



Bluesletter

Washington Blues Society

July 2022

Happy Birthday Leslie "Star Drums" Milton!
Blues News, Festival Previews & More
Mercer Music @ Capricorn: Part 2

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



Hi Blues Fans,

As I finish this month's letter, I just returned from the first Sunbanks Country Festival. It was a blast! Stellar music from start to finish! I enjoyed meeting and getting to know many of the musicians during these four days and it was an extremely nice group of very

professional entertainers. Some will say "it's not the "blues," but for me it's not the structure of the music, but the story told through song. Many attendees were regulars at traditional Sunbanks Festivals and many stayed for the entire weekend. I also met others who came specifically for the country festival, and I found them to be music fans much like our blues family. I encourage everyone to consider this event next year as I believe you will enjoy it!

We had a great International Blues Challenge in Spokane the first of weekend of June and was a great day of music too! We had nine talented acts enter and vie for the chance to go to the finals for the opportunity to go to Memphis and represent our blues society!

There were a lot of new folks who threw their hat into the ring for the first time along with a few who have entered in the past. John Firshi opened with a solo/duo set, and as he did in the finals last year, got toes tapping and heads bobbing along with the music. It just kept ramping up from there.

Some of the local bands included The Longnecks, Jan Harrison Blues, DA and the Blues Notes all represented the Spokane area. We also had John Firshi Band, Justyn Priest band, and the Blues Kangaroos from Idaho, and Kenny James Miller from Montana. And also, DA Blues in the solo/duo category. Six full hours of great music!

A few highlights!. Justyn Priest is one talented guitar player, and his future is very bright. The Longnecks, Jan Harrison and DA and the Blues Notes will keep Spokane clubs jumping for many years to come. Idaho has many nights of good blues from the John Firshi Band and the Blue Kangaroos. Montana has known about Kenny James Miller for a long time, and he will represent himself well wherever he and the band play!

Our International Blues Challenge Finalists from the Spokane competition will be... Drum roll please! Kenny James Miller in the band category and DA Blues in the solo/duo category.

Entering the wild card drawing are Jan Harrison Blues in band category and John Firshi in solo/duo! I'm excited for the upcoming International Blues Challenge Semi-Finals in Snohomish at Collector's Choice and in Centralia at the Moose Lodge, but move about that in next month's letter!

Star Drums & Lady Keys
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You had better make your plans now to attend the finals as it will be a powerful day loaded with surprises! Saturday, August 27th at Magnuson Park Amphitheater starting at 1:00 PM.

Yours in the Blues!

Tony Frederickson, President
Washington Blues Society
Member, Board of Directors, The Blues Foundation (2013-2016)

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This month, the Bluesletter celebrates the 84th birthday of a true national treasure, Leslie "Star Drums" Milton. Leslie's story is simply awe-inspiring, and Aaron Swaney captures some of Leslie's history that includes the Apollo Theatre, the Ed Sullivan Show, the Crescent City and the legendary Slamhound Hunters! The issue also features a preview of the 2022 Winthrop Rhythm and Blues Festival, welcomes Polly O'Keary & The Rhythm Method and TJ Read to the July Blues Bash in Shoreline, and concludes Kirk Anderson's excellent example of community involvement dedicated to preserving and promoting music heritage in Macon, Georgia.

Above: Leslie "Star Drums" Milton at the Salmon Bay Eagles in 2011
(Photo Courtesy of Aaron Swaney)

Cover: Leslie "Star Drums" Milton
(Photo Courtesy of Gael Kurath)

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Please Note: If the Editor receives enough editorial copy before the 5th, or camera-ready ads before the 12th, space may be filled and material may be saved for a future issue. Please send in contributions early!

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Please send articles and photos only as attachments.
Please do not embed images or stories embedded directly in emails and please do not send links. Please only send attachments with each file titled with a unique file name instead of computer- or camera-supplied identifiers. All contributions not meeting these requirements will be returned for revisions by the contributor.

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MISSION STATEMENT

The Washington Blues Society is a nonprofit organization whose purpose is to promote, preserve, and advance the culture and tradition of blues music as an art form. Annual membership is \$25 for individuals, and \$35 for couples. The Washington Blues Society is a tax-exempt nonprofit organization and donations are tax-deductible. The Washington Blues Society is affiliated with The Blues Foundation in Memphis, Tennessee.. Our website is www.wablues.org.

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR



Hi Bluesletter Readers,

Welcome to the July issue! I'm excited that this issue celebrates the 84th birthday of Leslie "Star Drums" Milton and his upcoming show at the Conway Muse this month. Shortly after I arrived in Seattle to work for Randy Finley's Seven Gables Theatres many decades ago, the Star Drums show transported the legendary Owl Tavern in Ballard into the stratosphere!.

I knew that my new hometown was home to a high concentration of moviegoers and readers (largely due to the rain that falls from September to May), I didn't know that Ballard or the University District hosted some exceptionally good live blues shows. After settling in to my new, \$250 a month apartment near the Seven Gables, I saw Buddy Guy play at the Fabulous Rainbow. Just weeks prior to my arrival, I saw Buddy Guy during my last week of seeing live blues in Chicago, and it was a thrill to see him in that hole-in-the-wall, corner bar.

I also enjoyed Annie Rose & The Thrillers and Jr. Cadillac at the Fabulous Rainbow and was sorry the venue closed in 1986. In the 1980s, venues like Astor Park and the Fabulous Rainbow Tavern were true incubators of live music in our region.

This month, I'll also celebrate a birthday, and I'd be remiss if I didn't wish Washington Blues Society Blue to the Bone recipient Rocky "Rock Khan" Nelson another year on the calendar.

This issue also features a preview of the award-winning Winthrop Rhythm and Blues Festival, the conclusion of Kirk Anderson's excellent two-part series on how a diverse group of local community resources are working together to revitalize downtown Macon through the Mercer Music @ Capricorn Project, and an updated blues jam and open mic guide.

Regular readers might notice that our venue guide and radio guide are missing from this issue. The short answer is that I've received more editorial content and paying advertising than space allows. As a result, I decided to temporarily hold off on including these listings as well as our membership form due to space. I receive more emails and phone calls regarding our listings than any other section of our magazine (and I know that venues and musicians like so see their names in print). Perhaps more importantly, these listings represent a tangible, paper-based version of a larger community. Our online listings will always be more current, and some may say more vibrant and interactive, but many "readers of a certain age" tell me that they value time spent with the paper version of this magazine. I do, too, and that's why I subscribe to paper newspapers.

Finally, I'd like to add to the suggestions in last month's "Help Me Build a Better Bluesletter" by letting current and potential contributors

know that I'm changing the way I work with our deadlines. Instead of waiting until "the deadline dash" of the 5th for editorial copy and the 12th for camera-ready advertising, I'm adopting a "first-in, first-used" approach. Instead of focusing on these traditional deadlines, I'll review materials submitted soon after I receive them.

The next issue is a good example of this new approach. I already have material from this year's International Blues Challenge, Keeping the Blues Alive and Blues Music Awards from this past May. I also am working on a preview of the Tedeschi-Trucks Band's return to the Pacific Northwest and am putting my finishing touches (finally!) on my review of Rev. Dave Brown's second book of poetry. I also have for the August issue Kathy Rankin's excellent article on the Celebration of Life honoring Greg "Slim Lively" Johnson of the Cascade Blues Association in Portland, Oregon.

Until next month, please enjoy this issue!

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Eric Steiner".

Eric Steiner, Editor

Washington Blues Society Bluesletter

Member, Board of Directors, The Blues Foundation (2010-2013)

A poster for "LA Roca Boom Bandwagon Bash". At the top, it says "NOW APPEARING IN YOUR TOWN...". Below that, "SUZE 'LA ROCA' SIMS" is written in large, stylized letters. The central image shows Suze 'La Roca' Sims singing into a microphone. To the right of the central image are several smaller circular portraits of other musicians. Below the main title, it says "BANDWAGON BASH". At the bottom, it lists "Next Stops: Jul 16 . Rockfish Grill - Anacortes Brewery" and "Aug 12 & 13 . Riverfront Blues Festival MT". At the very bottom, it says "Sponsored by suzesims.com | Cherub Productions | Alouscious Media" and "Special Thanks To: True Tone Sound, Amy Works, WA Blues, Nick Baker Music, Boom Boom".

Leslie “Star Drums” Milton & the Star Drums Light Show

“It’s just pure entertainment... I’m not a star drummer; it’s the production and the show.”

By Aaron Swaney

Leslie “Star Drums” Milton counts off the names like he’s found a good beat.

Don Dudley. Isaac Scott. Kirk “KT” Tuttle. Mike Lynch. Mark Dalton. Marlee Walker. Freddy James. They roll off his tongue in quick succession, almost like he’s rapping a snare drum. He’s recounting his early years in the Seattle blues scene.

Then the venues. The ones he and his musician collaborators played once upon a time on Pacific Northwest nights. Old Timers Cafe. New Orleans Cafe. The Mint. The Owl Cafe.

This was the late 1970s and ’80s in Pioneer Square and the heyday of blues in Seattle. Milton arrived in Seattle via Los Angeles, New Orleans originally. He brought with him a happy-go-lucky attitude and a penchant for hard work and showmanship. It didn’t take long for him to make in-roads in the Pioneer Square scene.

“I think we played every club in Pioneer Square at one time or another,” Milton says. “That was the place to be. A place for musicians to be. A lot of music goin’ on. People came out to see the bands and have a great time.”

Milton turns 84 this month and he’s keen to glance backward to many years dedicated to music and entertainment. Don’t think he’s done, though. He and Gael Kurath and their band, Star Drums & Lady Keys, are playing his birthday show July 16 at the Conway Muse.

“When I was in my 70s,” Milton recalls, “People would ask me, ‘When are you going to stop playing?’ ‘I’m never going to stop playing,’ I kept saying.”

He remains true to this.

Milton learned his craft at the foot of his uncle Ernest Milton in 1950s French Quarter, New Orleans. A 10-year-old Leslie was enthralled by his uncle – “a real clown on the drums” – and learned how to handle

his sticks, how to relax behind the kit and, most importantly, how to have fun playing. He joined the musician’s union at 10, began playing with New Orleans legends like pianist Meade Lux Lewis by 12, and by his teens, toured the South with Roy “Good Rockin’” Brown, all the way to New York and the Apollo Theater.

“I was the youngest member of the band,” Milton says. “We played every city in the South. Those audiences loved us. They really enjoyed our music.”

Milton and his wife, Janice, headed west in his early 20s, arriving in Los Angeles in 1961. Working with Quincy Jones and “Bumps” Blackwell, Milton became a session drummer of renown, playing on several national hits for the likes of Etta James, Sonny and Cher, Ray Charles and more. He appeared on the Tonight Show with Johnny Carson, the Ed Sullivan Show and Johnny Otis’ Big Band Show.

