Johnson's Mother; they were step-siblings. As Annye describes their relationship in the opening of Chapter 1: "I called him Brother Robert. He called me Baby Sis or Little Girl. We weren't blood. We were family." They met when

she was a toddler and he was 18 years old.

With Johnson's life being short-lived, much of the book is dedicated to her life after he died. She went to college in Washington, D.C. and lived in different communities, eventually calling Amherst, Massachusetts home. She kept in contact with her different siblings and shares their frustrating journeys as they were exploited for Robert Johnson's music and story. Robert Johnson's half-sister, Carrie, was his legal heir. When Carrie died, she left Robert's legacy to Annye, who then had to deal with all the legal struggles. Annye Anderson wrote this book while in her early 90's. She wanted the story of her family told before she passed.

The book club enjoyed learning more about the enigmatic Robert Johnson and hearing two songs of his sung and played by Hank Imhoff: "Kind Hearted Woman Blues" and "Sweet Home Chicago."

SAVE THE DATES

Spring Show – 04/28/24

The Vanessa Collier Band
w/ Slim & the Perkolorators

Mom I Picnic – 05/26/24

Bag O' Nails, Ol' G & the Moneymakers,
Blues On the Loose, Bobby Gentilo Band, Nate
Myers & the Aces, Tom Lowry Blues Band

Mississippi Railroad Show – 07/14/24

Mark "Muleman" Massey w/ The Cornlickers

Fall Show – 09/22/24

The Cinelli Brothers w/ Tom Lowry Blues Band

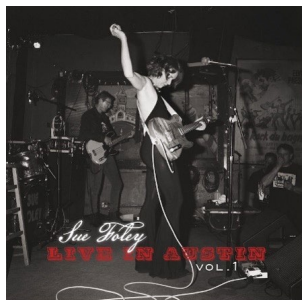
Christmas Party – 12/01/24

Darrell Nulisch Band

Please visit our website @
<http://www.bsclubblues.com/news&events.html>
for further information when artists are
confirmed and for details on each function

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



Sue Foley
Live in Austin Vol. 1
 (Stony Plain Records)

"Blues is the soul of music. Period." That's how Sue Foley described the music in 1993, in a brief video remembrance of her attraction to the blues and her arrival in Austin, Texas, from Canada a few years earlier.

Since then, Foley has made her mark on the blues world with fiery guitar work, tough vocals, plus a sensitivity and passion for the blues and roots music that livens every note.

Foley is a multiple award-winning singer/songwriter/guitarist who's been featured on dozens of her own and other albums and tours extensively, but also writes about the blues, teaches guitar, and brings to her music an understanding of its rich history.

All of that has led to her latest album, *Live in Austin Vol. 1*, as she pulls together eleven original songs and covers in a sparkling live performance that illustrates the bright arc of her musical career. Recorded live at Austin's Continental Club last May, Foley gives us some first-ever live recordings of early hits, plus some sharp covers.

Foley's band here is made up of her usual mates, Corey Keller on drums and Jon Penner on bass, with the stellar addition of Austin guitarist Derek O'Brien, who coproduced Foley's first two albums.

For the session opener, Foley reaches back into her 2006 album of the same name for the auto-erotic, hard-driving "New Used Car," with typically tough solos, followed by another original, the equally ferocious "Walkin' Home."

"Highwayside" has a country-rock twang, but Foley's sensuous take on Howlin' Wolf's "Howlin' For My Darlin'" puts her squarely back into a historic blues vein as she calls out a fiery solo by guitarist Derek O'Brien. Her "Queen Bee" is a smoothly honeyed version of the Sim Harpo swamp classic, "King Bee."

The instrumental "Hooked on Love (Lucky Lou)" lets Foley stretch out on a guitar showcase rich with tone and notes wound tightly for maximum pleasure. Her version of Bob Dylan's "Positively 4th Street" replaces his sharp-edged vocals with a slightly softer lyrical take and elegant guitar solo.

