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BLUE NOTES!

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President's Column

By Sally Katen



I am going to start this article with thoughts of everyone in our blues community: friends, family and musicians, I am sending prayers that we are all staying safe. It is hard to be confined day after day, and to keep mentally sane too! To those who are still working, be safe and thank you.

With all the music being canceled or postponed, it seems strange not to go out and see friends and enjoy the music we all love. I was looking forward to SBS Women Sing the Blues this past Sunday, and am sorry that the SBS has had to step back from live shows for now. Most future events for which I had tickets throughout May have been rescheduled to dates later in the year.

This May 7th is Sacramento's Big Big Day of Giving! And no, it's not canceled; instead it will occur online this year. Be sure and check out the website on that Thursday.

I can't write my article without mentioning my friend and musician Charles Baty. Hearing of his passing was a great loss to me and to our community. RIP, Charlie. I have spoken with Rick Estrin and there will be a Celebration of Life for Charlie this summer. We will keep everyone posted as soon as plans develop.

There are a lot of musicians offering up concerts (for free) on Facebook. I also see that they are accepting donations, and I feel we should donate, if you are in a position to help. Not only would it be our way of saying thank you, but it would help out a musician who can't be out and playing for us, where we would be paying a cover charge.

I hope to be out and about soon, once the quarantine is lifted, and I hope to run into everyone! With this virus we have going on, please stay home, stay safe, do what's right.

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Did you know you can support the Sacramento Blues Society every time you shop online at Amazon, at no cost to you? AmazonSmile is a simple and automatic way for you to support SBS. When you shop online at smile.amazon.com, you'll find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as Amazon.com, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible purchases to SBS when we are selected as your charity of choice.

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Help keep the Blues alive - Contact a Chair or Board Member to volunteer for the Board or a Committee!

The Sacramento Blues Society (SBS) is one of the oldest blues societies in California, founded in 1979. SBS is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation formed to preserve and promote blues music as an art form. SBS has kept the blues tradition alive in the Sacramento area by promoting the local blues music scene, bringing internationally renowned artists to the region, acknowledging our local blues artists, providing a musicians' Crisis Fund and publishing the "Blue Notes" six times a year. SBS is an affiliate member of The Blues Foundation, which honored us with a 2015 Keeping the Blues Alive Award, and provides educational opportunities for young people with The Blues Foundation's "Blues in The Schools" Program.

Board of Directors Meetings - 2nd Tuesday of each Month, 7:00 p.m.

All SBS Members in good standing are invited to attend.

For more details, including meeting location, check: www.sacblues.com/who-we-are/

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Blues In The Schools (BITS)

BITS Has Got the Blues

By Lisa Phenix, BITS Chairperson



Due to the pandemic, the Sacramento Blues Society Blues in the Schools Committee has decided to cancel its Student Showcase, which was to be held May 7, 2020 at Stoney's Rockin Rodeo. Of course, we're very disappointed; we were so looking forward to it, especially since Stoney's is freshly remodeled, and our students were so excited to perform.

Our After School Teaching program started off with a bang. With abundant support from fans, members, donors, and sponsors, BITS was able to start three eight-week after-school music programs in the Sacramento area. With Sacramento multi-instrumentalist Matt Hevesh teaching at Rosemont High in Rancho Cordova, guitarists Ross Hammond and Ryder Green assisting at River City in West Sacramento, and bass player Joe Lev and drummer Dwain Navarro leading at West Campus in central Sacramento, our teachers were well on their way to guiding our student bands. Then, along came the COVID-19 pandemic. Schools were shut down, and blues lovers everywhere are sheltering in place.

Despite this setback, the Sacramento Blues Society and BITS will actively participate in the Sacramento area Big Day of Giving through social media, highlighting many of BITS' accomplishments throughout the years. And BITS continues to celebrate and appreciate our many teachers and students who make this annual Showcase an SBS standout event each year.

We are updating our BITS collateral materials as well; a new updated brochure and logo are in the works. Thank you members, fans, donors and sponsors for all your support during these tough times. Stay safe, and listen to some blues.



Calling All Tech

By Lisa Phenix

During these tough times, SBS has the blues. And we need you if you've got tech skills. So many of our Board, members, musicians, promoters and venues are now relying on social media and communication technology to share our love for the blues and stay Sacto- blues connected. Do you have tech skills to share with SBS? Please volunteer! Email or call Volunteer Chairperson Lisa Phenix at 916-719-6106, lisap@winfirst.com.