It was in L.A. where the Star Drums show was born. Inspired by the recently released *Star Wars* space epics, Milton wanted to take the audience on an imaginary journey through space. Using a blackout stage, lights, fog machines, laser beams and drumstick trickery, Milton created the effect of a spaceship careening through space, allowing the audience to tour the solar system without leaving their seats.

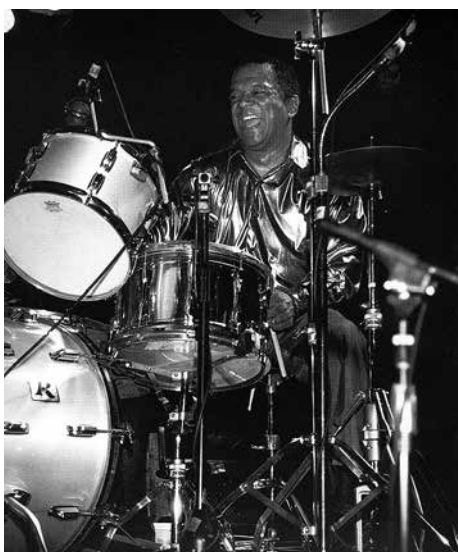
“Welcome aboard ladies and gentlemen,” Milton recites from the opening of his famous Star Drums show. “Travel with us through space, each light appearing to give the effect of speed of travel. Fog and smoke give the effect of traveling through a storm of smoke from the lasers firing. Once leaving the launch pad we’ll take you on a safe and musical journey.”

Then a countdown. A drum solo. Intense drumming. Sticks spinning, bouncing off the ground. Then tossed in the air, and finally caught behind his back. The showman in his element.



“I loved to inspire people,” Milton says, “and they really enjoyed it.”

By the time he arrived in Seattle, Milton had his Star Drums show in good shape. Every Wednesday night at the Owl Cafe, packed houses were treated to a musical journey with Milton as the master of ceremonies. Milton, drums glowing red, yellow and green with tremendous sound, his sticks moving so fast they blurred light and music into one. Milton manning the cockpit of every astral voyage.



Fellow drummers and musician friends dropped by to check out the show. Kirk Tuttle, Raven Humphries, Kathy Hart, Big Sam Mason. “All first-class musicians,” says Milton.

Star Drums was the name of the show, but Milton never saw himself as one.

“It’s just pure entertainment,” says Milton. “I’m not a star drummer; it’s the production and the show. Always was.”

When Milton first arrived in Seattle in 1977, he connected with the legendary Don Dudley, of KYAC — the first black-owned radio station in Seattle. This led Milton to gigs those early years in Pioneer Square, where he met the likes of Isaac Scott, Lonnie Williams, Mike Lynch, Mark Dalton, Kim

Field, Jim Mesi, Dick Powell, Patty Mey, and Freddy James. He would go on to collaborate with many of these musicians, make albums and play shows all around the Pacific Northwest.

Milton looks back fondly on those years.

“Seattle was a really laid back town then,” says Milton. “So many musicians playing a wide range of music. It wasn’t really a blues city yet, but so many good blues musicians made their way out here. There was a real tight-knit community of musicians.”

In the 1990s, Milton received a slew of honors from Washington Blues Society, including Drummer of the Year twice and Entertainer of the Year in 1994. He was inducted into the Washington Blues Hall of Fame and named a Living Blues Legend in 1999.

All the awards are nice, but Milton chuckles at the thought of them now.

“My business in the music industry is to play my drums and have fun,” Milton says. “I never cared about making the money or the prestige. It’s about having fun and playing with other musicians. And I did that. I’m proud of that.”

Milton met Gael Kurath at an informal session in a friend’s basement where he heard her playing “Wonderful World” on the piano. The two hit it off immediately and Star Drums & Lady Keys was born. Of course, helped along by a little of Milton’s charm.

“That first gig, I sang a couple of songs and then I said, ‘Now we’re going to hear from Lady Keys,’ says Milton, chuckling. “She said, ‘I don’t sing!’ But she did and she was great.”

Star Drums & Lady Keys became the house band at Alligator Soul — a popular hole-in-the-wall Cajun and Creole restaurant in Everett — from 1998 until it closed in 2010. They continued, and have made five albums, including the latest, *Reflections of the Soul*, with Lonnie Williams on saxophone and

Walter Young on guitar — a double disc album that was recorded after Milton’s 80th birthday.

Milton also recently recorded a solo album, *The Voyage* — a collection of original songs written by Milton that chronicle his seven decades in the music business. He produced this with longtime collaborator and friend Robert Gant, of GPI Records.

So many memories. Long chats with Marlee Walker on her Blues To Do TV show. Playing for then-President Bill Clinton at the Paramount. Opening up for Muddy Waters and Willie Dixon at the Showbox with the Blue Lights Band. Playing “Mount St. Helen’s Blues,” which Milton wrote shortly before the mountain erupted. Touring Europe with the Slamhound Hunters.

“I’ve had a ball, man!” Milton says.

He searches his memory for more names, but sighs.

“I had the pleasure of working with so many great Northwest musicians. Some of the guys I can’t remember their names,” Milton laughs. “Age, I guess.”

Want to see Star Drums in action? Join Star Drums & Lady Keys at The Conway Muse on July 16 to celebrate 84 years of Leslie “Star Drums” Milton! Tickets: conwaymuse.com. Also playing at Farmstrong Brewing July 30 for the Alligator Soul Reunion Party with tickets at farmstrongbrewing.com.

Happy Birthday Leslie “Star Drums” Milton!

Page 6:

An Afro & Stylish Red Coat
Otis Rush & The Slamhound Hunters

Page 7:

Celebrating Louis Armstrong at Alligator Soul
(Photo by Natalia Young)

A Slamhound Hunter Keeps the Beat
(Photos Courtesy of Leslie “Star Drums” Milton
Unless Otherwise Credit)

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Winthrop is Baaaaack with a Star-Heavy Line-Up

Award-winning festival returns with JJ Grey & Mofro, Charlie Musselwhite & more!

By Polly O'Keary

After a two-year hiatus due to Covid concerns, the Winthrop Rhythm and Blues Festival is back July 15-17 with one of the most star-heavy lineups in its 35-year history. Artists on the roster of the three-day festival include harmonica legend Charlie Musselwhite, contemporary superstars including Eric Gales and J.J. Grey and Mofro, emerging icons such as sax queen Vanessa Collier and International Blues Challenge solo/duo winner Hector Anchondo, and long-time favorites Too Slim and the Taildraggers. Below is a guide to this year's entertainment, including all the details you need to plan your festival weekend.

Headlining the festival Saturday night is J. J. Grey and Mofro. The band first appeared at Winthrop in 2009, whereupon many Winthrop fans were folded into the band's enormous and growing legion of followers. Since 2001, the Florida-based southern soul-rock band has built an international cult following almost entirely by word-of-mouth. In eight albums, including six on legendary blues label Alligator Records, the band has established a distinctive sound that combines Southern rock and soul. JJ Grey's sand-and-satin voice communicates both pain and joy matched by few, if any, other modern singers.

The lineup ahead of JJ Grey and Mofro on Saturday will deliver one of the most virtuoso-rich days of music the festival has ever produced. Late afternoon and evening acts include guitar deity Eric Gales, New Orleans funk juggernaut Dumpstaphunk, and saxophone phenomenon Vanessa Collier.

Dumpstaphunk has also been at Winthrop before and emerged as a fan favorite. The New Orleans funk Goliath includes what is possibly the Crescent City's most formidable rhythm section. Dumpstaphunk, including Ian Neville on guitar and Ivan Neville on keys, has performed at the New Orleans



Eric Gales
(Photo by Katrena Wize)

Jazz & Heritage Festival every year since 2001 and continues to tour all over the world. Most recently, before the pandemic, the band supported The Rolling Stones in New Orleans, as well as toured with George Clinton & The Parliament Funkadelic for his farewell tour.

Eric Gales is one of the most exciting guitarists to emerge in the last several decades, not only among blues fans but among all aficionados of the instrument. *Guitar World* Magazine's readers poll named him "Best New Talent" when he was still a teen. After a dizzying wave of fame found him in the 1990s, Gales wound up on the Hendrix family-owned Nightbird records at the start of the 2000s. In the 20 years since, Gales has developed a unique hybrid blues/rock sound that has impressed the greatest of his peers, including Joe Bonamassa, who called him "one of the best, if not the best, guitarists in the world today."

Gracing the Saturday stage at 4 PM is the incendiary saxophonist Vanessa Collier,



Charlie Musselwhite
(Photo by Danny Clinch)

who is also headlining the Friday night show in the beer garden tent the night before. A graduate of the prestigious Berklee College of Music with dual degrees in Performance and Music Production & Engineering, Collier has already won recognition that stars twice her age might envy. She has won three Blues Music Awards, including 2022 Contemporary Blues Female Artist of the Year, and eight BMA nominations. To borrow from the words of an article in *Blues Blast Magazine*, "Vanessa is an important part of the future of the blues."

Earlier in the day Pacific Northwest acts Lady A and Junkyard Jane will bring their much loved and well-known music to the stage. Lady A is the long-running emcee of the nightly after-parties on the Winthrop Festival beer garden stage, as well as the ringleader of the Sunday morning Gospel Hour set on the mainstage every year. This



J. J. Grey
(Photo by Jay Simon)

year her band joins her to perform her sassy, sultry original music on the mainstage at 2 PM where she will play old favorites and new cuts from her recent internationally acclaimed release *Satisfyin'*.

Junkyard Jane is one of the region's best-loved bands, and this year celebrated 25 years together. With a sound they describe as "a deadly brew of blues, swamp gas, rockabilly, old engine parts, country, motor oil, folk, funk and used kitty litter," the band has won a slew of awards individually and as a group. And in recognition of eight creative and critically-acclaimed albums, Junkyard Jane, fronted by multi-instrumentalist Leanne Trevalyan and guitarist Billy Stoops, has been enshrined in the Washington Blues Society Hall of Fame.

Opening the festival Saturday is up-and-coming guitar wizard Hector Anchondo, who is a staple of the rich blues scene of the Midwest, and who each year becomes more famous at the national and global levels. In 2015, his sizzling blues rock group the Héctor Anchondo Band made the semifinals at the International Blues Challenge, and in 2016 the group went all the way to the finals. Then Anchondo entered the 2020 International Blues Challenge in the solo/duo category and came away with the top prize, as well as the Memphis Cigar Box Guitar Award for best guitarist in the solo/

duo competition.

Hector Anchondo, Junkyard Jane, and Vanessa Collier will all turn in up-close-and-personal sets in the beer garden on Friday night as well, and Friday night party-goers will get an additional treat in the form of a set from GA-20, the only set they will do at the festival. GA-20 is a trio of a drummer and two guitarists, one of whom is long-time Charlie Musselwhite collaborator Matthew Stubbs. Together, the three turn out earth-shaking Chicago blues, including a tribute to Hound Dog Taylor.

