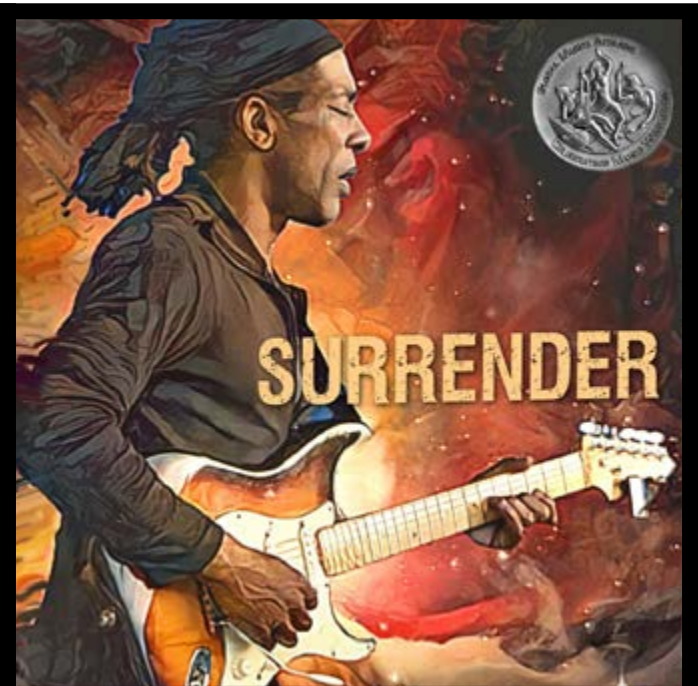




Blues Society of Central Pennsylvania
www.bscpblues.com

BLUES NEWS

Apr.- June 2021



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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.

From your President...

This is a week where everywhere I look people are reflecting on the one year anniversary of events that meant to them the beginning of the Covid 19 pandemic. With most tragedies in the U.S., Americans can read a date and most everyone knows what happened that day: 12/07/41, 11/22/63, 9/11/01 and 01/06/21.

There is no one designated date to mark the pandemic; it is more choosing a date that has meaning to you. For me, that date is the last time that BSCP had a live blues jam at Champions: March 12, 2020. The next day our PA Governor announced non-essential businesses would close down the following Monday. We knew change was upon us but no one anticipated the extent. "Those were the days, my friend; we thought they would never end."

The past year has been a whirlwind of uncertainty, a conglomeration of emotions and a rollercoaster of events. Like all things in life, the pandemic has been simultaneously devastating and rewarding, full of loss and grief and unanticipated satisfactions and joys, both for the world and for us as individuals. We have lost loved ones and we have had new people enter our lives.

We continue to face uncertainty, often swaying back and forth between despair and hope. BSCP Board of Directors is still not in a position to finalize plans for the future and won't be able to until businesses are operational and we know group gatherings are safe. We have, however, optimistically reserved the Mechanicsburg Picnic Grounds for Sunday, August 21. Mark your calendar!

Until then, we are fortunate to be part of a blues society that provides support for online musical and social activities. BSCP gives a big THANK YOU to all of the musicians who have participated in the virtual Thursday

Blues show, the volunteers who step up for the multitude of tasks, and all of the blues lovers out there who provide a receptive environment and encouragement as they support the musicians and the Blues Society of Central PA. See p. 8.

BSCP and Blue Heart Records officially released digital CD Backyard Blues and three bonus tracks on March 19, 2021. Betsie Brown and Sallie Bengtson, co-owners of Blue Heart Records, were already doing an amazing job of getting the music out to radio stations. All 16 songs have been getting airplay nationwide and worldwide.

Backyard Blues debuted on the Roots Music Review (RMR) Charts the week ending March 6, 2021, reaching #2 in Top PA Albums, #26 in the Top 50 Blues Albums nationwide; and #15 in Top 50 Contemporary Blues albums nationwide.

Backyard Blues is currently #2 in the RMR Top 50 PA Blues Albums, #12 Top 50 Blues Albums nationwide, and #8 Top 50 Contemporary Blues albums nationwide.

Very positive CD reviews are showing up in the U.S. and abroad. BSCP will be posting updates for airplay, ratings and reviews on BSCP Group on Facebook and on the BSCPblues.com website.



Celebrating the blues!
Kathryn Gregoire
bluesmunga@gmail.com

In Memoriam



Michael Fonfara

August 11, 1946 - January 8, 2021

Fonfara was a Canadian blues keyboardist who's been on the scene since the 60's, when he played with the rock artists Electric Flag and Rhinoceros. He was most known for his 70's work as the keyboardist for Lou Reed throughout the decade, including the album "Growing Up in Public," where he is credited as a co-writer and co-producer alongside Reed. Fonfara was also a longtime member of the Canadian blues group Downchild.



Sherman Robertson

October 27, 1948 - January 28, 2021

Born in Louisiana and raised in Texas, Robertson showed an early affinity for the guitar. After playing lead guitar for Bobby "Blue" Bland for six weeks in the 60's, Robertson formed his own band, Sherman Robertson and the Crosstown Blues Band. He took a break to raise a family before joining Clifton Chenier for five years, gaining him major recognition as his name spread. He was eventually signed to Atlantic Records by Mike Vernon before moving on to an independent label, resulting in his critically acclaimed album "Going Back Home."



Grady Gaines

May 14, 1934 - January 29, 2021

Born and raised in Texas, the Houston-based Gaines followed his state's creed and did everything big. He served as the band leader for such stars as Sam Cooke and Little Richard, forming the band The Upsetters with the latter, with Gaines as band leader and tenor sax in 1955. After a break in 1980, Gaines released three albums and played regularly at places like Etta's Lounge on Scott Street. In 2015, Gaines worked with Rod Evans on a biography about his life called "I've Been Out There," sharing stories of his time on the road.



Gene Taylor

July 2, 1952 - February 20, 2021

Taylor was a California-born blues pianist whose style harkened back to the boogie-blues greats. He spent time in Los Angeles playing with the likes of Big Joe Turner, T-Bone Walker and Ronnie Hawkins before joining the Blasters in the 80's. After the band broke up, Taylor played for the Fabulous Thunderbirds, officially joining the band from 1993 to 2006. During that time he moved to Austin, where he played for several artists and in various local clubs.



Louis Arzo "Gearshifter" Youngblood

February 14, 1953 - March 3, 2021

Based in Jackson, Mississippi, Youngblood's style ranged from country blues to soul-blues and everything in between. His great aunt taught him the rudiments of guitar, a skill he developed playing in informal bands during his time in the Job Corps. After establishing his musical talent, he began performing with artists such as Robert Robinson and Tommy Lee, spending the next few decades performing at clubs and festivals in the United States and Europe.

Blues Beat

By Jack Roberts



Blues on the Loose



Don Johnson Project

Jack Roberts here with some more blues news you can use. So let's catch up on what's happening - or about to happen - with local blues bands.

Mark Kormanik of **Little Buddy Rocks** checked in with us to say that Little Buddy is slowly finishing up their new CD. And slowly is no surprise, as the new CD will feature 13 or 14 songs - all written by Mark, aka Little Buddy, himself. It's being recorded by well-known Lancaster engineer and producer Steve Puffer. And the name for the CD? It's "Medo-T," which, Mark says, is "a different spelling for the drink Meadow Tea I get at yard sales and homemade tea by folks with water and herbs."

The title track to the CD is yours to check out on YouTube, as is another track, "Not Far From My Heart." So check 'em out already! As for the lineup, it's not new, although there are a couple of extras added to the mix: Mark will play guitar (or as he likes to say, "guitars"), Anton Marc will play bass, Tom Webb is on drums, and Ken McCoy will horn in on the sax. Joining the usual suspects will be Robin Church on trumpet and Michael Mink on keyboards.

As far as gigs go, Mark mentioned just one, but it's a whopper: opening for Walter Trout at The Sellersville Theater. When will that be? That's hard to say, as, according to Mark, it's been pushed back three times already due to the Corona virus.

Elsewhere, **Blues on the Loose** hasn't been playing at all either, but the boys continue to rehearse weekly, and with good reason. "We have developed a new show of blues material that we are anxious to share," BOTL front man Lewis Bechtold informed us in a recent email.

And where and when will they be sharing? "We have been asked by Rich Ruoff to perform in the upcoming Lancaster Roots & Blues Festival, October 2021," Bechtold said, noting that it "will be our fifth consecutive performance in this prestigious local music showcase." Five in a row - not bad, we must say. The band

has also is in talks about playing at Marion Court and Tellus 360 in Lancaster, Phantom Power in Millersville, and Conewago Pub in Manchester.