Sacramento Blues Society's Big Day of Giving Is May 7! By Lisa Phenix

Hey Blues Fans! As we all know, Sacramento has one big heart. May 7, 2020, SBS and all of you will celebrate our heart and soul with Sacramento's annual Big Day of Giving! Although the Blues in the Schools Student Showcase cannot proceed due to sheltering in place, SBS will celebrate BDOG through social media with past successes, our Blue Notes newsletter, and the latest and greatest in recent blues events.

Your generosity brings blues music and education to thousands of Sacramento area youth through the Blues in the Schools Program, support for struggling musicians through the Gene Chambers Emergency Fund, great blues events for Sacramento, and appreciation for our blues community including musicians, volunteers, venues, and promoters through SBS's annual Hall of Fame Awards events.

In 2019, the Big Day of Giving event raised 8.4 million dollars for local Sacramento area non-profits. In 2019, SBS raised over \$3600. This year SBS hopes to reach \$5000. Our generous members, Judi and Roger Patterson (Roger is a heck of a harmonica player too) have agreed to match up to \$1000 of SBS donations. Yay!

By donating through Big Day of Giving, your donation makes SBS eligible for all kinds of matching funds, prizes, and other perks. To donate, givers will have to set up an account. (Many of you are regular donors and already have an account.) Thank you, thank you, thank you! The info is private and allows you to donate throughout the year. **Please check out the SBS's BDOG site at: <https://www.bigdayofgiving.org/SacramentoBlues-Society>.** Log in as a donor and create or enter your existing log in information. Select "donate to SBS". You might want to consider creating an online fundraiser event and invite your friends to join in. Share our BDOG information and website, sacblues.com, with friends and family on social media. Share how SBS fills your blues needs, and connects you with music and community during these difficult times.

Please mark your calendars to celebrate our blues community on social media, our Blues in the Schools accomplishments, and give what you can on May 7, 2020. Thank you so much for your SBS support, volunteerism, smiles, and community spirit.

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Sugaray Rayford Struttin' at Sutter Creek! *By Jan Kelley*

Photos by Bob Cosman

On March 7, 2020, a group of Sacramento blues lovers trekked their way up to Sutter Creek to see the one-and-only Sugaray Rayford perform with his awesome band. We were not disappointed!

The old Sutter Creek Theatre, owned and operated by Laura and Byron Damiani, Jr, creates a homey atmosphere right off the bat by being a small, intimate theater. The owners keep it informal and down-home so that a theater-goer feels comfortable in attending and chatting with fellow attendees.



Sugaray has compiled a band of all-stars, each musician extremely talented in his own right and playing with a force to be reckoned with all night! There is a huge amount of energy coming from this tight-knit band that makes

it difficult for a person to stay in his/her seat while they're performing, and many couldn't!

The Sugaray Rayford Band this night consisted of flaming guitarist Gino Matteo; Drake "Munkihaid" Shining on keyboards, saxophonist

DJ Martin; Julian Davis on trumpet; bassist Allen Markel and drummer extraordinaire Lavell Jones. They performed many of the songs from Sugaray's latest album *Dark Night of the Soul*.



Sharing some of his life story, Sugaray talked of his childhood as one of three brothers raised by their mother, their struggles to just live and eat and praising his mother

who died of cancer early on. This led into a beautiful song "If You See My Mother", playing to the emotions of the audience while singing and strolling up and down the aisle. His ability to share these emotions with his gravelly voice portrays the hardships of his youth.

He joked that his becoming an "overnight sensation" took 37 years! Sugaray Rayford was the recipient of the Blues Music Award in 2019 for "Soul Blues Male Artist of the Year", was nominated for a Grammy that year for his *Somebody Save Me* Best Contemporary Blues Album of the Year, and continues to soar in the blues world. For more on Sugaray Rayford, go to: sugarayrayford.com

SBS Cancels its 2020 IBC Competition

With that pesky COVID-19 pandemic and quarantine affecting everything in the world, it's no surprise that it's impacted the SBS's plans for the 2020 IBC Competition. Although the International Blues Challenge won't take place until early 2021, in order for the SBS to send an entrant to that event, we typically start our plans for our own competition in the second quarter of the year, to allow time for competing bands to perform and to raise funds for their trip to Memphis.

SBS IBC Chairperson MariLu Onweller polled the Board of Directors to see how we should proceed with our 2020 plans. Sadly, the majority felt that, absent a magical crystal ball to see exactly when the quarantine will end, there is no way to predict when we can once again gather in person for live music, so it was decided to cancel the event for this year.