Sunday, following a sanctified morning with Lady A's Gospel Hour featuring Josephine Howell, five more of today's finest blues and roots acts round out the weekend, including headliner Charlie Musselwhite, one of the all-time great blues harmonica players. An important part of the blues scene of the 1960s in Illinois and California, Musselwhite has spent more than 50 years touring the world, along the way winning two Grammy Awards, 13 Grammy nominations, and 33 Blues Music Awards.

A new face to the festival, and indeed to the indie rock world, is Zach Person, a 24-year-old guitarist from Austin, Texas, who blends blues, rock, pop, and alternative sounds to create a gritty and contemporary sound all his own. Despite his youth, Person is a seasoned musician with more than 10 years of performances under his belt, including a two-year residency at Houston's House of Blues that he won at just 15. His unique style and undeniable skill have caught the interest of music critics the world over. Said American Songwriter, "reminiscent of everyone from Elmore James and Duane Allman to The Black Keys and Jack White, Person channels a raw, pure-bred American swagger."

Following Person is the zydeco sensation Curley Taylor and Zydeco Trouble, continuing a long tradition of including the joyous accordion-driven Cajun and Creole genre at the Winthrop festival.

Curley Taylor is one of the most prolific zydeco recording artists in the world, and he maintains a relentless touring schedule because of the band's lively and engaging performances and musical mastery. Curley Taylor and Zydeco Trouble are at once an excellent introduction to the distinctive zydeco style and a pleasure for long-time fans of the genre.

The afternoon continues with Outer Orbit, a funk-soul collective jammed with some of Portland, Oregon's top talent. Led by Galen Clark of the jazztastic trio Subtonic and fronted by vocalist Sarah Clarke of Winthrop-veteran act Dirty Revival, the band features an intimidating lineup of musical heavyweights. The band includes Tyrone Hendrix, an alumnus of Prince; Damian Erskine of the Skerik Band; Peter Knudsen of fusion juggernaut Ghost-Note; Mike Elson of Swatkins (a collaborator with Allen Stone), and Trent Baarspul (Jarrod Lawson) on guitar, and Ehssan Karimi (McTuff) on drums.

The festival will close on a high note Sunday evening with the return of Too Slim and the Taildraggers, the only band to play the festival every year. Too Slim, a native of Spokane, Washington, has built an international following in more than 30 years of touring and recording. With a sound described as "straight whiskey blues with a Southern rock beer chaser," Too Slim and the Taildraggers have won more than 40 national and regional music awards, including Lifetime Achievement and Hall of Fame awards from three different Pacific Northwest blues societies.

Each day of music will conclude with the beloved jam sessions on the Winthrop beer garden stage, hosted by the Methow Juke Joint Allstars, including long-time jam hosts Lady A, me, and members of our bands. You never know who might turn up to join them on stage, but one thing you can count on is a good time.

Mercer Music @ Capricorn: Part 2

"Macon has provided a great blueprint and proof that revitalization is possible."

By Kirk Anderson

Editor's Note: For Part 1 of this two-part series, please return to the June Bluesletter, which laid the groundwork of how a select group of community leaders from the arts, business, and higher education communities are working together to preserve and promote local music in Macon, Georgia. Frequent contributor Kirk Anderson relocated to the Pacific Northwest from Georgia and has deep, personal connections with many of the key stakeholders involved in Mercer Music @ Capricorn. This is an exceptional example of community development at the local level. Eric Steiner

The story of musicians, venues rising to greatness and the communities around them prospering is just about as common as the stories of the slow, steady fall after their success or their demise coming way too soon for the rise of the next industry du jour.

As collaboration between the Washington Blues Society and the Cascade Blues Association, Part 1 of this article is in the Cascade Blues Association's *Bluesnotes* in May 2022. You can find this electronic magazine at www.cascadebluesassociation.org/bluesnotes. As the Cascade Blues Association is dealing with the passing of its patriarch, Greg "Slim Lively" Johnson, I encourage you to go and read part 1 of our article and to support it. Whether it's taking a weekend to go down and see a show or supporting that blues society by becoming a member. They have a strong, new President in Anni Piper. They have a dedicated group on their Board and supportive membership. They are part of **our** community, and they are in a time of mourning. The resulting gift of music and community will come back to you many folds. Every effort counts.

Closer to home, Nirvana and their growth with label Sub Pop grew grunge out of the

love to create a new sound and movement out of our rain-soaked community. Kurt Cobain died when it seemed the sky just wasn't the limit. Chris Cornell's mutli-band rise from Temple of the Dog to Audioslave to Soundgarden reinvigorated the local musical community until his death again threw it into loss. Now, the Foo Fighters, with roots in our community, struggle to deal with the loss of Taylor Hawkins. I'd like to argue that it's time for us to fan those embers into new musical flames of the future.

Revitalization doesn't just happen because you wish it to happen. It is the fire in the souls of many people from different backgrounds all acting together to work within the community to use the resources already hidden there. Bill Underwood, President of Mercer University in Macon is often quoted for saying that areas of decay do not attract talented musicians and businesspeople. The Mercer Music at Capricorn project is meant to create economic excitement and stir the arts in the souls of those already there and those looking outside of their home communities for somewhere exciting to go.

The centerpiece of the Mercer Music @ Capricorn revitalization project in Macon, Georgia is the famous Capricorn Sound Studio that was meant to be the home recording studio for Otis Redding. After his passing the dream shifted from R&B to rock and roll. The recording studio served as the launching pad for the original Allman Brothers Band and their international hits. Elvin Bishop formerly of the Butterfield Blues Band launched his solo career from the intimate confines of the studio. Bonnie Bramlett of Bonnie & Delaney fame launched her solo career from Capricorn Studios (Not familiar with Bonnie & Delaney? Check out who helped Eric Clapton find his voice and band leadership ability before he had the

confidence to do both).

Larry Brumley is the Senior Vice President of Marketing Communications and Chief of Staff at Mercer University in Macon, Georgia. He was tasked by Mercer President Bill Underwood to oversee the Mercer Music @ Capricorn revitalization project for Mercer University. As I explained to Mr. Brumley that I wanted to highlight the collaboration in Macon to help inspire similar projects in the Pacific Northwest, he was quick to set aside time for *Bluesletter* readers.

Larry shares the more recent story of how this mixed-use revitalization project came from decaying infrastructure to reality. With a grant from the Peyton Anderson Foundation, the building was saved from foreclosure and possible demolition. A new roof was put over the buildings to prevent further degradation until a viable plan could be formulated to save the buildings as well as contribute again to downtown Macon and the community at-large. Prophetically, of each of the four buildings in the original complex, the historic Capricorn Recording Studio had survived largely undamaged.

Jim Dawes, President of the Sierra Development Group, had a vision for downtown Macon. He was persistent and went to Mercer University President Bill Underwood several times to pitch development along the College Hill corridor of downtown Macon which would benefit the city and the university. Jim purchased the buildings from developer Newtown Macon in 2015 and donated the buildings back to Mercer University. Jim's persistence (and vision) paid off, an agreement was made, and a handshake started the project down the road to fruition.

Mercer University's music incubator program was folded into the new project

which included reviving the intimate Studio A at Capricorn Sound Studios as well as added a larger Studio B which serves as a recording studio not only for larger format recording such as orchestras but includes new state of the art scoring capabilities to score music for Georgia's growing film industry. Bob Konrad is the Museum Director at the complex. It was his warm welcome, and depth of knowledge, that capped off our visit to the complex and was really the catalyst for this two-part story published in the *Blues Notes* and the *Bluesletter*.

How do some of the original Capricorn Records personnel view the new project?

Mark Pucci, was originally the National Publicity Director for Capricorn in the label's heyday in the second half of the 1970's and again for their revival in Nashville in the 1990's. He is now President of Mark Pucci Media. His close and personal history in the halcyon days of Capricorn Records validates the work that went into the project.

"I was a fan of music then and I still am," said Mark. "I'm excited that they saved it."

Mark contributed several photos from the late Capricorn publicity photographer Herb Krossover which are reproduced throughout the studios.

If you tour the project, you'll see the pictures he saved before Herb passed away. He also lent part of his personal collection of Capricorn memorabilia including several unique Capricorn publicity items such as a varsity jacket and sweater.

As a world class publicist, Mark also finds himself as a facilitator... not unlike the Mercer Music @ Capricorn Project itself. Both are there for specific projects but willing to provide what is needed for the artist when it is needed.

I learned that Mark also receives our

Bluesletter in his mailbox every month.

The second floor had been so damaged that the joists had to be completely removed and replaced. Now the new Capricorn Museum is housed on the second floor to tell the story of Capricorn Records and Recording Studio. They are saving the old and using it for the future.

Larry is extremely excited that the original music incubator program at Mercer University's Music Department had been folded into the Mercer Music @ Capricorn project. The incubator now has a home. Front and center in the Mercer Music @ Capricorn project and in the community.

Conceived as a safe place where musicians of all types can come to find resources that will help them with their music and the business of music.

The incubator also serves to bring seasoned Georgia musicians together with budding musicians in schools in the community so that the next generations can also have exposure to the arts.

Band rooms of multiple sizes on the first and second floors are mingled with the Pro Tools Lab, offices and meeting rooms of different sizes which give the musicians 24/7 access to the resources they need. Access to the professionals from the business side of music also has a home in the incubator giving the artists a view to the business of music as well as the art.

According to project leadership, "Mercer University, NewTown Macon, Sierra Development and Southern Pine Plantations (as well as the City of Macon) have brought back to life the historic Capricorn Sound Studios as part of the largest market-rate residential development in the history of downtown Macon."

Mercer University also had to find funding for its part of the endeavor, which

included grants from the local Peyton Anderson Foundation and the national Knight Foundation. The project garnered additional, significant support from 350+ individual donors and a \$2 million historic tax credit. These resources contributed to the \$4.7 million in funds raised for the Mercer Music @ Capricorn project.

The development also includes The Lofts at Capricorn which has more than 130 apartments. The four storey complex also includes leasing offices, a clubhouse, and pool, and parking as amenities for the apartments.

There is also street -level retail space which rounds out the mixed-use design that has been successful in so many downtown areas around the world. Few projects of this scope have at their center such a rich artistic history as Mercer Music @ Capricorn. It's truly a unique, multi-sector collaboration rooted in community.

Larry is quick to add multiple times during our interview that Mercer University President Bill Underwood tasked him with overseeing the project with some pretty clear direction: "Get it done!"

The project changed in scope as partners and vendors shared their connections to music in Macon. Larry also started to better understand what the Capricorn Sound Studio meant to the community during the Request for Proposal process from prospective vendors.

In one particularly memorable vignette, Larry told me that he was standing outside the dilapidated buildings when a car with Virginia license plates pulled up. The occupants had driven down from Virginia for a Dickey Betts concert at Macon's Civic Auditorium. They found the building that housed the Capricorn Recording Studios.

