Bluesletter

Washington Blues Society

April 2026

INSIDE

FANTASTIC NEGRITO TALKS TO WBS

BB AWARDS! BALLOTS AND INFO

UPCOMING SHOWS

Letter from the Editor

Hello Blues Lovers-

The first time I was ever nominated for a Washington Blues Society BB Award, I was dead broke and didn't have a single thing to wear I thought was worthy of the occasion. A friend hooked me up with a red dress that was too small, but it was a wrap dress, and a safety pin secured my modesty, such as it was. Then, my boyfriend had a gig, so he had my van, meaning I had his landscaping truck, mowers and all. I drove to the show and parked far enough away that I could brush off grass clippings if I needed to before getting inside.

It was probably 2005, the year after my first blues album came out, and I didn't feel very well-known at all. But when I got inside the door, there was Charles White talking to Mark Whitman, and they both greeted me by name and told me that they'd voted for me. It felt surreal because I sure knew who they were, and they were intimidating. I can't even remember the venue, just that it had nice tables and I was sharing one with a guitar player John Gullah, who, bless his heart, had a lot of nice things to say about that red dress.

The award for Best Female Blues Vocalist came around, and it might have been Leslie Fleury announcing. Right before she announced the winner, I had a sudden, strong feeling that she was going to say my name. I was still shocked when she did. I remember keeping my comments very short.

"I had no idea anyone knew who I was," I said. "Thank you, everyone. You'll never know what this means to me."

After the event I got back in the landscaping truck and drove out to Mardini's in Snohomish where my usual gig was taking place and walked in with the plaque under my arm. Everyone knew I'd been up for the award, and there was a pleased ruckus.

There have been many more, and each has meant a great deal. It's nice to know that there will be a whole fresh crop of plaques blessing deserving artists within a few weeks.

That said, the ballot is a LOT. Somehow, we failed to include the nominees for Best Blues Club in last issue, but they are there this month, and if you already voted, someone will contact you to get your Best Club vote. We also misspelled a couple names, even though like six of us tried our best to catch all errors.

Another thing that was difficult was figuring out how to present the nominees for best image and best graphic. We put the artists' names first, then the title of the work, but everyone got confused and so this month I've reversed it, putting the work's name first and then the artist. Also, and this I am proud of and hope we do it every year going forward: I made a gallery of all the visual art on the ballot called, "And the Nominees Are…" I hope it helps everyone pick a favorite in each category.

Congratulations to all nominees, and I look forward to seeing everyone at the BB Awards. Enjoy this, our BB Award issue!

Cheers-

Polly O'Keary, Editor

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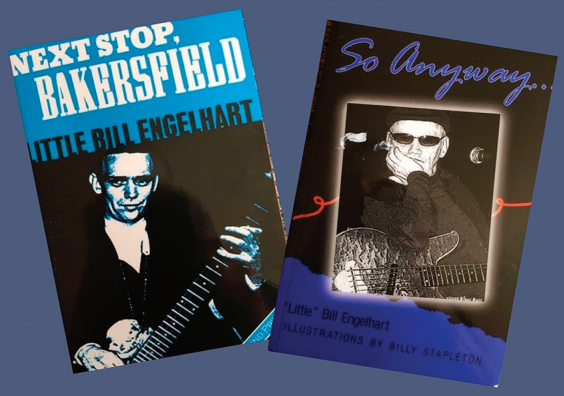

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In This Issue...

Inside...

In this issue we present an interview that our own Kirk Anderson did with the three time Grammy Winning artist Fantastic Negrito, who is touring through the Pacific Northwest soon.

Also see a new feature by Rick Bowen that will be semi-regular, called News on the Venues, that focuses on the clubs of the Washington blues scene, including new places that have blues, clubs that are closing, or clubs that are starting to hire live music, and so on.