For the record, or the CD, the latest BOTL lineup is made up of Lewy Dean, aka Bechtold, vocals, frontman and harmonica; Doug Porter, double bass and Fender Jazz bass; Jay McElroy, guitar; and John Hickey, percussion.

This just in: **Shawan Rice** released a new album February 26, 2021, "Shawan and the Wonton: Live at the Whitaker Center," which was recorded by Steve Shaw of Ranch Studio in February 2020. In addition to Rice on vocals and guitar, the lineup includes Daniel Delaney on Drums, Nate Young on keyboards, and Ajay Shugart on bass. You can find the album on all major streaming and downloading platforms, including iTunes, Spotify, YouTube, Tidal, and Amazon Music. For more on Rice, check her out at ShawanRice.com or on Facebook.

A Harrisburg native, Rice now lives in New Orleans, but she'll be back in the area to play some shows, including Babes in Palmyra on Thursday, April 29th from 7-9 p.m.; The Ploughman Cider Taproom in Gettysburg on May 1st from 7-10 p.m.; and The Big Hill Cider Works in Gardners on Saturday, June 26th from 6-9 p.m.

Moving on there are some changes in the works for **The Don Johnson Project**. For starters, Don's longtime keyboard player, saxophonist, and backup singer, Dominic Iacavone, who also played bass lines in Don's trio, has retired from the music scene. As a result, Don no longer has a trio, just the quartet. And now the good news: Tom Lowry is joining the band.

Where can you hear the new lineup? Well, unless things change, they won't be out and about until May. Then you can hear them on Saturday, May 8th, at Kissel Hill Valley Farm/Bull's Head Public House at 645 E. Oregon Road in Lititz, and on Friday, May 28th, at 7 p.m. at Duke's Riverside in Wormleysburg.

June will be even busier for The Project, kicking off on Friday, the 4th, at 7 p.m. at The Vineyard at Hershey, with a show the following night, at Mount Gretna @ the Tabernacle, starting at 7:30, in the camp meeting area, at 3rd & Glossbrenner Ave. in Mount Gretna.

Then on Friday, June 18th, they'll be at the Blue Bird Inn at 2387 Cornwall Road in Cornwall - their first-ever appearance there. One night later they'll be back at Kissel Valley Farm/Bull's Head Public House on Oregon Road near Lititz.

Don has no recordings in the works at the moment, but there's good news about the song his band recorded last year for the "Joy to the Burg" CD. The CD raised \$29,000 to aid local churches and the homeless. Way to go Don and friends.

Sister Blue is looking busy the next couple of months. She'll be playing with Mark Furman at the Capri Pizza Restaurant and Bar at 5855 Easton Road in Plumsville, PA, from 5-8 p.m. on Saturday, April 10th, and Saturday May 8th; with the Crooked Eye Blues Review at Crooked Eye Brewery on Saturday, April 24th, from 7-10 p.m.

On Saturday, May 22nd, Sister Blue will join Crooked Eye Blues Review at Country Creek Winery in Telford for a blues fest with a bunch of other bands. Details yet to come. For more on Sister Blue, check out her website at sisterblueband.com.

In addition to all that, Sister Blue with Crooked Eye Blues Review hosts an open mic at Crooked Eye Brewery, 13 E. Montgomery Ave., Hatboro, every Wednesday from 7-10 p.m. Just a quick warning, though: if you want to play, you have to bring your own instruments, mics, and masks.

How about that Acoustic Moose? They've got a busy three months coming up, including gigs at Grandpa's Love Shack in Shermansdale at 5 p.m. on Friday, April 2nd; Sign of the Horse Brewery in Hanover on Saturday, April 17th, Saturday, May 8th, Saturday May 29th, and Saturday, June 19th, all at 6 p.m.; and at The Vineyard



MOE Blues



Pair of Aces



Little Buddy Rocks



Stephen Solotist and the Philly Blues Kings

The Philly Blues Kings



Acoustic Stew



Sister Blue



Rose Hudson

and Brewery at Hershey in Middletown on Monday, May 31st, aka Memorial Day, starting at 2 p.m. All we can say is that sounds like one fast-moving moose!

Meanwhile, Bob Wineland is prepping for double duty, starting with a gaggle of gigs for Pair Of Aces, his duo with Marianna Schaeffer, first at Hook & Flask Distillery Carlisle from 7-10 pm on Friday, April 2nd; the Downtown Lounge in Lebanon from 7-10 pm on Friday, April 16th; Reid's Wine & Cider House in Gettysburg on Saturday, April 24th, call for time; and The Silver Cup Lounge at Cumberland Golf Course in Carlisle from 6-9 pm on Saturday, June 12th. They will be at Crostwater Distillery in Lewisberry from 6-8 pm on Friday, April, 30th and Friday, June 11th and at Casterigg Wine Shop in Carlisle from 5-7:30 pm on Saturday, June 26th.

When he's not doing that, Bob will be cooking up an Acoustic Stew with band mates Gary "Rocky" Rothrock and Marianna Schaeffer, first at The Hat Creek Wine Shop in Carlisle from 7-10 pm on Friday, April 23rd, then at the Downtown Lounge in Lebanon from 7-10 pm on Friday, May 14th, and finally, from 6-9 pm on Friday, June 4 at Champions Sports Bar Patio.

We just got word that Stephen Solotist has found himself a new band. "After the initial Covid shutdown a year ago, my hope

was to find a band where I could perform live regularly and be a part of things rather than a band leader," Stephen told us in an email.

He'd heard that the Philly Blues Kings were looking for a vocalist, so he contacted them through local blues DJ and media guy Greg Gaughan, who is also the booking agent for Jamey's House of Music in Lansdowne. The audition, which was held in late January, went well. The lineup includes Stephen on vocals and guitar, Dave Reiter on guitar and keyboard, Jamey Reilly on bass and Bill Marconi on drums and vocals.

The band is currently prepping to restart the weekly Sunday Blues Brunch at Jamey's House of Music. That's a bit off the beaten track for a lot of Central PA blues enthusiasts, but it could be worth the trip, especially for traveling bands. "The PBK are the house band hosting the event and back up any jammers who need other musicians to participate," Stephen said. The jam runs from noon to 2 p.m., after which the PBK perform an hour-long set.

"We plan to expand our set list to perform at other venues as things open up and to record original material as well as covers as the year progresses," he added.

Elsewhere, it appears Moe Blues will be playing mo' blues soon. The high-powered

band will be rockin' Tellus 360 in Lancaster from 8-11 p.m. on Thursday, April 1st. We won't want to miss that.

Finally, a quick last word from local blues diva Rose Hudson, who messaged us to say that she'll be making a rare appearance on Friday, April 2nd, at The Sign of the Horse in Hanover.

"I'm one of the guest vocalists with The Rodney Kelley Experience," she said. Who else is singing? I guess we'll have to go there to find out. Tunes start at 6:30 and go until 9:30.

Well, that's it for now. If you've got any Blues News we can use, be sure to email me at ragtime_willi@hotmail.com or message me on Facebook. In the meantime, keep up The Beat.



Shawan Rice

BACKYARD BLUES

with BONUS TRACKS DIGITALLY RELEASED

Backyard Blues, a collection of 16 original songs of various blues-based styles performed by Central Pennsylvania artists, and three bonus tracks were digitally released Friday, March 19, 2021.

Backyard Blues was born of the fruits of a weekly blues jam, hosted by BSCP, held every Thursday night for more than twenty years, at which long-lasting friendships and musical connections were created. The creativity and musicianship which demonstrate the nuances of the blues is as impressive as the society's efforts to preserve and share it in recorded form. Produced, recorded and mixed by the brilliant Bobby Gentilo and produced by Gary "Rocky" Rothrock, BSCP Blues Jam Coordinator, the recording sessions were held at Right Coast Recording, Columbia, PA.

In 2020 when the Coronavirus pandemic prevented having the beloved weekly jams, the blues society adapted to the times by continuing the tradition virtually via Zoom sessions broadcast to their Facebook group page. This opened the doors of their event to the world, both by musicians who participate and blues

fans who tune in from the comfort and safety of their own homes.

Among those virtual musical guests were Crooked Eye Tommy (Nashville, TN) and Miss Bix (Malibu, CA) from the Blue Heart Records label. Clarence Spady (Scranton, PA), from the sister label, Nola Blue Records, has performed multiple times. Three original tunes from those esteemed artists, representing the "Virtual backyard of Central PA," are bonus tracks included on this digital release. Crooked Eye Tommy was a Finalist in the Solo-Duo category of the 2020 International Blues Challenge. BMA-nominee Clarence Spady's "Surrender" and "Red Walls" by Miss Bix recently received Global Music Awards. Clarence is currently a finalist for the International Songwriters Award for "Surrender."

