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BiTS

JUNE 2020

BLUES IN THE SOUTH

INTERVIEW WITH
PAUL COWLEY

INTERVIEW WITH
ELIZA NEALS

LAWRENCE
LEBO'S COLUMN

REVIEWS

VIDEOS

FOR THE THIRD TIME IN THE 33 YEAR LONG PUBLICATION HISTORY OF BITS, WE HAVE NO GIGS TO PUBLISH. ALL HAVE BEEN CANCELLED OR OCCASIONALLY POSTPONED. IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO SAY WHEN THINGS WILL RETURN TO NORMAL, BUT BiTS WILL CAREFULLY MONITOR THE SITUATION AND WHEN THINGS START TO RETURN TO NORMAL WE SHALL LET YOU KNOW.

IN THE MEAN TIME, DON'T GO TO GIGS, MAINTAIN YOUR SOCIAL DISTANCE AND REMEMBER:

**THE CORONA VIRUS DOES NOT
CIRCULATE**

IT IS PEOPLE THAT CIRCULATE IT

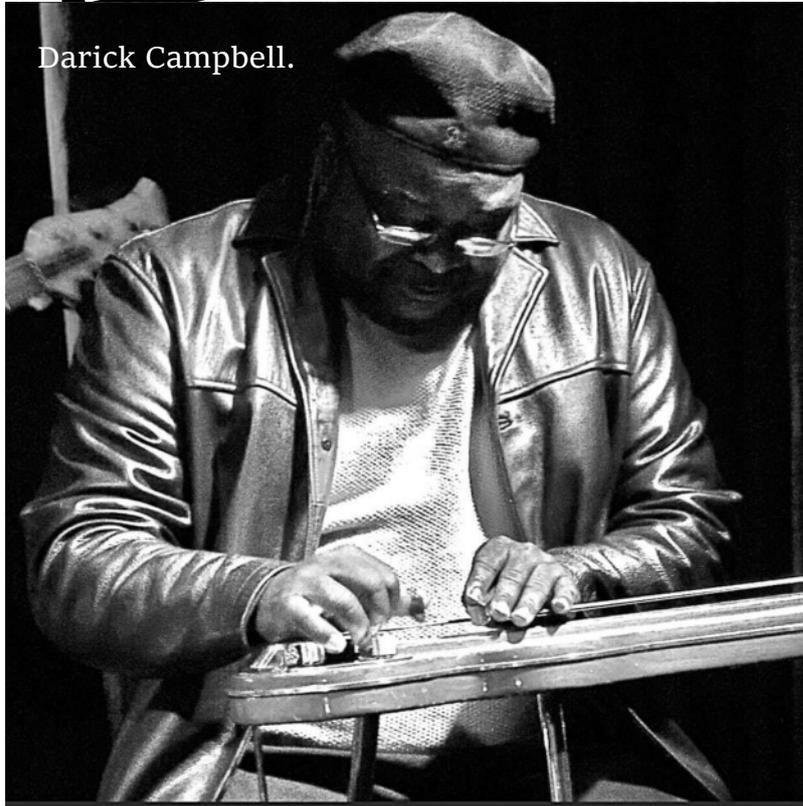
Darick Campbell November 1966-May 2020

Darick Campbell was the youngest brother in the award winning group the Campbell Brothers, the foremost practitioners in the Sacred Steel tradition. Darick started out as a drummer, but he later took up the lap steel and became one of its leading players. In recent years, the Campbell Brothers band, fronted by Darick Campbell's riveting 8-string lap steel playing, took the power and brilliance of this African American gospel music to secular audiences worldwide.

The music he and his brothers played is known as Sacred Steel and is a form of gospel music

Sacred steel music and the African American church at Casa de Deus date back to the 1930s, when the steel guitar was introduced as an alternative to the church organ. Darick played the steel loop and published an educational video on how to play the instrument.

The Campbell Brothers created a vibrant mix of gospel, country, rock, jazz, blues and soul. When the group was presented at the Rochester Music Hall of Fame in 2018, it was accompanied on stage by pedal giant Robert Randolph.



Darick Campbell.

The Campbell Brothers became disaffected from the House of God church in Nashville, Keith Dominion, because the Pentecostal church wanted to keep the music within its walls. The Campbells were more and more sought after in music festivals and wanted to take their beautiful and emotional sound to the world.

Although Darick Campbell moved to Georgia after the separation, he was a member of the House of God in Atlanta.

In 2012, Chuck and Darick Campbell signed a contract with the sacred steel supergroup The Slide Brothers and performed on the Experience Hendrix tour, celebrating the music of Jimi Hendrix alongside names like Randolph, Buddy Guy, Keb' Mo', Dweezil Zappa, Taj Mahal and Bootsy Collins. Slide Brothers also released an album and brought the exuberant sound to the general public through "The Tonight Show with Jay Leno".

Darick Campbell is survived by his wife, Pam, a daughter and a granddaughter.

Ian K McKenzie

Little Richard (Richard Wayne Penniman)

December 5, 1932 – May 9, 2020



Born in Macon, Georgia, Little Richard was the third of 12 children. His father, Bud, was a stern man who made his living selling moonshine and didn't do much to hide his disdain for his son's early signs of homosexuality. At the age of 13 Richard was ordered to move out of the family home, and his relationship with his father was never repaired.

Two of his uncles, as well as his grandfather, were preachers, and Richard was involved with the church as much as anyone in his family, singing gospel and eventually learning to play the piano.

It is almost impossible to convey the awfulness of popular music in the UK in the 1950s. Largely comprised of ersatz ballads, childrens' and novelty songs (Where Will The Dimple Be?) as well as string-laden instrumentals it was bland and safe and uninspiring. Then along came rock 'n' roll.



In September 1955, Richard stepped into the recording studio and pumped out, 'Tutti Frutti', an instant Billboard hit that reached No. 17 in the US. Coupled with the efforts of Bill Haley, Jerry Lee Lewis and Elwood Presley, the world was never the same again. In the next 18 months, Little Richard assaulted us with the likes of 'Long Tall Sally', 'Good Golly Miss Molly' and 'Send Me Some Lovin'. Thundering piano, screaming, shouted vocals, the ubiquitous baritone sax and suggestive lyrics—oh my, what a change. It was wonderful. Some Brits tried but did not make an impact for some years.

After his rock career faded, Richard went back to his roots, making a number of excellent gospel records.

In addition to his records, Little Richard appeared in several early rock films, such as Don't Knock the Rock (1956), The Girl Can't Help It (1957) and Mister Rock 'n' Roll (1957).

R&B pioneer Johnny Otis stated that "Little Richard is twice as valid artistically and important historically as Elvis Presley, the Beatles, and the Rolling Stones put together."

Earl Green: 11 February 1945; died 6 May 2020

Earl Green, who has died aged 75, was a Jamaican-born singer and songwriter. He heard R&B on the radio and jukeboxes in his home land. He moved to Lewisham, south-east London on his 13th birthday.

He was a member of The Raisins (aka The Coloured Raisins) in the late 1960s. The band later became Black Velvet.

The 1970s saw Earl fronting the band Ardon, performing original material, along with guitarist Gary 'Gus' Jarreat and bass player Gwyn Hood. The three later formed The OT Band, performing R&B/soul covers, which lasted over 30 years. Other bands he performed with around this time include Sweet Rain and Baby Grand.

Otis Grand guested with the OT Band from time to time and recruited Earl and tenor saxophonist Andy Dummett for his band, Otis Grand and the Dance Kings. His stint with Grand's outfit (later Otis Grand and the Big Blues Band) lasted eight years and resulted in two albums, 1998's 'Always Hot' and 1990's 'He Knows The Blues'.

In the latter half of the 1990s Earl formed his own band and released his debut solo album, 'Feel The Fire'. He joined my band, Bop Brothers, for a five-year stint and was the featured singer on the album 'Bop Brothers ... and Sisters', which saw Earl duetting with Dana Gillespie, Ruby Turner, Connie Lush, Taka Boom and Deitra Farr. He picked up

British Blues Awards for Male Vocalist of the Year in 1996 and 1997.

The new millennium saw Earl joining Paul Lamb and the King Snakes for a few years—he is featured on the albums 'Take Your Time And Get It Right' and 'Live At The 100 Club'. More solo albums followed—'A Different Picture' and 'New Day', both recorded with guitarist-producer Jake Zaitz. He spent the final years of his musical career fronting The Right Time, a south London blues band, and his last recording was with this outfit, 'Live At The Bronte Blues Club'.

Outside music, Earl had a passion for photography and maintained a career as a gardener up until the late 1980s. Sadly he was forced into retirement in 2013, due to failing health. He is survived by his wife Val, their daughter Helen and their son Joel.

Jon 'T-Bone' Taylor

Earl Green 1993

© Bob Pearce



Most Played Album Top 40 – April 2020

Collated from the playlists of the Independent Blues Broadcasters Association Members

Position	Artist	Album
1	SAMANTHA MARTIN & DELTA SUGAR	RUN TO ME
2	THE PROVEN ONES	YOU AIN'T DONE
3	JOHN DOE TRIO	RAILROADED
4	JAMES PITTS BAND	COME TO PLAY THE BLUES
5	THE TERRAPLANES	MIDNIGHT TRAIN
6	VANJA SKY	WOMAN NAMED TROUBLE
7	SEAN TAYLOR	LIVE! IN LONDON
8	CHASIN' THE TRAIN	DEAD MAN'S HANDLE
9	HALF DEAF CLATCH	EVERY PATH LEADS HERE
10	ROOMFUL OF BLUES	IN A ROOMFUL OF BLUES
11	ALBERT CASTIGLIA	WILD & FREE
12	BLIND LEMON PLEDGE	GOIN' HOME
13	RORY GALLAGHER	CHECK SHIRT WIZARD: LIVE IN '77
14	CRYSTAL SHAWANDA	CHURCH HOUSE BLUES
15	RYAN PERRY	HIGH RISK, LOW REWARD
16	LARKIN POE	SELF MADE MAN
17	RICHARD TOWNEND & THE MIGHTY BOSSCATS	TICKET TO MEMPHIS
18	BEN RICE & R.B. STONE	OUT OF THE BOX
19	PHIL JOHARI	SLOW BURN
20	ROGER HUBBARD	BRIGHTON BELLE BLUES
21	ADAM KARCH	EVERYTHING CAN CHANGE
22	DAVE FERRA	STARTING SOMETHING
23	ROBERT JON & THE WRECK	LAST LIGHT ON THE HIGHWAY
24	AVEY GROUWS BAND	THE DEVIL MAY CARE
25	REVEREND SHAWN AMOS & THE BROTHERHOOD	BLUE SKY
26	JAKE LEG JUG BAND	GOODBYE BOOZE
27	LIBBY RAE WATSON & BERT DEIVERT	SHE SHIMMY
28	THE DANBERRYS	SHINE
29	ELIZA NEALS	BLACK CROW MOAN
30	ZOE SCHWARZ BLUE COMMOTION	CHAMELEON
31	CHARLIE BEDFORD	GOOD TO GO
32	THE CLAUDETTES	HIGH TIMES IN THE DARK
33	BARRELHOUSE	MAINLINE VOODOO
34	KING BISCUIT BOYS	ORGANIC & NATURAL
35	ROBERT CRAY BAND	THAT'S WHAT I HEARD
36	MICK CLARKE	BIG WHEEL
37	FIVE POINTS GANG	FIVE POINTS GANG EP
38	JIM GUSTIN & TRUTH JONES	LESSONS LEARNED
39	JOHN VERITY	PASSION
40	HARRY HORNSEY	REVUE

THE BITS INTERVIEW: PAUL COWLEY

BiTS: Let's make a start then. Can you tell me how you got into blues music in the first place?



PC: Quite late in life really. I've always had an interest in music right from being a young boy. I had some classical lessons when I was 11.

Then played a few chords through my teen years. Cat Stevens songs and things like that, but proper acoustic blues I was barely aware of until my early forties really. My wife bought me Clapton Unplugged for my 40th birthday from my children, and I was amazed at the effect this music had on me. I'd never heard of Big Bill Broonzy, Robert Johnson, any of those people. But that was the start. It was like a lightbulb went on. I researched these people and I've never looked back really. It was literally the gift of the album Clapton Unplugged from my wife [chuckling].

BiTS: How old are you now, Paul?

PC: I'm 62 this year, in July.

BiTS: That's 20 years or so that you've been immersing yourself in this music. Big Bill Broonzy you already mentioned, who else?