They asked Larry if there was any way if

(Continued on next page)

Mercer Music @ Capricorn: Part 2 (cont'd)

"I know there's the business side, but guys like you and me benefit from it because we dig music."

they could walk through the studios. The feelings that emanated from the studio touched them deeply and they wanted to play a song in that studio. Larry obliged, and as they finished, they had tears in their eyes. Larry's business acumen was now bolstered with this emotional experience and the practical knowledge of just how deeply this place reaches musicians.

Larry talked about going to Los Angeles for a Georgia Bulldog game, and during that visit, he went to the Grammy Museum.

One display featured a map with pushpins to musically-important cities to the Grammy organization. He saw one pin in the Southeast, and when he chose that pin Macon, Georgia came up. He knew that Macon shared similar musical legacies as Muscle Shoals, Memphis, Detroit, Los Angeles and New York City. He knew this project was important beyond Macon, Georgia, and the Southeast. It was important to the world of music and to the larger Grammy community.

Macon's other entities that have been working on their own projects that now seem to dovetail into Mercer Music @ Capricorn are Les Griffith who owns the Moonhanger Group.

Moonhanger has revitalized other of Macon's historic musical heritage such as the Hargray Capitol Theatre and historic Grant's Lounge. Les also gave the H&H Soul Food restaurant direction when its longtime owners needed to retire.

The Tudor-style house that the Allman Brothers bought with their early earnings ("The Big House") was renovated into the world-class Allman Brothers Band Museum. You can walk through the rooms that were home to the band as they conceived their biggest hits and can see memorabilia from the decades of music.

The Douglass Theatre was the Black only

venue during the Jim Crow era where so many of the R&B bands of the time played at as that genre grew. This has been newly renovated and stands ready next to the other venues in Macon.

Also, downtown at Gallery West, home to renowned photographer Kirk West's ever-changing collection. I hope that *Bluesletter* readers remember coverage of Kirk West's *Blues in Black & White* coffee table book that chronicles his lifetime of blues and rock photography in the May, 2021 issue. West had access to, and captured many, musicians worldwide, and his book is a treasure trove of some pretty exceptional images.

Kirk and Kirsten West moved to Macon in 1994 and renovated The Big House and called it home before the museum.

The band Gov't Mule was arguably birthed in the music room, and Kirk and Kirsten worked tirelessly within the community to bring music back to Macon. Kirk echoes the earlier comments that the Mercer Music @ Capricorn is a cohesive project that takes Macon's musical past and uses it as a springboard to fortify and connect the other projects in the community.

Jessica Walden, daughter of Alan Walden, has started Rock Candy walking and van tours that gives an innovative way to experience Macon's history from an insider. Alan Walden, while at Mercer University, was a co-founder of the Capricorn label, and chronicled his work in the music business in last year's autobiography, *Southern Man: Music & Mayhem In The American South: A Memoir* (Jawbone Press, London, England).

William Rutledge owns and operates Fresh Produce Records also on Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard which houses 40,000 vinyl records as well as CD's cassettes, tapes, turntables, speaker and more.

The shotgun home of Little Richard when he was growing up is open for tours by appointment and Otis Redding is memorialized with a statue at Gateway Park next to the ever present Ocmulgee (oak MUL gee) River. Although not music related, the Ocmulgee Mounds National Historic Park is not far from downtown and commemorates more than 12,000... yeah 12,000... years of continuous human habitation.

All of this is within a 90 minute drive of Atlanta and the busiest airport in the world as well only a three hour drive east of Savannah and Charleston or the similar drive time to the sugar white sand beaches at Panama City and the panhandle coast of Florida.

Part of the Macon community, John Mollica is an artist who was commissioned for murals around the Mercer Music @ Capricorn facility. He contributes to the local projects going on and has a long history with the art community in Macon.

I loved his comment, "I know there's the business side but guys like you and me benefit from it because we dig music."

So, as you can see, it wasn't about inventing new things. It is "Leveraging Macon's Musical Heritage to Create Macon's Music Future." Can we leverage the musical heritage of the Pacific Northwest to create the Pacific Northwest's music future? It is in your and my hands. Only we can answer that question.

What can we do?

Macon has provided a great blueprint and proof that revitalization is possible.

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Here are some of our 2022 Sponsors and Supporters





Sass Jordan
Bitches Blues
(Stony Plain Records)

From her first release, *Tell Somebody*, on Atlantic Records in 1988, four hit singles topped the charts. Jordan moved from Montreal to Los Angeles to capitalize on the newfound success. Her second release, *Racine* was on MCA in 1992 and sold less than 500,000 copies worldwide and four songs from this release also charted. That same year, Sass Jordan recorded "Trust In Me" with Joe Cocker for Kevin Costner's soundtrack album for *The Bodyguard*. She then went on to release five other albums that continued to highlight her distinct singing style and continued to work with-in her wide range of vocals. Sass has also starred off-Broadway and was the only female judge on Canada's "Canadian Idol" all six years. Three plus decades in music and performance comes together in her newest release, *Bitches Blues* out on Stony Plain Records this month. Drawing from this deep well of experience, Jordan is quick to sum up why this album at this time. "There's an undercurrent of blues throughout my whole career – The music that I have mostly been drawn to has always had that gritty, rootsy vein running through it, and that's why I am enjoying making these records so much." The album's cover art harkens back to old weather beaten boards on an old Mississippi building as the CD opens with a cover of Rick Derringer's "Still Alive and Well" with guitarists Chris Caddell and Jimmy Reid bringing the fire after keyboardist Jesse O'Brien sets the tone with the blues Hammond keyboard work. Cassius Pereira lays down the familiar beats of the blues on drums as bassist Steve Marriner rounds out the rhythm section at times thumping the downbeat and at other times adding texture to the rhythm section. New and reworked Jordan originals are interspersed with covers from Ed & Lonnie Young, Fred McDowell, Little Milton, and Little Feat. Bringing it all together is Jordan's voice that shines through with experience of a lifetime of blues. Kirk Anderson



Strat Cat Willie & The Strays
On a Hot Tin Roof
(Self-Released)

One of the sharpest-dressed guests at my table at the 2022 The Blues Foundation Keeping the Blues Alive Award luncheon was guitarist "StratCat" Willie Hayes from Southern New York. His CD arrived when I got home, and I was drawn to its upbeat, jump-influenced blues. "Have a Blues Party" kicks off the CD and it's all about what blues fans (and players) have wanted ever since COVID struck in 2020. Get together with some friends, set the cares of the week aside, and have a blues party. Several songs are from the perspective of bluesman who wants to just enjoy the weekend playing the blues with his friends. The Strays feature Mabel Welch and Sing Trece on vocals, Rich Graiko on trumpet, Josh Cohen on sax, Neal Massa on keys, and Jeremy Hummel on percussion. *On a Hot Tin Roof* uses two high octane engine rooms: John Wilson on bass and Dave Fiorini on drums and Vinnie Burvee on bass and Dave Salace on drums. StratCat Willie's crisp guitar work, solid songwriting, and polished vocals shine from start to finish. "Redneck Woman" and "Way Too Fast" are playful, cautionary tales, and I particularly enjoy "Running with the Strays" (as I'd like to think I did in my youth far too many decades ago). *On a Hot Tin Roof* is an upbeat blues party in a CD case! Eric Steiner



Dave Thomas
One More Mile
(Blonde on Blonde)

Blues patriarch Son House famously said "There ain't but one kind of blues and that consist between a male and a female that is in love." Welsh-born guitarist and singer songwriter Dave Thomas has been guided by that axiom for over 50 years. His new album *One More Mile*, the first in five years, was a decade in the making, and is the first of three new releases to come. The 10

new tracks future collaborations with great musician and songwriter friends. Some of the recording sessions date back 20 years to 2000 and 2003, presented as an eclectic mix of styles with original material and select covers that feature Thomas's distinct vocal abilities. The album's opening number would be the fulfillment of the dream for many singers. The sparkling arrangement of B.B King's "It's My Own Fault" places Thomas in the center of a precise combo and the dazzling horn section from the Travis Haddix Band. A real blues lover's dream come true that continues on the funky horn driven original "I Like My Chicken Fried," that features hot Hammond organ from Tom Arnold sparring with strong guitar from Thomas. He then pays tribute to the late great James Cotton by brandishing his harmonica skills on the cover of Cotton's Chicago Blues classic "One More Mile to Go." Irish multi-instrumentalist Declan Sinnott played all the instruments on four original tracks written by Henderson in the middle of the album. Thomas enumerates the plight of the workingman on the acoustic ramble "I Want The Blues," elaborating on his wish to leave the complications of the world behind and find solace in the blues. The project and takes a psychedelic trip to a studio in Bristol where the Groundhogs jammed out three more acid blues rockers from the trio's 1970 album *Thank Christ for The Bomb* by first generation British Blues disciple Tony McPhee. Thomas remarks about the album when interviewed by Tony Bell "I call it One More Mile because it really feels like a lifetime journey that I've been on. And I've been playing music for well over 50 years, so the milestone is quite significant." Rick J Bowen

Editor's Note: The Bluesletter will review Dave Thomas' 2022 CD, Road to the Blues, in a future issue!

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Our website has the most up-to-date live music calendar & listings online @ www.wablues.org!