Foley moves back into deep blues history with another cover — the Memphis Minnie chestnut, "Me and My Chauffeur Blues," which could easily have been paired with the attitude of the opener, "New Used Car" as its driving wheel. The sultry shuffle of Foley's original "Better" is another sensual take — "I will love you better than your other girls can..."

The set closer is a strong cover of Cheap Trick's '70s rocker, "High Roller," as Foley leaves us breathless with its furious pacing.

This terrific live album is a capsule version of Sue Foley's wide-ranging talents that have brought her to her current spot — just sittin' on top of the world of blues music. Let's hope volume two isn't far behind.



Christone "Kingfish" Ingram
Live in London
 (Alligator Records)

As if it's not enough to create a magnificent album of live blues, Christone "Kingfish" Ingram doubles your pleasure here with, what else, a double album overflowing with passionate music from this exciting young guitar slinger.

It's just been four years since the young Kingfish (he's now 24) exploded on the blues scene from his hometown of Clarksdale, Miss., with his 2019 debut album, *Kingfish*, and then his second 2021 effort, *662*. That album won the GRAMMY Award for Best Contemporary Blues Album, won the Blues Music Award for Best Blues Album, and topped both the DownBeat Critics' Poll and the Living Blues Critics' Poll. Since his debut, Kingfish has been nominated for and won 10 Blues Music Awards. He's also won 11 Living Blues Awards.

Since then, he's been appearing at concerts and festivals worldwide. I saw him on one of his blues cruise appearances (that's the Legendary Rhythm & Blues Cruise, a floating festival not to be missed), and he's even more impressive in person. This live session, recorded for an SRO crowd at The Garage in London, gets you as close as possible to that exhilarating experience where artist and crowd join in a musical celebration.

On one hand, there's a lot of great music on these 17 tracks that I could describe. On the other hand (that other hand can be so annoying!), it's very easy to reduce my workload and say that they are uniformly full of dazzling guitar, sharp lyrics, and the enthusiasm of a live concert. So here's a sample.

The session begins with what has become a signature tune, "She Calls Me Kingfish." It opens with a haunting keyboard overture, then turns into a fiery guitar exercise that suddenly eases into a slow-burning interlude before resuming its wicked pace.

The Kingfish uses this concert format to show off his considerable guitar wizardry, with lengthy tracks that give him the freedom to showcase several styles within one extended song, just like "She Calls Me Kingfish." With the crisp support of his road band — keyboardist Deshawn Alexander, bassist Paul Rogers, and drummer Christopher Black — Kingfish can offer a concert within a concert. It's a powerhouse of a live set.

There are a multitude of guitar highlights, and one of the finest comes about a third of the way in

— the slow-burning fire of Kingfish's newly written instrumental, "Mississippi Night," ten minutes of scorching blues that leaves no note unburned.

There are two masterful acoustic tracks that dip into the deep blues of "Been Here Before" and the autobiographical "Something in the Dirt" about growing up in Clarksdale. The emphasis on vocals, here and throughout, demonstrate further maturity from this young bluesman.

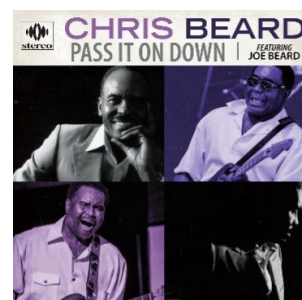
Pacing is everything in a concert, and not every song is designed to light your fire. "You're Already Gone" is a remorseful ballad with a tasty B3 solo and a dramatic pause midway, that eventually fades gently into the night. "Outside of This Town" is another long-play tough burner with guitar solos filled with electricity.

The closer is "Long Distance Woman," an astonishing 12-minute, two-part concerto that gives the first part to an elegant piano solo from Alexander that morphs into a funky B3 ride that gives way in the second part to furious Kingfish guitar and sharp lyrics. (Spoiler alert: The first part is not included on the LP version of the release.)