PC: Mississippi John Hurt. Mississippi Fred McDowell, Blind Willie McTell. When I first moved from the Clapton Unplugged modern contemporary stuff, there's a record shop in Porthmadog called Cob Records and I went in completely blind and I was looking for acoustic blues. There was a CD amongst the blues section, and it was a black cover and it was Lightnin' Hopkins, Coffee House Blues. I bought it simply because it was a black man holding an acoustic guitar. Didn't know anything about it but I put it on in the car and it was yet another lightbulb going on. I love Lightnin' Hopkins, so I listened to him for 12 months and then slowly but surely, there were cassettes then, I bought 'Beauty of the Blues' which was a compilation of early country blues stuff. 'The Legend of the Blues' was another one, and I played those in the car, continually for years [laughing].

BiTS: Doing what's normally called 'woodshedding', just playing along with the records and learning how to play them?

PC: There was that. I found that because I wasn't a total novice, I could play a couple of chords. I couldn't play the guitar properly, but I found initially the first few things I tried, I was pleasantly surprised at the success I had in learning them. Probably not very well really when I look back, but I then found a local blues professional musician with a shop and I had lessons from him for about 12 months. He was a great guitarist but not necessarily a great teacher, but other than that I'm pretty much self-taught. Through this connection with the music shop guy, we set a blues club up in Sutton Coldfield and that would be the best part of 20 years ago now. We got a room above a pub. We met once a month on a Wednesday night and we found that 20 years ago there were quite a few touring American solo blues players and they're always happy and keen to do a Wednesday night gig [chuckling]. They could get gigs over the weekends, but midweek wasn't so easy, so we had some great names at the blues club.

BiTS: I'm sorry I missed it when you said, but what city was this in?

PC: It's Sutton Coldfield. That's a suburb of Birmingham.

BiTS: Right, got you. How did you drift into performing yourself?

PC: Well, it was really as a result of they called me a leader at the club. There were a couple of us and eventually I ended up pretty well alone with the club. I did have some help from another mate, but we used to



have club nights where one would have to lead the evening a little bit, encourage other people to play and just slowly but surely and then there was the opportunity with visiting artists to do a support slot. Just three songs. It just slowly developed, but I got to a point where to continue developing my music, I needed to perform more and nowadays I really enjoy touring and the adventure of going somewhere different. Setting up and playing in front of a room full of people that you've never seen before and the reaction that that creates. I love that. I love the journey, the driving. I used to run and you could train forever but to do a race would lift your level of performance so much more than just training and it's a bit like that with a gig [chuckling], I find.

BiTS: Yes, I can see that. You were never a revivalist. I know you play the old stuff, but you write your own songs as well, yes?

PC: I do. I feel that there are so many other people who do that so well, I don't have the mind for the detail of every alternating bass note and hammer-on that John Hurt did. I love to listen to it, and I appreciate other people doing it, but it doesn't interest me particularly. I find if I can reinterpret a song in my own style, I think I've got more to offer in that way than as you say, as a revivalist [chuckling]. It's just my take on it.

BiTS: I take it that you found yourself increasingly becoming successful and doing gigs in various places?

PC: Yes, this current coronavirus situation is quite frustrating. We've just done, when I say we, my wife generally comes with me, but 13 dates in the UK. The quality of the gigs is improving year on year and the reaction I get is improving and I feel a little bit of gained reputation and then I come home hoping quite a nice year is going to unfold, quite a few gigs were in front and it's all just stopped.



Paul Cowley - Rainin'

BiTS: Yes, well if it's of any consolation to you, I am talking to you because for Blues in the South I get people who subscribe and one of my subscribers asked me if I'd do an interview with you. So you've got one fan there [laughing].

PC: Well, that all helps. That's the spread of reputation, isn't it [laughing]?

BiTS: Absolutely, yes. Tell me why you moved to France in the first place?

PC: A set of circumstances all fell into place. My trade, I've been a self-employed builder from a young age, all of my life in the West Midlands. Reasonably successfully and with a good standard of living. I arrived at a point in time where the two children were relatively independent, house paid for and just a feeling that with the business I was faced with either expanding to employ more people, so I did less of the physical work. I don't have a problem with the physical work, but as you get older, you can see it would become more difficult and we just fancied an adventure of some kind in life while we'd still got some energy left. It was nine years ago we came here, and we bought a farm without the land, effectively. It's a farmhouse, a hectare which is 2½ acres. A big barn and it's completely rural. We're surrounded by mostly dairy farming country.

BiTS: Do you have your own studio there?

PC: Well, because of my lifetime skill as a builder, at little cost from the surplus of renovating the house, I've been able to create a studio in the barn. It would never have happened in the UK. I've got this granite building, two-foot thick granite walls. Slate roof, king post oak roof trusses. I've got this fairly small studio, but it's fantastic. I spend a lot of time over there. All the instruments are out. Family are across the yard in

the house. I'm not bothering anybody. That has helped me a lot in terms of being a musician, this ability to go over there and immerse yourself in it.

BiTS: Do you play every day?

PC: Yes, I decided that I'm not that young really and if I wanted to go out and play for people that were paying in one way or another, I should endeavour to be as professional and as good as I can be, so I play about three hours a day.

BiTS: You also play slide as well as finger picked acoustic. How did you learn to play slide? I mean I'm a guitar player myself, although 20 years older than you and it was a long time before I discovered that there was such a thing as open tunings.

PC: I've really stumbled along, and I played mostly the first six or seven years just standard tuning finger picking and then bought a second-hand Dobro brand resonator with a round neck. A pretty cheap instrument but it actually has a wonderful tone to it and just slowly one song at a time I started to investigate open D tuning and it's just very small increments of progress. Eventually, more recently I bought a National Triolian metal-bodied guitar and I tend to keep the Dobro in open D, the National in open G, and song by song it just keeps developing and expanding. It's wonderful, in fact.

BiTS: May I ask you how many guitars you are the owner of?

PC: It's approximately 20.

BiTS: I thought you were going to say something like that [laughing].

PC: I'd have to go and count exactly. I play a Gibson J-45, which I love, and I've had that for the best part of 20 years. The Dobro and the National and they're my three principal instruments. I bought a Harmony F-hole arch top. A friend had said to me, I'd mentioned I'd like to buy some kind of arch top and he said there's one on eBay and it's described as a 'Hormony' misspelt. He said I don't think many people will look at this, so I put an offer in for this guitar and bought this 1930's Harmony F-hole in almost mint condition. It doesn't have any great value, but the historic value is quite significant. Then I've got an old late fifties Stella. No value but I like it and last year I bought on eBay, a Regal Stromberg-Voisinet. It's a beautiful parlour guitar with decal on it, the artwork, but it needs a neck reset, new bridge. It'll cost equally as much as it will ever be worth.



BiTS: Do you have a luthier near you in France, or do you have to come back to England for that?

PC: There's a guy 3½ hours south of here, but he's really very, very good. He puts most of his work on Facebook. Forty-four photographs of a neck reset of J-45 and you can see the way he does things is very professional but not very cheap either [chuckling].

BiTS: No, I can imagine that. You've made quite a few records of your own. Have you got anything in the pipeline at the moment?

PC: My plan is really next winter to do the next album. I found that now with this studio, it has a natural good sound. I like to record myself. I'm free from any inhibition or pressure of being in a studio, but I've found a guy who lives not far from here who's really talented. He mixes and masters. I haven't got the skill to do that, but between us, the result is not so bad now [chuckling]. I was invited, this winter just gone, a local filmmaker asked me if I would do some original music to accompany a film he was making, so that's been recorded. It's just seven tracks in my guitar style, but instrumental only and I am going to put that on a CD just to sell at gigs.

BiTS: That's great. How many albums have you made in total, about a half-a-dozen?

PC: No. Four full albums and this instrumental thing, which is seven tracks, whether you call it an EP. All that has just been learning. The early couple I listen to now and I'd like them to disappear really

[chuckling], or do them again. But that's just progress isn't it and learning.

BiTS: Yes, I suppose so.

PC: The latest one that I did in 2018, called 'Just What I Know', I am pretty pleased with that really. It turned out really well, so I'm happy with that and excited to do the next one.

BiTS: You're clearly, as everybody is at the moment, completely stymied by the coronavirus thing. Are you trying to set up gigs for shall we say a year's time or something like that?

PC: Yes, I mean coming back from

the UK tour there were lots of different leads so I'm a little bit conscious that people might think it's not the most important thing at the moment, but I have been sending enquiries out. I've got three decent dates confirmed for next February, March. Lots of other people saying we're not doing anything until things are clearer. Yes, I'm in the process. I find that it's best to be about 12 months in front of when you want to go really.

BiTS: There's lots of people who are putting what are in effect live gigs of themselves from their living rooms on the internet. Have you got any plans to do that sort of thing?

PC: I don't really have the equipment to do that here. I've been doing just as an exercise in keeping myself playing, revisiting songs. I'm putting video, just an iPad recording. I've done seven I think, so far but I do one every three or four days. They're all Facebook. Only on Facebook. I'm going to just put them on once and then let them disappear [laughing]. But it's good.

BiTS: Hearing that makes me think I might do something about gathering them together in one place or something.

PC: Okay, they're all there. I put one on last night actually. I'm improving the quality of the video and the sound just slowly.

BiTS: Thanks very much for talking to me. One more question, if you don't mind. Of all the musicians that you've seen over the years, who remains your favourite?

PC: I think the first name that always comes to mind is Eric Bibb.

BiTS: Really?

PC: Yes, I saw him just as I was getting interested in this music about nearly 20 years ago at the Birmingham Blues Festival. He was relatively unknown and playing with a slide player, a Swedish slide player, Göran Wennerbrandt and that music had a profound effect on me and still does [laughing].

BiTS: That's wonderful. Music has a strength that gives you strength, doesn't it?

PC: Absolutely, yes.

BiTS: Okay, thanks for talking to me, Paul.

PC: Okay, thank you, Ian. All the best.



