



BLUE NOTES!

Blues Society



BLUES REVUE
BLUES MUSIC SAMPLER
SEPT - OCT 2020
VOL 41
ISSUE #5



Napkins



LIGHTNING INSIDE THE HERED



the USED BLUES band used again



ART KING RAY VAUGHAN

President's Column

By Sally Katen



As the months go flying by, it looks like the virus is continuing to spread and that we are going to be in for a long haul. Stay safe, stay in if you can, and wear a mask! The SBS has face masks available and they are pretty awesome! Please see the article about the new and improved SBS face mask in this issue of Blue Notes.

We have a new board member, Chris Clark, who was appointed to complete Art Quinn's term after he resigned. Chris comes to the Sacramento Blues Society with a lot of experience, knowledge and a strong love of the blues. In addition, Jim Tatol is our new Acting Secretary and Barbara Katen is our new Acting Parliamentarian.

SBS Board Member Renee Erickson has returned to us after a successful double lung transplant! Her family organized a drive-by welcome home parade on July 26th, with the fire department, police department, family and a large number of SBS members and friends participating. It was so good to see her. Welcome home Renee!

We are busy working behind the scenes from home and will have a few things to share with you in the near future.

On a final note, I ask that you please support our local musicians and member businesses as they are also hurting during this difficult time. Let's all do what we can to help each other! And, stay safe!

Call for Board Volunteers/Annual Membership Meeting

As we do every year, the Sacramento Blues Society will hold its bylaws-mandated Annual Membership Meeting. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we are planning a virtual meeting, with details to come in the Nov-Dec newsletter.

We will have three vacancies on our Board of Directors, and a number of current Board members will also run for re-election. If you'd like to have a direct hand in running the SBS, and have the time and desire to make the commitments required, please contact our Board Development Chairman, Doug Pringle at sacramentoblues1979@gmail.com. The deadline for submission of candidates is Wednesday, September 30, 2020.

Anyone running for election is asked to submit a brief statement of who they are and why they are running, along with a head shot photo, to be published in the November-December issue of the Blue Notes. Any current Board members who are up for re-election this year should also submit statements and photos.

Ballots go out to the Membership in November.

2020 Committee Chairs

Blues in the Schools - Lisa Phenix

Hall of Fame - Sally Katen

Events - Mindy Giles

Membership - Linda McShane

Sponsorships/Fundraising - Doug Pringle

Public Relations & Social Media - Mindy Giles

Volunteer Coordinator - Lisa Phenix, Deanna Myerson

Donor Gifts - Sally Katen

Blue Notes Newsletter - Cari Chenkin & Jan Kelley

IBC Competition - MariLu Onweller

Webmaster - Dave Baldwin

Board of Directors Development - Doug Pringle

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 organization 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) which 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/

2020 Board of Directors

Sally Katen, President

Lisa Phenix, Vice President

Rich Gormley, Treasurer

Barbara Katen, Parliamentarian

Jim Tatol, Secretary

Cari Chenkin

Mari Lu Onweller

Renee Erickson Sullivan

Rick Snyder

Doug Pringle

Chris Clark

Sacramento Blues Society Publications

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Blues In The Schools (BITS)

Update

by Lisa Phenix, BITS Chair

Goodbye & Thanks

BITS is sad to announce that Co-Chair David Alcock has decided to step down. In addition to having been an SBS Board of Directors member, webmaster, and the social media guy, Dave has been active with BITS for over 15 years. Throughout that time, he ran the BITS Assembly Program and the annual Student Showcase stage with Liz Walker, and was regularly the SBS emcee and stage manager. Liz and David were instrumental in the success of the BITS *Out of the Box Festival* in 2016, along with the apt assistance of Swell Productions. BITS loves you, David, and will miss all your hard work and dedication to BITS!



Updated Materials

BITS has been busy getting its house in order, updating its brochure, banner and logo; and archiving information from extensive successful past programs to be ready, willing and able to meet the blues music needs of our students as soon as COVID clears. This past year, more students than ever showed interest in music, but lack access to instruments and music education, which prompted SBS and BITS to implement a Student Endowment Fund to address this need. Read more about that in a separate article in this issue of Blue Notes.

BITS Videos Coming Soon!

Due to COVID, it was a real loss to our students to be unable to continue the After School Program and perform at the Student Showcase this past May. BITS is consulting with our after school high school teachers, musicians and students as to what the next school year will look like, and how BITS can best meet their blues music needs.

Since BITS cannot safely offer live assembly performances at schools at this time, BITS is creating downloadable video assemblies to bring the blues to students everywhere. SBS members, BITS donors and sponsors, your generosity is making this happen. Thank you!

The four 48-minute video performances, targeting grades K - 8, will be divided into four 12-minute learning blocks. Students can listen, sing along, play body percussion and ask questions. They are encouraged to write their own songs and teachers can answer questions and encourage song writing.

Blues Educators Help Wanted

Are you a Sacramento area teacher? BITS needs to hear from you. Are you a student interested in music? Reach out to BITS. We need you and your creative ideas to help us provide the highest quality blues education. Are you a Blues Society member interested in helping BITS? Please join us to bring the blues to the next generation. Contact Lisa Phenix, 916-719-6106, lisap@winfirst.com .