FRIDAY, JULY 1

Waterfront Blues Festival, Portland 12 PM
Crossroads Mall, Bellevue: Phantoms of Soul 7 PM
Black Angus, Federal Way, Blues Healers 7 PM
3rd Place Commons, Shoreline: Market St Dixieland Band 7 PM
Pub 282, Camano Island, Midnight Hour 7:30 PM
Jazz Alley, Seattle: Acoustic Alchemy 7:30 PM
Royal Room, Seattle: Keith Lowe 7:30 PM
Salmon Bay Eagles, Seattle: Kimball Conant & the Fugitives w/Anne Eastwood 8 PM
Doc's Riverside Alehouse, Machias: Polly O'Keary & the Rhythm Method 8 PM
North City Bistro, Shoreline: Frank Kohl 8 PM
Stimpy's, Kent: Cory Wilds Band 9 PM
Bake's Place, Bellevue: Jazz Overhaul 9:30 PM

SATURDAY, JULY 2

Waterfront Blues Festival Portland 12 PM
3rd Place Commons, Shoreline: Moxie 7 PM
Royal Room, Seattle: Jonah Hieb 3 PM, Atlas Tango 7:30 PM
Prairie Park, Mossyrock: Mossy Rock Freedom Festival
Border Days, Grangeville, ID: Michele D'Amour & the Love Dealers 6 PM
Crossroads Mall, Bellevue: Sheri & JoMamma 7 PM
Rockfish Grill & Anacortes Brewery, Anacortes: Powerhouse 7:30 PM
Jazz Alley, Seattle: Acoustic Alchemy 7:30 PM
Aurora Borealis, Shoreline: XOfenders 8 PM
Conway Muse, Conway: Nick Vigarino 8 PM
North City Bistro, Shoreline: Kelly Jonson 8 PM
Belltown Yacht Club, Seattle: Brett Benton 8 PM
Bake's Place, Bellevue: Bill Anschell Quartet 9:30 PM

SUNDAY, JULY 3

Waterfront Blues Festival, Portland 12 PM
Royal Room, Seattle: Jim Page 2 PM, Fred Frith Trio 7:30 PM
Peabo's, Mill Creek: Sunday Music Revue 7 PM
The Spar Tavern, Tacoma: Sunday Blues 7pm
Jazz Alley, Seattle: Acoustic Alchemy 730PM
North City Bistro, Shoreline: McTuff 8pm
Club Crow, Cashmere: Dusty 45's 8pm

MONDAY, JULY 4

Waterfront Blues Festival, Portland 12 PM
McMenamins, Bothell: Norris and Nicely 2 PM
Legion Pk, Everett: Massy Ferguson, Lady A, Eden 4 PM
4th of July Celebration, Remlinger Farms, Carnation: Brittany Daniel, Miles Harris & the Deep Cuts, The Staxx Brothers, Scott Pemberton O-Theory 4-10 PM
Blues Brews & BBQ, Hotel Bellwether, Bellingham: The Atlantics 6 PM
Winthrop Art Fest, Winthrop: Dusty 45's 6 PM
North City Bistro, Shoreline: Duende Libre 8 PM

TUESDAY, JULY 5

Farm Strong Brewing Co. Mt Vernon: 6:30 PM
Madison Pub, Everett: David Tondi & JP Falcon 7 PM
Central Saloon, Seattle: Blues Tuesday 7 PM
The New Frontier Lounge, Tacoma: The Tacoma Scrutinizers 7 PM

Jazz Alley, Seattle: Sara Gazarek 7:30PM

WEDNESDAY, JULY 6

CCR, Snohomish: Usual Suspects 6 PM
The Mill, Milton: Singer Songwriter Night w/Billy Stoops
Jazz Alley, Seattle: Sara Gazarek 7:30 PM
Royal Room, Seattle: Kitty Junk//Bad w/Birds 7:30 PM
Engels Pub, Edmonds: Dee's Motown Jazz 8 PM
Aurora Borealis, Shoreline: Michele D'Amour & the Love Dealers 8pm

THURSDAY, JULY 7

Bad Alberts, Seattle: Annie Eastwood & Friends feat. Kimball Conant 6 PM
Slim's Last Chance Saloon, Seattle: Honky Tonk Happy Hour 6 PM
Blues Brews & BBQ, Hotel Bellwether, Bellingham: Chris Eger Band 6 PM
River Walk Plaza, Mt Vernon: Stacy Jones Band 6 PM
Si View Park Summer Concerts, North Bend: Sheri Roberts Greimes & Mitch Pumpian 6 PM
Jazz Alley, Seattle: Nearly Dan 7:30PM
Edmonds Center for the Arts, Edmonds: The True Loves
Gas Station Blues, Issaquah 7 PM

FRIDAY, JULY 8

Comox Valley Exhibition Grounds, Courtenay B.C.: Vancouver Island Music Fest 3 PM
Wallace, ID: Wallace Blues Festival 4 PM
Northwest Cellars, Kirkland: Little Big Band 530 PM
The Repp, Snohomish: Norris & Nicely 630pm
3rd Place Commons, Shoreline: Todd Zimberg 7 PM
Port Gardner Bay Winery, Everett: Blue Healers 7 PM
Tacos El Guero, Bothell: Polly O'Keary & The Rhythm Method 7pm
Wallace ID: Wallace Blues Festival 7 PM
Royal Room, Seattle: Karl Blau 7:30 PM
Aurora Borealis, Shoreline: Whitewing 8 PM
The Barn at Wilson Farm, Bonney Lake: Victims of Love
Looking Glass Coffee, Snohomish: Zach Michaud & Ian Jones 7 PM
Jazz Alley, Seattle: Nearly Dan 7:30 PM
Engels Pub, Edmonds: True Romans 8 PM
North City Bistro, Shoreline: Bruce Barnard Trio 8 PM
Kamiah Hotel Bar, Kamiah, ID: Joel Astley Band 8:30 PM

SATURDAY, JULY 9

Comox Valley Exhibition Grounds, Courtenay B.C.: Vancouver Island Music Fest 3 PM
Wallace ID: Wallace Blues Festival 12 PM
Third Place Commons, Shoreline: Take 7 Band 7 PM
Bindle Stick, Snoqualmie: Kate Dinsmore 7 PM
BITS, Mukilteo: Blue Healers 7 PM
Madison Ave Pub, Everett: Crooked Mile 7 PM
Rockfish Grill, Anacortes: CD Woodbury 7:30 PM
Jazz Alley, Seattle: Nearly Dan 7:30PM
Drunk Two Shoes BBQ, White Center: Dusty 45's 8 PM
Aurora Borealis, Shoreline: The Takers 8 PM
Conway Muse, Conway: Mark DuFresne Band 8 PM
Salmon Bay Eagles, Seattle: Joe Cook Band 8-11 PM
North City Bistro, Shoreline: 2Ality 8 PM
Engels Pub, Edmonds: The Weatherheads 8 PM
Ritzville: Music on Main & Main Street Market 9 PM

SUNDAY, JULY 10

Comox Valley Exhibition Grounds, Courtenay B.C.: Vancouver Island Music Fest 3 PM
Seward Park, Seattle: Seattle Peace Concerts 12pm
Skagit Valley Farmers Market, Mt Vernon: Norris & Nicely 2 PM
The Spar Tavern, Tacoma: Sunday Blues 7 PM
Royal Room, Seattle: Sam Hirsh Trio 7:30 PM
Peabo's, Mill Creek: Sunday Music Revue 7 PM
Jazz Alley, Seattle: Nearly Dan 7:30 PM

MONDAY, JULY 11

Madison Pub, Everett: MaD BoJo 7 PM
Royal Room, Seattle: Royal Room Collective Music Ensemble 7:30 PM

TUESDAY, JULY 12

Farm Strong Brewing Co. Mt Vernon: Lost at Last
Madison Pub, Everett: Blue Healers 7 PM
Central Saloon, Seattle: Blues Tuesday 7 PM
The New Frontier Lounge, Tacoma: The Tacoma Scrutinizers 7 PM
Aurora Borealis, Shoreline: WBS Blues Bash w Polly O'Keary & the Rhythm Method and TJ Read 7 PM
Hing Hay Park, Seattle: Joel Astley Band 7 PM
Jazz Alley, Seattle: Janiva Magness 7:30 PM

WEDNESDAY, JULY 13

Rockfish Grill & Anacortes Brewery: Mike Fast Quartet
CCR, Snohomish: Usual Suspects 6 PM
Royal Room, Seattle: Noble Dust/Oilella 7:30 PM
Aurora Borealis, Shoreline: Jazz Conspiracy 7:30 PM
Jazz Alley, Seattle: Janiva Magness 730PM
Engels Pub, Edmonds: Space Force 8 PM

THURSDAY, JULY 14

Bad Alberts, Seattle: Annie Eastwood & Friends feat. Kimball Conant 6 PM
Slim's Last Chance Saloon, Seattle: Honky Tonk Happy Hour 6 PM
Blues Brews & BBQ, Hotel Bellwether, Bellingham: Cascadia Groove 6 PM
Music at the Marina, Everett: Lady A 5 PM
Bad Albert's, Seattle: Annie Eastwood & Friends feat. Kimball Conant 6 PM
Madison Pub, Everett: Songwriter Showcase hosted by Stacy Jones 7 PM
Gas Station Blues, Issaquah 7 PM
Shanghai Room, Seattle: How Now Brown Cow 8 PM
Jazz Alley, Seattle: Spanish Harlem Orchestra 7:30PM

FRIDAY, JULY 15

Jericho Beach Park, Vancouver BC: Van Folk Fest 4 PM
Winthrop Rhythm & Blues Festival 5 PM
Earth & Vine, Bainbridge Island: Michele D'Amour & the Love Dealers 7 PM
Black Angus, Federal Way: Blue Healers 7 PM
Look Glass Coffee, Snohomish: Sheri & Da Boyz 7 PM
Third Place Commons, Shoreline: GenRAshun 7 PM
Kimball Coffee House, Gig Harbor: Tün 7 PM
Jazz Alley, Seattle: Spanish Harlem Orchestra 7:30 PM
Salmon Bay Eagles, Seattle: T Town Aces 8 PM
Engels Pub, Edmonds: Lounge Vultures 8 PM

Herman's, Victoria BC: Blue Moon Marquee w/Duke Robillard 9 PM
Bake's Place, Bellevue: Everlovers 9:30 PM
Vashon Strawberry Festival, Vashon: Dusty 45's 10 PM

SATURDAY, JULY 16

North Bend Block Party, North Bend 12 PM
Winthrop Rhythm & Blues Festival 11 AM
Jericho Beach Park, Vancouver BC: Van Folk Fest 12 PM
Kla Ha Ya Days, Snohomish 12 PM
Bake's Place, Bellevue: 10th Anniversary Celebration 3 PM-Midnight
Tacos el Guero, Bothell: Michele D'Amour & the Love Dealers 7 PM
Deception Pass State Park, Oak Harbor: Briar & Joe Seamons 7 PM
Madison Ave Pub, Everett: Big Earl 7 PM
3rd Place Commons, Shoreline: Emerald City Horns
Jazz Alley, Seattle: Spanish Harlem Orchestra 7:30 PM
Triple Door, Seattle: Robin Ford 6 PM
Salmon Bay Eagles, Seattle: Seattle House Rockers
Mirkwood, Arlington: Joel Astley Band 8 PM
Aurora Borealis, Shoreline: The Spin-Offs 8 PM
Conway Muse, Conway: Stardrums & Lady Keys 8 PM

SUNDAY, JULY 17

Winthrop Rhythm & Blues Festival 11 AM
Jericho Beach Park, Vancouver BC: Van Folk Fest 12 PM
Jamestown Saloon, Smokey Point: Norris & Nicely 2 PM
Madison Ave Pub, Everett: Summertime Blues Benefit for KSER 2-9 PM
Peabo's, Mill Creek: Sunday Music Revue 7 PM
The Spar Tavern, Tacoma: Sunday Blues 7 PM
Jazz Alley, Seattle: Spanish Harlem Orchestra 7:30 PM
Rock Fish Grill, Anacortes: Suze Sims & La Roca Boom

MONDAY JULY 18

Madison Pub, Everett: MaD BoJo 7pm
Royal Room, Seattle: Royal Room Collective Music Ensemble 7:30 PM