BB King Entertainer of the Year

Sugaray Rayford

Album of the Year

Kingfish, Christone “Kingfish” Ingram

Band of the Year

The Nick Moss Band feat. Dennis Gruenling

Song of the Year

“Lucky Guy,” written by Nick Moss

Best Emerging Artist Album

Kingfish, Christone “Kingfish” Ingram

Acoustic Blues Album

This Guitar and Tonight, Bob Margolin

Acoustic Blues Artist

Doug MacLeod

Blues Rock Album

Masterpiece, Albert Castiglia

Blues Rock Artist

Eric Gales

Contemporary Blues Album

Kingfish, Christone “Kingfish” Ingram

Contemporary Blues Female Artist

Shemekia Copeland

Contemporary Blues Male Artist

Christone “Kingfish” Ingram

Historical Blues Album

Cadillac Baby’s Bea & Baby Records – Definitive Collection, Earwig Music

Soul Blues Album

Sitting on Top of the Blues, Bobby Rush

Soul Blues Female Artist

Bettye LaVette

Soul Blues Male Artist

Sugaray Rayford

Traditional Blues Album

Lucky Guy!, The Nick Moss Band Featuring Dennis Gruenling

Traditional Blues Female Artist

Sue Foley

Traditional Blues Male Artist

Jimmie Vaughan

Instrumentalist Bass

Michael “Mudcat” Ward

Instrumentalist Drums

Cedric Burnside

Instrumentalist Guitar

Christone “Kingfish” Ingram

Instrumentalist Harmonica

Rick Estrin

Instrumentalist Horn

Vanessa Collier

Instrumentalist Piano

Victor Wainwright

Instrumentalist Vocals

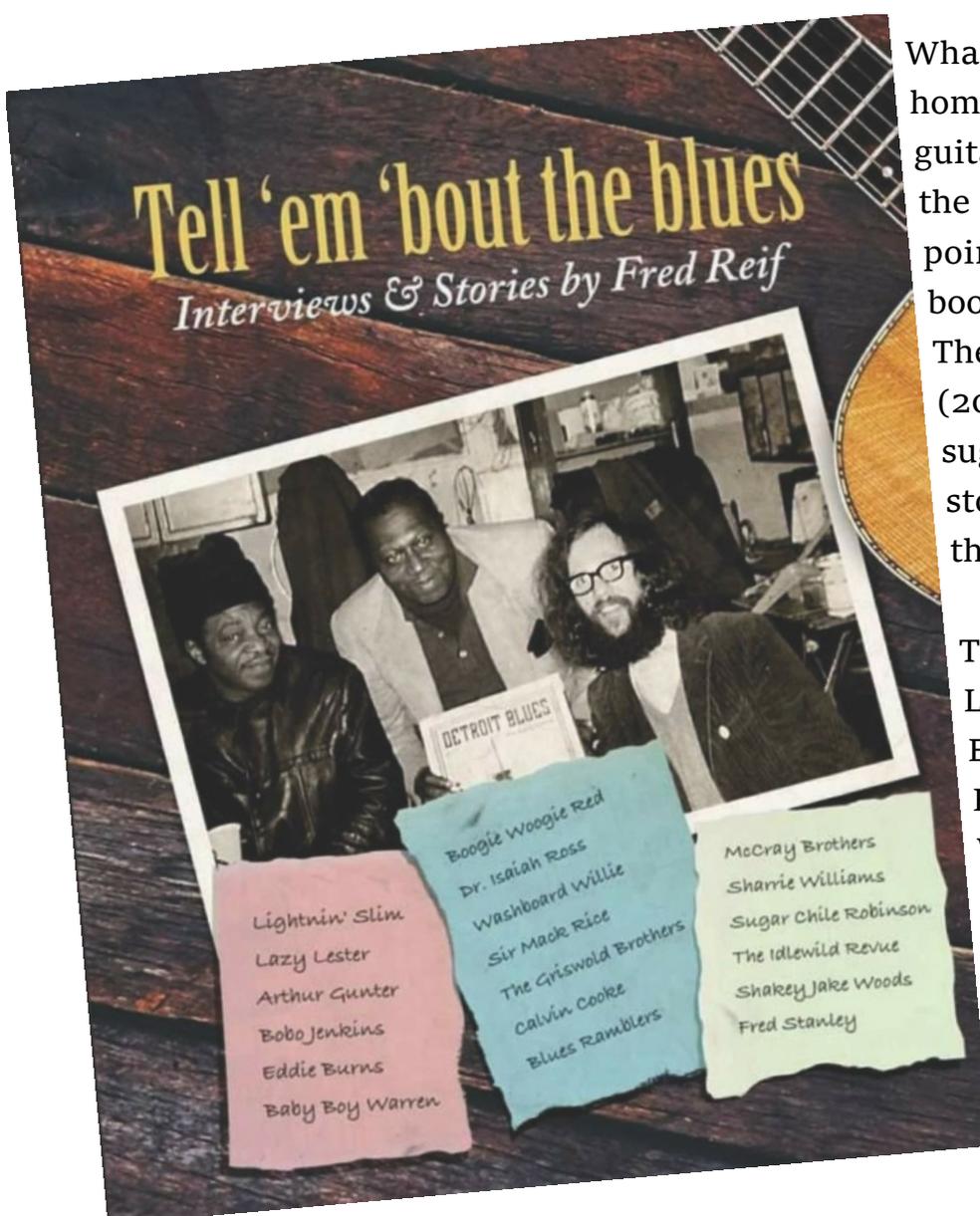
Mavis Staples

2020 Blues Music Awards Winners Announced

TELL 'EM 'BOUT THE BLUES

INTERVIEWS & STORIES BY FRED REIF

(Available from Amazon U.K.)



What do you do when told to 'stay home'.... watch a bit of telly, pick up the guitar and have a strum, spend time on the internet looking at all manner of pointless things, or purchase a new book and read? Me, I did all of the above. The book was self published last year (2019) by Fred Reif and, as the title suggests, it contains interviews and stories that he had accumulated since the late 1960's.

These include Lightnin' Slim, Lazy Lester, Arthur Gunter, Bobo Jenkins, Eddie Burns, Baby Boy Warren, Boogie Woogie Red, Dr. Isaiah Ross, Washboard Willie and many more. None of these artists were ever major stars in the world of blues, but they were incredibly important to people like myself, who in the early sixties discovered their music.

What makes this book well worth the cost, is the fact that Fred didn't just meet up and chat with these people, he played gigs with them and he toured with them. They were friends, and, as such, inclined to be relaxed enough to 'open up' more. There are of course the usual label shots and promotional photos, but many pictures I've not seen before. Obviously some taken by Fred, others provided by the artists (or their families).

Having been privileged myself to have worked with four or five of the artists featured, some wonderful memories were being re-lived as I read of Fred's encounters and vividly recalled some of my own!

I can highly recommend this book to anybody interested in learning more about the blues and the people who played and sang 'em.

Bob Pearce

Interview: Eliza Neals, “...finding the strength to be 100% myself,”

By Gary Schwind

Eliza Neals is a blues singer whose music has been honored in her native Detroit as well as in international publications. She discusses her new album, working with blues icon Joe Louis Walker, and how her opera training has helped her career as a blues musician.



GS: How do you feel the new album compares to previous work you've done?

EN: This album is going to be more sentimental—a lot of stuff coming from way, way back. I think it's more heartfelt. More like a confessional. That's different. Of course I have some different guests like the blues icon Mr. Joe Louis Walker. And also the blues-rock Detroit legend Derek St. Holmes from all the hits from Ted Nugent, who also wrote a song for Koko Taylor. It's a mixture of those two sounds. It's a lot of confessional stuff.

GS: Was there any impetus for making this more confessional and more personal?

EN: It just came out. A lot of the times when I'm writing or when I'm onstage, it happens. I'm just ready to speak about

certain things. The timing was right for me to get certain things off my chest. I know a lot of my friends and fans are going through a lot. I guess I'm being a little braver than I have been in the past, letting things out. What's happened to me has probably happened to other people.

GS: Do you find that's a little more challenging?

EN: I think I'm just being braver. It's an evolution for me of finding the strength to be 100% myself. If you're brave enough to do it, that is what helps everybody else.

GS: Your fans can probably sense the authenticity in that.

EN: The fans tell me how much they love it, and how much it comforts them when I sing certain things with just me and the piano. I go out on a limb, and it's almost like walking around naked. When I've played these songs live, some fans have said, "Wow! That's the best thing I've ever heard. Thank you so much."

GS: What do you learn from working with artists like Joe Louis Walker?

EN: I became friends with him because the bass player he uses is the bass player I use on the east coast, the great Lenny Bradford. I actually went to one of his gigs in New York and met Joe, who I really wanted to meet. I've always wanted to work with him, and that became a reality on "The Devil Don't Love You" and "Black Crow Moan". He has such an authentic blues voice. It's got that raspiness to it. I thought it would be a

cool pairing with my voice. He sings almost like a duet with me on “Black Crow Moan”. I just watched to see how he puts things together in the studio . He’s a blues legend. There’s so much I can learn. It’s never-ending. Every time I’m with him I think, “Oh! I’m gonna do that.” He was like “Eliza, you don’t have to work so hard. Just lay back. Let the band work harder.” Things like that change your whole set.

GS: I’ve heard that from other musicians.

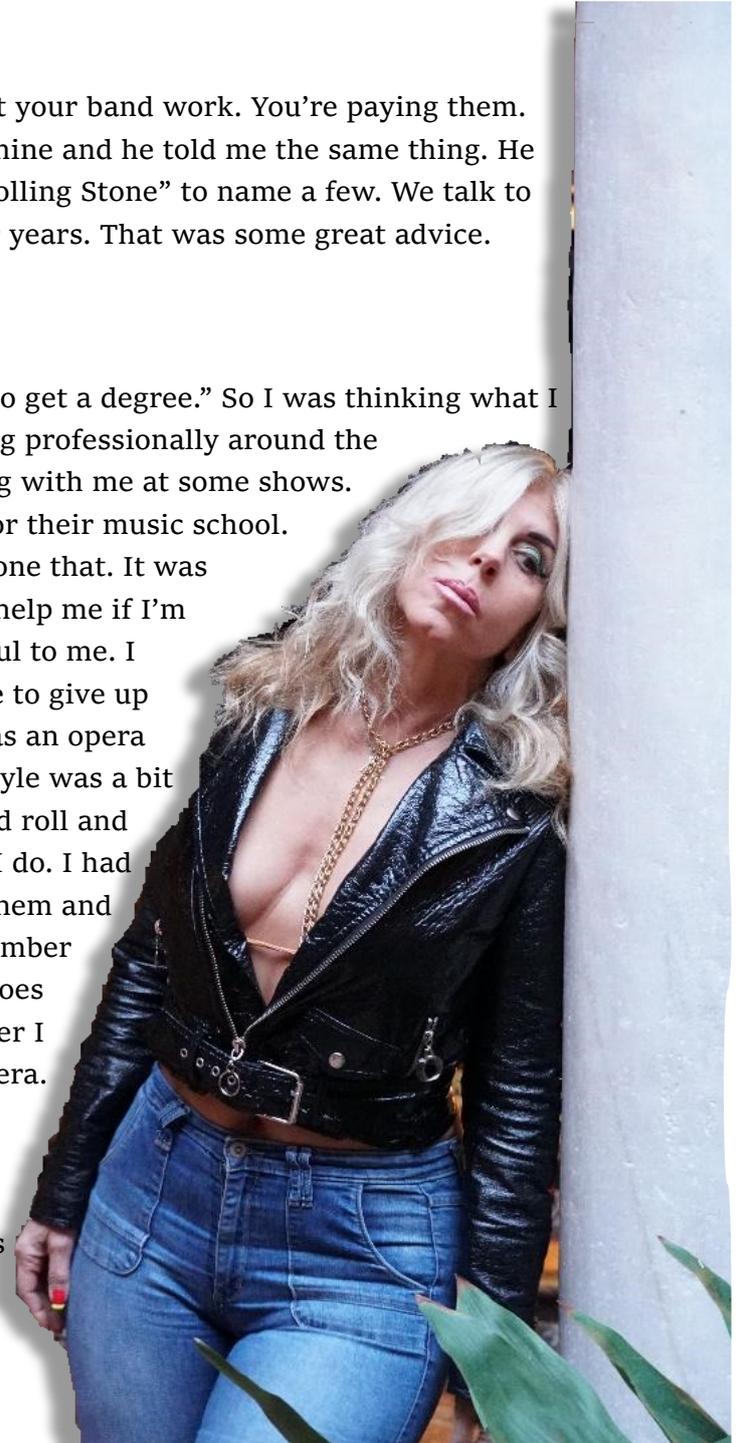
EN: Yeah. He was like, “I love what you do, but chill. Let your band work. You’re paying them. Let them do some work.” Barrett Strong is a mentor of mine and he told me the same thing. He wrote “Heard It Through the Grapevine”, “Papa Was a Rolling Stone” to name a few. We talk to each other three or four times a day. He told me that for years. That was some great advice.

GS: You were trained in singing opera?

EN: My dad was a military guy, and he said, “You have to get a degree.” So I was thinking what I should go to school for. I was already singing and playing professionally around the Metro Detroit area. I have two sisters. They were singing with me at some shows. I went down to Wayne State in Detroit and auditioned for their music school. They didn’t have a rock school, although I would have done that. It was opera or jazz. I tried opera because I figured that could help me if I’m doing so many gigs. I’m sure opera could be really helpful to me. I passed the jury and everything, and got in. They told me to give up rock gigs to keep my voice pure and I could really do it as an opera singer. I love the work ethic that I learned, but the lifestyle was a bit too pristine for me at this point. My first love is rock and roll and blues. The training was worth a million bucks for what I do. I had to learn three arias to audition. I went off and learned them and passed the jury. I was lucky to tour Europe with the Chamber Choir there and got a taste of what a touring musician goes through. It was cool. It’s a different kind of training. After I graduated, I had to unlearn what I learned. I learned opera. Then I had to unlearn opera to go back to my raspy rock blues sound. The training I learned allows me to sing correctly so I don’t wreck my voice. It’s breathing, how to carry your voice, things like that. A lot of rock singers lose their voice because they don’t have that part of the training.

GS: What would you be doing if you weren’t making music?

EN: I am friends with Motown legend Barrett Strong and helped him find a team to work his abundant publishing catalog . I would probably be a copyright lawyer to help artists who get ripped off and don’t know their songwriting rights. So they can bring in more money and not have to tour so many nights a year and burn out. You can have these streams of income if you know your rights.



Gary Schwind is a journalist whose passion has been music since his days as an undergrad at Ohio State University. In his career, he has interviewed artists ranging from Billy Joe Shaver to Raul Malo of The Mavericks. He lives in Orange County, California, with his wife and two sons.

The 2020 FORM UKBlues Awards virtual presentation event took place on Sunday 17th May 2020 , and if you missed it or want to enjoy it again it is now available on the UKBlues Federation's YouTube channel and on the UKBlues Federation's Facebook page

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Jules Fothergill Young Blues Artist of the Year, sponsored by Bluefunk Rhythm & Blues Club



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Dave Raven UK Blues Based Broadcaster of the Year . sponsored by Blues Matters!