2020 SBS Hall of Fame Update

by Sally Katen, HOF Committee Chairwoman

Wish we could be looking forward to the HOF Event at the end of September, but we are quarantined to help get through the Pandemic. So there will be NO 2020 Hall of Fame Celebration, but SBS would like to celebrate our previously Inducted HOF Members, in this Hall of Fame Edition of the Blue Notes!

HOF Members

2008

Arbess Williams (OT)
Gene Chambers (D)
Johnny Heartsman (D)

2012

Al Arnett (D)
Marshall "Soulman" Jones (OT)
Ray "Cattfish" Copeland
Steve Samuels (D)
Torch Club/Teixeira Family (NM)

2015

Bruce Pressley
Donna Proctor Smith
Liz Peel VanHouten
Michael Andrews (D)
Robert Sidwell

2018

Andy Santana
Artist Joyce
Frankie Lee (D)
Jimmy Morello
Richard W. Grigsby

2010

Charles Baty (D)
Johnny "Guitar" Knox (D)
Phil Givant (D)
Mick Martin
Rick Estrin

2013

Jim Monroe
Jimmy Pailer
Lew Fratis
Nate "Snakeboy" Shiner (OT)
"Ratatat" Pat Balcom

2016

Anthony "Tony" Montanino
Dale Lyberger
Doug Crumpacker
Harvey "Guitar Mac" MacKnally
Marcel Smith

2019

Kenny Marchese
Leo Bootes
Marty Deradoorian
Robert Nakashima
Gary "Whalin" Black (D)

2011

"Big Mike" Balma (NM)
Lena Mosley
Omar Shariff (D) aka David Alexander Elam

2014

Aaron King
Derek Washington
Jan Kelley (NM)
Joe Lev
Marshal Wilkerson

2017

Bill Scholer
Fred "Deacon" Baker
Jay Peterson (D)
Kenny "Obie Dee" Van Cromphaut
Stan Powell
Tim Wilbur

Legend

Total of 52 Hall of Fame Members
(D) Deceased = 12
(NM) Non Musician = 3
(OT) Out of Town = 3
34 active Hall of Fame Members

SBS Creates Student Endowment Fund

By Rich Gormley, SBS Board Member & Treasurer

During the July 14, 2020 Board of Directors meeting, the Board unanimously agreed to establish a Sacramento Blues Society fund to aid students in the acquisition of musical instruments, equipment, special education or mentoring in an effort to foster their interest and abilities in the music world, particularly blues. To initiate the fund, the Sacramento Blues Society and the Blues in the Schools program each contributed \$1,000. In addition to donations from members, sponsors or others, SBS will donate 5% of its membership dues collected to the fund. This new fund joins the Gene Chambers Musicians' Crisis Fund as a core program of the Sacramento Blues Society.

The focus of this fund will be on children who exhibit a certain degree of proclivity for music and need financial help to acquire a musical instrument. The world is also moving to online education and even the Blues in the Schools programs will be conducted via

the Internet. This may necessitate computers, video cameras, wifi adapters or other equipment to get a student, a group or a class, connectivity to the Internet. This fund may be used for such purposes. A perfect example of this was in the last Blue Notes (Jul/Aug 2020), wherein Mitch Ward of the Crossing 49 Band described how a student in a Grass Valley school who demonstrated a great ability on the guitar but couldn't afford one, was subsequently given a guitar and amplifier which Mitch acquired from Fender.

We're accepting applications from students or their families, teachers, or SBS BITS presenters/mentors. Contact us at vicepresident@sacblues.com for applications.

Getting Our Dose of the Blues

By Cari Chenkin

If you're a music lover like I am (and if you're reading this publication, you certainly are!), this current COVID-19 pandemic and quarantine period have resulted in a pernicious condition I've named "LOLM", or Lack of Live Music! Characterized by grumpiness, a state of the "blahs" and excessive snacking, this disease has infected our blues community! While we know the only "real" cure will be the clearing of the virus, enabling us to once again enjoy venues and live music, there is a temporary panacea available in the form of radio shows, internet concerts and recorded music.

Therefore, this issue of the Blue Notes will focus on reviews of recently released blues CDs, some from our very own member bands, as well as information about radio shows that feature or include blues.

And, by the way, if any of you SBS member bands have recently released CDs, we invite you to submit them to us for review in a future issue. To submit your CD, send an email to: editor@sacblues.com, and I'll respond with information on where to send them.

We're also including some publicity for a couple of organizations that are working to get grants and funding for venues, including the National Independent Venue Association (NIVA) and the National Independent Talent Organization (NITO), which created the "Save Our Stages" campaign. This campaign and these organizations need your help to make sure our government and legislators take action to help preserve performing arts through this economic slowdown.

Oh, and if you're interested in the CDs we've reviewed in this newsletter, buy them! This helps support artists who can't currently tour and play live shows!