We had hoped that 2020 would be the first year in a few that we'd send an IBC entry. We're very disappointed, as we already had two member bands who expressed a desire to participate, and we know our bands and members are also as disappointed as we are. So, for now, we're setting our sights on 2021, when we'll hold a competition to select a member band to represent us at the IBC. Thanks for your patience!

Can an Instagram Message Change Your Music Life?

A Story about a Young SBS Member

By Jack Walter & Lisa Phenix

Justin Walter grew up in El Dorado Hills California just like any other young boy, enjoying typical sports and Scouts activities. Additionally, there was a piano in the house, so Justin took piano lessons that



In Memoriam



Remembering Charlie Baty

By Jan Kelley

On Friday, March 6, 2020 the world lost a fantastic, irreplaceable guitarist, friend and all-around good person. Charles Baty, aka Little Charlie, passed away when his heart just couldn't beat any more.

Born in 1953 in Birmingham, Alabama, Charles was a young child when he was drawn to music, first starting out on the drums. After his family moved to California, he picked up harmonica during his high school days in Millbrae, then later moved onto learning guitar. He was intelligent and mostly self-taught, deriving his skills from listening to other musicians. His expertise shone in many styles, including West Coast, Jump Blues and Jazz and Swing. Known for his acrobatic finger picking guitar playing and master of many styles, this artist was appreciated and enjoyed world-wide.

Charles earned a degree in Mathematics from UC Berkeley in 1975 before moving from the Bay Area to Sacramento, where he soon formed Little Charlie and the Nightcats. He asked his friend Rick Estrin to move to Sacramento in 1976 and join his new band. Their first album in 1987 was *All the Way Crazy*, released by Alligator Records, which has remained their label to this day.

They toured the United States and abroad, playing often at the San Francisco Blues Festival (produced by Tom Mazzolini) and the Sacramento Blues Festival (produced by Phil Givant), and many more.

The last time Charles performed live in Sacramento was on February 29, less than a week before he passed. It was for a Celebration of Life for a long time blues fan, "Tie Dye" Tommy Puentes. This international blues star had an audience of about twelve people, but it didn't matter to him--he was always a humble man who gave back to the community he loved.

The Sacramento Blues Society proudly inducted Charles Baty into our SBS Hall of Fame in 2010.

Rest in Paradise Charles!

resulted in recitals a couple times a year. At age 10, Justin got his first guitar and learned how to play it from singer, songwriter and country music artist Stephan Hogan.

In June of 2019, 13 year old Justin's musical curiosity led to an interest in the blues. He reached out to Ryder Green on Instagram asking him "how do I get to play in a blues jam?" Ryder responded with "meet me at the Folsom Powerhouse at 7pm".

We met up with Ryder in the Powerhouse Pub parking lot, where Ryder gave Justin the lay of the land, explaining that, due to his youth, they would not let Justin into the building until he was on stage performing, and made sure we understood that Justin needed to leave after he was done playing.

After a 40 minute wait in the parking Justin got called in and we rolled the gear into the Powerhouse Pub. Ryder kicked things off and then turned Justin loose on the audience. Having experienced playing on a stage at church and a couple of school talent shows with audiences of hundreds, Justin took the cue to lay out some of that 1-4-5 that literally brought the house to a standstill! Ryder took the lead with a few more songs, giving Justin the opportunity to solo in different keys and tempos. The crowd could not believe Justin was only 13 and had never performed blues before. At the time, we did not realize was this was a life-changing experience.

A week later, Ryder invited Justin to jump in with the Ryder Green Band at the Auburn Ale House. Similar requests to perform continued, with an invitation from David Hale & Rick Snyder of "The Six String Showdown" to participate in a Blues Guitar playoff in Bakersfield. Justin took another SoCal road trip to Los Angeles where he and his peers played at the The Ragin Cajun in Redondo Beach and a Stellar Shows Production - "Six Strings Showdown 21 & Under Blues Guitar Cavalcade" in Long Beach.

Justin and the other young artists who performed have been recognized as the next generation's blues future and have been embraced by the blues community.

While his Dad manages his Facebook presence, Justin launched his own Instagram account JustinWalterMusic that has exceeded 1000 followers watching and listening to Justin's music clips.

Recently Justin had the opportunity to play for the Sacramento Blues Society's Blues in the Schools Program, giving back to the community. He also got to hang out with Christone "Kingfish" Ingram and met up with Eric and Ladonna Gales here in Sacramento. Just imagine – Justin played a total of 24 performances in an eight month period, all from a single Instagram message "how do I get to play in a blues jam"!