TUESDAY, JULY 19

Farm Strong Brewing Co. Mt Vernon: Zach Michaud
Madison Pub, Everett: Chris Eger 7 PM
Central Saloon, Seattle: Blues Tuesday 7 PM
The New Frontier Lounge, Tacoma: The Tacoma Scrutinizers 7 PM
Jazz Alley, Seattle: Greg Adams & East Bay Soul 7:30 PM

WEDNESDAY, JULY 20

Rockfish Grill & Anacortes Brewery: Kalyna Rake & Dan Gurman 6 PM
CCR, Snohomish: Usual Suspects 6 PM
Aurora Borealis, Shoreline: Jazz Punishments Big Band
Jazz Alley, Seattle: Greg Adams & East Bay Soul 7:30 PM
Engel's Pub, Edmonds: Sheri & Da Boyz 8 PM

THURSDAY JULY 21

Occidental Park, Seattle: Dusty 45's 5pm
Blues Brews & BBQ, Hotel Bellwether, Bellingham: Space Band 6 PM
Tippy Canyon Winery, Chelan: Spin-Offs 6 PM

Riverwalk Plaza, Mt Vernon: Chris Eger Band 6 PM
Madison Pub, Everett: Songwriter Showcase hosted by Stacy Jones 7 PM
Gas Station Blues, Issaquah 7 PM
Jazz Alley, Seattle: Rick Braun & Richard Elliot 7:30 PM
Triple Door, Seattle: Big Road Blues 7:30 PM
Salmon Bay Eagles, Seattle: Red House 8 PM

FRIDAY, JULY 22

Ohme Gardens, Wenatchee: Spin-Offs 7 PM
Third Place Commons, Shoreline: Centerpiece 7pm
Jazz Alley, Seattle: Rick Braun & Richard Elliot 7:30 PM
Aurora Borealis, Shoreline: Rain City Time Machine
Engels Pub, Edmonds: Joe Cook Band 8pm

SATURDAY, JULY 23

Deception Pass State Park, Oak Harbor: Cory Vincent Trio, The Enthusiasts, Cascadia Groove, Miller Campbell, Chris Eger 1-9 PM
Royal Room, Seattle: Ray Skjelbred Trio 5 PM, Dmitri Matheny Group 8:30 PM
Bad Jimmy's, Seattle: Joel Astley Band & Elliott Bay Blues Band 7 PM
Madison Ave Pub, Everett: Eric's Maine Connection
Egan's Ballard Jam House, Seattle: Lady A 7 PM
Third Place Commons, Shoreline: Sheri & JoMomma
Wine Girl Wines, Manson: Spin-Offs 7 PM
Jazz Alley, Seattle: Rick Braun & Richard Elliot 7:30 PM
Salmon Bay Eagles, Seattle: Dermody Sherman Band
Aurora Borealis, Shoreline: Criminal Squirrel Orchestra
Engels Pub, Edmonds: Michele D'Amour & the Love Dealers 8 PM
Conway Muse, Conway: Mojo Cannon & the 13th St Horns 8 PM
Oxford Saloon, Snohomish: Dana Osborne Band
Little Red Hen, Seattle: Dusty 45's 9 PM

SUNDAY, JULY 24

Mercer Island Farmers Market: Kimball Conant & the Fugitives w/Annie Eastwood 11 AM
Gasworks Park, Seattle: Seattle Peace Concerts 12 PM
McMenamins, Bothell: Sheri Robert Griemes 5 PM
Peabo's, Millcreek: Sunday Music Revue 7 PM
The Spar Tavern, Tacoma: Sunday Blues 7 PM
Royal Room, Seattle: Joel Frahm Trio 7:30 PM
Jazz Alley, Seattle: Rick Braun & Richard Elliot 7:30 PM

MONDAY, JULY 25

Madison Pub, Everett: MaD BoJo 7 PM
Royal Room, Seattle: Royal Room Collective Music Ensemble 7:30 PM
Jazz Alley, Seattle: Amy Helm 7:30 PM

TUESDAY, JULY 26

Farm Strong Brewing Co. Mt Vernon: Leo Bootes 6:30 PM
Royal Room, Seattle: Alex Baird 7:30 PM
Madison Pub, Everett: Unbound band w/Kevin Sutton
Central Saloon, Seattle: Blues Tuesday 7 PM
The New Frontier Lounge, Tacoma: The Tacoma Scrutinizers 7 PM
Jazz Alley, Seattle: Amy Helm 7:30 PM

WEDNESDAY, JULY 27

Jazz Alley, Seattle: ConFunkShun 7:30 PM
Royal Room, Seattle: Songwriter's Round w/Abby K, Paula Boggs, Aline & Wes, Wes Speight, Sean Morse
Aurora Borealis, Shoreline: Emerald City Jazz Orchestra
Engels Pub, Edmonds: Lou Echeverri 8 PM

THURSDAY, JULY 28

Music at the Marina, Everett: Dusty 45's 5 PM
Bad Albert's, Seattle: Annie Eastwood & Friends feat. Billy Stapleton 6 PM
Blues Brews & BBQ, Hotel Bellwether, Bellingham: Jasmine Green 6 PM
Madison Pub, Everett: Songwriter Showcase hosted by Stacy Jones 7 PM
Gas Station Blues, Issaquah 7 PM
Jazz Alley, Seattle: ConFunkShun 7:30 PM

FRIDAY, JULY 29

Deming Log Show Fairgrounds: Mt Baker Rhythm & Blues Festival 4 PM
The Barn at Wilson Farm, Bonney Lake: Kim & Brian
Third Place Commons, Shoreline: Momentum 7 PM
Doc's Riverside Alehouse, Machias: Stacy Jones Band
Jazz Alley, Seattle: ConFunkShun 7:30 PM
Doc's Riverside Alehouse: Stacy Jones Band 8 PM
Aurora Borealis, Shoreline: Engage 8 PM

SATURDAY, JULY 30

Deming Log Show Fairgrounds: Mt Baker Rhythm & Blues Festival 11 AM
Royal Room, Seattle: The Skyler Floe Quintet 4 PM Jr Cadillac 8 PM
McMenamins, Bothell: Gin Creek 5 PM
Hart Hat Winery, Wenatchee: Spin-Offs 5 PM
Farm Strong Brewing, Mount Vernon: Alligator Soul Reunion w/Star Drums & Lady Keys w/Odd Mood Jam Band 5 PM
Carolina Smoke BBQ, Bothell: Joel Astley Band 5 PM
Third Place Commons, Shoreline: Portage Bay Big Band
Jazz Alley, Seattle: ConFunkShun 7:30 PM
Main Street Grill, Ferndale: Whitewing 8 PM
Engels Pub, Edmonds: The Dogtones 8 PM
Easy Monkey Taphouse, Shoreline: Annie Eastwood & Her All-Star Band 8pm
Aurora Borealis, Shoreline: Rockfish & Friends 8 PM

SUNDAY, JULY 31

Deming Log Show Fairgrounds: Mt Baker Rhythm & Blues Festival 11 AM
Oxford Saloon, Snohomish: Sheri Roberts Greimes & Marc Lagen 6 PM
Peabo's, Mill Creek: Sunday Music Revue 7 PM
The Spar Tavern, Tacoma: Sunday Blues 7 PM
Jazz Alley, Seattle: ConFunkShun 7:30 PM
Royal Room, Seattle: Jovino Santos 7:30 PM

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Two Extra Special Shows at Jazz Alley in July

Roots music royalty & B.B. King Entertainer of the Year-winner album release celebrations!

By Rick J. Bowen

While it is certainly justified to say each and every event at Seattle's Jazz Alley is a "special show," the world class venue will play host to two extraordinary performers in July in hosting Janiva Magness and Amy Helm among the list of great concerts at Seattle's premiere live music venue.



Welcome Janiva Magness!

Singer-songwriter-author Janiva Magness makes a forceful return with the release of her 16th studio album *Hard to Kill*, the Los Angeles-based musician's first new collection in three years, on her own Fathead Records.

Hard to Kill is a boldly honest and affecting collection of songs that sit on the bedrock of blues, soul, and funk. She is only the second woman, following blues giant Koko Taylor, to receive the Blues Foundation's B.B. King Entertainer of the Year Award.

As anyone who has seen her performances or listened to her albums will attest, Magness has, indeed, earned a place in the history of American music. The seven-time Blues Music Awards recipient (and the 2009 B.B. King Entertainer of the Year, the Blues Foundation's highest honor) and 2016 Grammy Award nominee will simultaneously release the Fathead audio book edition of *Weeds Like Us*, her frank, profoundly moving 2019 memoir. Janiva Magness - Album Release Celebration Tuesday, July 12 and Wednesday, July 13, 2022, at 7:30 PM.



Welcome Amy Helm!

Jazz Alley also welcomes singer-songwriter and multi-instrumentalist Amy Helm, daughter of the legendary drummer and vocalist from The Band, Levon Helm, for two shows in support of her upcoming release *What the Flood Leaves Behind*.

Helm returned home to Woodstock's Levon Helm Studios just before the pandemic to record *What the Flood Leaves Behind* and reclaim a sense of self as a pause for the traveling musician and mother of two young boys who was seeking clarity in her calling and career. Helm is dynamic performer with a soaring soprano who follows in her father's footsteps by blending elements from country, blues, folk, Gospel, soul, and roots rock to present a unique vision of Americana storytelling. Show times are Monday July 25th and Tuesday the 26th at 7:30 PM. For More info go to <https://www.jazzalley.com/>



Save the Date @ Jazz Alley!

Janiva Magness Album Release Celebration Hard to Kill on Tuesday July 12th & Wednesday July 13th

Amy Helm supporting the What the Flood Leaves Behind release on Monday July 25th & Tuesday July 26th



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July 2022 Blues Jams & Open Mic Listings

Jam hosts listed & open mics are either blues-friendly or full band-friendly. Go out & support live music!

SUNDAY

192 Brewing, Kenmore: 192 Blues Jam w/The Groove Tramps All Ages (times vary on Seahawk game days), 3-7 PM

The Bleu Note Restaurant & Lounge, Lakewood: Open Mic 6 PM

Captain Jack's, Sumner: Open Mic hosted by Lady Carter & the Gents 7 PM

Collector's Choice Restaurant, Snohomish: Acoustic Open Mic 7 PM

Club Crow, Cashmere: Jam Session 1st Sun, 7-10 PM

Conor Byrne, Seattle: Open Mic 8 PM

Darrell's Tavern, Shoreline: Jazz Jam 7-10 PM

Dawson's, Tacoma: Tim Hall Band 7-11 PM

The Boom Boom Room at the Point Casino, Kingston: Duff's Rockin' Jam 7-10 PM

El Sarape Cantina, Shelton: Open Band Jam 3rd Sun 4-8 PM

Cafe Racer Seattle: The Foundation Open Jam 4th Sun 7-9 PM

Headworks Brewery, Enumclaw: Open Mic 6-8 PM

Joseppi's, Tacoma: Sunday J Session w/Mo Betta Band 6-9 PM

Lucky 7 Bar & Grill, Kirkland: Tommy Wall Sunday Wicked Blues Jam 7 PM

Mirkwood Public House, Arlington: Open Jam 7-10 PM

O'Malley's Lounge, Olympia: Blues Jam w/The Pleasure Hounds 6-9 PM

Purdy's, Sumner: Jerry Miller Blues Jam 7 PM

Queen Anne Beer Hall, Seattle: Open Mic 8 PM

Twin Dragon, Duvall: Open Jam hosted by Doug McGrew 7 PM

Red Dog Saloon, Maple Valley: Open Jam w/The Walkie Tacos 6 PM

Warehouse West, Yakima: Open Mic/Jam hosted by Rod Giles Band 4-7 PM

MONDAY

Badger Mountain Brewery, Wenatchee: North Central Washington Blues Jam (1st, 3rd & 5th Mondays) 6 to 9 PM.