CD Review: Watermelon Slim - "Traveling Man" (Northern Blues Music)

Reviewed by Rick Snyder

Wow! A blues double CD! Not only is this an ambitious endeavor but one that sparks memories of my teenage years. No, there were no CDs, but there were definitely double albums, and we waited with bated breath for their release. I remember poring over each word in the liner notes, who played what, how long was each track, who produced, mixed, etc.

Watermelon Slim, aka Bill Homans, is the only player on this gorgeous, live, double CD. This man looks like he has lived a life to be remembered.

And that voice! If ever a voice was destined to sing the blues, well, you've got to listen for yourself.

Watermelon Slim has sharpened his bad to the bone, bare-bones style of a man, a guitar, a harmonica, and a mic to a razor's edge. At 70 years old, with thirteen albums to his credit, Slim has seen his share of two-lane blacktop from the cab of a big rig; faced the Grim Reaper during a heart malfunction; as well as experienced university life, having earned a Master's Degree in History at Oklahoma State University.

His rough, grizzled blues sounds like you're on the back porch of a friend's house in the backwoods of Oklahoma, just taking in the afternoon. The beauty of having recorded this double CD live at two Oklahoma blues clubs in 2016 is that you get that up-close and personal sound that is sometimes elusive in the studio.

This beautiful piece of recorded American roots music runs the gamut from originals celebrating life behind the wheel of a Freightliner to coming face-to-face with the last great frontier – death; to maybe putting down his guitar and retiring, to acknowledging those who came before him and were his inspiration. He also pays homage to Cat-Iron, Mississippi Fred McDowell, Muddy Waters, and the standard "John Henry" covered by more names than can be told in this review.

With his mighty fine picking, in which he gives ample time to each of three resonators, including a dobro that he plays on his lap left-handed and backward, Slim engages his audience with some wit that he has refined over 70 years, some story-telling and some relatable humanity.

All of which we need much more of today.

SBS Board Update

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the SBS Board of Directors met via Zoom in August. We will do the same for the September meeting, and will see how the opening up of the state is going, before deciding upon future meetings. Please stay tuned for any further developments! And STAY HOME when you can, wear your (SBS!) masks and stay safe!



Sacramento Area Blues Radio Shows

Day	Radio Station	Website	Dial	Blues/Roots Show	Host(s)	Times(PDT)	NOTES
Monday	KDRT-FM	kdrf.org	95.7FM	Juke in the Back	Matt the Cat	10-11pm	http://www.jukeintheback.org/
Tuesday	KVMR-FM	kvmr.org	89.5FM	So Many Roads	Thom Myers, Richard Tewes	2-4pm	
Wednesday	KVMR-FM	kvmr.org	89.5FM	Soul Poppy Jazz	Klara Voyant	2-4pm	Blues is part of the mix
Wednesday	KVMR-FM	kvmr.org	89.5FM	Ragpicker's Review	Jeff Wright	10pm-12am	Blues is part of the mix
Thursday	KVMR-FM	kvmr.org	89.5FM	Blues 2 U	Russ Roy	12am-4am	
Friday	K-ZAP	k-zap.org	93.3FM	Rush Hour Blues	Various	5-5:20pm	Blues is part of the station format
Saturday	KXJZ-FM	capradio.org	90.9FM	Mick Martin's Blues Party	Mick Martin	1-3pm	
Sunday	KVMR-FM	kvmr.org	89.5FM	Blues Spectrum	Various (Rotation)	1-3pm	1st week – Ralph Henson 2nd week – Russ Roy 3rd week – Derek Washington 4th week – Steve Cagle
Sunday	KVMR-FM	kvmr.org	89.5FM	Blue Garage	Michael Axelman	3-5pm	1st & 3rd Sundays
Sunday	KDEE-FM	kdeefm.org	97.5FM	Sunday Blues Blend	Tim White	6-8pm	
Sunday	KVMR-FM	kvmr.org	89.5FM	Juke Joint	Scott Hickman	12am-4am	

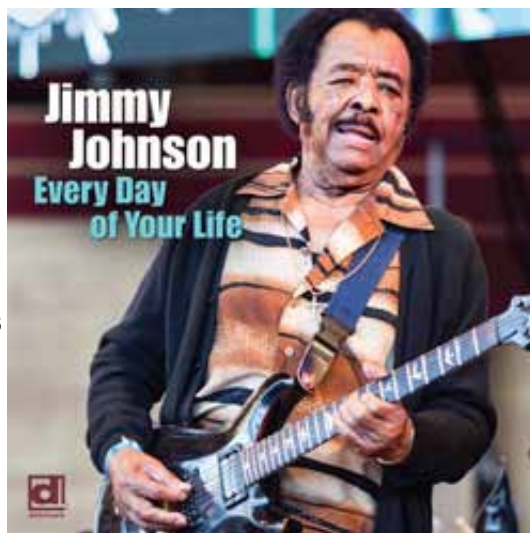
CD Review: Jimmy Johnson - "Every Day of Your Life" (Delmark Records)

Reviewed by Mindy Giles

He's been known "The Barroom Preacher" for many decades. Chicago blues/R&B man Jimmy Johnson has a wealth of knowledge from which to preach. He will be 92 years old this year, and his gorgeous tenor is every bit as soaring as it was when his Delmark Records debut, *Johnson's Whacks*, released in 1980.