Justin looks forward to the opportunities ahead that continue here in Northern California, but it also looks like we are planning trips to Los Angeles, Denver and Nashville in the future. In his own words "I could not be more thankful for the friendships, encouragement, opportunities and blessings of being part of the blues community".



Charles "Little Charlie" Baty: July 10, 1953 - March 6, 2020

Compiled by Mindy Giles with Rick Estrin, Chris "Kid" Andersen, Ray Copeland, Liz Peel Van Houten, Stan Powell, Aaron Moreno, Mark Hummel, June Core and Quique Gómez

Fearless, fierce, a relentless seeker. Generous, observant, clever, wordy, worldly. One of the greatest modern guitarists. The leader and co-founder of Sacramento's Little Charlie & The Nightcats,

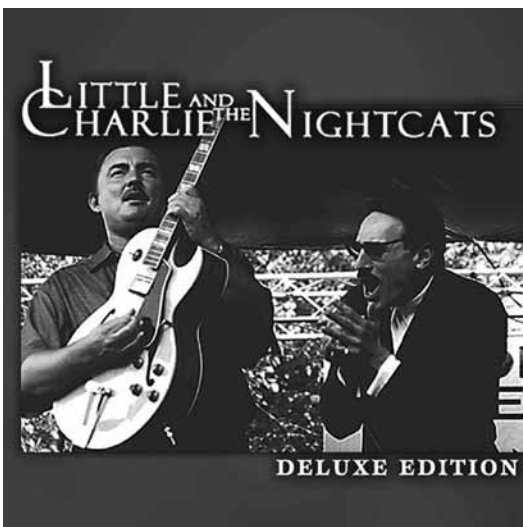
Charles Baty never played the same song the same way twice. Guitar World said, "Baty's straight blues playing is eye-popping...inspired and manic blues guitar. He can sting like Buddy Guy and swing like Tiny Grimes." The band released nine albums on Alligator Records (1987-2008) before Charlie decided to retire from their worldwide touring. But of course, he never stopped playing. Inside his vast musical mind jazz, rockabilly and swing had a very fertile playground.

More recently, he fronted **The Little Charlie Caravan** and jazz trio **Little Charlie & Organ Grinder Swing**, and performed regularly with his blues colleagues Mark Hummel, Kim Wilson and Anson Funderburgh. He released fourteen albums in his lifetime. His fifteenth, *Cooking At Greaseland*, with Quique Gómez will be released soon on Gulf Coast Records.

We lost him on March 6, from a heart attack due to complications of pneumonia. For blues fans worldwide, it has been akin to losing Muddy, Junior, Stevie, John Lee (who intoned in back in 1987- "You're dangerous with that guitar, man. They're gonna put you in jail.") Here, his friends who knew him best speak eloquently of their time with him:

Rick Estrin (Co-founder of Little Charlie & The Nightcats):

For me to say that my association with Charles Baty probably saved my life sounds overly dramatic, but if you know my story, and especially if you knew me personally 45 years ago, you know it's not an exaggeration. 1976, the year I began playing with Charles, marked the start of a major turnaround in my life. I'm not going to go into detail about my lifestyle



©Alligator Records/Photo: Art Tipaldi

when Charles invited me to join his fledgling band, but I'll just say it was unhealthy, and illegal - and by 1976, things for me, looked and felt hopeless. Then I stepped off a Greyhound bus in Sacramento, and my life began a whole new trajectory.

In those early days, our bar tab often exceeded our pay...and it wasn't because we drank so much - but our mutual love for some obscure and arcane styles of blues, kept us going. I had lived in Chicago and had the opportunity to play with some well-known blues musicians, but right away I could see that Charles' talent as an instrumentalist - on harmonica and guitar - was like nothing I'd ever seen.

For me, being in a band with Charles was simultaneously intimidating and inspiring. Playing with him instilled in me a badly needed sense of pride, and really forced me to work and develop my skills and my craft - 'cause I could see, otherwise - I was gonna be reduced to a nightly afterthought.

In 32 years and listening to Little Charlie on literally thousands of gigs, I never lost that feeling of anticipation, wonderment and fascination.

His skills and knowledge never stopped growing - His work ethic never wavered - but it was his instinct for constructing the most daring, thrilling, and wildly logical solos that was his absolutely unique gift. Night after night, I would introduce Little Charlie as "One of a kind" - it's an

overused phrase, but in Charles' case, it was the gospel truth. At his best, he was the best.

Christoffer "Kid" Andersen (Guitarist, Rick Estrin & The Nightcats; Producer-owner, Greaseland Studios)

Little Charlie Baty was one of a kind. I think I can also say that our relationship was one of a kind. At first, he was my idol, which he always remained. Then he was my friend, which grew over the years. Ultimately, I was his successor in the band, no, the DYNASTY that he started, **The Nightcats**.