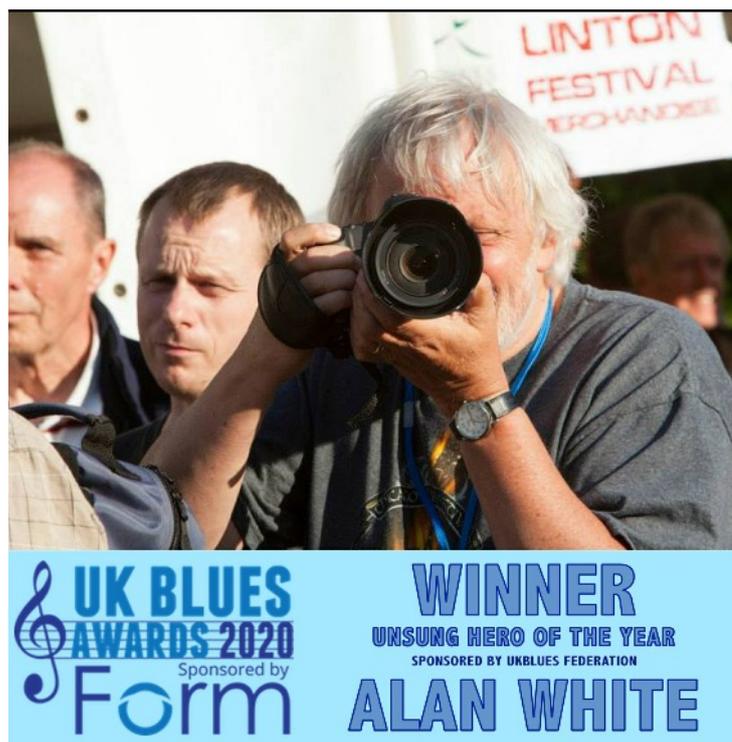
Blues Album of the Year, sponsored by The Colourblind Blues Show



Blues Club/Venue of the Year, sponsored by Upton Blues Festival



Blues Unsung Hero, sponsored by the UKBlues Federation



BiTS and Pieces: Stuff and occasional nonsense

Mea Culpa

Whoops! An error crept into last month's interview with guitar ace Innes Sibun. In some editions, Robert Plant, with whom Innes played, was referred to as Robert Palmer. I claim a senior brain-fart. Sorry. The pic of Plant was correct.



**WE NEED
YOUR HELP**

Fancy giving record reviewing a try? If you know what you like and can string a word or two together without too much of a problem then give it a go. We can help with albums and stuff to review.

Interested?

Email: editor@bluesinthesouth.com

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Ch', on a white background.



OUR BRAVE NEW BLUES WORLD by Lawrence Lebo



SPECIAL REPORT

As I write this, where I live we are still on COVID-19 'Stay At Home' orders. My husband and bassist Denny Croy and I have been alone in our home together now since mid-March. The good news is we haven't yet killed each other! The bad news is, as it is for all performing musicians, all of our work has been cancelled, and we are completely unsure of what the future has in store for our profession. It's a brand-new Blues world. From our home isolation I ponder how this will play out in the months and years to come. So, I decided to question a few of my blues colleagues about their take on the subject.

I've asked Australian Blues guitarist and touring artist Fiona Boyes (FB), American harmonica artist and owner of the Arizona (USA) venue "The Rhythm Room", Bob Corrione (BC), Alligator Records (USA) owner Bruce Iglauer (BI), London (UK) proprietor of Ain't Nothin' But Blues Club, Kevin Hillier (ANBB), and A. J. Gross, CEO of the Las Vegas (USA) Blues festival The Big Blues Bender (BBB). This is what they told me

From [Fiona Boyes](#):

LL: As an artist, how have you been impacted by the COVID-19 global pandemic?

FB: The immediate effect is the total loss of work for the foreseeable future. Unlike a lot of professional musicians, I don't usually supplement my income with regular teaching or any other form of income...so clearly, the situation is a shock! I played my last festival here in Australia on Sunday 8 March, flew home and then everything was closed down the next day. Like a lot of my friends in the industry, I think we've all just been stunned. In recent years, I've turned into a real 'road dog', traveling and touring a lot more than I did earlier in my career. 2020 was shaping up to be very busy, with confirmed dates in USA,



Canada and Europe, as well as domestic touring. Now, I'm finally getting my head around performing on-line and starting to schedule shows. It's a bit daunting, but in some ways not unusual. To make a living as a creative person, writing and performing non-mainstream original music, often requires innovation and a pinch of 'rat cunning'. It's 25 years since I had any other job. You may start out just wanting to sing and play, but then one day there's the gig where the sound guy doesn't show up—and, next thing you know, you've got to learn how to run a PA system. The importance of social media has turned most musicians into publicists (another learning curve for many). Some of our Australian festivals include social media obligations in the hiring contract. And so it goes on, now we must try to learn to adapt to the 'new normal' of on-line performance platforms. It is extremely difficult, because, for me, and many others, being a musician is all about the audience. We are players by the good graces of those people who come to the gigs, buy the albums, and who share the love

of this music, and in this way, we create a community together. The audience is always the main thing, and I always want to do my best for them.

LL: What do you think will change for you post COVID-19?

FB: One of the things I'm really enjoying, for the moment, is not spending 8+ hours at a time in a vehicle! I do love to travel, but with this pause, I realize how much it's been taking out of me. My recent albums have featured baritone, and a range of interesting cigar-box guitars—great fun to play, and I think, fun for the audience too—but it means I've often been traveling with up to 5 instruments. Lots of luggage, lots of lugging...hours and hours in airports and tour vans; it might take a little longer before we all get too nostalgic and miss that side of the business!

It's very difficult to say how things will bounce back from this pandemic. Will people flock to live gigs, just because they can? Will they become acclimated to staying at home and continuing the trend for online amusement and streaming that was already a growing reality before the lock downs? Being forced to move to on-line gigs may be a great thing, allowing musicians to stay in touch with fans, and make new ones, in places they can't regularly visit. Ever the optimist, I hope that new possibilities will emerge along with the challenges. There will be good things, but they will still be different things to actually sharing in a communal moment with fellow music lovers at a live performance. Nothing like seeing and hearing a real, live sweaty musician, in the moment, and playing for you!

LL: What do you think the blues community (venues, organizations, blues DJ's, fans) can do to help support artists post COVID-19?

FB: Creating a sense of community is something that I think Blues does really well. Over the many years I've been exploring my passion for this music, it's taken me on lots of adventures round the world. I've met some of my heroes, I've made new friends, I've played and learned from colleagues and strangers alike. Every time I move to a new town, I go straight out and look for the local gigs and find out if there is a nearby Blues society to join. One mistake a musician could make, is to think that the music scene is just about the performers. Venues, DJ's, fans, blues societies, festivals, promoters, bookers—we are all in this together and need to support each other. Maybe all we can do right now is to recognize and respect our connectedness and stand ready for the 're-opening'.

LL: What can your fans look forward to from you post COVID-19?

FB: Currently I am working on the liner notes for a 20 Year Celebration release of my very first solo album 'Blues in My Heart'. I like the synchronicity of a 20-year anniversary, in 2020. It's an acoustic album of fingerpicking/ragtime blues, signaling the sort of material that would take me on to win the International Blues Challenge a couple of years later. In the intervening years I've gone on to explore all sorts of regional Blues styles, most notably the cigar-box and swampier electric Mississippi stuff that appears on recent albums. It's very cool to revisit this earlier repertoire, and I love the re-mastering job that my friend, Grammy-nominated sound engineer Joseph Cara has done on it. So, I'll be getting my acoustic chops back up to speed and looking forward to introducing a wider audience to that aspect of my playing, whether that is (hopefully) live on tour...or maybe on-line. The album is due for release in USA/Worldwide on Fresh! from Reference Recordings.

More recording projects are in the works—both electric and acoustic—and I continue songwriting. I've also launched a new website (Blue Empress Art) featuring work by both myself and my husband, Rev Steve Clarke, aka 'The Preacher'. I always have a lot of projects going on; many more than I can actually bring to fruition! Many of the recent tour cancellations have made commitments to re-schedule for 2021, so with a bit of luck I might even get a chance to play for you in your neck of the woods, wherever that maybe.

From [Bob Corrione](#):

LL: As an artist, how have you been impacted by the COVID-19 global pandemic?

BC: It's been rough. My last live show was on March 14 at the Rhythm Room with Dave Riley and our band. We had an exceptional night of playing and I am really missing being on a stage making music for the people. What is really bad is that John Primer and me have our new album releasing May 1. John and I had about three weeks of shows planned in the US and in Italy for May. Obviously, all that's been canceled. The new release will still come out on May 1, but it will be a while before we will be able to do shows to promote it. I have a few gigs that are still on the books for fall, but I have no idea if they will actually still be happening when that time comes around. I'm currently doing some work towards some future album releases right now. But because very little money is coming in I have to go very slowly. I've been somewhat successful selling T-shirts and CDs by mail which has kept me going.

LL: What do you think will change for you post COVID-19?

BC: I am very concerned that after all the orders have been lifted, that the audience, fellow bandmembers and venue staff will be able to perform their functions safely. Our business depends on gathering people together. What will the new social norms be? I wonder if it will be possible to get back to the way it was before the pandemic. I really don't know the answers to those questions.

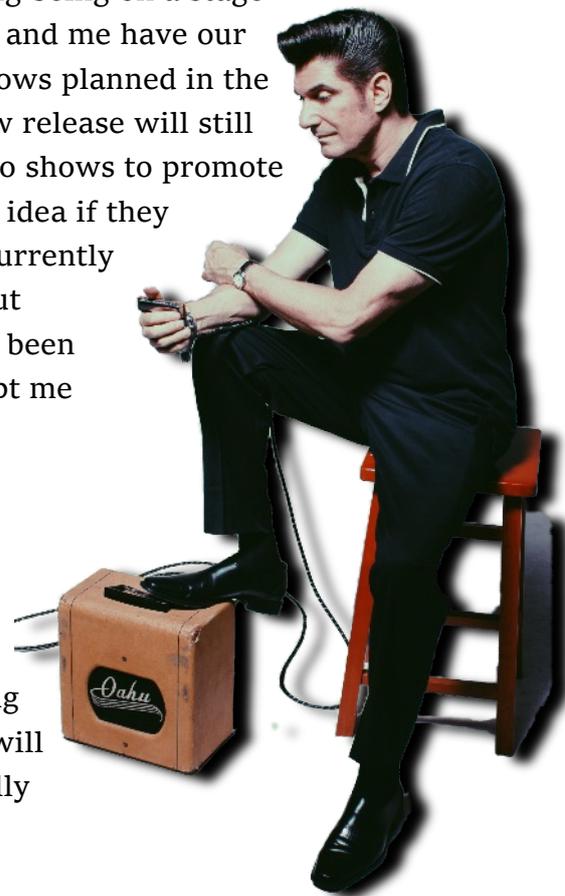
LL: What do you think the blues community (venues, organizations, blues DJ's, fans) can do to help support artists post COVID-19?

BC: I think we are all trying our best to help each other out through this. I have the unique position of being both an artist and a venue. As a venue we are completely wiped out financially. There is no money coming in and the bills are stacking up. I am very concerned that we will see our insurance lapse and our power shut off. Once the venue is allowed to re-open we'll be able to put artists back to work again. I'm hoping that the audiences aren't scared away.

LL: What can your fans look forward to from you post COVID-19

BC: When I'm finally able to get back on the stage, I will be so incredibly appreciative. I miss playing in all of the wonderful live music projects that I am involved in. I am very privileged to work with great artists like Bob Margolin, John Primer, Dave Riley, Jimi Primetime Smith, Alabama Mike and Andy T, Dianna Greenleaf and others. Immediately after the lockdown is lifted, I hope that John Primer and I can go do some festivals and shows to promote our new CD 'The Gypsy Woman Told Me'. And if I look a little bit further down the line, I am also planning a new CD series of older recordings called 'From the Vaults'. I am sitting on a wealth of amazing unissued master recordings, done over a 30-year period. Lots of work to do but a lot to look forward to!

LL: As a venue, how has The Rhythm Room been impacted by the global pandemic?



BC: The Rhythm Room has been greatly impacted. The governor shut down all Arizona music venues and bars on March 16. But I have faith that we will eventually be able to regroup, re-open, and continue our 28-year tradition of presenting live music. But right now we are completely depleted. I did file for the disaster relief.

LL: What do you think will change for The Rhythm Room post COVID-19?

BC: I am afraid that it will take a while to get people to have the confidence to come out in the kind of numbers that it takes to run a club. I don't know what it will take to have people feel comfortable together in large numbers again. We will be figuratively walking on a tight rope until we can get our momentum back.