His guitar playing, ever inventive and always pushing stylistic boundaries, is clean and spirited, whether it is his funky and wise title track, the moody slow blues of Percy Mayfield's "Strange Things Happening" (with Delmark's house pianist Roosevelt Purifoy) or his lively reggae-tinged heartbeat original, "My Ring." His beautiful, rich re-working of his friend Fenton Robinson's classic "Somebody Loan Me A Dime" (which features Brother John Katke's piano) telegraphs the pain of loneliness.

Johnson has two different stellar Chicago bands supporting him on his five originals and four choice covers. And what a deep and timely closing choice—"Lead Me On." It is Jimmy Johnson, solo, playing piano and singing his secular message, ("You know how it feels, you understand, What it is to be a stranger In this unfriendly land --here's my hand , take my hand , darling and lead me on...), but fully infused with gospel from his birthplace in Holly Springs, Mississippi.



He grew up among a number of future blues stars—his friend Matt Murphy, and his two younger brothers, Syl Johnson (soul/R&B star and writer of "Take Me To The River") and Mack Thompson, the future bassist for Magic Sam. He moved north to Chicago in 1950 ("Economics and to get away from that Jim Crow!"), and his younger brothers followed. Johnson played behind soul stars, Otis Clay, Denise LaSalle, and Walter Jackson through the 1960s and 1970s, then moved on to the grittier West side blues scene. He played rhythm guitar behind Jimmy Dawkins and later with the great Otis Rush --that's Jimmy in Japan on the 1975 classic *So Many Roads- Live in Concert*.

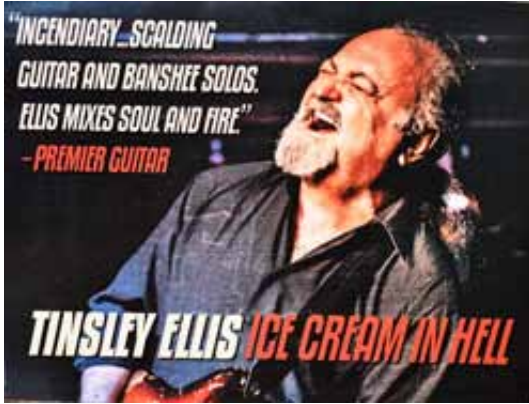
Johnson's Whacks, four eye-opening tracks on Alligator's *Living Chicago Blues, Vol. 1* followed and since then, Johnson has been a central figure in carrying on the sound of authentic Chicago blues.

Support SBS through Amazon Smile

Did you know you can support the Sacramento Blues Society every time you shop online at Amazon, at no cost to you? Amazon Smile 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 prices, 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. Go to Amazonsmile.com. Sign into your Amazon account (or create one). go to the Charity List. Select "The Sacramento Blues Society". That's it! From then on, each purchase helps. Thank you!

CD Review: Tinsley Ellis - "Ice Cream In Hell" (Alligator Records)

Reviewed by Doug Pringle



Released by Alligator Records, *Ice Cream In Hell* is a blast of blues-rock power. The album was recorded in Nashville and produced by Tinsley Ellis and his long-time co-producer Kevin McKendree.

Ice Cream in Hell is the latest statement of raw, rocking blues power from Tinsley Ellis, one of the most exciting and popular blues-rock guitarists around the world. He has been delivering his searing guitar work and gritty vocals to audiences around the globe for over three decades.

Ellis considers his new album the most raw-sounding, guitar-drenched album of his career. It would be difficult to disagree. There are 11 Ellis originals from the nod to Stax-era Albert King, "Last One To Know" to the Hound Dog Taylor-esque romp "Sit Tight Mama" before ending with the slow-burning ballad, "Your Love's Like Heroin". To this reviewer, a lover of slide guitar, the best sound on the album is "Sit Tight Mama". Throughout the album his lyrical guitar solos perfectly match with his fervent vocals.

"Rugged, burning and riveting, Tinsley Ellis is a powerful and commanding presence, both on guitar and as a gruff, full-throated vocalist. He's the hardest-working man in blues-rock... it's impossible to not enjoy the ride." BLUES MUSIC MAGAZINE

CD Review: Red's Blues - "Broke Down In The Fast Lane" (Sherry & Ray Music)

Reviewed by Steve Cagle, Writer, Broadcaster "Blues Spectrum", KVMR FM Community Radio

Red's Blues was formed in 2012 by vocalist Beth Grigsby and her husband, veteran bass player R.W. Grigsby. They released their first album in 2014 and quickly established themselves at music rooms in Sacramento and northern California, frequently inviting other well-known blues artists to join them. Their second album,



You Knock Me Out, was released in late 2017, and like its predecessor, featured guest turns by several highly-acclaimed national and regional blues musicians.

Red's Blues' third album is another ear-pleasing, dance-inducing set of vintage style blues, with ten original songs and a lone cover of a lesser known Big Joe Turner tune. Produced by Beth and R.W., recorded and engineered by Grub Mitchell at Sacramento's Dog Yard Studio, and mixed/mastered to perfection by Chris "Kid" Andersen at his legendary Greaseland Studio in San Jose, this is a top shelf effort in every way. The cover art by Greg LaTraille, depicting R.W. and Beth in full performance while their disabled vehicle sits nearby, adds another layer of class to the overall package.