Conor Byrne, Seattle: Bluegrass Acoustic Jam 8 PM

Nectar Lounge, Seattle: Mo Jam Mon 9 -11 PM

Royal Room, Seattle: Jazz Jam Session hosted by Thomas Marriott 9pm

Dawson's, Tacoma: Music Mania Jam 7 -11 PM

Riverside Pub, Wenatchee: North Central Washington Blues Jam, 2nd & 4th Mon, 6-9PM

Emerald of Siam, Richland: Open Mic/Band showcase hosted by Barefoot Randy/Dirty River Entertainment 8 PM (All Ages until 10:45 PM)

HD's Bar & Grill, Belfair: Joe Faker Jam 6 PM

Headworks Brewery, Enumclaw: Open Mic 6PM

Jazz Bones, Tacoma: Jam Night 7-10 PM

TUESDAY

Café Racer, Seattle: Open Mic 1st & 3rd Tues 7 PM

Capitol Cider, Seattle: Tues Blues Jam w/John Pine Tree 6:30-8:30 PM

Royal Esquire Club, Seattle: Sea-Town All-Stars 8-10 PM

Elmer's, Burien: Jam Night hosted by The Cory Wilds Band 8 PM-Midnight

Antique Sandwich Co., Tacoma: Open Mic 7-10 PM

Double J Saloon, Lake City/ Seattle: Open Mic 1st & 3rd Thurs 8:30 PM

Burien Eagles: Jam w/Billy Shew 7-11 PM

The Garages, Lake Oswego, OR: Garages Blues Jam w/Pat Stillwell Band 7:30pm

The Hidden Door, Shoreline: Open Mic 7 PM

Odin Brewery, Tacoma: Open Mic 7pm

Oxford Saloon, Snohomish: Acoustic Open Mic Hosted by Jerry Battista 6 PM

Slippery Pig, Poulsbo: Monthly All Ages Open Mic 7 PM

Tweede's Café, North Bend: Open Mic 6:30-9:30 PM

Zeeks Pizza, Bellingham: 1st Tues Live Music Night 6-9 PM

WEDNESDAY

Capitol Cider, Seattle: Jam Night 9 PM

Bethel Saloon, Port Orchard: Open Mic 8 PM

Black Dog Arts Cafe, Snoqualmie: All-Ages Open Mic 7 PM

Black Lab Gallery, Everett: Open Mic hosted by Jeff Crookall 6:30-10 PM

Blue Moon Tavern, Seattle: Open Mic 8-11 PM

Couth Buzzard Cafe, Seattle: Open Mic 7:30-10 PM

Star Bar and Grill, Federal Way: Linda Myers Wicked Wed Jam 8-11 PM

Darrell's Tavern, Shoreline: Open Mic 8:30-11 PM

Filling Station, Kingston: Open Mic All Ages, Styles & Instruments Welcome 7 PM

The Hidden Door, Shoreline: Open Jam 7pm

Jules Mae's Saloon, Seattle: Jazz Open Mic 7 PM

Madison Ave Pub, Everett: Unbound Blues Jam 7:30-11 PM

Mirkwood Public House, Arlington: One Take Weekly Jam w/Chris Eger & Richard Williams 8-11 PM

Penn Cove Brewing Company, Coupeville: 6 PM

Skylark Café, West Seattle: Open Mic 8-11 PM

The Spot, West Seattle: Blues Night 6 PM

Soundbite Cider, Everett: Open Mic 7PM

Tony V's Garage, Everett: Open Mic 9-11 PM

The Tin Hat, Kennewick: Open Mic & Jam w/Mondo Ray Band 7-11 PM

Brickhouse, Vancouver, WA: Open Mic hosted by Right as Rain Entertainment 8:30 PM

THURSDAY

192 Brewing Company, Kenmore: Open Mic 7-10 PM

Bent Bine Brew Co., Belfair: Open Mic 6-9PM

Blue Room, Bellingham: Open Mic All Ages 6-10 PM

Bridgepress Cellars, Spokane: All Genres Jam 7-10 PM

Cruisers, Post Falls ID: Open Mic/Jam Night 6-10 PM

Port Gardner Bay Winery, Everett: Open Mic 6:30-9:30 PM

Dawson's, Tacoma: Blues Jam w/Billy "The Pocket" 7-11 PM

Dog House, Seattle: Jam w/Uptown All Stars 7:30 PM

The Growler Guys, Lake City: Jazz Open Mic 7 PM

Jack-sons Sports Bar & Clubhouse, Yakima: Open Jam 8-11 PM

Looking Glass Coffee, Snohomish: Open Mic, 2nd & 4th Thurs 7:00 PM

The Village Inn Pub, Bellingham: Jam w/Jimmy D 8-11 PM

Salmon Bay Eagles, Seattle: Blues Jam, Last Thurs, 8-11 PM

Slippery Pig Brewery, Poulsbo: Front Street Blues Review Night w/Thys Wallwork, All Ages 7-11 PM

Gordon & Purdy's Pub, Sumner: Outlaw Blues Jam w/Boogie Chillin' 7-11 PM

Stars Bar & Grill, Federal Way: Jam Night w/Billy Shew 8 PM

The New Moon Craft Tavern, Port Angeles: Blues Jam 7 PM

New Frontier Lounge, Tacoma: Open Mic night hosted by Chuck Muller 7 PM

SnoTown Brewery, Snohomish: Open Mic 7 PM

San Juan Island Brewing Co, Friday Harbor: Open Mic 6-8 PM

Red Dog Saloon, Maple Valley: Open Music Jam hosted by the Iron Stallion Band 7 PM

The Loft Pub, Victoria B.C.: Open Jam 7 - 11 PM

Maverick's, Lakeside, MT: Thurs Blues Jam 8:30 PM

FRIDAY

Bryant Corner Cafe', Seattle: Open Mic 6:30 PM

La Copa Café, Seattle: Victory Music All Ages Open Mic 6:30-9:00 PM

Dread Knott Brewery, Monroe: Open Mic 7-10 PM

Kana Winery, Yakima: Open Mic 7-10 PM

Soul Food Coffee House & Fair Trade Emporium, Redmond: Jazz Jam Last Fri 7 PM

Wicked Cider, Kennewick: Wicked Jamz/Open Mic every other Fri 6-10 PM

SATURDAY

The Spot, West Seattle: Open Mic 6 PM

The Hidden Door, Shoreline: Open Mic 7 PM

Kiss the Sky Books, Sultan: Open Mic 7 PM

All listings are subject to change, please check with the venues for the most up-to-date information. The most current listings are online at www.wablues.org. Venus or musicians wishing to list their Jam Nights or Open Mic: Send details to vicepres@wablues.org.



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JULY SHOWS

7th, Riverwalk Concert Series, Mount Vernon
16th, Downtown Block Party, Northbend
17th, Kila Ha Ya Days, Snohomish

AUGUST SHOWS

4th, Looking Glass Coffee, Snohomish
12th, Seafarers memorial Park, Anacortes

SEPTEMBER SHOWS

1st Looking Glass Coffee, Snohomish
16th, The Barn at Wilson Farm, Lake Tapps
24th, Tulalip Casino, Marysville

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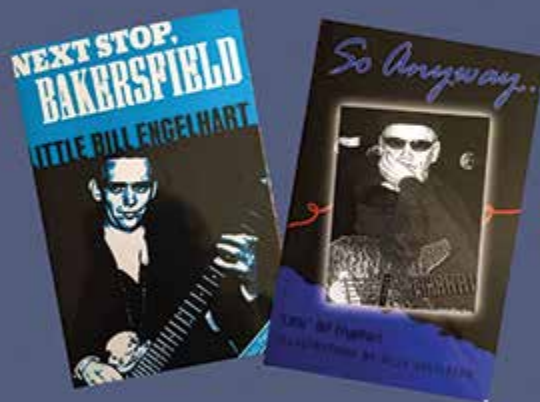
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View from the Bandstand at the Unbound Blues Jam

One horn player's experience at the Madison Avenue Pub

By Steve Pearse, *The Midnight Hour Band*

*"Some call me wood-choppin' Sam,
Some call me wood-cuttin' Ben,
Last girl I cut the wood for, you know,
She wants me back again."
Tommy McClellan (Albert King)*

I'd been practicing my blues scales, lines, and licks for months, along with listening to signature blues tracks like "Big Boss Man," "Born Under a Bad Sign," and "Wang Dang Doodle," among many others. Even though I'm a decent musician who's played in a few bands and, before that, had 'jammed' informally with friends in their garages over the years, this marked the first time I had signed up as a guest player, hoping to hop up onto a well-known—and highly regarded—live blues stage. So, my first objective was to avoid getting cut off at the knees, so to speak—to avoid embarrassing myself in front of other musicians, club customers, and my musician friends who promised to tag along, assuring me that all would be well. Easy for them to say!

I'd read up on blues jam protocol and etiquette: Arrive early, introduce yourself to the host, be ready and tuned up, greet the lead singer and other musicians, and get a sense of their expectations. I only knew what I hoped to get out of what could be a nerve-racking experience. After all, public speaking ranks #1 on the list of Americans' worst fears, according to the National Institute of Mental Health, so performing impromptu for a knowledgeable, up-close-and-personal, blues-loving crowd must come in a close second, right?

But I'm getting ahead of myself here.

Blues aficionados in the know also advise prospective jammers to immerse themselves in the scene before ever jumping up on stage. Visit as many jam-hosting venues

as possible. Watch, listen, and learn about those critically-important "house dynamics." Get a sense of the venue's vibe. Notice everything from physical layout, lighting, and decor to house demographics. Is the crowd mainly older or younger? Dancers as well as listeners? What musical genre (e.g., traditional blues? acoustic bluegrass? R&B? blues/rock?). Does this venue feature, and what artists have played there recently? Does a house band start things off on jam night? Are guest musicians invited on stage one at a time, or as a group? Are jammers free to comp the singer, or are they expected to step up and solo only when directed?