Blue Heart Records is a female-owned, independent, full-service record label devoted to championing multi-generational blues and roots artists. "We are so fortunate to have a locally owned international blues label in our community which provides tremendous support for our local musicians and,

at the same time, attracts high caliber blues artists from around the country to perform at our virtual and live venues," says Kathryn Gregoire, President, Blues Society of Central PA.

"I guess this could technically be called a re-release, since we made the CD version available locally last year," said Rocky Rothrock, "but this digital release will promote our music across the nation to hundreds of blues media outlets and greatly expand the online presence of BSCP."

Sallie Bengtson, partner at Blue Heart Records, is proud to be working with the label's "hometown" blues society for this release. "Chicago or Memphis may be the first places that come to mind when talking about blues, but we have much to be proud of in Central Pennsylvania. The outreach of our individual and collective efforts to keep the blues alive and available to a worldwide audience is the result of the passion and dedication of the local blues community. It's truly an inspiration and a joy to work with the Blues Society of Central PA to bring exposure of this musical project to radio and media."

BSCP WELCOMES OUR NEWEST MEMBER: JESTER

Dave and Rosemary Witzel recently purchased a BSCP membership for a household member: Jester. In response to our inquiry about Jester, Dave sent this reply, accompanied by delightful pictures:

When the box arrived, it was like a dream I had a long time ago. As I was spending more time on line because of the pandemic, I didn't even remember clicking on him. Thinking it must have been for a prankster prop, we put the box in the closet. It was not till summer that we took him out of the box and put him on a chair on the porch. It felt good to see him out of the closet; he looked so happy sitting there. Feeling guilty leaving him on porch all the time, we started putting him in the car whenever we went somewhere. He really seemed to enjoy the rides. Jester has been to several music fests and really seems to enjoy the music. Poke Salad Annie by Tony Joe White (swamp blues) one of his favorites. A song about a

plant, poke sallet, used as a food and medicine; the berry ink was used to write the declaration of independence. Jester never complains about all the photo opts and has always provided interesting conversation during this time of limited socialization.



Jester playing music



Jester eating Poke Berry plant



Jester at a music fest



Jester feeding the chickens



In the Spotlight...

Tony Formica

By Hannah Sherman



Born in Harrisburg, Tony Formica was always interested in music. When he received a transistor radio at 4 or 5 years old his parents had a hard time keeping him in batteries. He always felt music touching his soul. His family moved to Lawnford Acres when he was 8 and after the Agnes flood he saw a family moving in two doors down. He rode his Big Wheel down to meet the Ivanoffs and they ended up becoming his second family. Tony's dad taught history and English to Florita and Mitch. Mitch was about 12 years older and when his bands practiced Tony would play along.

His guitar playing was curtailed when he shattered his arm playing soccer in high school, but he always sang. Mike, Skip, and Jon Skiffington were all friends with Tony. They became his first band. Over the years his bands included Krypton City Blues Revue, T-Bone and the Turbokings, Slaughterhouse Blues and The Corn Wallace Band.

The jam wouldn't become what it became without Tony. It wasn't a regular thing at first. There were a couple of impromptu jams but no BSCP. People would just get together and play. Mitch, Dale Wise, Kenzie Johnson and others would show up and, according to Tony, Dale brought a snare, brushes, a kick pedal and a cardboard box. It was old school. Tony, Dan Mowery and Jason Suter would go to jam and met Blaine Weiser and Tom Dawes. Bands were formed. The jam was its own thing and came to life.



Tony Formica on his Harley Sportster with his Chihuahua "Big Daddy."

Tony was there at the early BSCP meetings, including the first one in 1998. After the flood at the Lochiel, Tony, Mike Noll, Jason Suter and Mike Easton put the organ on tables and took the rest of the equipment to the 40x8. Tony is the one responsible for obtaining that venue and it was perfect for many years.

Following are some thoughts about Tony.

Mary Mammola: "The first time we saw Tony was New Year's Eve. It started snowing and I said let's not go but Al said we're going. We heard word of mouth that there was a blues band playing and Tony was there. Al knew him because he coached him in Little League. It was the first local blues band we'd ever seen. We picked up a band schedule and the rest is history."

Buster Grubb: "My oldest memory of Tony is from the Lochiel. He was there every week and it seemed like every week he had a new malady: a broken arm, a gouged eye and one week a tree fell on his car but he was still there. He drove there with the roof caved in on his car. He was there through thick and thin."

Dot Grubb: "Met when he was with Krypton. He was the one got us into 40x8. He was just there."

Kathy Robinson: "I first met Tony doing sound for KCBR. He played at the first Treasurer's Picnic. He got a flatbed truck so they wouldn't have to play under the pavilion at the 40x8 but they never got to use it because it rained. He played every Treasurer's Picnic for years."

Dale Wise: "As musicians go, he's one of those pure spirits who loves what he does first and foremost for the music. He wasn't for getting notoriety, money or chicks. It was Tony's magic that got us into the 40x8. It was an idyllic venue for picnics and the Mississippi Railroad."

Carrie Baker: "He was funny. He would show up with Krypton and do sound. He took me to some great shows. I booked Slaughterhouse's first gig and the G-Man downtown. They were really understaffed

but it was a great understanding crowd. The band blew them away. My son Evan was 6 months old at the BSCP's first festival at Little Buffalo. He was a little sick and my roommate said she would help take turns watching him. She came up to me without the baby and said Tony had him. I found him trying to pick up chicks with a baby!"

Bill Wasch: "The thing I remember most from working with Tony is the passion for the music and the hard work he put into getting T-Bone and the Turbokings out in front of people. As with any band, the feedback from the crowd and the money were nice but that wasn't the point for Tony. He LOVED the blues and really wanted to share his take on the music with as many people as possible. Although his technical knowledge of music was limited, he knew what he heard in his head (the little voices aside) and did his best to get that out to the people listening. He wanted everyone to care about the music the same way he did. T-Bone and the Turbokings started in late 1991 or early 1992. The Turbokings name was a suggestion from Ed Coffey, who along with Jeff Kauffman was extremely supportive of live music and especially the blues. Tony took me to the first meeting of BSCP"



Tony is playing with The Corn Wallace Band

Tony in his Pimp Coat for Halloween playing with Slaughter House Blues Band

VIRTUAL THURSDAY BLUES SHOWS



JANUARY 2021

BSCP welcomed the 2021 New Year in with a bang, watching the strawberry ball drop at midnight at the square in Harrisburg, followed by a few minutes of the fireworks show. The celebration was all part of the BSCP New Year's Eve online celebration with expanded hours of 6:30 pm to 1:00 am.

The plan was to have a night of PA bands playing so blues lovers could celebrate New Year's Eve dancing in their kitchens or living rooms. So many bands generously agreed to make the special show happen: Nate Myers Band, SouthBound Band, The Mighty Klucks Trio, Clarence Spady & The Electric City Band, Peter Veteska and Blues Train, and Switch Fu.

Unfortunately, as 2020 was coming to an end, medical conditions hit the bands hard, either reducing the size of the bands or requiring them to be replaced at the last minute. To keep socially distanced, Clarence Spady had already decided to play without his band. Peter Veteska and Blues Train had decided to make a video in a studio where the band members could be distanced. Still, there were sets that needed to be replaced.

Our IT guy, JD, who was traveling to Arizona in an RV with his wife and three cats, came to the rescue, spending New Year's Eve Day downloading three videos of previous shows and preparing them to play. The process took several hours and the evening's show was already underway when the download was completed. Fortunately, all went well and viewers were able to watch Fiona Boyes from Australia, Carlos Elliot from Columbia, S.A. and Moonshine Society from Virginia. The show was a wonderful way for over 2100 viewers to say good-bye to a challenging 2020 and to greet 2021 with enthusiasm and hope.

One of the musicians scheduled to play on the New Year's Eve show but unable to, Chad Salvaggio, passed away on January 3, 2021. BSCP held a tribute show in his honor on January 21. The men who performed tell the story of his life. **Mike Banks**, vocalist/guitarist, started out playing with Chad at the Blue Front in Steelton, which served as the unlikely birth of Strangest of Places. The band went on to do nearly 5 years of monthly dates at HMac and a handful of gigs at Shakedown BBQ. In recent times, they did a few gigs annually at Grotto Pub; small, intimate "acoustic" gigs that they wouldn't trade for the world. **Chris Purcell**, vocalist/guitarist, recorded with Chad on his own records and other's musical projects over the years and played with Chad in Nate Myers and the Aces.