Red's Blues music is inspired by the blues and various other roots music of the 40s, 50s and 60s, re-imagined with a present day viewpoint, while still evoking the sound and feel of the original music. Considering the high level of technical and musical proficiency involved, it's no surprise that this album outshines most retro-rock and vintage-style blues recordings of recent years.

Throughout the album, the music flows like a big, lazy river, driven by a powerful force, yet in no hurry to reach its destination. It opens with the title track, one of four songs co-written by Beth and R.W., a tale of mishaps on the road that also serves as a social commentary about the current state of the union. The combination of Beth's vocals with the music arrangement and performance create a unique sound that could be mistaken for Patsy Cline singing with the Grateful Dead.

R.W. wrote "Flim Flam Man," a song that first appeared (along with R.W.) on Mark Hummel's *Wayback Machine* album in January 2020. This rendition brings the tempo down slightly and adds a swampy, percussive rhythm. The lyrics provide an assessment of the current commander in chief, making swampy music apropos for the occasion.

"Road Scholar" is a medium-tempo blend of surf and blues penned by R.W., with drummer Tim Wilbur handling the lead vocals. Johnny Burgin, a longtime fixture on the Chicago blues scene and perennial guitarist for the prestigious Delmark Records, contributes to seven songs including this one, where his note-bending fretwork adds a 60s surf music aura to the mix.

"Howlin' Winds," a lesser known Big Joe Turner composition from the mid-1940s, showcases harmonica master Rick Estrin and keyboard maestro Sid Morris, then R.W. takes the microphone for "Jackknifed," a song he co-wrote with Mark Hummel, with Morris handling the barrelhouse piano business.

"Sweet Karma" opens with the familiar guitar riff from the Stones' "Satisfaction" then morphs into a country rock melody similar to the Band's "The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down" while Beth sings from the perspective of a woman yearning to escape a suffocating relationship. Next up is another no-good man tune, "40 Years of Trouble" borrowing the Farfisa organ melody from the 60s Tex-Mex classic "Wooly Bully" to propel the up-tempo romp, with Johnny Burgin's guitar solo giving a boost to the already energized proceedings.

"A Word About Gossip" is R.W.'s reworking of "A Word About Women" by Lazy Lester, with Kyle Rowland doing double duty on both guitar and harmonica while R.W. and Beth provide the duet vocals. Red's Blues guitarist Doug Crumpacker wrote the humorous "my baby left me" song, "G.O.N.E.," a retro rock 'n' roller featuring John Cocuzzi on the ivories and Doug himself taking on the lead

vocals and guitar duties, with amusing call and response backup vocals adding to the merriment.

Beth gets to channel her inner Peggy Lee on the jazzy “Hands Off,” a song she co-wrote with R.W. that also gives John Cocuzzi one more opportunity to leave the ivories well-tickled before the album concludes with Doug Crumpacker’s guitar-driven instrumental “Say What?”

Whether it’s the technical expertise at the boards, the impeccable musicianship from band and guests, or hitting a new level of songwriting, Beth and R.W. have set the bar high for themselves. But there’s no doubt they will rise to the occasion again on their next go-round.



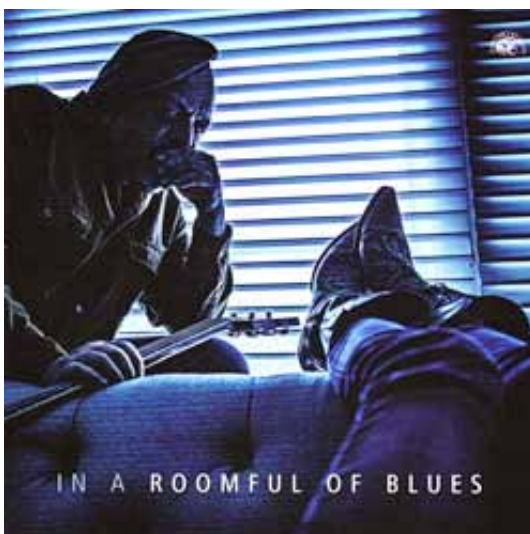
CD Review: Roomful of Blues - “In a Roomful of Blues” (Alligator Records)

Reviewed by Cari Chenkin

I wish there was no COVID-19 right now, because I’ve just listened to the perfect dance party CD! With 13 tracks, 11 of which are originals written by the band members and guest musicians, Roomful of Blues has created a unique collection of tunes embracing multiple tempos and styles, but still maintaining the signature Roomful of Blues’ swinging sound.

It opens with an infectious boogie-woogie beat and swinging groove on their cover of John Brown and Don Robey’s “What Can I Do?” Keyboards take the foreground, with the famed R.O.B. horn section providing a punchy counterpoint. I defy anyone to hear this song and keep from tapping their feet, if not breaking out into outright dancing!