It says a fair bit about the less attractive facets of the human psyche that because I took his place in the band he started, many assumed that we were "rivals" of sorts, even thinking that there was animosity between Charlie and the new Nightcats. Such speculations were wrong. The Charlie I got to know was a very warm, inclusive and playful man. We enjoyed taking swipes and cheap shots at each other, but just like when we played together, it was always humorous sparring, never fighting. I came to truly love him, and greeting him with a big hug every time I saw him would always fill me with a happiness you can only get from family.

Truth is, decades of being a band leader had worn him down. His health and psyche had both suffered from the immense responsibilities and stress of having to keep an internationally touring outfit together. This led to his short-lived "retirement" around 2008, but his love for playing and LEARNING music never faded. He was still exploring new musical territories, up to the moment he left us. He was always evolving, not just in his spare time, but right in front of everybody's eyes as he took the stage with his guitars. That was one of the things that made watching Little Charlie play such an exhilarating experience. He was an electrifying performer. Never mind

the more obvious stage antics, because even just sitting down and playing the guitar in a seemingly relaxed fashion, he would have any attentive listeners at the edge of their seats.

He had such an immense vocabulary of blues, swing, bop, Rockabilly, Western Swing, Brazilian and Gypsy jazz styles of playing; his unique brain would NEVER run out of new ways in which to put them all together. I will forever bow to the musical giant that was Little Charlie.

"Those are some big shoes to fill" is a phrase I would, and still do hear daily. Well... duh!! There's only one way to tackle such a daunting task. There's only one way to "replace" someone who is irreplaceable, and that is to be yourself and be the best version of yourself you possibly can.

One cannot copy Little Charlie, because the very essence of what made him Little Charlie was to be original and unpredictable, and making completely off-the-wall statements in the language he had learned from the masters he studied so intently.

I believe that after a few years of knowing him, I did earn his respect. Maybe it was seeing me adapt to his classic tunes playing alongside Rick Estrin. Maybe it was when during a recording session together where I was playing the upright bass, and he was noodling with "Four" by Miles Davis and I spontaneously joined in. Maybe it was that time in Australia when we were touring together, and they were still **Little Charlie & The Nightcats** and I was there with Charlie Musselwhite, and he complimented me on my outfit, which was essentially the same as his! Mostly, his respect was hard earned and had to happen over time, but every time I could feel it happening was a moment for me to treasure. In the end, I felt he treated me like an equal. But we all know that there will never be anyone equal to Little Charlie Baty. I hope I made him proud. I sure as hell am proud to have known him.

Ray "Catfish" Copeland (*The Ray "Catfish" Copeland Band*)

I met Charlie sometime in the summer of 1975. He had just graduated from UC Berkeley with 4.0 grade point average in mathematics and was then in Sacramento. I had a band named **Quickshake** (Liz Peel-bass, Jim Monroe- piano, Tony Montanino- drums) and was playing a gig at The Gateway Lounge in Roseville that summer, when Charlie Baty showed up. We were sharing the bill with the more well-known and established **Sunland Blues Band**. Charlie introduced himself and played a few songs with both bands. We were all duly impressed with Charlie's expertise on both harmonica and guitar. I assumed that he might want to join on with more established **Sunland** band, but he asked if he could join our band and we jumped at the opportunity.

We spent many hours rehearsing and listening to the blues classics, and Charlie immediately became our featured artist in the band. He taught me how to play proper guitar accompaniment behind his superb harmonica and he also excelled on guitar on some of our songs.

Charlie and I hung out a lot that summer, listening to blues and swing jazz. I had an extensive collection of LPs and lent Charlie several Bill Doggett LPs featuring the great Billy Butler on guitar,

who played the classic riffs on the original version of "Honky Tonk". I also lent Charlie an LP by album by Oscar Moore, the stellar guitarist from The Nat "King" Cole Trio along with two LPs done by guitarist Bill Jennings, who rose to prominence in the Louis Jordan Band in the 40's and 50's. Charles taped them all and studied them closely and the rest was history.



Photo: Grez Guitars

Liz Peel VanHouten (*1st Bass player w/ Little Charlie & The Nightcats*)

I met Charles in 1975. I was playing a gig with **Quickshake**, Ray "Catfish" Copeland's band. Charles showed up out of the blue and asked to sit in on harmonica. When he wanted to join our band, we were thrilled.