Nate Myers, vocals, harmonica, acoustic guitar, and **Pete Netznik**, acoustic and electric guitar, bass, mandolin, played with Chad in the Nate Myers and the Aces and Nate Myers Trio, fusing blues, rap, country and everything in between. They recorded "Catfish Blues/It's My Music," and "Is that What You Want?" on the 2019 BSCP Backyard Blues CD. **Bill Wasch**, vocals and guitars, and **Jay Kirssin**, bass, have played with Chad during the past several years. Both played with Chad in Rosey and The Naturals. Among other projects, Bill played with Chad in The Turbokings; Jay played with Chad in the Jimmy DePalma Band. They also teamed up with Chad for numerous fill-in gigs. Bill and Jay continue to play together with Switch Fu and The Sum. Bill also plays with The Bad Toupees and The SouthBound Band.

The show ended with the **Chad Salvaggio** Tribute Video, a compilation of videos and pictures of Chad in bands and jams compiled and arranged by JD Drudul. The musicians and friends had the

opportunity to share stories about Chad during the Zoom social hour following the show.

Other musicians who played in January include Hank Imhof, Linda Null, Tim Geisweit, Meg Williams, Terry Goose Downing, Vinny S, Ethan Lake, Lisa Mann, Todd Klucker, and Stacy Brooks. Greg Gaughan, Producer and Host of RCBC Radio Blues Show every Saturday from 10 am - 2 pm EST gave a Blues Talk January 28. You can read more about Greg on page 11.

FEBRUARY 2021

The Mississippi Railroad came to town for the Delta and Hill Blues February 25 show hosted by Bobby Gentilo of Right Coast Studios. Passengers from Clarksdale MS included Anthony "Big A" Sherrod, Bill Able, and Terry "Harmonica" Bean, all performers who BSCP has brought here for past MS RR picnics. Bobby Gentilo and Carlos Elliot have spent time and performed in Clarksdale MS and learned to play in the MS Hill Country Blues tradition. Bobby and his band performed in his studio and Carlos was accompanied on drums by Eduardo Oviedo in his home in the mountains of Pereira, Columbia South America.

Other musicians who played in February include Hank Imhoff, Tom Cook, Roger Hammer and Nick Franz, Joe Firth, Shawan Rice, Tas Cru, Bob Wineland, Kevin Kline, Kathy Murray and Bill Jones

MARCH 2021

On March 18, BSCP and Blue Heart Label will be holding a Digital CD Release Party for Backyard Blues and three bonus tracks: Clarence Spady "Surrender", Miss Bix with Keesha Pratt "Red Walls" and Crooked Eye Tommy Marsh "Hot Coffee and Pain". See p. 6.

Other musicians who played or are scheduled to play in March include Peter Veteska, Kevin Neidig, Rich Tyson, Gordon Farris, the Exactlys, Todd and Christina Klucker, Benjamin Vo, JT Thompson, Andy Tolins, Skyla Burrell and Mark Tomlinson.

WHAT IS COMING NEXT FOR THURSDAY NIGHT BLUES?

BSCP will be celebrating one year of the Virtual Thursday Night Blues on April 22. BSCP expects to continue the virtual shows through May but doesn't have

enough information to make plans past then. Everyone is eager to be able to participate in live blues jams on Thursday evenings at Champions, but, as always, safety will be our top priority. BSCP will keep you informed on the BSCPblues.com website, by emails, on Facebook, and our July-September newsletter.

BSCP is grateful to all of the musicians who have participated and continue to participate in the virtual Thursday Blues show, the volunteers who step up for the multitude of tasks, and all of the blues

lovers out there who provide a receptive environment and encouragement as they support the musicians and the Blues Society of Central PA.

You can go to BSCPblues.com to see videos of the Virtual BSCP Thursday Blues show provided by Greg Hogg and Dan Mowery or to the BSCP Group Facebook page.

BSCPblues.com



Anthony "Big A" Sherrod



Terry "Harmonica" Bean



Carlos Elliot, Bobby Gentilo, Eduardo Oviedo

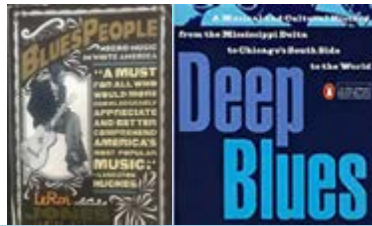


Miss Bix



Tommy Marsh

BLUES BOOK CORNER



By KATHRYN GREGOIRE

Blues Book Corner is a new feature describing the activities of the BSCP Blues Book Club, which held its first official meeting Monday, September 21, 2020, on Zoom and continues meeting at 11 am on the third Monday of each month. The book club members share some of what they learned reading the first two books and watching related documentaries.

Blues People by Amiri Baraka

The first book reviewed over the course of two months was **Blues People: A History of the Negro People** (1963) by Amiri Baraka a.k.a. LeRoi Jones. The book club members were astounded at how much they learned from the highly researched writings. **Blues People** provides an in-depth foundation for understanding the development of blues music in the United States.

The author is a poet, evident in the beauty of the language used to describe the socio-cultural history of the blues. He traces the contributions of Africans into the American culture as reflected in blues music. The effects of emancipation, the tension between gospel and blues music, the development of a Black middle-class and the discovery of blues by White America, all contribute to its expression. To study blues music is to study blues people.

Blues America (Documentary)

For the third meeting, members discussed a related two-part documentary: **Blues America Part 1: Woke Up This Morning** (2013) and **Blues America, Part 2: Bright Lights, Big City** (2014) found on YouTube. This BBC documentary focuses on how blues music crossed borders from Black to White and, as it grew more popular, from the disenfranchised to the powerful. Blues music first appeared in the southern U.S. around the beginning of the 20th century and then in the second half of the century “the White kids got the Blues”.

Part 1 complimented **Blues People** by providing additional information through stories, pictures, videos, and music of the early blues musicians. Part 2 updated the more recent history of the blues and maintained a focus on

blues music, illustrating the impact of the migration to Chicago, the British Invasion, the electrification of blues music and the morphing of Black and White music, with Rock n Roll epitomizing musical desegregation. A highlight of the documentary was watching a Blues Tribute to B.B. King at the White House where B.B. King called on President Barak Obama to sing a few lines of “Sweet Home Chicago,” a Robert Johnson original, thus giving a nod to blues music as a true American art form.

Deep Blues by Robert Palmer

Reinforcing and expanding on the learning from **Blues People**, the members discussed **Deep Blues** (1981) by Robert Palmer at its December and January meetings.

Palmer writes about different parts of Africa where slaves came from and the characteristics of their music providing an understanding of the music slaves brought with them, despite the fact that they were not allowed to have drums because they might use them to communicate with each other to plan insurrections.

The earliest Delta blues appear to have originated in the vicinity of the Will Dockery plantation, as noted by Charles Peabody of the Harvard Peabody Museum in 1901 who first wrote down the songs of the field hands in 1901 in Clarksdale MS. **Deep Blues** goes on to describe the journey of Delta Blues through cotton fields, the streets, juke joints, homes, urban bars, outdoor festivals and big city concert halls. The blues is “the story of a small and deprived group of people who created, against tremendous odds, something that has enriched us all.”

The life of Muddy Waters is used to illustrate the journey of the blues in the Delta, Chicago, and, ultimately, the world. Muddy found the electric guitar to be useful in the noisy Chicago bars; his many innovations transformed the blues.

The story of the **Deep Blues** is rich with details about and the contributions of many musicians, such as Charley Patton, Son House, Robert Johnson, Robert Lockwood, Blind Lemon Jefferson, Rice Miller, Big Walter, Little Walter, Elmore

James, Howlin’ Wolf, Joe Willie ‘Pinetop’ Perkins, Jimmy Rogers, Robert Nighthawk, and Riley ‘BB’ King.

Most of the rhythmic devices Patton uses have counterparts in West African drumming – stacking rhythms on top of each other in order to build up a dense, layered rhythmic complexity. Delta guitarists were the first on records to deliberately explore the uses of feedback and distortion. Bass patterns, guitar riffs, and piano boogies invented in the Delta have been imitated world-wide. The use of a metal or glass slider on fingers is an homage to Delta musicians like Muddy Waters and Elmore James.

Palmer notes that “blues authors shape existing material to their own individual styles and consider this process to constitute authorship.” Musicians would change their songs each time they sang them until records introduced the concept of a song sounding the same each time it was performed. Today we often have difficulty trying to figure out whom to give credit to for a song sung by early blues masters.

The **Deep Blues** story also includes the significant role of “race records” and the record industry and the radio stations. The most popular Delta blues records were done in Chicago by Chess records. Muddy Waters did recordings for Leonard Chess, never signing a contract because he was “part of the family.”