The second cut, “You Move Me”, co-written by vocalist Phil Pemberton and guitarist Chris Vachon, takes a soulful turn,



featuring Chris’s guitar work front and center, with an impressive, yet understated, organ sound filling the spaces and background. Track three, the title track “In a Roomful of Blues” is a moving tribute to love and regret.

“Phone Zombies”, the album’s fourth track, pokes fun at the phenomenon of modern phone fixation, complete with phone ringtones in the background. It’s the first song from this album that I heard on Sirius XM’s Bluesville channel and includes the phrase “walk into a fountain, fall off a mountain” humorously describing how absorbed people become in their phones. Yes, remember that video we all saw about the lady walking into a fountain in the mall because she was focused on her phone and not her surroundings?

Succeeding cuts move into a little political commentary and a “torch song” waltz that’s a tribute to an “off and on again” relationship. Track seven, “She’s Too Much”, written by keyboards player Rusty Scott, came out swinging, à la Benny Goodman, with an amazing drum beat and horn-led arrangement. Clear the floor, I’m dancing! Roomful of Blues even gives a nod to Zydeco, with the accordion-based “Have You Heard”, the eighth track on the album.

Track nine, the Chris Vachon original “We’d Have a Love Sublime” moves into a more rocking groove, with a Chuck Berry-esque feel, horn riffs galore and a smoking sax solo. The next song, “Car-cinoma Blues” is the album’s sole slow blues jam, describing a friend’s struggle with cancer. The mood moves back to uptempo swing mode with the next cut, a cover of Doc Pomus’ “Too Much Boogie”. The next song, “Let the Sleeping Dog Lie” takes us to a blues rhumba beat, and then the CD closes with a joyful swing tune called “I Can’t Wait”.

This 21st album from Roomful of Blues is one that I’ll be enjoying for a long time!

New and Improved SBS Face Masks Now Available!

by Barbara Katen & Sally Katen

We have just received the new SBS Face Masks. They are made from classic 2-ply cotton that is multilayered and washable, with adjustable elastic sizing for ears, and a front seam which allows for comfortable breathing.



These new masks are by far the best on the market! Now available in Dark Gray, too. Choose your color! Cost for pickup is \$15.00 each, \$17.00 for mail delivery. Please contact Sally at (916) 201-0877 to place your order NOW!

Special props to Renegade Classics/Troy Rowsey, owner, for providing us with such a great product and being such a champ to work with us! The previous masks we sold for SBS were not what we and others were expecting, and we apologize. If you are one of the individuals who contacted us to voice your unhappiness with the mask, you will be able to exchange one older mask for one of the new ones. Contact Sally Katen at: president@sacblues.com.

CD Review: John "Blues" Boyd - "What My Eyes Have Seen" (Gulf Coast Records)

Reviewed by Mindy Giles



"Snapshots from a life's camera" describes this dramatic verité album of John "Blues" Boyd's truth. Ten chapters of his life in song form are tied together with brief dreamlike recitative interludes, underscored by producer Chris "Kid" Andersen

on organ and guitar. Hypnotically, this unfurls John's magisterial baritone voice as memory.

This is as creative an album in blues as I've heard. It is a complete play, or a film fully scored. "I sit in my chair and my memory takes me there" he intones each time....

John tell us with a bold shuffle that the blues is in his blood, in his DNA, backed by Greaseland All Stars, including June Core (drums) and Jim Pugh (piano). Then we go deeper, darker, as John prepares us to travel with him, back to his beginnings.

"If you could see the places, understand where I have been
Share the terror and the sadness and the empty in between...
Then you could understand why in the shadows I have been
If you had only watched what my eyes have seen."

Greenwood, Mississippi. Working in cotton fields at age seven. He is talking about white supremacists, the KKK—what he saw them do. In "Ran Me Out of Town" at age 18, he escaped with his life ("I was runnin' I was jumpin' fences...") for marching with Martin Luther King in 1963. Guest star Nancy Wright is on lowdown baritone sax.

John's enduring love and adoration for "A Beautiful Woman," his wife Dona Mae, is a big joyous, horn section-driven uplift. But it is followed by "Why Did You Take That Shot?", a mourning second-line that begins with an excerpt of Robert Kennedy telling an Indianapolis, Indiana crowd that MLK had been assassinated. Andersen's guitar and John Halblieb's trumpet are pained and beautiful.

California, 1978. Where they play the blues "just like down in the South." For all of John's travelling, this is when he "stakes his claim." And he became "That Singing Roofer." It's joyous jump tune, even though "roofing is doggone hard."

But, life...After "49 Years," with Dona Mae, John sings, "I put my baby in the ground." Eric Spaulding's blue sax moves with him. John's full-throated voice, like blues legend Sam Myers, has melismatic elasticity, whether he reaches a falsetto wail or goes down low.

This aural backstory closes with a forward-looking "Got To Leave My Mark." At age 74, this is only John's second commercially available record—he has more to do. As Guy Hale, Gulf Coast Records' owner and co-writer of six of these songs notes in his liners: "These songs are also cautionary --- what was has happened again in the

darkness of today's state of the nation. It's a musical warning that we should all heed what can happen when we allow evil to prosper."