About a year later, Charles and Catfish split-up--Tony Montanino and I stayed with Charles; Jim

Monroe left with Catfish. Charles took the helm and changed the name of the band to **Little Charlie and the Nightcats**, honoring Little Walter's band. Soon, we added Kenny Blue Ray to the lineup, and played at places like the Aero Club for whatever we could make from the tip jar. It wasn't long before Charles convinced Rick Estrin to come up from the Bay Area. Rick took over on harmonica and vocals, Charles switched, just like that, to playing guitar, a feat which completely amazed me! At some point, Tony left, and Bill La Rock took over on drums. Then Kenny headed to Texas, leaving the line-up as Charlie, Rick, Bill, and me

This version of **Little Charlie and the Nightcats** stayed together for about five years, playing around Sacramento and then expanding out of town. Charlie and Rick's enthusiasm for blues was contagious and their high energy performances attracted audiences. A female bass player was rare, too, back then. By 1979, we were playing blues festivals and smoky nightclubs, including a regular Friday night gig at Maurice's American Bar. We traveled to San Francisco and the surrounding Bay Area and north toward Chico, Eureka, Arcata and several cities in Oregon. I loved it, but it was becoming increasingly difficult to do justice to my studies at UC Davis, hold down a part-time job to pay bills, and continue to work at being the bassist for an up-and-coming band. My world began to crack apart as I realized I would have to choose. Charles already had his degree from UC Berkeley, so nothing was standing in his way. In '81, not being a big risk taker, and not driven like Little Charlie, I chose the conservative route and left the band.

All along, Charles was my blues mentor, making sure I was familiar with Little Walter, Muddy Waters, BB King, Sonny Boy Williamson, and a whole lot more. He must have spent hours and hours making cassettes for me to listen to and practice. His enthusiasm pushed me and expanded my horizons. Since he wanted a genuine blues sound, he liked that I was a fledgling blues player without prior musical bias. At the same time, his guitar influences were branching out big time, including Charlie Christian and Eddie Lockjaw Davis. He liked to listen to sax players to get ideas for guitar—Sonny Stitt was another one. Charles pushed me to learn some jazz standards. I started putting notes down in a fake book to learn tunes like "Take the A-Train", "Don't Get Around Much Anymore", and "Cherokee". I am pretty sure Charles envisioned the band starting out a set with a jazz instrumental before bringing Rick out on stage to wow the

Charlie Baty, from *Liz Peel Van Houten*, con't. from p. 7

crowd. Then, the worst thing happened—my irreplaceable fake book got left at a gig in Oakland and was never found. That was huge, because I was never going to get that time back from Charles to recreate that book.

Today, I am truly grateful for the part I did get to play in his life as one of the original **Nightcats**. Allow me to reiterate what I said to Charles at the 2015 SBS HOF induction ceremony: "Thank you for mentoring me in the blues, believing in me, and giving me so many opportunities to play blues venues and meet blues players. Your reverence for the blues made a believer out of me. Your own musical accomplishments, having taken you far and wide, are a testament to your character and speak for themselves. Your tireless energy onstage has been, and will always be, an inspiration".

Aaron Moreno (Guitarist)

I first met Charles Baty about 25 years ago. I was still in my formative years as a blues guitarist, taking lessons from another Sacramento blues legend – the late Johnny "Guitar" Knox. After having built a solid blues foundation, I told him that I wanted to learn the jazzier side of blues. Again, we built a foundation in that sub-genre and after about six months, he told me: "Go see Little Charlie. Tell him Johnny Knox sent you." So go see Little Charlie I did.

The band started as a trio, with Charles wielding a big Gibson ES-175. I wasn't sure what to expect, until he counted off the first song. It was "Cherokee" (a jazz standard we would discuss over the years), taken at a breakneck, almost reckless tempo. I watched in awe as he attacked the song with a punk rock intensity that I then didn't realize could apply to jazz. Charles then proceeded to give a 90-minute lesson in the history of jazz, blues, rockabilly, and everything in between. He ended that set playing Albert Collins' signature tune, "Frosty", on a blue Strat, with an intensity that few but Collins himself could produce. That day I had a new guitar hero!

After the set, I approached Charles to introduce myself. I told him Johnny Knox sent me. He smiled and we chatted about what I wanted to learn. The next time we met, he handed me cassettes—Charlie Christian, Jimmy Bryant & Speedy West, Les Paul, George Barnes, Billy Butler. It was the start of a mentorship that lasted until his passing.

What I learned from Charles is how to think musically. His playing is as much cerebral as it is brute force, always taking risks. Few blues guitarists could match his musical skill.