Book club members gained a deepened respect for blues music from learning about how blues music is created. According to Palmer, “Delta blues is a refined, extremely subtle, and ingeniously systematic musical language.” The complexity of the music is something few are able to master, the timing with “subtle variations in vocal timbre” and the ability to hear and then sing and play “very precise gradations in pitch.” Blues techniques are learned and applied methodically in “a fusion of music and poetry accompanied at a very high emotional temperature.”

Blues Book Club members welcome you to join by emailing Kathy at bluesmunga@gmail.com.



RCBC Radio Station Broadcast Studio



Greg G DJ



Backstage with the DJ's from 90.7FM Love Radio in Manila, Philippines

Blues Biz

Greg Gaughan

By KATHRYN GREGOIRE

Greg Gaughan, producer and host of the weekly internet radio show, RCBC Blues, is based in Philadelphia.

Greg, we are so excited to find out that there is an all-blues radio show on RCBC Radio on Saturdays morning in our region, especially since you regularly schedule local musicians from PA/NJ/DL.

KG: How did you get started in radio broadcasting?

I majored in Communications and I have a technical degree in Radio/Television Broadcasting which I received in 1985. I started on FM radio in 2003 at Z88.9FM and from 2007 to 2010, I was station manager/program director at WDBK-91.5FM at Camden County College in New Jersey, which is my alma mater. Since then, I've been spinnin' music on FM and the internet for the past 18 years.

KG: Could you tell us about your current radio show?

I am the producer and host of the weekly internet-based radio show, RCBC Blues, which airs every Saturday, 10am to 2pm EST at www.tunein.com/radio/RCBC-Radio-889-s27707/.

RCBC Blues broadcasts from the RCBC Radio studio located on the campus of Rowan College at Burlington County in Mt. Laurel, NJ. My show is an eclectic mix of all styles of Blues music from Chicago to the Delta to Texas to the West Coast, to the Midwest, up to Canada, across the big pond to the UK and Europe, and down to the land of the Kangaroo, plus from 12 noon until 1 pm, I feature all local blues artists from NJ/PA/DE.

KG: How did you end up with a show focused solely on blues?

Well, I grew up on Rock n' Roll in the 60's and 70's and I knew rock was born out of the blues but I didn't realize how much. Then, in 1987, I walked into a club in Philadelphia and

saw Alicia Levy playing acoustic guitar with Mark Fuhrman on bass. I was blown away by the blues that this duo was laying down. After seeing Alicia and Mark perform on that Sunday afternoon, I made it my mission to seek out blues music.

In 2018, RCBC Radio decided to pull-the-plug on the FM frequency and go strictly internet broadcasting. I decided to retire my Roots-Rock/Americana format after 15 years, revamp my show and do an all Blues format playing Blues and nothing but the Blues.

KG. Do you go to Rowan College – Burlington County to do the Saturday blues show?

I used to, but with the pandemic, the college is closed. I built a studio in a bedroom in my house. I used to broadcast my show live but now I record everything here and send it over to the Program Director at RCBC and he uploads it to the designated time slot.

KG: How do you put your show together?

Basically, I will play a few new releases each hour, dig into the archives, and play some music that was released a few years ago, too. I focus on women artists, too; playing at least two or three female artists each hour. I am getting at least 10-12 female artists on each show. The songs I play range from the 1920's up to the present day. You get a little bit of everything!

Another thing I will do is if an artist has a birthday that month, I will play one of their songs to celebrate their birthday. If an artist has passed away, I will play one of their songs and mention the date of their death in honor of that artist. I promote the upcoming shows of local artists and I take requests.

KG: How many songs do you play during your four-hour show?

I average around 55 songs a show. I come from old school radio so I am all about getting the music out there to the people.

You know, back in the 50s and 60s, the DJs on the radio played the music and the kids heard it and that enticed them to go out and buy it.

I have listeners call me up and tell me "You know, I was in the music store looking for an album and while flipping through the racks I saw this artist that you played last week and I bought that CD." This is what I think radio should be all about.

KG: I noticed that you played a recorded two-part interview with the Blues Duo Satan & Adam that you did at the Barbary in Philadelphia in 1991. Will you be playing more interviews?

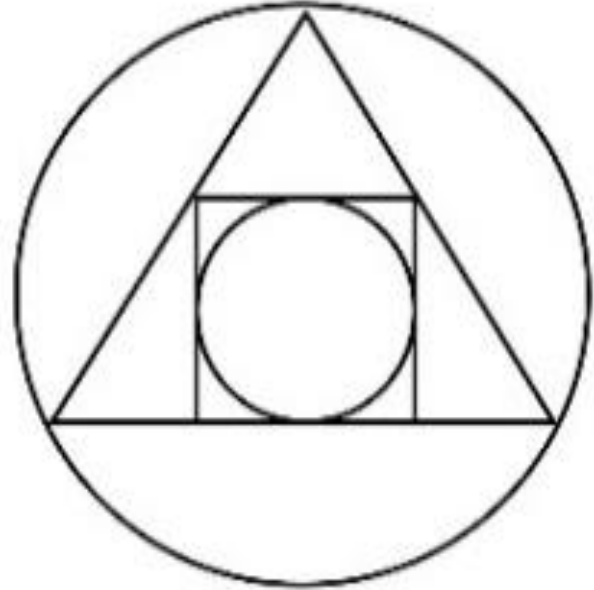
Actually I am just starting a Zoom Blues Podcast on my new Facebook page, "Inner View of the Blues", also on my YouTube Channel by the same name. I am going to be interviewing blues artists, record label people, and other people that work in the Blues Community around the world.

KG: How can people tune in to hear you?

Online, you can just search RCBC Radio and click on the "Tune-In App" on our website for the radio station. Or you can download the app on your phone and then open the RCBC Radio "Tune-In App" on your phone. The app is free, but you will have advertisements. There is a paid service on the "Tune-In App" if you want to avoid the advertisements. But the ads don't interrupt the broadcast. You can also tell your smart speaker to play RCBC Radio.

People can also check out my RCBC Blues Facebook page and my RCBC Blues Group. I post my playlist each week so my listeners can see the artist I play, the song title, the album title and the name of the record label. I have a monthly calendar of music events on my RCBC Blues Facebook page which will be updated as live music returns.

The Roger Hammer's Songwriter's Notebook: *Alchemy*



Much of new music is finding new ways to rediscover old music. Players today did not invent instruments, chords or the other basics of all music. They creatively put them together again with their own spin, as was done by the old blues masters. A blues jam is a great example, where even if the song itself has been around for years and performed countless times, a new version is created in real time that is never an exact copy of any previous rendering. Alchemy, too, is a way of approaching old standards and can even aid the songwriter in the process of writing "new" ones.

Alchemy, an old and largely forgotten art, is a way to approach creating new songs. This is a process of transformation with defined steps that provides new perspectives on applying ancient knowledge to songwriting. The essential steps have a classical order, but your use of the steps is not limited to following one strictly after the other. You are free to initiate completely different alchemical steps concurrently or you may find that one series of operations helps you discover what was missing in another, or works better with some variation, leading to new paths. With each step I offer a song that goes along with what is happening.

1. Calcination (Fire): Free yourself

of what is unnecessary. This does not mean to reduce everything to ash from burning, but rather to selectively release the nonessential components without changing the rest in order to prepare for the next step. Roasting coffee beans, for example, drives off what is not needed for making coffee while bringing out its aroma. Like beginning to make any recipe, the first step is best accomplished with a sense of purpose. One way is to use a notebook to capture words, phrases or symbols going through one's mind while representing the thoughts that should remain after calcinations, casting the others aside. I let loose with [Rhythm Engine](#).

2. Dissolution (Water): Make the remains fluid again. Once freed from extraneous volatiles and reduced to essence, the thoughts and experiences that will be useful for the remaining operations are those that both physically and symbolically dissolve in water and disappear into solution. An example is salt, which does not burn, but easily dissolves in water. That which does not dissolve remains in the bottom of the vessel. This state I found in the River [Allegheny](#).

3. Separation (Filter): Remove what would not become fluid. Physically

this can be accomplished with a filter, such that the solution and its dissolved ingredients easily pass through, while those solid particles that are not desired for further purification are trapped and remain behind. A familiar analogy is the filter to keep coffee grounds and tea leaves out of your drink. Mentally, only the filtered, clarified solution is used for further work. The operator has now taken up those clearer elements of experience and memory via dissolution and is leaving the rest behind through separation. At one point in my life this was a lengthy but temporary situation I wrote about in [Missing You](#).