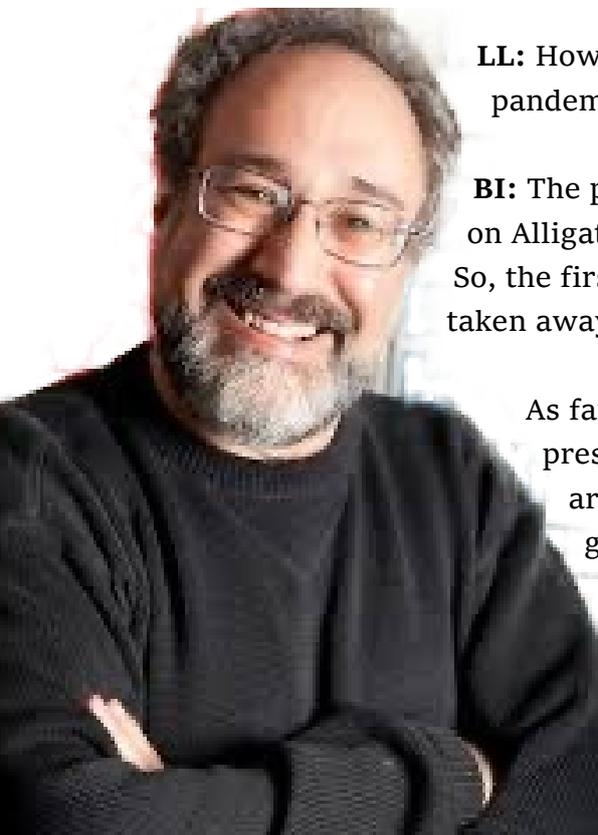
LL: What do you think the blues community (artists, venues, organizations, blues DJ's, fans) can do to help support venues post COVID-19?

BC: We're all going to have to stick together, get out, and support blues music if we want it to survive. Blues music is at its core, live music and the artists need the energy from the audiences. Artists also really depend on CD and T-Shirt sales from their live shows.

LL: What can we look forward to from The Rhythm Room post COVID-19?

BC: We will promise you some spectacular shows! We look forward to reuniting our regular fan base to come out to support the shows and the venue. I am hopeful that this pandemic will pass and that we will all be able to gather once again and celebrate this sacred music called the blues!

From Bruce Iglauer ([Alligator Records](#)):



LL: How has Alligator Records been impacted by the COVID-19 global pandemic?

BI: The pandemic has created great problems for us. Almost all the artists on Alligator tour regularly and depend on their live performance income. So, the first people affected are the artists, who have had their livelihood taken away.

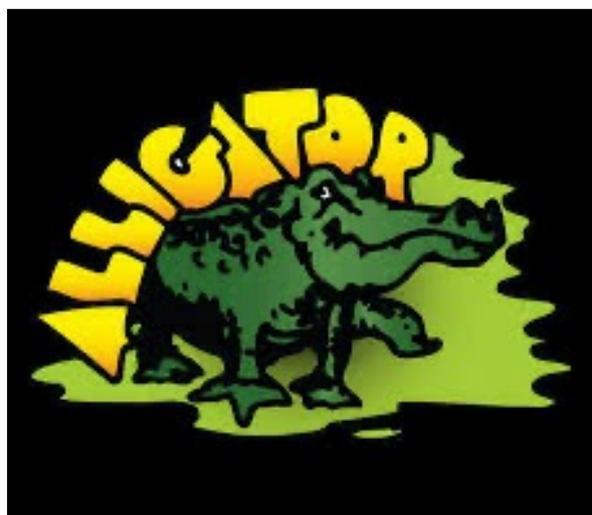
As far as Alligator, we use their tour dates to create publicity at radio, press, online, etc. We also advertise a lot of their tour dates. The artists sell CDs at their gigs (our market is still 50% physical goods) and we depend on those sales as a significant part of our income, as do the artists. Beyond that, almost every independent record store in the country is closed. We still sell a lot of CDs at stores, so this is a blow. Amazon, the biggest customer for CDs in the country, has been buying music sporadically as they are focusing on 'essentials'. Obviously, with massive unemployment, people are not spending a lot of money on music. The result of all this is that our CD sales this April are less than 20% of our sales last April. Streams and downloads are continuing at about the same level as before the pandemic, but the streaming services are focused on the youth market and hits, and spend little time promoting

their blues or any other niche music with largely adult consumers (jazz, classical, traditional folk, world music, etc.) Beyond that, we get a lot of our radio play on college and community stations. Some of them are off the air and many of which are programming old shows they have in their archives.

In summary, this pandemic is severely hurting our business. We have five new releases ready to go, and we're holding them in hopes that touring may begin again at some point. There's no point in releasing them now. But—blues fans are very loyal to their music. We know that when the worst of this is over, there will still be an audience for the blues, both live and on record. Still, the next months (and perhaps the next few years) are going to be very difficult for blues artists and blues labels.

LL: What do you think will change for Alligator Records post COVID-19?

BI: Right now it's hard for me to envision what post-Covid-19 looks like. In the ideal world, a vaccine would be developed, the whole world would be inoculated, and things would return to pre-pandemic normal. However, this seems unlikely. If people don't congregate to hear music, we're going to have to work with our artists to create more online presence, including streaming concerts, live 'chats', and solo video performances. If there are no gig sales and almost no record stores (I believe lots of stores will not reopen after the worst is over), we'll have to consider whether to release our records in physical form or digital only. If we don't release in physical form, we'll need to push our existing customers toward downloads (another format like physical sales that has been shrinking for years) and streaming services (a big change for our older customers, who really like to own music). The record industry has already decided that streaming is the future, and it's clear that younger people have little interest in owning music if they can access it. And we're going to have to get more response from the streaming services in terms of getting our music in front of their subscribers. This is going to be a real challenge!



The great thing about the streaming and download services is that they are virtually worldwide. In the past, it was impossible to buy an Alligator CD in China, and very tough in India, in any country in Africa, and in much of mainland Asia. Of course, we've had no distribution in third world countries, and often not in second world countries. Now our music is available in all those markets. There are three Chinese streaming services offering our full catalog (that's happened within the last year). Traditionally there has been a lot of interest in American music elsewhere in the world. Hopefully, folks will discover the blues

in countries where we've never had distribution and our artists have performed little or not at all. That's our hope for the future.

LL: What do you think the blues community (venues, organizations, blues DJ's, fans) can do to help support labels and artists post COVID-19?

BI: If fans are financially able, they should support the artists by watching their online streaming performances and contributing directly to the artists through PayPal and other services. The Blues Foundation has set up a special support fund, for artists hurt by the pandemic (which means virtually every blues artist, including both leaders and sidemen/sidewomen). It's the COVID-19 Blues Musician Emergency Relief Fund (go to blues.org). Fans could make a contribution to that fund.

From the label side, we appreciate everyone who buys a CD or LP or a download, or streams blues through any of the streaming services. (The streaming services pay very little, but those fractions of pennies add up). Fans are not only supporting the labels, but, because the labels pay royalties to artists and songwriters, so buying a CD or download or streaming blues music helps the artists and songwriters too. (Alligator pays about half a million dollars a year in royalties). If you're sheltering at home, it's a great time to check out some of those artists you've read about but never heard. As far as venues, they're in lots of trouble too. Clubs are shuttered, and some of them will never reopen.

DJ's—if you're still on the air, just keep sharing the music with your listeners, as well as alerting them to online performances. We at the labels wish that DJ's would focus in on one song from a new album and play it repeatedly so the listeners would associate one song with an artist, the same way that we learned songs on Top 40 radio in our youth. And please back-announce each song. I don't like listening to 10 songs in a row and then trying to remember whether it was #5 or #6 that I liked when the DJ comes back on air to announce the list of songs. It's not fun listening to the radio while taking notes.

For all of us—keep on playing the blues for our friends and acquaintances. We need more fans!

LL: What can fans look forward to from Alligator Records post COVID-19?

BI: As I said, we have five albums “in the can” ready or almost ready for release. We haven't announced them yet, and we're not going to announce them until we have release dates. I can tell you that we'll continue to support both our beloved veteran artists and our young guns. With Alligator being one of the “last men standing” among blues labels, part of our mission is to introduce the blues giants of the future, so the blues will continue to have an audience for many decades to come.

From Kevin Hillier ([Ain't Nothin' But Blues Club](#)):

LL: How has Ain't Nothin' But Blues Club been impacted by the global pandemic?

ANBB: We are closed, so losing thousands of £'s per month.

LL: What do you think will change for Ain't Nothin' But Blues Club post COVID-19?



ANBB: If we survive being closed for over 6 months, smaller audiences for months afterwards. We do not expect Central London to recover for, maybe 2 years, as fears of being in crowded places will still be there.

LL: What do you think the blues community (artists, venues, organizations, blues DJ's, fans) can do to help support venues post COVID-19?

ANBB: There is not a great Blues Community. We have our own small community at the Bar; hence we are doing an on-line Festival fortnightly, via our Facebook page, with

our roster of musicians, together with the best of British Blues and a special link-up with musicians in the USA.

LL: What can we look forward to from Ain't Nothin' But Blues Club post COVID-19?

ANBB: We will start doing what we have always done—put on live music. But, until London is fully opened, and travel in Europe is fully operational, it will be difficult to fund.

From A.J. Gross ([Big Blues Bender](#)):

LL: How has The Big Blues Bender festival been impacted by the global pandemic?

BBB: We are hopeful that the collective actions being taken right now to fight COVID-19 will result in a period of recovery during the summer. However, we do understand that if things do not improve, we may be forced to cancel. Many major festivals postponed their events to September and October as their rescheduled dates, contributing to our cautious optimism and the likelihood that we will be in a better situation by then. The health and wellbeing of our guests, artists and staff is our top priority. As the Bender date slowly approaches, we will continue to evaluate and respond to events as they unfold. This unprecedented situation offers a glimpse as to why Big Blues Bender 2020 may be the most relevant Bender on record.



LL: What do you think will change for The Big Blues Bender festival post COVID-19?

BBB: There is much uncertainty surrounding live music and entertainment due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. We will follow guidelines recommended by local and state public health officials, all while keeping Bender true to its roots. In times such as these, we believe music is more important than ever. Our hope is that the Blues can get us through.

LL: What do you think the Blues community (artists, venues, organizations, Blues DJ's, fans) can do to help support venues post COVID-19?

BBB: After stay-at-home orders are lifted, the best way to help the Blues community is to buy tickets, merchandise, albums—anything to support artists and venues! The entire Blues community is reeling right now. Most artists rely on constant gigs to make ends meet, but those gigs have all disappeared for the time being. For all they have given to us, we intend to stay resolute in our commitment to them so they can return to doing what they love—making music. Additionally, the live entertainment production industry consists of individuals who work as independent contractors, working an assortment of events

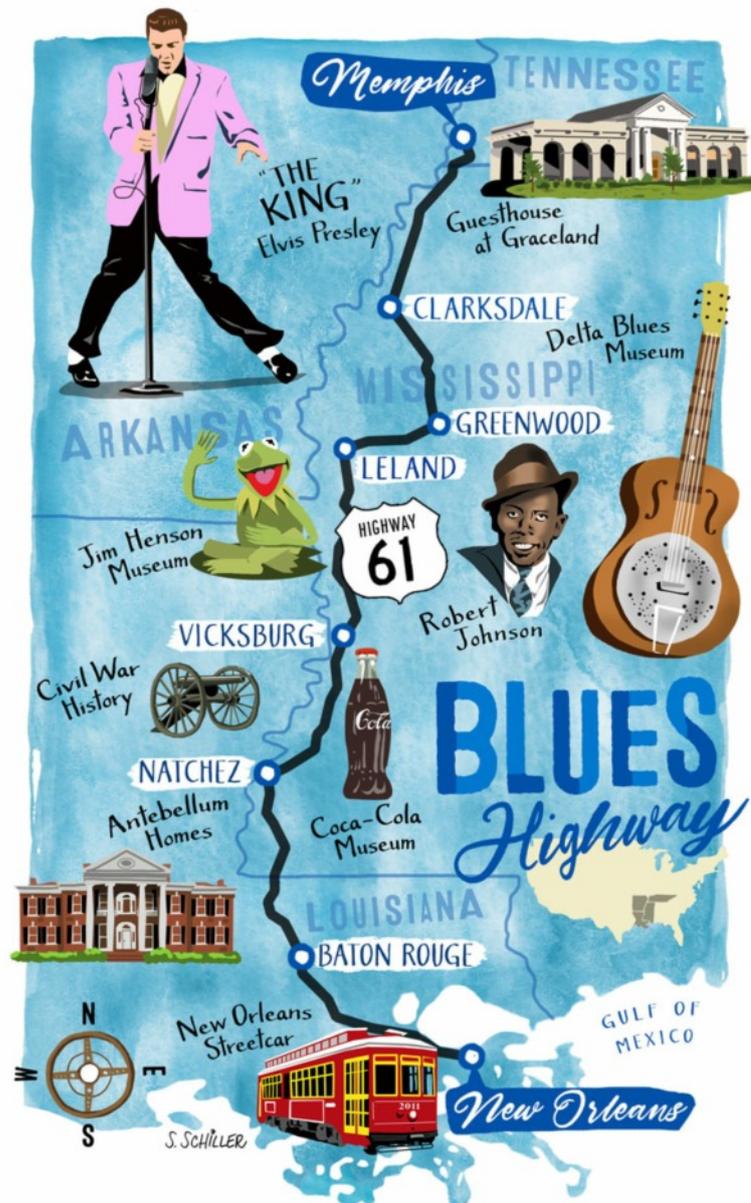
year-round. These folks are our close friends and colleagues, and they are counting on us to help them back on their feet.