I wrote the following on Facebook, after the last time I played with him: "There are few things as intimidating as playing the guitar with Charles Baty. It was very apropos, considering the occasion - honoring the memory of Johnny Knox on his birthday for the second year since his passing. It was Johnny who told me to seek out Charles nearly 25 years ago. And it was from Charles that I learned to be musically fearless, musically intellectual, and musically cut-throat (among other things). His melding of blues, jazz, and various other forms of Americana make him the best (in my humble opinion)...I mean, literally, the best." To which he responded: "Thanks for the incredibly nice and generous words Aaron. I don't agree with the 'best' designation, but being fearless is something that I learned a long time ago and believe that it is utterly necessary to be a good musician. And you, have matured into a respectable player of great musical dimensions and crazy ideas. I loved that bass note work that you were doing last night. Thanks Aaron!"

No. Thank you Charles for helping me find my voice. And helping

me be me.

Stan Powell (Harmonica)

I met Little Charlie in 1978, when I took group harmonica lessons from him at the UC Davis student union. This was not a "master class" that world-class musicians like Charles might give, but instead this was a class for total beginners. I went on to take private lessons from him. His advice ranged from the caustic ("the point is not to use the harp to make bathroom sounds") to the technical ("anytime you want to bend the 6-draw, remember you have the same note in the 2-draw") to the practical ("if you make a mistake, repeat it a couple of times so everyone thinks you did it on purpose"). Charles gave some of his best advice as we listened to records. For example, he explained how Little Walter's "Juke" isn't just a bunch of great licks, but instead each verse belongs together with the other verses, and each instrument is reacting to the rest of the band. I still think about his advice and continue to learn from it.

Charles was my most important musical mentor, and I will always be grateful for his generosity. While I have played with, and learned from, many other musicians over the years, it was Charles who opened the door for me to become a musician. I owe my start to Little Charlie. I will miss him.



Photo provided by June Core

June Core (Drummer For Little Charlie & The Nightcats 1997-2003)

Little Charlie, a consummate professional! Always strived to be the best he could be. Never stopped learning his craft, musicianship and performances. Year after year, mile after mile. Always listening and picking the best that music has to offer, if there were even just two people in the audience. Charlie, Rick Estrin and Ronnie James gave it their all. Even at times Charlie seemed possessed with reaching and striving to dig something new out of himself and band, there was so much laughter and interesting things we all shared in. These things and more I carry with me on my own path, thanks to Charlie, Rick Estrin and Ronnie James Weber! Charlie will never be forgotten by me, and so many.

Mark Hummel (Harmonica/Bandleader/Producer)

One of the most fun Euro tours **The Golden State-Lone Star Revue** ever did was in 2012, mainly because, unlike other occasions, we had control of our own tour.

Charlie, Marty Dodson, Richard W. Grigsby & I started in Ospel, Holland at Moulin Blues on a show with Lazy Lester, then proceeded to do gigs, travelling in a rental car around Europe. Charlie was learning French and would ask directions and speak to venue owners when they spoke little English. We did our best to navigate

maps and GPS. The wonderful thing was that we could take our time, without an official road manager.

We ate well. We also had some days off to sightsee, especially in Belgium. Charlie loved the Belgium beer shops. We played France, Belgium, Holland, Germany, Luxembourg as I recall - a few festivals.

It's the only time we've done a tour under our own steam, and we



had a blast! I think this was the tour where Baty actually took me to dinner in France somewhere (a rarity) and told me his story about how he left his own band. Long story but a combo of road hazards and disappointments, health travails, etc. I realized after he left GSLS that he really didn't have to do the road, as he was economically sound for many years. It was purely the music that kept him traveling.



Photo provided by Quique Gomez

Quique Gómez (Harmonica Player, Singer-Madrid, Spain)

I met Charlie in person, for the first time, one hour before our first show together. It was September 2018 and I was on tour in California. For the Sacramento area shows, Kid Andersen suggested I call Charlie to play guitar (Kid was the regular guitar player on that tour).

What could I say..... YESSS, let's call him. Charlie didn't know about me but he was happy to play with Kid Andersen, so I was lucky that I was going to do two shows with one of my favorite guitar players in the world!!!!

I sent some songs to Charlie and soon we realized that we both love the same music. Charlie was one of the best blues players in the world, but he also loved Jazz and some others roots music, so we put together a set list that we never rehearsed, we just played it in two shows.