My goals that night seemed simple but were actually pretty daunting: (1) quickly get the gist of each number's melody, tempo, and structure; (2) pick up on the other musician's styles and blues-worthy contributions while watching and listening for the leaders' cues; and, most important, (3) jump in right on cue, transition smoothly, launch into my own 24-bar solo, closing out in a natural, pleasing way.

That was the plan and my approach. I'd taken a number of trips on the ferry from my home on Whidbey Island to Everett's famous Madison Avenue Pub during the past year or so, and I felt as comfortable as ever I would be. Time to plunge ahead and test my horn-blowing blues chops at the Madison Pub!

Seems I picked the perfect Unbound Blues Jam night to sign up. I arrived nearly an hour before the jam was scheduled to start and lucked onto a four-top table right by the door. Great! Plenty of room for my horn and my buddies, and I'd be in a perfect spot to survey this vibrant, pulsing blues pub and sports bar. Ready to catch blues fever!

I introduced myself to Rob, Madison Ave Pub manager, who directed me to the sign-up clipboard at the bandstand, then gestured toward house band bass player Paul. Lucky me! The list at 6:30 PM was blank. I would



be first to be invited up there, or so I hoped (better for banishing those stage-fright butterflies)! I asked Paul about the jam protocol ("Sean'll let you know"), then wandered back to my table, where buddies and fellow musicians Dave and Steve were sipping their drinks and enjoying the house band's driving beat and practiced harmonies.

I unpacked my tenor sax and walked between tables toward the stage, found a nearby chair, and waited for lead singer Sean to wave me up. Just then, a tall fellow carrying a professional-looking case that held at least ten harps of varying sizes, signed in. A player who seemed familiar with the jam's routine, Gary would be sharing his talent up there, too. After taking a 10-minute break from the house band set, drummer Chris and lead guitar man and singer Sean stepped back up on stage. In the meantime, Jim, a bass guitarist with whom I had played in an Everett-based band a few years ago, joined Gary and me. Jim was glad to see me, and I him.

A fine musician, and, as I was about to learn, a pretty decent song writer and singer, too! Paul then marked out our stage 'spots' and

adjusted our mics. Gary stepped up to the mic on my left, opened his harp case, selected the evening's instrument, and nodded at Sean. Ready, practiced, and apparently at ease. We would be playing the blues together in one fashion or another for the next 20 minutes or so—five numbers, as it turned out.

When Sean signaled time for our set, I asked a few questions: 'Will you invite in a certain order to solo? Can I back you as you sing? What tunes will we be playing?' Sean's response was both encouraging and a little scary: "Just follow my lead, stay with us, and do your own thing."

Then, to all three of us: "Anybody got any numbers they want to do tonight?" Jim asked to play and sing a blues number he had recently written, Sean nodded, and then I suggested a couple of favorite numbers. Sean reached down and picked up a few titles lists and their respective keys.

"Nope, don't really like those. We'll start with 'Cross-Cut Saw,' key of A."

The good news was that I'd heard that blues tune many a time. The bad news? I'd never played it. The tenor sax is a B flat instrument, so that would be B major for me, in all its 5-sharps glory. But OK! And off we went. At a nod from Sean, Gary stepped right up, leaned into the mic, and blew a sweet harp over two 12-bar choruses. Jim's bass playing hung right in the pocket with drummer Chris, sounding as though they'd played together for years! When it seemed that Gary's harp solo was winding down, I riffed a bit in the lower register.

Mistake! Gary turned and shot me a look as I did my best to segue from his licks to my own.

"You stepped on my airtime, man!"

I apologized, of course. I now knew what for Gary, and probably for the Unbound Blues Jam at the Madison Ave Pub in general, the protocol was: Watch for the nod signifying that it's your turn; and while the other guy is playing, stay back."

Now that we had gotten the swing of one another's performances, the next four numbers, none of which I'd ever heard or played, progressed surprisingly well. Folks encouraged us and applauded, and Rob and Paul gave us some praise and high-fives. As an impromptu group, we apparently jelled as we jammed!

I thanked house band members and Rob for the opportunity to perform on their stage.

Shaking hands all around, Jim, Gary and I returned to our tables and stowed our instruments. Then, I enjoyed a celebratory libation with my buddies Dave and Steve. How that bar clock flies when you're

really having fun! If I was going to make the 10 o'clock ferry back to Whidbey Island, I'd have to scoot.

A few Wednesdays later, I returned to the Madison Ave Pub and the Unbound Blues Jam stage.

Can't say I was entirely at ease that second time around either, but I had internalized those important jam protocols, watched, and listened to my fellow jammers, and played a reasonably mean horn, according to my Midnight Hour bandmates who kept me company that night.

As Albert King growls in "Cross-Cut Saw," "can't help but say hot dog"!

In Memoriam: Dave "Strummin' Dog" Galanin

"Dave was a regular for many years at Centrum's Port Townsend Blues workshop..."

By Son Jack, Jr.

Our dear friend, "Strummin' Dog" Dave Galanin (1955-2021) and master of the pre-War blues passed away just before Christmas 2021.

Dave was a regular for many years at Centrum's Port Townsend Blues workshop, and to honor his memory, his friends are putting together a schedule of events to celebrate his life at this year's Blues Workshop (see link below).

As part of this special celebration, Mary Hilts, Program Director for Blues Week has kindly setup a scholarship fund that will be used to cover full board and tuition for students that are Black or Indigenous. If you wish to donate, please contribute to the **"Dave Galanin 'play it good' Blues Fund"** (see link below).

Below is an article about Dave that originally ran in the May/June 2018 *Bluesletter*, and we hope you can join us to celebrate the life of a man who excelled in his relationships, his craft and his kindness and generosity toward others.

"Strummin' Dog" (aka Dave Galanin) is a son of Sitka, Alaska, and a force of nature. This comes through loud and clear in his music, which has the intensity that only a master practitioner of old-school, gritty, authentic blues can deliver. He cites his main influences as Son House, Bukka White and Mance Lipscombe among many others. He will be performing at the Triple Door Musicquarium

on June 25th, 5-8pm.

As a self-taught musician, he has played guitar for over 40 years, and began playing out publicly in New Zealand where he opened for Paul Ubana Jones and 'lil Ian Goodsman.

He has also shared the stage with the likes of Guy Davis, and Jake La Botz, and in addition has recorded with Hanni El Khatib (video posted on YouTube). He is a regular fixture in the bars and clubs in Sitka, Alaska and plays there annually at the HomeSkillet Festival.

His newest and third CD, Signify was recorded at Pulp Studio overlooking Silver Bay in Sitka, Alaska. Music by Strummin' Dog is available at CD Baby, iTunes, eMusic, Bandcamp, and Spotify.

Dave also happens to be a Tlingit Silver Carver, coming from a family of carvers, and apprenticed with the late master silver carver, Louis Minard. He has a natural affinity for the art and creates pieces of jewellery as well as large sculpture pieces for commissions.

His artwork currently combines both the traditional and contemporary design, creating his own style using copper, silver, and gold. He organized an artist cultural exchange with Stacy Gordine of New Zealand, and now also carves in stone, such as jade, and in ivory and bone. Dave is the sole proprietor of "Galanin Silverworks."



"Strummin' Dog" Dave Galanin,
Rest in Peace
(Photo Courtesy of Son Jack Jr)

As of press time, harp player Jim DiIanni has booked a duo show at the Hood Canal Brewery in Kingston, Washington, on July 30, 7-9pm. It will be great to return to the Pacific Northwest and play the blues with Jim!

More information

Donate to the Dave Galanin 'Play it good' Blues fund: <https://centrum.org/2021/11/centrum-scholarship-fund/>

Port Townsend Blues workshop: <https://centrum.org/port-townsend-acoustic-blues-festival-workshop/>



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Those Summertime Blues: July Blues Bash

Join Polly O'Keary & The Rhythm Method & TJ Read on July 12th at Aurora Borealis in Shoreline!

By Rick J. Bowen

The monthly Washington Blues Society Blues Bash continues with an in-person event Tuesday, July 12th at 7 PM, at Aurora Borealis, 16708 Aurora Ave North in Shoreline, Washington.

The June Blues Bash features the winner of the 2022 Best of the Blues Award for Washington Blues Recording (50), Polly O'Keary and the Rhythm Method. The opening set will present the debut of TJ Read who recently released a self-titled album. The Blues Bash is free, all ages are welcome, and we will have a raffle with prizes including tickets to Seattle's Jazz Alley. We encourage everyone to "Tip the Band," to support the artists' volunteer performances. More about the performers...



Polly O'Keary and the Rhythm Method

Polly O'Keary is a PhD student, a world-traveled bassist, one of Washington State's most frequently-awarded female blues singers and songwriters (6x WBS Best

Female Vocalist, 4x Best Blues Songwriter, etc). Her music reflects the life of a modern blueswoman; she's seen the river rise and take everything more than once, and lived to laugh, sing, and write music about it.

Polly O'Keary and the Rhythm Method is the trio she built with her husband, drummer Tommy Cook, winner of the 2017 Washington Blues Society Blues Drummer Award, with whom she shared the rhythm section duties for worldwide touring act Too Slim and the Taildraggers for four years. David Miller rounds out the trio and he grew up listening to blues in Texas. At 25 in San Luis Obispo, he led The Dave Miller Band for 18 years until relocating to the Seattle area. Polly O'Keary and the rhythm Method are a fan favorite not only in the Pacific Northwest, but also across the United States and throughout Canada.



TJ Read

Thomas Jefferson ("TJ") Read grew up in

Houston, Texas and relocated to the Pacific Northwest after being assigned there by the military. He now resides in a suburb of Seattle. TJ's unique brand of blues will take you from the city to the country and back again. Some of his original compositions are not easily categorized. TJ's recent eponymous album contains both city blues featuring a full band and TJ's solo acoustic offerings. Influenced heavily by Lightnin' Hopkins and Robert Johnson, Read puts his own twist on their traditional material. His influences include other blues artists worth discovering, such as Tampa Red and Jimmy Witherspoon. Now, obviously, TJ did not grow up in a musical vacuum, and he is also influenced by more contemporary rock and blues artists such as Eric Clapton and Stevie Ray Vaughn. He especially cites Eric Dolphy and Frank Zappa as musical inspiration. TJ has worked extensively as a sideman and bandleader, but at present, is gigging as a solo acoustic artist. His experience includes a solo weekly sit down at Mama's Cantina in Reno for a year and a half. In addition, he played Fridays at Alligator Soul in Everett, Washington for a year. In the more distant past, he had a regular gig at a marginally legal after-hours joint near Pioneer Square in Seattle.

Photos:

Polly O'Keary & The Rhythm Method

(Photo by Rock Allen)

TJ Read

(Photo by Linda Brooks)

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Send updates, additions & corrections to both Editor@wabluess.org and ericrichd@aol.com by the 10th!

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