We also recommend donations to music-focused nonprofits, such as the HART (Handy Artist Relief Trust) Fund, which is near and dear to our hearts. Every year at the Bender, we kick off the weekend with HART Party, a star-studded musical review and live auction to benefit the HART Fund, which supports Blues musicians and their families in financial need due to a broad range of health concerns impacting artists and provides acute, chronic and preventive medical and dental care as well as funeral and burial expenses.

LL: What can we look forward to from the Big Blues Bender Festival post COVID-19?

BBB: Our wonderful community knows that music is so much more than a luxury. It's the very soundtrack of our lives; it's the fuel for our souls. When we find ourselves on the other side of this situation, we will be thirsty for the power of live music like never before. When our isolation breaks, our social spirit will yearn for the camaraderie of like-minded spirits. The 2020 Bender offers the promise that normal life will once again return, and music will never have sounded sweeter.

~ Lawrence Lebo



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King King are going to be back on tour again in the UK this year! The Glaswegian rockers' **October UK Tour** went on sale on **Friday 17th April** via www.kingking.co.uk/tour and www.thegigcartel.com. What's more, guitarist **Stevie Nimmo** will join King King on the tour as the band's newest member!



Says Alan Nimmo: *“As it already felt like it was so long since we had the chance to play in front of our UK fans, the tour in April had us so excited with anticipation. So, you can imagine our disappointment when it had to be postponed!!!*

However, it brings us great joy to know that we'll be playing some dates in October and that at least for some... the wait will be over!

I am really looking forward to properly showcasing the new line-up for our fans. I can confirm that the lads are super excited to get out there and play for you. We have been working so hard on the new album and the results have been so satisfying... the response to our first single “I Will Not Fall” which was A-listed on Planet Rock has been amazing.

*As I have done on several occasions in the past when it comes to writing... I enlisted the talents of my big bro (Stevie Nimmo) to add some of his flavour to the songs alongside the other lads and when you hear the new album you'll be able to spot his voice in the background on several songs. This started me thinking that it was time to take the next step in the natural evolution of King King! So not only will Stevie be present on the new album but when we embark on our October tour you will see an addition to our already outstanding line-up of **Jonny Dyke, Zander Greenshields and Andrew Scott**... we will welcome **Stevie** to King King as our newest member!*

This is something that I have been thinking about for a long time and I feel now is the right time. I am extremely happy to bring Stevie in to the band as I feel that musically we raise to another level and it will be so exciting not only us but for our fans too who I know already have a lot of love and respect for him!

For more information and images, click here – www.noblepr.co.uk/press-releases/king-king/uk-tour-2020-2021.htm

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Friday 16 October 2020

Planet Rock's Rocktober – Bristol O2 Academy 1

Saturday 17 October 2020

Exeter Phoenix

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Planet Rock's Rocktober – Sheffield O2 Academy

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MusicGurus and BiTS believe that you should only pay for what you use so we don't charge subscriptions. Buy lessons and personal tutoring sessions with a one-off payment and that's it, they're yours to watch whenever, wherever and as many times, as you want.

Tutors in the blues and jazz field include Marcus Bonfanti (guitar), Matt Walklate (harmonica), Paddy Milner (piano), Ron Sayer (guitar) and many more. For a full list of tutors go [HERE](#).

[Click this line for a list of available courses](#)

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“How Eric Gales isn’t the hugest name in rock guitar is a total mystery” – **Dave Navarro**

“This guy could be the best player on Earth” – **Mark Tremonti**

Eric Gales has rescheduled his 2020 UK tour to February 2021 and has added two extra dates at the Brighton Concorde (Feb 3) and the Dover Booking Hall (Feb 4). The tour follows the release of his album ‘The Bookends’ via Provogue/Mascot Label Group earlier in 2019. The album features collaborations with B. Slade, Doyle Bramhall II and Beth Hart. Tickets for the Brighton Concorde and Dover Booking Hall shows go on sale via www.thegigcartel.com. Tickets for all the other shows that have been rescheduled are still valid.

Special guest on all shows is the critically acclaimed British Blues rock guitarist Danny Bryant. Hailed as “A National Blues Treasure”, Bryant recently released his 11th studio album ‘Means of Escape’ via Jazzhaus Records to a great fanfare.

The challenge for making ‘The Bookends’ was for Gales to push himself. “As a guitar player it’s been established that I can play a little bit, just a little bit”, he smiles. But for this album he not only wanted to motivate himself as a musician, but also as a vocalist, to build up his vocal discography. “What spearheaded that was the artists that I have on the record”, he says.

Written over a nine month period, the album was recorded at Studio Delux, Van Nuys, California, The Dog House, Woodland Hills, California, Blakeslee Recording, North Hollywood and the day before he was due to fly to LA for pre-production the original producer David Bianco tragically died. It was Bianco’s management who then suggested Matt Wallace. “I heard his work and the kind of people he has produced such as Maroon 5, Faith No More and all these cats. When we met up together it was just perfect. I just trusted the guy and it ended up being great, I love Matt Wallace”, says Gales.

For more information, click here – www.noblepr.co.uk/press-releases/eric-gales/2021-uk-tour.htm

**ERIC GALES – FEBRUARY 2021 UK TOUR
WITH VERY SPECIAL GUEST DANNY BRYANT**

Brighton, Concorde 2
Wednesday 3 February 2021

Dover, The Booking Hall
Thursday 4 February 2021

London, O2 Academy Islington
Friday 5 February 2021

Southampton, 1865
Saturday 6 February 2021

Bristol, Fleece
Sunday 7 February 2021

Nottingham, Rescue Rooms
Monday 8 February 2021

Leeds, Brudenell Social Club
Wednesday 10 February 2021

Gateshead, Sage
Thursday 11 February 2021

Glasgow, Oran Mor
Friday 12 February 2021

Manchester, Academy 3
Saturday 13 February 2021

Bilston, The Robin
Sunday 14 February 2021



at The Platform Tavern

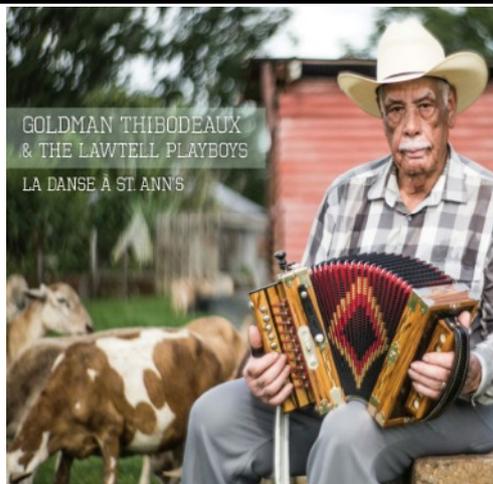
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www.stansbluesjam.co.uk



Goldman Thibodeaux and the Lawtell Playboys La Danse à St Ann's Nouveau Electric Records

Goldman Thibodeaux and the Lawtell Playboys play Creole La-la music from the 1920-30s. The band was originally started in 1946 when brothers Bébé and Eraste Carriere combined their talents to form The Lawtell Playboys. Goldman learned to play accordion in his 50's, following a heart attack. Calvin Carriere (Goldman's cousin) and Delton Broussard, the band's accordion player, often played with him to help him learn. When Delton became ill, he passed the accordion position in the Playboys to Goldman. Calvin and Goldman played for several years before recording their first

CD in 2001 titled 'Les Miseres Dans Le Coeur'. In 2002, the band recorded a second CD titled 'Gumbo at Goldman's'.

Today the Lawtell Playboys are : Goldman Thibodeaux (accordion, vocals); Louis Michot (fiddle); Courtney Jeffries (guitar); Brock Thibodeaux (frottoir ie., scrub-board); Lee Tedrow (bass); and, Barry Cormier (drums). They still play the music of their roots with zest and enthusiasm. This music is dance music, not intended for passive listening but for moving to. The titles of the tunes send that message too. 'Two-step de St. Ann's', 'Allons Sur Le Plancher' ('Get On The Dance Floor'), 'Allons Danser' ('Let's Go and Dance'), there are waltzes, 'Valse De Les Misere' ('The Waltz of Misery') and just fun dance pieces like, 'Jongle à Moi' ('Think Of Me') and 'Watch That Dog'. The music was recorded live at a Thibodeaux Family Reunion at St. Ann's Church, Mallett, Louisiana on Nov. 30, 2019. The button accordion is not an easy instrument to listen to, especially for our twenty-first century ears. But give it a try. [Click here to listen.](#)

The plan was to release 'La Danse à St. Ann's' at the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival. When the festival was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Thibodeaux chose to release the album anyway to offer his fans and music lovers internationally something to keep their spirits up in these trying times.

Wise move. I for one just love it. Encore! Une autre!

Ian K McKenzie



Various Artists Discover British Blues UMG Recordings ASIN: B087NC56TW

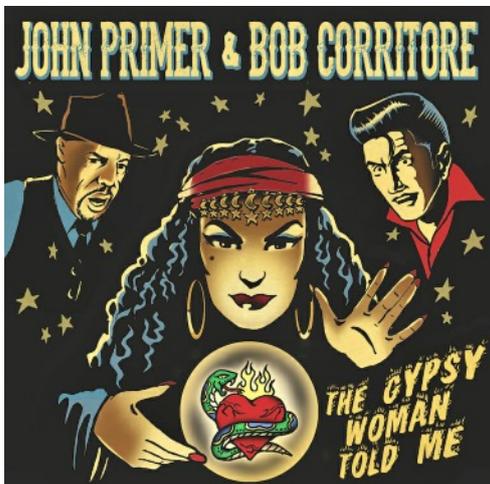
Hot on the heels of the recent 'Crawling up a Hill' compilation of British blues from the late sixties/early seventies comes this offering from the Decca/Deram labels. This has the advantage of covering both British 'blues booms', the early sixties and the late sixties, although curiously it doesn't include the Stones even though they recorded for Decca at the time. Instead we have early sixties tracks by Alexis Korner, both his skiffle group and Blues Incorporated—the first British Blues Band—and also ex-Blues

Incorporated sideman Graham Bond, Zoot Money and early John Mayall. Also we have a couple of blues tracks by Davy Graham featuring his guitar and vocals with minimal bass and drum backing. We also get records by visiting American blues singers Otis Spann and Champion Jack Dupree, (both with Eric Clapton on guitar), Eddie Boyd (with Peter Green on guitar), Mae Mercer and Curtis Jones.

The later sixties tracks include John Mayall (with Clapton and also Peter Green), Savoy Brown, Ten Years After and the Keef Hartley Band. There are also a number of rare oddities here, Rod Stewart's 'Good Morning Little School Girl' from 1964, from Sheffield Dave Berry's version of 'Hoochie Coochie Man', from Liverpool Steve Aldo with Jimmy Reed's 'Baby What You Want Me To Do' and from Wales Amen Corner (with Andy Fairweather Low) covering Nina Simone's 'Gin House Blues'. We also get two Peter Green instrumentals 'Greeny' and 'Curly' both backed up by the current Bluesbreakers and 'Out of Reach' which features Peter on both guitar and vocals.