CD Review: Val Starr & the Blues Rocket "Lighter Side of the Blues"

(Sandwich Factory Records)

Reviewed by Steve Cagle

"Lighter Side of the Blues" is the fifth album from Val and her band the Blues Rocket, and it finds them at the top of their game and still climbing. Since its release in January, the album has been embraced by an ever-expanding worldwide



audience, with enthusiastic reviews appearing frequently in digital and print media. Val has been interviewed on numerous occasions, and the album continues to appear on many highly respected airplay charts.

For the most part this is an original affair, consisting of a dozen self-penned songs and a version of the Jimmy Reed hit, "Big Boss Man," with new lyrics courtesy of Val. A variety of styles that stretch beyond the blues are employed throughout, giving the listener a feel-good ride across a wide-open musical landscape, with the message that blues songs don't have to be sad or heavy as the recurring theme.

The opener, "Say Goodbye To The Blues (Like You Mean It)" is a breezy, highway-friendly opus that easily falls into a category that Bob Margolin refers to as a "good driving song". The band is locked into a steady groove, where they stay for the duration, with guest artists Todd Morgan on keys, percussionist Horacio Socarras and sax players Danny Sandoval and Saxophone Zot further enriching the proceedings.

The groove continues steadily with "Sactown Heat," an ode to the summer swelter in the north central valley; no matter how much you experience it, you never get used to it. "If She Can Get A Man (Anyone Can)" is a traditional slow grinder that showcases the fluid harmonica delivery of Frankie Munz.

The title track provides another smooth soundtrack for a highway cruise with the glass down as the spirited rhythm flows on auto pilot, giving Munz another opportunity to display his harp-blowing abilities in a laid-back manner that serves the song perfectly. The band stretches out on the smoky, late-night-style semi-torch blues, "All Or Nuthin' Man," sounding so well-greased and in synch with each other that, were they to lay down their instruments and walk out, the music would continue to flow along on its own.

"Can't Get Sad Tonight" is another breezy steady-roller that combines elements of both classic country and vintage rock and roll. "Lift A Finger" provides bassist, co-producer and Val's life and music collaborator John Ellis (the artist formerly known as John E Sandwich) the chance to show his chops on the electric slide guitar while

the song deals lyrically with the dilemma of a non-compliant partner in the domestic chore department. While it's unfathomable to think that Val is describing her real-life partner in the aforementioned tune, she instills credibility to the words of "Mister Bassman," a minor key love song for the John of E Sandwich fame.

"Movin' On" floats on a melody that evokes both the early Beatles and vintage girl groups of that era, with a soulful touch on saxophone provided by Danny Sandoval. "24 Hour Blues" takes a humorous approach to life's daily challenges with a New Orleans flair that eases into a leisurely paced piano boogie.

Val tosses out the original words to "Big Boss Man" and transforms it into a heated warning to harassing employers that "no tolerance" is the new business model.

If up to this point you've been listening to "Lighter Side of the Blues" to relax after a busy day or unwind following a stress-inducing situation, then you may want to hit the Pause button rather than engaging your calm demeanor in the final two songs. The first of the two, "Shame On You," is a hard rocker showcasing veteran axeman Tim Brisson's exceptional 6-string proficiency. It's followed by the up-tempo roadhouse rouser "The Blues Doesn't Pick Or Choose," complete with barrelhouse piano and a high-energy exchange between Danny Sandoval's screaming sax and Tim Brisson's fiery fretwork. Between these two songs, you're more likely to be wired for a marathon than poised to ease into a carefree state of bliss. They are both excellent songs nonetheless and highly enjoyable to be sure. But they might be better suited elsewhere on the record or perhaps saved for a follow up album featuring the hard rocking side of the blues.

Overall, this is a fine album with flawless performances from everyone involved, and there are plenty of glowing reviews from around the world to back that up.

My Lung Transplant Journey

By Renee Erickson Sullivan, SBS Board Member & Past President

A couple of years ago, I was out looking at Christmas lights with friends and became short of breath and had to go home. It was odd for me because I had been healthy my entire life. It happened again, and I decided to go to the doctor. Shortness of breath was my only symptom.



It turned out that I was diagnosed with *Idiopathic Pulmonary Fibrosis*. IPF is a terminal disease which causes your lungs to develop scar tissue. It is progressive and there is no cure except for a lung transplant. **IPF kills more people every year than breast cancer!** However, most people have not even heard of it. It often goes undiagnosed, because the shortness of breath could be caused by so many other things. At first, they said I had pneumonia.

Fortunately, after months of testing and two and a half years on oxygen, I qualified for a double lung transplant. It's been over three months since my surgery and what a journey it has been! There have been many ups and downs, but it has all been worth it.

I left my home on April 18th for the University of San Francisco Medical Center and returned on July 23rd! After six weeks in the Intensive Care Unit and another few weeks on the floor, Scotty, my husband, and I moved to a flat in San Francisco for six weeks to be

close to UCSF for the many appointments that they had scheduled for me.

My kidneys decided to give me a problem so I've been on dialysis three times a week in addition to everything else. The doctors are confident that the dialysis is temporary. I still have a long way to go in my recovery but I'm now able to walk (slowly) on my own.