4. Conjunction (Crystallize): Repurpose in a new direction. The next step will be to reverse the inward refinement process as you relate and reconnect what has remained within to larger external references outside of our personal thoughts. Conjunction takes what remains through separation and relates them to external factors. These can be anything that is on your mind at the time, like places you have visited, landscapes, events, or even the weather. As you work on this operation, think of crystallizing some theme that keeps recurring, as a crystal may precipitate or

form from a solution. Conjunction is the point where you should feel progress and the promise of new direction, realignment with a larger purpose. For me one of the outcomes was [Where \(You Never Know\)](#).

5. Fermentation (Transformation): Fundamental change. A familiar analogy of fundamental change is the transformation of grapes into wine. With the addition of external ingredients such as yeast and time, grapes undergo a true fundamental change such that the end result is significantly different than the starting ingredients. This step may often need lengthy periods of contemplation, just as good wine must quietly age. Eventually, the near-final elixir is ready for its next step of purification. It could even bring a smile as in the twisty [Switch](#).

6. Distillation (Concentration): Reduced to the essence for the next to final step. This is the application of heating and cooling, as found in the distillation of

chemical spirits. The outcome is a different form of liquor that is more concentrated than before. With your music, you need to take the best of your ideas and distill them down to their essence once again. Distillation may take time or may suddenly appear to be complete. Only you will know, and with practice will become familiar with your feelings in each step. You are almost finished but those who wish to reach even greater heights are encouraged to continue in the work of the final operation. Meanwhile, enjoy [Rum Runner](#).

7. Coagulation (The Final Goal): Achieve your personal Philosophers Stone. The process has reached a state of satisfaction in the product; it is mature and ready for presentation. This is a magical moment, indeed, that a work of great time and effort has been finalized. It is a significant milestone in your journey. The distilled essence needs to be fixed in

a final form, packaged for consumption. The wine is put into the bottle; the story is printed in the book; the art is hung on the wall. Or simply, the song is recorded and posted like [My Song](#).

This concludes the Alchemical Order of Operations in this very brief introduction. Hopefully you found it interesting and may even want to adopt some of the steps in your own life, whether related to music or not. The goal is nothing less than to achieve your own Philosopher's Stone. Imagine what you can do.



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PIEDMONT BLUES

by Dr. Mo



was coined by British musicologist Bruce Bastin in the late 60s, the music had existed for decades. Piedmont blues is a unique style, more often associated with Ragtime and folk music than Delta blues. While the later is often considered a “heavier or darker” music, Piedmont blues is usually more melodic and syncopated. One of the first recorded musicians of this style was Arthur Blake.

Arthur “Blind” Blake was born in either Newport News, Virginia, or Jacksonville, Florida, in 1896. Not much is known of his life prior to his first recordings, “Early Morning Blues” and “West Coast Blues” in 1926. Both of these recordings were considered groundbreaking in their rhythmic and melodic complexity. While singing a fairly standard blues melody, Blake simultaneously plays a complex counter melody while also playing a syncopated bass line. The overall effect is that of a ragtime pianist or Dixieland band. These two tunes set the template of what was to become the standard for Piedmont style blues. Over the next six years, Blake was to record approximately 100 songs in this style, some of his best known include “Police Dog Blues,” “He’s In The Jailhouse Now,” “That’ll Never Happen No More,” “Back Door Slam Blues” and “Diddy Wa Diddy.” In 1932, Paramount records went bankrupt, ending Blake’s recording career. He died December 1, 1934, of complications from pneumonia.

Quickly following the popularity of Blind Blake’s recordings on Paramount, other labels started looking for artists who could play in a similar style. One of the first to be recorded was another blind guitarist and singer, **Willie McTell**. He started his career as a street musician in Georgia in the early twenties. His first recording for the Victor label was “Stole Rider Blues” in 1927. He was influenced by Blind Blake and also his uncle, pianist “Georgia” Tom Dorsey. McTell set himself apart from other blues guitarists of the time by playing primarily a 12 string guitar. His style of playing is a bridge between conventional blues, more aligned with Delta blues and the

more ragtime influenced Piedmont blues. Even when playing conventional blues progressions, his performance relied on the more syncopated finger picking style of the Piedmont blues. He was a prolific song writer, and become very popular, even being recorded by Alan Lomax for the Library of Congress in 1940. One of his compositions, “Statesboro Blues” has become a Blues Rock standard.

Any discussion of Piedmont blues must include **Blind Boy Fuller**. Born in Wadesboro, North Carolina, in 1904, he was among the most popular and an example of the epitome of Piedmont blues performers. Fuller incorporated not only the more syncopated rhythms of Ragtime, but also made great use of the more elaborate chord progressions of Ragtime and early Jazz. His unique picking style became the standard for players. Throughout the 1920s he performed extensively in the Durham and Winston-Salem area, eventually recording his first side “Rag Mama Rag” in 1935. Within the next 5 years he recorded over 120 songs. His singing style was rough and direct, and his lyrics were often explicit, dealing with love, loss, desire, jealousy, death, and other subjects of street life with a combination of wit, humor, menace, and honesty. He and another Durham street musician, Gary Davis, often played together and undoubtedly influenced each other. Following his ordination as a Baptist Minister, the Reverend Gary Davis began playing and composing more church oriented music, eventually leaving the Durham blues scene and moving to New York, only to be rediscovered in the “Folk Revival” of the 1960s.

Fuller was instrumental in forwarding the careers of many other musicians. A young harmonica player named Saunders Terrell often played with Fuller, eventually joining forces with another guitarist in Fuller’s orbit Walter “Brownie” McGhee. The two became known as Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee, becoming probably the most famous of all Piedmont style musicians. **Etta Baker** was also a prominent Piedmont style guitarist influenced by

When we think of geographical areas associated with blues music, certain places immediately come to mind. The Mississippi Delta region is often cited as the “Birthplace Of The Blues” and the cradle of prewar blues music. Chicago, and to a lesser extent Memphis, are heralded as the bastions of post war “Electric Blues”. Obviously, there are other regional “schools” of blues music, like Texas or West Coast, but how often is Durham, North Carolina, considered a center of blues music?

Rather than cotton, tobacco was king as a crop through out the Carolinas, Southern Virginia, and parts of Tennessee and Georgia. By the early 1900s, the last vestiges of the old plantation/ sharecropper systems were disappearing. Simultaneously, the demand for tobacco was increasing. Many African Americans, as well as displaced Appalachian poor whites, were drawn to Durham for the decent wages being offered in the tobacco industry. It was here, in this mix of cultures that a distinct style of blues music began to foment. Characterized by a combination of walking bass lines played by the thumb, with a simultaneous melody played on the top 3 strings, a new and distinct style of blues developed.

Although the phrase “Piedmont blues”

Blind Boy Fuller and Blind Blake. Born in 1913, her father started teaching her guitar at age 3. By the time she was in her teens she was playing at dances and parties, joining her mentors on stage. In 1936 she married and drastically reduced her performing schedule to gatherings of family and friends. In 1956 she cut her first recordings that were released on a compilation album "Music of the

Appalachians", cited by Taj Mahal as an influential recording. After her husband's death and retiring from the Skyline Textile Company in 1973, she began performing to great acclaim at festivals and concerts. She released recordings and continued to play and teach until her death in 2006 at age 93. Here is a video that displays her unique finger picking style: <https://www.ettabakerproject.com/video.html>

The Piedmont blues tradition has continued, being performed by many artists. Until the death of John Cephas in 2009, the duo of Cephas and Wiggins were popular performers in this style. Jorma Kaukonen, David Bromberg, Stephan Grossman, Ry Cooder, Taj Mahal, Guy Davis and many others continue to keep this vibrant and often overlooked part of blues history alive.



Willie McTell

Blind Boy Fuller

Etta Baker

hawk Roosts CD Reviews

by Bill "Nighthawk" Halaszynski,

Hello there ladies and gentlemen. So, Blues/Jazz/Rock & Roll have been my main musical food groups since forever. There was my babysitter's stack of Beatles 45's at age five followed rather quickly by a neighboring family of musicians' reel to reel player in their basement. It contained exotic and enticing Jazz sounds that I vowed to try figuring out (and still am). In the end, however, it was the names that drew me in for good. Fats, Cannonball, Smokey, Muddy, Wolf, Monk, Little Richard, Big Walter, Pinetop and Dizzy. I've been on that path ever since.

As time wore on, I found myself ensconced in one of those forms (Blues/Jazz/Rock & Roll) for increasingly longer periods. Often wondered if I'd get back to the other two, but always eventually did. After many years of these cycles my ears have opened wider and grown more accepting of sounds that were once thought to be one thing, but not another. I finally arrived at the conclusion that the only label that mattered was Good Music.