There are some great tracks here—for me both Clapton and Peter Green's guitar playing during this period was exemplary and this compilation includes some lesser-heard examples—we also get to see how the music developed from its beginnings with Alexis Korner and there are also some interesting rarities. However, limiting the tracks to just the Decca/Deram labels obviously decreases the scope of the compilation and the exclusion of the Stones seems a strange choice as they were the leading and easily the most popular blues act of the early sixties—I can only think this is to do with licensing issues. [Click here for track list.](#)

Graham Harrison



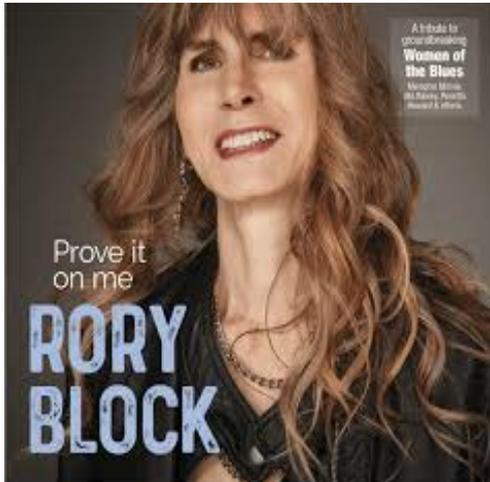
John Primer and Bob Corritore *The Gypsy Woman Told Me* Vizztone Label ASIN: B084Z5BGR4

This is the third collaboration between these two—Chicago blues veteran guitarist Primer and Phoenix-based harp player Corritore—and like its predecessors it is very authentic sounding Chicago blues, as you'd expect from Mr. Primer, an ex-sideman with Muddy Waters, Junior Wells and Magic Slim, indeed the album is named after the Muddy Waters track 'The Gypsy Woman Told Me'. The album was recorded in 2018 and 2019 in various places with various personnel and produced by Corritore, Clarke Rigby, and Kid Andersen. The band includes guitarists Jimi Smith and Billy Flynn, pianist Bob Welch and Andersen on organ (!), three bassists—Kedar Roy, Mike Hightower and Troy Sandow; and two drummers—June Core and Brian Fahey.

We begin with Chick Willis' 'Keep-A-Driving', a lovely shuffle in typical Chicago blues 'ensemble' style, while 'Knocking on Your Door' picks up the pace with Bob's distorted harp driving the track along. 'Gambling Blues' (one of my favourites) is just John and Bob with a more country sound that reminded me of John Lee Hooker. 'Little Bitty Woman' is a rocking Primer original and features John on slide, it reminded me of Junior Parker's 'Love My Baby' and features great piano from Bob Welch, while Little Milton's 'Walking the Back Streets and Crying' is a slow blues with more nice piano. It's not all old classic blues though, 'I Got the Same Old Blues' is the J.J. Cale song which John and Bob bring new life to adding a bit of Chicago grit to Mr. Cale's normally laid-back groove and

another Primer original 'Walked So Long' has a relaxed jazzy swing. However, we also get 'My Imagination'—the Sonny Boy Williamson II tune (with Bob in a key an octave higher that Sonny Boy played it in?) and also Jimmy Reed's 'Let's Get Together' both done in authentic fashion. To be brutally honest there isn't anything here that we haven't heard before BUT I loved the way that both these front men are committed to the 'ensemble' sound. They don't hog the limelight for themselves and the band also play their part in backing them with pitch-perfect playing.

Graham Harrison

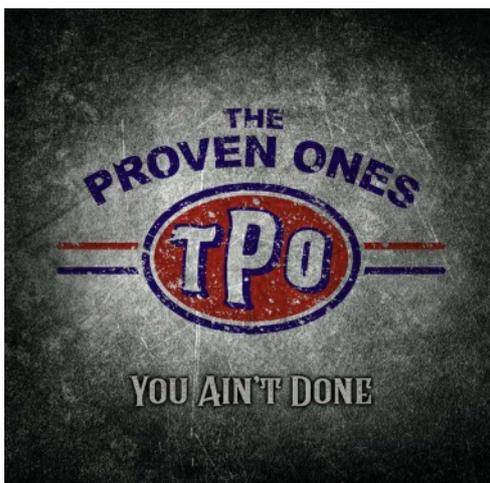


Rory Block Prove It On Me Stony Plain ASIN: B083XRSDCJ

This is the second installment of Rory's 'Power Women of the Blues' series, which spotlights the music of female performers from the blues' formative years, the first featured Bessie Smith and this one includes songs by Memphis Minnie, Ma Rainey as well as other less well-known singers. The album features Rory and 'The Rory Block Band'—which turns out to be Rory providing additional vocals and percussion, double tracked by engineer Rob Davis.

We start 'He May Be Your Man' by Helen Humes (who replaced Billie Holiday with Count Basie in 1938) followed by Madlyn Davis' 'It's Red Hot'—which works great with Rory's slide guitar. 'If You're a Viper' is apparently by Rosetta Howard but many will know the version by Fats Waller, and the title track is a Ma Rainey song—which surprisingly works well with just Rory's guitar despite having been recorded with a jazz band. 'I Shall Wear A Crown' by blind gospel singer Arizona Dranes is one of the highlights here, a lovely gospel song with Rory's multi-tracked voice providing the backing choir. Memphis Minnie's 'In My Girlish Days' is a perfect vehicle for her guitar and vocals and I also liked the poignant version of Little Kimbrough's 'Wayward Girl'. As often in her 'mentor' series we also get one original song, in this case 'Eagles' which is a very personal story, done in a blues/gospel style so that it fits in perfectly with the other songs. There is a fair bit of variety here as Rory flits between blues, jazz and gospel and adds percussion and extra vocals but I must admit I would have liked to have heard additional instruments and maybe a jazz band. However, I note that there weren't any songs by major figures like Big Mama Thornton, Sister Rosetta Tharpe and Sippie Wallace so maybe we'll get another installment?

Graham Harrison



The Proven Ones You Ain't Done Gulf Coast Records ASIN: B0858TYK83

This is the second album from this group of session musicians consisting of Brian Templeton (vocals), Kid Ramos (guitar), Anthony Geraci (keyboards), Willie J. Campbell (bass) and Jimi Bott (drums). Over the years the guys have played with top line blues acts including The Fabulous Thunderbirds, The Radio Kings, The Mannish Boys, and Sugar Ray and the Bluetones and

this new album was co-produced by Bott and guitarist Mike Zito at Dockside Studio in Maurice, Louisiana, with new original songs from each member of the group.

The opener 'Get Love' is a powerful way to start with stinging lead guitar, heartfelt vocals, a chugging rhythm section and riffing brass. 'Gone to Stay' and 'You Ain't Done' maintain the intensity—two rocking tracks, with 'You Ain't Done' sounding like The Stones in their pomp. 'Already Gone' is more country than blues but does have some lovely boogie piano from Geraci, while 'Whom My Soul Loves' is a poignant soul ballad featuring Templeton duetting with the excellent Ruthie Foster—wow! For me the album tailed off after this, the playing throughout is excellent from all these "proven" session musicians but I just thought that the songs weren't memorable enough. There is lots of variety here but if I wanted to be harsh I'd say that there isn't any real blues material, it's all rock-blues and more commercial leaning material.

Graham Harrison



The Reverend Shawn Amos & The Brotherhood Blue Sky Put Together Music PTM-00008

Here is the eagerly awaited new album from the Reverend, who has recently released two excellent EPs (Kitchen Table Blues, Volumes One and Two). Shawn is the son of Wally Amos, the founder of the Famous Amos chocolate chip Cookie Company and Shirlee Ellis (professionally known as Shirl-ee May, whose performing career was during the early nineteen sixties). His wide and varied interests have over the years culminated in him becoming, amongst other things, an ordained minister in the Universal Life Church, a songwriter, singer, record producer, web personality and founder and CEO of Freshwire, a digital content creation company. He has overseen the collation and production of anthologies and box set re-issues for such artists as Johnny 'Guitar' Watson, John Lee Hooker and Quincy Jones. For many years, he also collaborated with his great friend and colleague, the late Solomon Burke on a good number of projects.

Late in 2019 Amos relocated to Texas and as a consequence, the album was recorded at Blue Rock Studios Wimberley, Texas and produced by James Saez. Joining the Reverend on these ten Brotherhood-original numbers are: Brady Blade (drums); Christopher Thomas (bass); and Chris 'Doctor' Roberts (guitar).

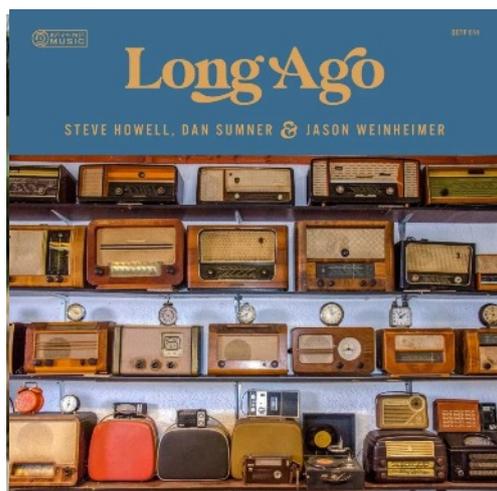
The album opens with the floating and highly atmospheric 'Stranger Than Today', which contains delightfully ephemeral slide, acoustic and resonator guitars. Together they combine, with a lazy wailing harmonica over laidback loping percussion, to describe a day that is somewhat.....strange. On 'Troubled Man', a rattle snaking tambourine gives way to Ruthie Foster's gospel infused vocals, which pleasingly joins the Reverend's fiery, stark voice. All the while, equally fierce and snarling guitar and harmonica, energetically burn away.

'Twenty Seven Dollars', is quite simply, a straight down-the-line piano and fuzz guitar stomper in the best rollicking blues tradition. The jaunty goodtime feel of the New Orleans second line strut is

well represented here with 'Keep The Faith, Have Some Fun'. The magical foot-tapping, jangling brass is provided by the splendid Mudbug Brass Band. The distortion of vocals, fuzz guitar and harmonica is well suited to the melancholic 'Albion Blues'. A starkly clear, brooding piano only adds to this slow burning blues. Texas Blues is also well represented here with 'Counting The Days', a raw animated harmonica leads stomping percussion, while a claustrophobically wailing, striding guitar dominates. A suitably incandescent vocal from the Reverend tops it all off!

Greatly endorsed!

Brian Harman



**Steve Howell, Dan Sumner & Jason Weinheimer Long Ago
Out Of The Past Music OOTP 014**

Here, on this his ninth album, Steve continues on his journey of delving into the vastness of American music, to deliver a splendid collection of fine tunes. Steve takes lead vocals and plays archtop and flat top acoustic guitars, as does jazz guitarist Dan Sumner, while Jason Weinheimer provides bass.

The mixture of blues, jazz and easy listening numbers that is contained within these eleven numbers, fully reflect Steve's love and affection towards the music of the first half of the 20th century. His measured, softly lilting, relaxed baritone voice effortlessly merges with the crisply picked guitars to produce a cocoon of warmth and comfort.

This is very evident on the Percy Mayfield penned 'Please Send Me Someone To Love', where the rich mellow bass allows the guitar to gently underpin Steve's vocals. On the evocatively spacious and emotive 'Angel Eyes', Steve remains true to Ella Fitzgerald's rendition. 'Do Nothing 'Til You Hear From Me', is intentionally similar to the Mose Allison version and is all the better for it, and features a splendidly rich solo from Dan.

The Horace Silver jazz standard, 'Song For My Father', has Steve extolling his love and respect for his dad, as his restrained but heartfelt feelings pour gently from the speakers. The rich, luxurious guitar tones that are found on the Bossa Nova instrumental 'Dindi', evoke thoughts of a low tide gently lapping a sandy shore. Duke Ellington's 'Nothing But The Blues', is quite simply delightful, laidback vocals, gentle picking and a relaxed attitude. What more could you want?

Greatly endorsed!

Brian Harman.



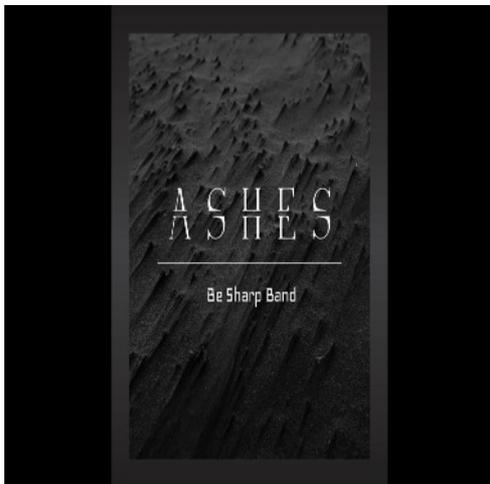
Bad Touch Kiss The Sky Marshall Records

Bad Touch is a young five-piece outfit with a strong sense of “classic rock”, but much of the music here does keep a sense of the blues roots. The opener, ‘Come A Little Closer’, brought to mind early 70s Free in the vocal and guitar work, with an almost southern rock type guitar break, all allied to a Bad Company-styled raucousness. This continues into ‘I Get High’, where the drumming has that Free sound to a tee, whilst the stocky, grinding rhythm of ‘Let Go—but please don’t get the idea this is some kind of Free tribute (welcome though I know that might be to some!),

this is modern music. It is rock, no doubt about it—the crunching, riffing guitar work of Robert Glendinning and declamatory vocals of Stevie Westwood put that beyond debate—but it is also music that remembers its blues roots. That sense of an early 70s approach is also reinforced by the rock cover of Kiki Dee’s 1974 hit, the soul-styled ‘I Got The Music In Me’ (with horns and backing vocalists). That soul/ rock hybrid also comes through on ‘Too Much Of A Good Thing’. Some readers may find this album just too rocky but those who recall and/ or long for the days when this kind of music ruled the roost should find plenty to enjoy.