I can't begin to tell you how humbled and grateful I am for all of the prayers and support that I received from everyone.

Not a day goes by that I don't think about my donor and my donor's family. Someday I hope to make contact with them and let them know exactly what this wonderful gift of life has meant to me and to my family and friends.

I know that there are many reasons why people choose to be or not to be organ donors, and I respect each and every decision. It has also come to my attention that many times, organs do not get donated simply because the family is unaware or too upset in the middle of a crisis and it just doesn't get done. Please, if you or your family plan on being an organ donor, do not count on that little dot on your driver's license. It doesn't always work.

Please join me in thanking God and my donor family. God bless everyone! I'll keep you updated. In the meantime, make every breath count!

IBC Self-Produced CD Competition

The annual Best Self-Produced CD competition is part of the International Blues Challenge held in Memphis in January. SBS is looking to submit the Sacramento area's Best Self-Produced CD. If you and/or your band are a current member of SBS and have released, or plan to release your self-produced CD between November 1, 2019 and October 31, 2020, you are eligible for consideration.

Of all entries received, SBS will select one CD as our area's best, and will send it to the Blues Foundation in Memphis for judging. To enter your CD, send five copies of it to the SBS Post Office box, or email us at IBC@sacblues.com to arrange drop off, or for more information. Deadline for submission of CDs is Sunday, October 4, 2020. You can also find more information about the competition on the Blues Foundation's website, blues.org.

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

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SBS Extends All Current Sponsorship Agreements

Among the other unpleasant effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent shutdown, is that many of the benefits that the Sacramento Blues Society offers its sponsors depend upon our various events and promotions, which just can't happen now. This has made it impossible for us to fulfill all the commitments we made in our sponsorship agreements. At its July meeting, our Board, in recognition of these extraordinary times, extended all our current sponsorships to the end of December, 2021. We hope that in the coming year we will all be able to resume our work and that we will be able to provide the visibility benefits you deserve. Thank you, Sacramento Blues Society Sponsors!

Venues and Artists Need Help!

We all know how much we miss our live music, due to COVID-19; but it's important to consider the bigger picture and how this pandemic and the corresponding shutdowns have negatively impacted those whose businesses are the performing arts. Here's some information compiled by the National Independent Venue Association (NIVA). NIVA includes more than 2,400 independent live entertainment venues and promoters from all 50 states and Washington, D.C., banding together to fight for survival.

Situation

- Independent venues were the first to close and will be the last to fully reopen.
- Venues have zero revenue, but obligations like mortgage/rent, bills, loans, taxes, and insurance continue.
- We have no work to offer our employees for the foreseeable future.
- The shutdown is indefinite and likely to extend into 2021 as our venues are in the last stage of reopening.
- The ability to open at partial capacity is not economically feasible. Rents, utilities, payroll, taxes, insurance, and artist pay are not on a sliding scale matching the capacity we're permitted to host. They are fixed costs.
- Due to the national routing of most tours, our industry will not recover until the entire country is open at 100% capacity. NIVA members need assistance in order to survive until that day.

Impact

- According to a survey of NIVA members, 90% of independent venues report they will close permanently in a few months without federal funding. Current PPP funding will not solve the crisis.
- Pollstar estimates a \$9 billion loss in ticket sales alone - not counting food and beverage revenue - if venues remain closed through 2020.
- Live events provide 75% of all artists' income .
- For every \$1 spent on a ticket at small venues, a total of \$12 in economic activity is generated within communities on restaurants, hotels, taxis, and retail establishments.
- The estimated direct annual economic impact venues bring to local communities is nearly \$10 billion.

Artist Support

- 600+ artists with social media impressions of 900 million are supporting NIVA's request for federal relief under the hashtag #SaveOurStages.
- Writing a letter to Congress, artists including Dave Grohl of the Foo Fighters, Mavis Staples, Lady Gaga, André 3000,

Coldplay, Willie Nelson, Billie Eilish, Gary Clark Jr., Robert Plant of Led Zeppelin, Miranda Lambert, Billy Joel, Earth Wind & Fire, Kacey Musgraves, Leon Bridges, Wyclef Jean, Bon Iver, Jay Leno, Tiffany Haddish, Jeff Foxworthy, Jerry Seinfeld, and Tig Notaro are among those advocating on behalf of NIVA members.

The People Are Speaking!

- Through SaveOurStages.Com, individuals sent more than 1 million emails, reaching all 538 members of Congress. They asked legislators to provide federal assistance to independent venues and promoters.

Bipartisan Support

- Led by legislators of **both parties**, nearly 150 members of Congress sent letters to Mitch McConnell and Chuck Schumer in the Senate, and Nancy Pelosi and Kevin McCarthy in the House supporting NIVA's requests.

What Can You Do to Help?

Visit nivassoc.org and saveourstages.com for suggestions and information. For a more local perspective, check out: cacapitolvenuecoalition.org.

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www.rickestrin.com

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www.kylerowlandblues.com

Surface Tension

www.surfacetensionsacramento.com

Tim Noxon Rockin' Blues Band

www.facebook.com/TimNoxonRockinBluesBand

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toddmorganmusic.com

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