Vinyl is having a major resurgence in recent years, and this month we also add another new feature: John Kulmann's Vintage Vinyl Vault. His family had a Seattle record store for many years and his vinyl collection is insane, and this month he presents us with memories and reflections about an album featuring some of the PNW's most iconic artists, recorded when they were still just beginning to arrive.

Finally, this month as always, we bring you news about shows coming ot the Evergreen state that you don't want to miss, and local and national new album releases.

Above: Fantastic Negrito, courtesy of the artist

Cover: Washington BB Awards poster by Alisia Ortiz.

Cover design: Sean Donovan, Gatorboyproductions.com

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Washington Blues Society April Board Meeting

THURSDAY, April 9

5 p.m.

Location: APEX Everett

El Sid Cocktail Lounge

Address:

1611 Everett Avenue

Everett, Washington 98201

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FEBRUARY BLUESLETTER DEADLINES FOR MARCH ISSUE

Ad Reservations	5 p.m. on 3/30 to editor@wablues.org
Calendar	5 p.m. on 3/10 online. Please submit @ www.wablues.org
Editorial	5 p.m. on 3/1 to editor@wablues.org
Camera-Ready Ad Art	5 p.m. on 3/5 to editor@wablues.org

Please Note: If we receive enough editorial copy before the 30th, or camera-ready ads before the 5th, space may be filled, and material may be saved for a future issue. Please send ALL contributions early!

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Please send articles and photos as attachments only to editor@wablues.org. Please do not embed images or stories in emails and please do not send links.

Please only send attachments with each file titled with a unique file name instead of phone or camera-supplied identifiers. All contributions not meeting these requirements will be returned to the contributor.

Photos: Only high-resolution PDF, tif, or jpg attachments saved as 300 dpi or greater. CMYK format only (for color) and grayscale (for B & W). Cover size: 8.5 in x 11 in.
Please remove any watermark or branding information from all photos.
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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. The Washington Blues Society received the Keeping the Blues Alive Award from The Blues Foundation in 2009.

KEEPING THE BLUES • ALIVE •

WASHINGTON BLUES SOCIETY
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News on the Venues

A quick look at several spaces that are either new , have new ownership or have added live music in 2026

By Rick Bowen

The Hangar at 5x5 Bar and Bistro

Inside the Staybridge Suites in Mukilteo, the adjoining spaces of the 5x5 Bar and Bistro and the Hangar Room have added live bands on Saturday nights. Formerly the "Theatre Room," this space and the connecting social areas have been transformed into a bar, dining area and music venue. The bar features craft cocktails and a casual menu of light bites and flatbread pizza. The management wisely booked two popular North Sound bands for mini-residencies: The Davanos will play six shows and the Stacy Jones Band three this spring, with a variety of acts to follow. Music fans should note this isn't your average tavern; it is one of the first-class amenities in a hotel that has 134 apartment-style suites.

Butter Notes Café

The new Butter Notes Café on North Broadway in Everett is a dessert-forward cafe serving coffee, crepes and light bites. The sweet little place hosts an all-ages jazz jam session every other Sunday and live jazz events once a month. Additionally, they recently introduced an innovative feature inside the cafe: Butter Notes now has a fully equipped podcast studio for local creators, musicians, entrepreneurs and anyone who wants to share their story.

The Stacy Jones Band plays at The Hanger. Image by Gladys Jones

Chinnie's Kitchen

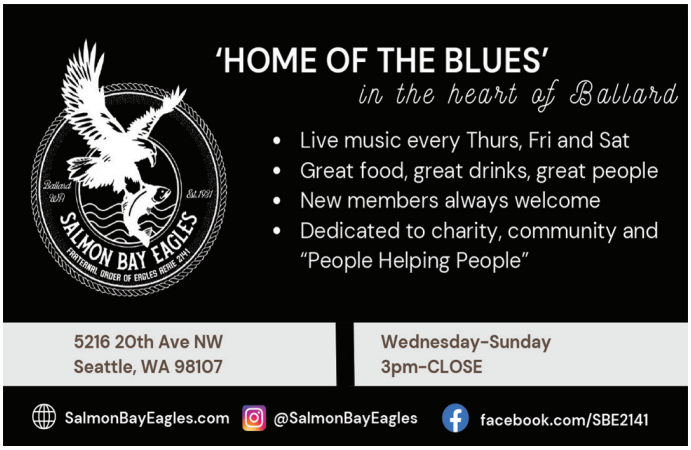
The Asian fusion restaurant in South Everett, Chinnie's Kitchen, boasts a full menu of "Chinese comfort food" and expertly crafted cocktails. The lounge now hosts acoustic music nights on weekends. Our very own Mary McPage broke in the joint with her signature brand of raucous blues and roots in February.