Norman Darwen

(www.badtouchrocks.co.uk)



Be Sharp Band Ashes Independent

Right from the off – the nicely-grooving and appropriately-titled ‘Just Blues’ - this five-piece, five year old band out of Zagreb in Croatia impresses with an original blues sound. Yes, there is a touch of Janis Joplin to vocalist Marija Gašparič’s tough no-nonsense approach (though without Janis’ excesses), guitarist Nenad Maderić has a slightly rock-tinged tone on a few occasions but keeps within reasonable bounds throughout and he displays an individual approach, over the tight rhythm section of Hrvoje Kaučić on bass and

Robert Jurčec drums, with the excellent keyboards playing of Tomislav Ocvirek driving things along or providing a cushion as required. All the songs have quite distinct arrangements – a lot of thought has gone into this set. My own personal favourites here include the gritty boogie of the spooky ‘Wolf’ (with Marija’s nice vocal acknowledgement of John Lee Hooker), the slow ‘Mama’s Everyday Blues’ with its Robert Johnson derivation and some fine blues harp by guest Krešo Oremuš, very much in an early post-war Chicago style, and ‘Put ‘Em Down’, a frantic number which sounds rather like the early Yardbirds (even down to the backing vocals). Really though, every track of the twelve is well worth a listen, and although the band has been described as “blues-rock”, this is really their own brand of blues with an occasional rock twist to it. It is well worth checking out.

Norman Darwen

(www.besharp.band)



Red's Blues Band Flim Flam Man Independent: download sing

There is just a very slight, almost psychedelic tinge to this catchy, rock blues single from a four-piece band out of Sacramento, California who are just finishing off their third album. The line-up of distinctive vocalist E Reid-Grigsby, her husband and bass player RW Grigsby, guitarist C Crumpacker and drummer Tim Wilbur is augmented by prestigious guitarist Kid Andersen (providing a different sound on Wurlitzer electric piano) and guitar ace Rockin' Johnny Burgin, and the music is memorable... given that though it is, the lyrics will probably attract the most attention however. Although the band insists they can be applied generally, some lines seem

to leave little room for doubt, and the sleeve strongly hints otherwise—let's just say given the rather scathing portrait of the flim flam man, the band probably won't be voting for the incumbent President of their country at the next elections. Do check it out—it is available from their website.

Norman Darwen

(www.redsbluesband.com)



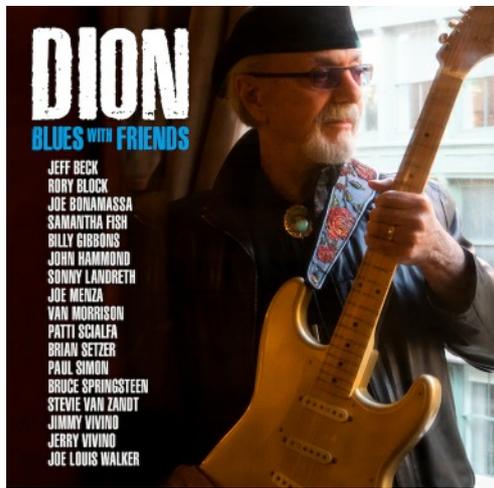
Georgia Randall Help Wanted Own label

Singer/ songwriter/ guitarist / bandleader Georgia Randall was born in Virginia and is based in Florida these days. On the evidence of this, her third album in her own right, much of her music is blues-based and incorporates elements of soul, rock, funk and folk—try the opening number (the title track) which kind of has these elements all together, or the grooving blues-rock of 'Anticipation Blues'. The traditional 'Motherless Child' is given a modern and appropriate make-over, and shows just a what a fine singer Georgia is, as too does the slide guitar-driven and gospel-steeped 'Born To Die'. 'Drive-

in Fantasy' adds psychedelia to the funk, blues and folk mix, a little like Bobby Rush's early sound, whilst the positive message of 'Do Right' rides a pop-gospel arrangement and Dave Van Ronk's 'River Come Down' has a bright late 60s feel, and with a guitar break by Johan Nilson which fits that approach perfectly... which seems like a good place to mention the other members of the tight band: keyboards player Albert Biele, bass player Julie Klein and drummer Michael Elliott. 'Big Oak Tree' is a fine original blues shuffle and Georgia's vocal timbre on 'Put It Down' reminds me a little of vintage Grace Slick of Jefferson Airplane! This rather intriguing album closes with another late sixties sounding number, the acoustic-based 'Is It Today'.

Norman Darwen

(www.georgiarandall.com)



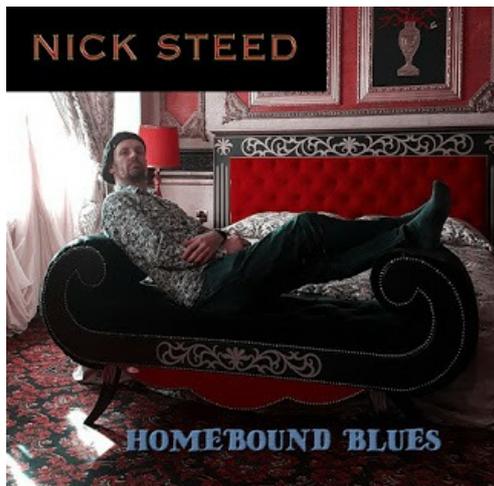
Dion Blues With Friends Keeping The Blues Alive

It is difficult to avoid this review becoming merely a list of rather impressive superstar names who have turned up to record this album with Dion. Ah yes, Dion—late 50s and early 60s pop star, but unlike many of the pretty boy singers around at the time, he always had something of a tougher approach (think of ‘The Wanderer’ for a good example of what I mean).

In the 60s he began recording blues and R&B material, and in the 2000s he made several blues albums—and he sings the blues well. Well enough to attract label boss Joe Bonamassa, Joe Louise Walker, Sonny Landreth, Billy Gibbons and Samantha Fish—all big names from the contemporary blues scene – alongside others like Bruce Springsteen, Paul Simon, Jeff Beck, Van Morrison and others from the rootsier side of the music business for guest appearances. Even the sleeve notes are credited to Bob Dylan.

But of course, it is the music that matters—and there are no problems on that score. The songs are all originals, with a wide variety of arrangements, from the tough blues-rock of the opener to the rockabilly-tinged ‘Uptown Number 7’ with Brian Setzer, via the straight-forward blues of ‘My Baby Likes To Boogie’, the jazzy ‘Stumbling Blues’, the rural style of ‘Told You Once In August’ and the beautiful and thought-provoking ‘Song For Sam Cooke (Here In America)’. I’ve not even mentioned half of the tracks, but, yes, I am mightily impressed. You will be too.

Norman Darwen



Nick Steed Homebound Blues NS5 Playbyhead

Nick Steed is a freelance keyboardist, vocalist based in Stockport, South Manchester performing all over the UK and Europe. Nick began learning keyboards at age of seven, performed live and earned money from an early start at age thirteen and has worked solo and with various styles of bands since. He is a highly regarded musician who has been recognized for his songwriting.

Nick normally is to be found with his own band called the Nick Steed Five but this one is really something very different. All original and 9 tracks with all instruments except sax/harp played by Mr Steed. Two additional musicians are Paul Winn on harp and Kim Nishikawara on sax, plus Amanda Jane Heywood guesting vocals on 'Hold It Tight'.

This ‘lockdown’ music is a little different to the usual Steed fare. There is a slightly more gentle edge to the arrangements and to the playing and singing, nowhere more obvious than on the track ‘Feeling For The Blues’ which first appeared on the Nick Steed Five album ‘Feeling The Blues’. The earlier version has a hard edge to it, the second—which has the subtitle (Alt. Version) is softer and

more laid back. There is a feel among these tracks of a genuflection to JJ Cale, which I for one welcome.

The two outstanding tracks are for me, 'Electra Glide (Highway 61)' and the title track 'Homebound Blues'. Both come with excellent sax parts, from Kim, Nick's regular sax player. The first, which reflects Nick's love of highspeed transport and motorcycling—an Electra Glide is a Harley Davidson motor bike—has already been earmarked by the motor cycle manufacturer as the music for a future commercial. 'Homebound Blues' is one of the best of a plethora of lockdown blues around at the moment.

All in all this is a super record which you should acquire at once if not sooner.

Ian K McKenzie

I'm Gonna Live Anyhow Until I Die
ALAN LOMAX'S "SOUTHERN JOURNEY," 1959-1960



Various Artists I'm Gonna Live Anyhow Until I Die: Alan Lomax's "Southern Journey," 1959-1960 Global Jukebox Records 2010 (Catalog ID: GJ1005 / UPC: 847108024497)

Alan Lomax (1915-2002) was a documentarian, ethnologist, cultural activist, and arguably the foremost folklorist of the 20th century. In 1959 and 1960, Lomax and his assistant, English folksinger Shirley Collins, travelled the southern states of the USA with one of the earliest stereo tape recorders. The tracks on this album represent a few of the hundreds of recordings they made. Without a doubt the 'star' of the show is Fred McDowell,

beautifully recorded with a very early edition of 'Highway 61'. Wonderful. Lomax typed one word after this performance's entry in his field log: "Perfect".

Bluebird 'hillbilly' recording artists J.E. Mainer and his Mountaineers; menhaden—a type of fish—fishermen chanties (*sic*) of the Bright Light Quartet; Blue Ridge country gospel composer and bus driver E.C. Ball; and Bessie Jones and the Georgia Sea Island Singers also feature, and the music is magnificent.

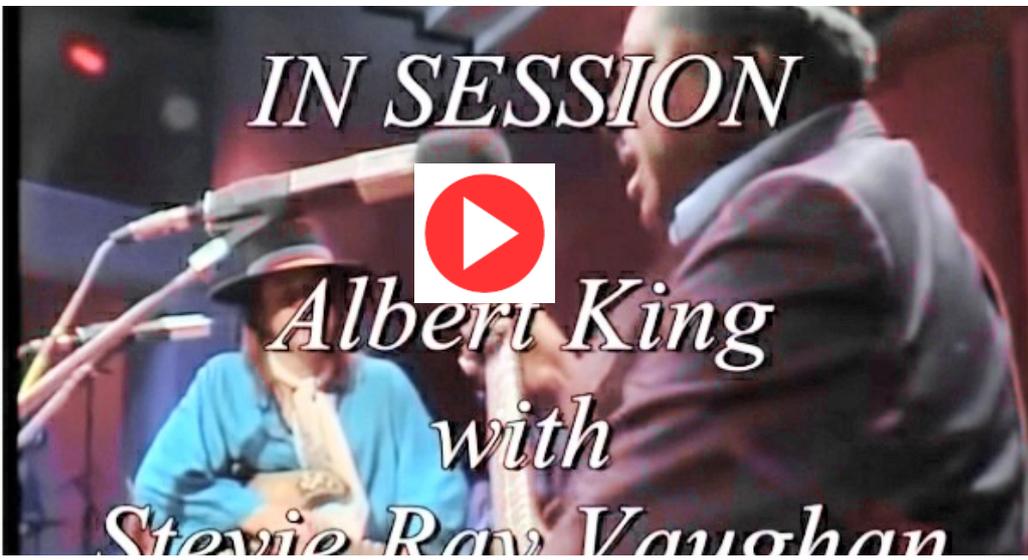
One of the most fascinating features is the inclusion of two different versions of the same tune, The Devil's Dream by Hobart Smith (fiddle). Recorded in Williamsburg, Virginia. April 28, 1960, in the Blue Ridge Mountains and also by Sid Hemphill (four-note quills and vocal effects) with Lucius Smith (drum). Recorded at Senatobia, Mississippi. September 22, 1959. The Mississippi Hill Country fife and drum arrangement of the latter is a wonderful stylistic comparison/ contrast with the country fiddle work of Hobart Smith. Both versions are a delight.

This is a fabulous record, issued a number of times previously. If you don't already have it, get it now.

Ian K McKenzie



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IN SESSION

*Albert King
with*

Stevie Ray Vaughan

Albert King & Stevie Ray Vaughan: Don't You Lie To Me



James Booker Live Vi

*James Booker "True"
Live at Montreux*

James Booker: True



Lil Armstrong: The Pearls, Heebie Jeebies. With Mae Barnes, dms & 2nd vcl; Henry Red Allen, tpt; Buster Bailey, clt.

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