That's just a sample of the fine music here. It's all equally worth your while, and as close to a concert experience as you're likely to get until you see Kingfish in person. You should do both as soon as you can.

Kingfish has been called the future of the blues, probably because he's just getting under way, and expected to keep up the good work. But the good news is that the future is now, as this impressive performance demonstrates, so you don't have to wait.

Even more good news: The blues is here to stay.



Chris Beard
Pass It On Down
 (Blue Heart Records)

Blues music has a rich history that's full of great music and musicians.

It has a future, too, but sometimes it's hard to know where this classical American music will go next.

Chris Beard's strong new album *Pass It On Down* gives us a clear-eyed look at the music from both sides now — where the music has been and where it just might be going.

Chris is the son of veteran Rochester, N.Y., bluesman Joe Beard, who grew up on Beale Street in the 1950s. With family friends like Matt "Guitar" Murphy and Buddy Guy, it didn't take long for the younger Beard to learn to love and play the blues. With years of club work on his resume, Chris released his debut recording, "Barwalkin'," in 1998, which earned him a W.C. Handy nomination as the Best New Blues Artist.

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

Pass It On Down is his seventh album since then, each one increasing his foothold in the blues, as well as moving him in his own musical direction. This latest session includes his father, in a tribute to his roots, as he also works his way into a bluesy future.

Chris gets plenty of help along the way from his band — guitarist Brother Wilson and Marvin Parker on bass, drummer Carlton Campbell, keyboardists John Tucker and Jonathan Curry with special guest appearances by Johnny Rawls, Mary Ellen Haden, Richard Rodolph, Kenny Neal and his band. Nine of the ten tracks are originals by Beard and include previously released, remixed and remastered songs, plus one cover. This is his debut on Blue Heart Records.

The album opener is a funky-tough “Let The Chips Fall,” kicking in with drums and ripped with a horn attack followed by fierce guitar riffs — it’s a strong statement that this music is now his own, and let the chips fall where they may. “One More Cry For Love” follows, slowing the tempo but not the contemporary mood. “Big Girl” rides a steady beat of frustration over a woman so near but yet so far.

The moving title track pairs father and son Beard in a heartfelt blues-filled duet with a plea to keep the music flowing — to “pass it on down.” That’s followed by Chris returning with the powerful slow-blues “House Of Shame.” A heady organ intro pushes “When Love Comes Knocking” into another funk-filled treat. Chris Beard traveled to Baton Rouge to record the torchy “Son I Never Knew,” that turns blues into soulful sorrow.

“Keeps Me Believing” is a gentle and powerfully soulful love song, followed by the upbeat invitation to dance “Who Do You Think You’re Foolin.” Beard goes down home for the closer, with gritty guitar work and vocals that bite on “Bitter Baby.”

Blues giant Willie Dixon was fond of the phrase, “The blues are the roots, the rest are the fruits.” Chris Beard’s solid efforts here dig deep for the roots and provide a tasty sample of the fruits. It’s an album well worth enjoying for all of its musical rewards.



Johnny Rawls
Walking Heart Attack
 (Catfood Records)

Johnny Rawls is a soul survivor.

There aren’t too many soul men left who make Rawls’ kind of music — sensuous, soulful music, richly flavored by the blues.

He’s been making his music for more than 50 years, after learning to play guitar in his teens. Rawls’ schoolteacher in Purvis, Miss., got him gigs backing musicians who were touring the area, such as Z. Z. Hill and Joe Tex. In the mid-1970s, Rawls joined soul great O. V. Wright’s band, later became his music director

and played with him until Wright’s death in 1980. The band then continued as the Ace of Spades Band for another 13 years.