We played The Torch in Sacramento and the next day we played in Nevada City. We really had a ball playing these shows with Kid Andersen on bass and Alex Pettersen on drums, so in my next California tour, four months later, we went to the studio and we made a recording together. The CD will be released soon, and Charlie plays great on it. At the end of April we should have been touring Spain supporting this CD. But I feel lucky that I had the chance to get closer to this monster of the guitar and a great human being. Thanks, Charlie for letting me be part of your world these last two years.

Hall of Fame Wants Your Nominations!

By Sally Katzen

Summer will be here before we know it and that means that the Sacramento Blues Society Hall of Fame event won't be far behind!

SBS members, as well as the general public, can nominate their favorite musicians, promoters and supporters to the SBS HOF Committee, who will then screen the applications to meet the criteria approved by the Board of Directors.

Go to <http://www.sacblues.com/hall-of-fame/> to fill out the form by following the instructions/criteria. You'll find past honorees on our website as well. Nominations are accepted year round; however this year's deadline is July 1st, 2020. The nominees will be announced in the September/October issue of the SBS Blue Notes.

The HOF Induction Ceremony will be at Harlow's Restaurant & Night Club, 2708 J Street, Sacramento, on Sunday, October 4th, 2020 from 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm, with an After Party/Wall Hanging at the Torch Club, 904 15th Street, Sacramento from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm.

Each year the cost of production and promotion of The Hall of Fame event has increased. To keep door costs down, the HOF is accepting donations to help with the presentation of this event which honors those committed to the Blues. All donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by the IRS. Make checks payable to the Sacramento Blues Society, add a note indicating the donation is for the HOF. PayPal donations are also accepted on our website.

Mindy Giles will be helping me again this year with promotion and serving as stage manager as well. It is always a pleasure to be working with her and she has shared some great ideas for the upcoming event.

See you there!

Renee Erickson Sullivan Update

As of press time for this issue, the good news is that our SBS Board member Renee Erickson Sullivan has just had double lung transplant surgery and will begin her long recovery! Please check out her GoFundMe page: <https://bit.ly/3cAePTK>, if you'd like to make a donation.

SBS Announces Guitar Fundraiser Your Chance to Acquire a Unique Instrument!



Thanks to the generosity of member Craig Christensen, we have an exclusive opportunity to raise money by either raffling or auctioning off a special and unique guitar. Craig has donated his Charvel electric guitar, signed by all the members of the Papa Roach band! We're working out the details on how we'll proceed with this fundraiser, so stay tuned for more information. And meanwhile, when we all get back to attending live SBS events, you'll be able to see the guitar in person!

SBS Board Update

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and shelter-in-place order for the entire state

of California, the SBS Board of Directors canceled our March meeting. We held a "virtual" meeting for April, and got together via teleconference to handle SBS business, and plan to do the same for May as well. Please stay tuned for any further developments! And STAY HOME and stay safe!

Thank You Donors

Our donors and members are the life blood of our organization. Without you we would be unable to accomplish our mission. Thank you all, and especially these major donors:

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Please join these major donors by making a tax deductible contribution on our website: www.sacblues.com or by sending a check made out to "The Sacramento Blues Society". Mail to SBS PO Box 60580, Sacramento, CA 95860-0580.

We need your continued support. When you renew your membership, why not add an additional contribution? Every little bit helps!

Colin James Rocks the Starlet Room!

By Cari Chenkin

I didn't expect that March 11, 2020, would be the last live music show I'd see for months, but if I had to pick one to have to last my memory for a long time, this would be it! Having never seen Colin live before, I was very excited to experience this monster guitar talent in person, and he did not disappoint.



My first clue was spotting the 14 guitars onstage; 10 would be played by Colin and four would be played by his other guitarist, Chris Caddell. And believe me, Colin did play all of them! From a couple of Gibson Les Pauls to a beautiful resonator, he switched guitars seamlessly from song to song.

Accompanying Colin and Chris were Steve Marriner - harp and bass and Geoff Hicks - drums. Together, this quartet put out some

blistering sets, without being overly loud and obnoxious on volume. The sets consisted of a mix of original tunes and some tasty covers. Most notable for me was their fabulous cover of **Fleetwood Mac's** "Oh Well" (one of my all-time fave songs!) and their touching rendition of **Van Morrison's** "Into the Mystic". I wish I had taken notes on all the songs they performed so my review could be more "targeted", but I didn't. So I'll just have to say that each tune, from upbeat swing or rocker to slow blues jam, was a treat for the ears. I spent a bunch of time out on the dance floor, because the tunes were tailor-made for dancing, and I know everyone who attended had a great time. Thanks Colin, and come back to Sacramento soon!



Photos by Bob Cosman and Mindy Giles



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