Big Harp George

Living In The City (Blues Mountain Records)

It's always a pleasure to discover a recording that covers all those afore-mentioned bases as well as Big Harp George's latest release, Living In The City. While primarily rooted in the West Coast Blues of the 50's with a nod to New Orleans, the subject matter is decidedly present tense and a few stylistic departures help declare this a tour de force of modern Blues.

The memorable moniker Big Harp George refers to the Chromatic Harmonica that George Bisharat adroitly utilizes throughout this collection. He's a master of the instrument who avoids over playing in favor of coaxing all the colors and textures out of the behemoth device in service to the task at hand. He's aided here by a horn section and two top notch guitar players. Everyone eschews instrumental heroics for a dynamic group sound that threatens to blow the roof off.

"Build Myself an App" kicks things off with a big, swaggering sound led by Michael Peloquin (Tenor Sax), Doug Rowan (Baritone) and Trombonist Mike Rinta along with powerful backing vocals by the Sons of the Soul Revivers (James, Dwayne & Walter Morgan) who appear on six of the thirteen tracks and leave a big impression each time out. Lyrically, it's an update on the hopeless loser pipedream of striking it rich on a long shot that they haven't a clue of how to achieve. The punch line comes with Bisharat asking his band mates if they know how to code at song's end.

The Spirit of Albert Collins presides over "Smoking Tires." Guitarist Kid Andersen steps out front to start off with some righteous Iceman worthy licks. It also feels like a classic Collins tale. The story of a fed-up man declaring his relationship dissatisfaction with the ultimate kiss-off as he drives away, "My parting gift to you

is gonna be the smell of my smoking tires."

The late Charlie Baty passed away about a month after recording his contributions to this album. It serves as fitting epitaph to this master guitarist who shows his ability to swing and sting as necessary throughout his six songs here.

Title track "Living in the City" begins with some deep groovin' standup bass by Andersen (he switches to bass on tracks where Baty plays six-string) then gives way to Bisharat's lilting chromatic and the first appearance of Lisa Leuschner Andersen's backing vocals. Baty steps up stinging on his solo that helps propel this tale of life in the urban jungle to even greater heights.

"Heading Out to Itaipu" is the first musical curveball, an exuberant Brazilian orchestrated romp. The brief intro features Baty on acoustic and violinist Carlos Reyes with a nod to Django Rheinhardt/Stephane Grappelli. It's a poignant moment that alludes to Charlie's admiration of Django and Gypsy Jazz. Ben Torres adds flute (he also steps in on Baritone Sax for several other numbers). Lorelee Christensen makes her first vocal appearance here. Bisharat gets to show off his vocal range on this story of blue-collar escape.

The next six selections all have that classic west coast feel that melds original Rock & Roll with swing, jump Blues and a healthy dose of jive. The oft humorous lyrics pull no punches nor do they spare any marks. "Copayment" bemoans the high cost of low living in the modern medical vernacular. Big Harp opts for his diatonic and rips off a four-star solo. "Try Nice" will keep all the hepcats and kittens dancing 'til they drop. Instrumental "Bayside Bounce" allows Producer Chris Burns to step out a little on piano here and shine. It also contains a full-bodied solo from Baty that brings a smile every time I hear it.

Mambo inspired "Chew Before You Swallow" brings both guitarists together for the only time here and the swinging groove they create carries the day. Andersen also provided some comic relief vocally.

The heartfelt immigration saga, "Enrique," once again pulls the listener away from straight blues into the struggles of those who strive for better by coming to this country. It's an achingly beautiful ballad that features Andersen on acoustic this time out along with Reyes' violin. It's a plea for brotherhood in a time when that's a commodity lacking in portions of society.

A one-two punch of bared emotion closes out this noteworthy collection. Drug enabling, prescription pushing doctors are scorned in

"Pusher in A White Coat." It's a dramatic slow Blues punctuated by Andersen's wailing guitar. The Sons of the Soul Revivers add tortured vocals in support of Bisharat's accusatory leads and squalling harp. This is as good a time as any to commend the rhythm section led by drummer June Core who is aided by the tag team of bassists Andersen (acoustic) and Joe Kyle (electric). They do yeoman's work navigating a wide array of time signatures and stylistic variations.

The final stop of this journey over borders literal and figurative is the Gaza Strip. "Meet Me at the Fence" is 6 minutes of raw release set to Mediterranean/Middle Eastern instrumentation. The desperate characters vow to meet at the fence where they can dance one last dance in defiance and die from oppression on their feet. It's a stunning finale.



Clarence Spady

Surrender (Nola Blue Records)

Surrender serves as an overview of where the Blues have taken singer/guitarist Clarence Spady, his current state of being and a hopeful glimpse into what the future may hold. This is just the third release since his 1996 debut Nature of the Beast. It's a compelling recording that serves as a sterling showcase for his fluid and, as needed, biting fret work as well as his confidently soulful vocals. There's a nice blend of revealing originals and inventive covers that allow Spady the chance to showcase the many facets his Blues have acquired over the years.

"If My Life was A Book" is a soul-based reflection on what's been accomplished and its potential worth to others. Spady covers Lucky Peterson's "When My Blood Runs Cold" as tribute to his late friend. In doing so he creates a slow Blues in the classic tradition that will hold its own in years to come.

CD Reviews

"K-Man" follows as counterpoint, its jaunty beat belying subject matter. Spady's son Khalique passed away at age 25. Father finds a way to celebrate his son while navigating the under currents of sorrow that none of us want to even think of, let alone face. It's an enduring testament to parental love and how tragedy can serve as catalyst to do better in memory of a loved one.

Title cut "Surrender" serves as this collection's centerpiece at its midway point. Spady faces up to his demons and finds his way to surrender to God's will in this joyful slow burner. Next up is a down home take on ZZ Hill's "Down Home Blues." Spady gets to show off his acoustic picking here and Tom Martin shines on harp.

The album concludes with three previously unreleased live cuts from 1998. "Addiction Game" is an unflinching look from the inside at drug abuse and the subsequent loss of control that follows. Instrumental "Jones Falls Expressway" showcases Spady ripping it up on guitar alongside saxophonist Tom Hamilton blowing up a storm on tenor and the roiling B-3 of keyboard player Mark Hamza. The set ends with "Pick Me Up," a soulful plea for help and understanding.

One can only hope Clarence Spady gets back to us much sooner with the next chapter in his ongoing journey. It'll be a trip worth taking.



Selwyn Birchwood

Living in A Burning House (Alligator Records)

Selwyn Birchwood & company rip, roar, swagger and wail their way through "Living in a Burning House." It's a dynamic achievement that places the gravel voiced guitarist squarely in the upper echelon of Blues folks who got it way going on. Schooled in how to play a mean lap steel as well as lead a band by Sonny Rhodes as a young man, Birchwood has established his own distinctive sound over the past decade or so.

While classic influences can be felt in his work, the end result is all his own. Regi Oliver's

Baritone sax in particular (he also plays tenor, alto and piccolo flute) provides a perfect foil for Birchwood's passionate six string excursions. Oliver's rock bottom end helps keep Birchwood's keening slide from sailing off into the nether. Walt May's Piano, B-3 and Wurlitzer work the middle ground to keep the sound fresh and full.

"I'd Climb Mountains" breaks from the gate at an accelerated pace. It's a bold declaration of love and commitment that sets a high standard for the rest of the record to meet. A tale of betrayal and retribution, "Drunk, Laid and Stoned" keeps the tempo up as Birchwood's screaming lap steel announces itself a force of nature to be dealt with.

A touch of reggae rhythm gets "Living in A Burning House" started and Regi Oliver's muscular tenor takes this look at coming to terms with a relationships conclusion to an even deeper emotional level.

The mood picks up a bit with "You Can't Steal My Shine." In the midst of life's innumerable setbacks the main character defiantly declares worldly possessions mean little when compared to the human spirit that can't be taken away by others. Soulful "She's a Dime" is a joyous declaration of just how special the lady in question is.

Other highlights include just about everything else on the record. It's exhilarating to witness a still young performer truly hit their stride with the promise of more to follow. Birchwood has managed to meld the Blue's venerable past with current influences to create a viable future.



Curtis Salgado

Damage Control (Alligator Records)

Curtis Salgado is a quintessential Blues survivor. Early on he served as inspiration to John Belushi for the Blues Brothers. He spent a couple years with Robert Cray in the early 80's before fronting Roomful of Blues and even put in a short stint with Santana before establishing himself as a leader in the 90's. He keeps on keepin' on despite having a cancer diagnosis in the early 00's.