Rawls’ career since then is the stuff from which legends are born: The Blues Music Awards, Blues Blast Awards, Living Blues Awards, and the W. C. Handy Awards have all acknowledged Rawls with multiple awards and nominations, including Soul Blues Album of the Year and Soul Blues Artist of the Year. Living Blues magazine described him as a “soul-blues renaissance man” when he was featured on the cover in 2002. Three of his albums have made the DownBeat Magazine Critics’ Choice Best of the Year List. He is on two markers along the Mississippi Blues Trail — one in Hattiesburg, Miss., and another, of all places, at Marker 110 in Rockland, Maine, testifying to the migration of blues from Mississippi to Maine. Rawls’ first recorded with other musicians, but his first solo album, *Here We Go*, was released in 1996, and since then he’s released an album almost every year.

For his latest session, Rawls is backed by his regular group, The Rays: Johnny McGhee — guitar; Bob Trenchard (he’s head of Catfood Records and wrote a pair of songs here with Rawls) — bass; Richy Puga — drums; Dan Ferguson — keyboards; Andy Roman — sax solos; Mike Middleton — trumpet; Nick Flood — baritone/tenor/alto sax; Frank Otero — trombone; with Jon Olazabal — percussion; and backing vocals by Janelle Thompson and Shakara Weston.

Of course, none of that matters much unless you actually sound good. And Johnny Rawls sounds just great.

That becomes pretty obvious as the album *Walking Heart Attack* opens crisply to horns and backup singers with the song, “Walking Heart Attack,” a funky workout that makes a powerful opening statement. “Trying to Live My Life Without You” is a tribute to Otis Clay, the late soul legend, with whom Rawls recorded 2014’s “Soul Brothers.” “Free” is a Rawls original with gospel undertones and a pleading vocal. “Tell Me the Truth” turns to the blues for its driving wheel, sparked by crackling horns.

“Born All Over” is gloriously pure soul, as Rawls delivers musical testimony from the O.V. Wright songbook, from which he draws a song for every album. “Heal Me” is more strong soul with an orchestral sound punched along by some eloquent B3. A pair of songs by Rawls and Trenchard follows, the horn-driven, easy-swinging rhythms of “One More Sin,” — “If loving you is a sin then I ask for forgiveness again and again...,” with that B3 romping again. Then a soulful vocal take advances “Lies” as one of the album’s strongest cuts.

In what seems an unusual cover choice for a lifelong soulman, Rawls turns Bruce Springsteen’s mythic “Hungry Heart” into a brightly rhythmic bit of soul. The closer “Mississippi Dreams,” is another Trenchard original that reaches back home for Rawls in a sentimental journey spiced with a soaring sax solo.

It makes for a perfect ending to an elegantly soulful journey, at least for this thoroughly enjoyable album. Rawls sounds like he’s got a lot more soul to give. I know I’ll be waiting.



BLUES AIRWAVES

WPFW 89.3, Washington D.C.,
 “Roots and Fruits”

w/ Bill Wax, Saturdays: 2:00pm – 4:00pm

WTMD 89.7 (Streaming at wtmd.org),
 Baltimore, “The Roadhouse”
 w/ Bob Sekinger. Saturdays: 6:00pm – 9:00pm

WXPB 90.5, Philadelphia,
 “The Blues Show”

w/ Jonny Meister, Saturdays:
 7:00pm – 12:00am

“The Blues Journey” with Greg Gaughan (aka Greg G) on Radio That Doesn’t Suck, Toronto, Canada, Saturday: 9am/3pm/9pm EST, early Sunday Morning” 3am EST or On Demand at www.rtds.ca.

Radio — Airwaves.co.uk/,
 Harrisburg, “The Music Club”
 w /DJ’Riff (Tory Gates),
 Fridays: 3:00pm- 6:00pm

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1 pm

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2 pm

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3 pm

Blues on the Loose

4 pm

Bobby Gentilo Band

5 pm

**Nate Myers
& the Aces**

6 pm

**Tom Lowry
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