Damage Control finds him in fine fighting shape here in 2021. The voice still has that bark and bite, his harp chops remain strong and life's rich pageant has blessed him with a plethora of blues inspiration.

"The Longer I Live" is a strong opener that clearly states Salgado's current mission statement. "The longer I live, the older I wanna get." He goes on to back that up with "You're Gonna Miss My Sorry Ass," and its rollicking honky tonk piano compliments of Kevin McKendree. This like father like son tale of life lived with no apologies and little common sense dares you to sit still and just listen.

Things get a little less defiant on "Precious Time," a late 70's style blues-rock saga of desperate characters meeting and falling in love for keeps.

Facing up to life's twilight is an over-riding theme throughout this collection. "Always Say I Love You (At the End of Your Goodbyes)" acknowledges that it's best to let those you care about know how you feel because the future is never promised.

"Hail Mighty Caesar" livens things back up. It's easy enough to see Animal House era Belushi fronting Otis Day & the Knights on this frat house call and response spectacular. "I Don't Do That No More" follows with its message of sobriety over the grave to a jitterbug beat. Wayne Toups brings his squeeze box and trades off vocals on the Zydeco two stepper, "Truth Be Told."

My personal favorite may just be "The Fix Is In," a low-down slinky blues that has, by far, the most harp of anything on the album and Selgado gets deep down in the gutter with it.

The stunning overall lack of harmonica on the entire record is the biggest drawback to an otherwise exemplary piece of work. With Salgado, it's about being a fully developed performer first and harpcat next. That's ok with me, I just dig the guy's chops and could always use a little more. The strong backing and arrangements make this a modern Blues worth hearing.



A PEEK AT THE PAST

Snapshots of BSCP history

Birth of the Blues Society, Little Buffalo Blues Festival and Treasurer's/Mom I's Picnic

Gary Harrington, Dave Snyder, and Max Drenning were part of a band called the Howlers who wanted to market themselves and their newly released CD. It was difficult to find places to play the blues in Central PA. They decided one solution would be to start a blues society that would help to promote the blues with members holding festivals and events. A small group of blues lovers came together with all making extensive contributions to getting the Blues Society of Central PA established, including, but not limited to, Carrie Baker, Beverly McCormick, Dot Mowers, Jimmy "Jimmoe" Mulholland, Cecilia "Beulah Mae" Jankura, Mitch Ivanoff, Dale Wise, Bill Wasch, Mike Easton, Kathy Robinson and Tony Formica.

As Tony Formica describes the beginnings of BSCP, "We all came at it from a different way – our own perspectives and our own agendas." It came together and grew into its own thing, with a life of its own."

One of the blues lovers making it a personal mission 22 years ago to create a blues scene in the Central PA area with its own blues society is Gary Harrington. He laughs as he talks how it really was for selfish reasons and started out being self-serving. He wanted to be able to get gigs to play in clubs; to teach guitar; to give blues music workshops in schools, universities, afterschool clubs and at Parks and Recreation; to bring in and even play with well-known musicians for events and festivals; to run a radio show; and to have a place to jam. He made all of these things happened, and more.

Gary notes that three times over the course of the past six years, he was hospitalized for his heart condition and needed extensive care which was provided by Mike McEnany, Gary "Rocky" Rothrock, Mike Easton in their homes and a crew of BSCP volunteers. Gary reflects "If not for BSCP, I would not be alive today. It came full circle for me. I wanted a blues society for marketing purposes. It did so much more than that. It saved my life."

The first meeting of the Central Pennsylvania Blues Society was held on June 6, 1998, at 3:00 pm at the Best Western

Courtyard. The Agenda states three purposes for meeting:

- Establishing a blues society for area blues bands
- Establishing a mailing list combined from all area blues bands to all area blues fans
- Establishing a 1st Blues Festival July 18, 1998 at Little Buffalo State Park

Officers for the first year were elected at another meeting held shortly after in a private club in Steelton called The Home Association: President - Dave Snyder, Vice-President: Mike Easton, Secretary – Cecilia "Beulah Mae" Jankura and Treasurer - Kathy Robinson.

The Blues Society made plans to sponsor the Little Buffalo Blues Festival at the Moore Pavilion in the state park located in Newport, Perry County on Saturday, July 18, 1998, from 1:00 – 8:00 PM. The day would include several bands from the region, food, drinks, and arts and crafts venues. Tickets were Adults \$10, Students/Seniors \$5, and Children under 12, \$1.

BSCP President, Dave Snyder, had worked closely with the Perry Council of the Arts and was involved with helping them set up festivals. He brought that knowledge and his connections to the board. The PA Council of the Arts awarded BSCP and Perry County grants to bring national and local musicians to Little Buffalo Blues Festival.

According to the PERRY COUNTY TIMES, JULY 2, 1998-Page 5, the festival featured "Krypton City Blues Revue, the area's number one traditional blues band with an extremely large stage presence; Jimmy D and Wide Lode Rhythm, the silky voice and talented guitar work of an area icon backed up by an unforgivable rhythm section; Beulah Mae and the Belvederes, done "vintage" style; the Howlers, providing their brand of groove-blues; Jukester and the Hipshakers, one of the region's foremost harmonica players; and Ben Martin, former guitarist for the Ray Charles Band." Riviera Paradise was added to the line-up. My Wife's Sound Co. provided sound.

The second BSCP Little Buffalo Blues Festival featured headliner "Big Jack" Johnson and the Oilers, who travelled from Clarksdale MS. Krypton City Blues

Revue and T-Bone and the Turbokings, with Tony "T-Bone" Formica also played. Gary Harrington and Tony Formica provided sound.

The Third Annual Central PA Blues Fest was held Saturday, August 19, 1-7 PM. Tickets were \$10 (\$5 Students, Seniors) at the gate. Advance tickets were \$8 (\$4 Students, Seniors). The promotion poster states that "The Blues Society of Central PA presents Jesse Yawn, Blues Singer Extraordinaire; Chris Cain, 'one of the best blues guitarists in the country'; Tom Principato (one incredible guitar line after another) and his Band; B.C. and the Blues Crew, a taste of the big Chicago sound; and T-Bone and the Turboking." Gary Harrington and Tony Formica provided sound.

Dave Snyder obtained grants for some of the festival expenses from the PA Council on the Arts, through Meirearts. Ever resourceful and creative, Treasurer Kathy Robinson, with her crew of volunteers, held pig roasts at the 40 & 8 Club to raise the necessary funds for the second and third festivals. The festivals were successful in bringing together the blues lovers in the area and contributing to an identity for the Blues Society. After the first three festivals, BSCP discontinued the event because of prohibitive costs. The fundraiser event, however, continues to be held each year and remains a major supporter of BSCP activities.

BSCP called the fundraiser the "Treasurer's Picnic" until 2017, when the name was changed to "Mom I's Picnic" in recognition and appreciation of Virginia Ivanoff, or better known as Mom I, who lived in the kitchen every picnic. She would come in early and get the kitchen ready for the day. The volunteers cooked chicken, hot dogs, hamburgers and side dishes, set out the food donated by attendees, and cleaned up afterwards.

Each year the music continues to be provided through the generosity of the great bands here in Central PA who support the BSCP. In 2019, the Mom I Picnic served as the site of the BSCP "Backyard Blues" CD release party; all of the musicians who played on the CD performed at the picnic.

For the first time, in 2020, BSCP sadly had to cancel the Mom I Picnic. Members look forward to its return. When it does return, BSCP hopes you will be able to attend and will volunteer for setting and cleaning up, kitchen, cooking, and ticket duty. Many hands make for light work and a lot of fun.

Hannah Sherman reflects back over the 22 years of BSCP. "At first it was rather loosely structured and even looked like at one point that it could not survive financially. Eventually the blues society came together and has grown, evolved and expanded into new levels, building on the foundation established in those early years."



05/27/2019 Ben Brandt Band



05/28/2017 JD and Roger Hammer Duo



Jimbo Sage



05/28/2017 BSCP Dancers



Treasurer's Picnic Mechanicsburg Club 5/28/2017



Jeff Cameron, Nate Myers, Pete Netznik



Lee Carroll, Kenzie "KJ" Johnson, Mike Noll, Harry Werner, Mitch Ivanoff



Danny Kreiger, Bill Frederick, Dave "Dr. Mo" Moyer, Rich Zambito



Jason Suter, Tony Formica, Tom Dawes, Blaine Weiser



**P.O Box 7453
Steelton, PA 17113**

MUSIC OUTDOORS

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www.casselveyards.com
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Duke's Riverside Bar & Grille
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www.dukesbarandgrille.com
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J & P Winery
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www.jpwinery.net
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Marion Court Room
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