At Large Brewing

On the Everett waterfront, At Large Brewing changed ownership in February 2026. The taphouse now hosts live music on Saturday nights and special event days, featuring indoor and outdoor seating to accompany its well-known "large" rotating tap list and food truck events.

Slim's Last Chance

As a footnote in Georgetown, longtime roadhouse Slim's Last Chance has been saved. Together in Music, the team behind Tim's Tavern in White Center, rescued the chili-and-live-music venue. The move, described as a way to "steward Slim's into its next chapter," ensures that the venue, a cornerstone of the local scene for more than 20 years, remains open under new management.



18 Years ago this month....

Looking back at the BB Awards from 2008!

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Washington Blues Society

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Celebrating Vinyl on Record Store Day April 18

The third Saturday in April has been set aside to celebrate neighborhood record stores since 2008

By Kirk Anderson

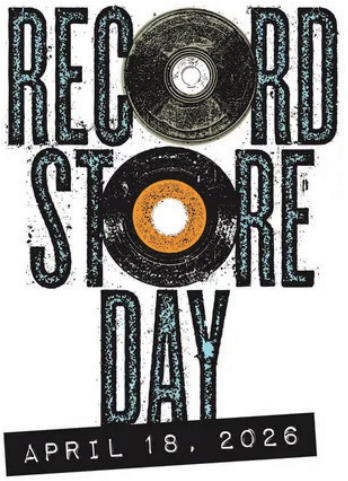
Annually held on the third Saturday of April since 2008, National Record Store Day celebrates the culture of more than 10,000 independently owned record stores with a real physical footprint in communities worldwide. National Record Store Day brings together artists and fans through independent shops to celebrate the medium and lifestyles around it. Limited edition vinyl, special events, and in-store performances adorn the celebration in a way digital just can't.

This year there are more than 350 exclusive and limited editions initially released only at indie record stores, along with releases only on vinyl on Record Store Day, with some eventually making it to the streaming platform. The variety will change from label to label, store to store, state to state, and country to country across the globe.

Born at a time when other formats, Napster and streaming in general was decimating the brick and mortar record store and vinyl, Record Store Day began to build each year as more and more fans of the format and the music on it came to the stores and were reminded of the rich experience. They saw community within the walls and realized how the big box stores were decimating the feeling of belonging…as well as the livelihoods of so many store owners who put their savings and time into these communal gathering spots.

Many of the stores now have special live performances and collectables that are one of a kind or in limited numbers. I can remember treasuring going down to the stores I had let myself forget about as the convenience of streaming took over. I again saw the faces of the record owners and employees that vested themselves in the experience, while many of us turned to convenience and free streams.

I couldn't wait to bring these treasures home and go through the ritual of pulling off the shrink wrap and cueing up the record, moving the needle and tonearm from its resting point to the first groove of the record. The feeling of the artwork and cardboard in my hand as I read that art, as I listened to that art. Check out www.recordstoreday.com.



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SOUTHERN AVENUE
CHIEF JOSEPH
The RUMBLE featuring BOUDREAUX JR.
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And The Nominees Are....

Here are the five nominees on the WBS BB Award Ballot of Best Blues Image

Title: Joe Gabaldon's Daughter (Blanche)
Photographer: Dennis Browne

Title: Joe Gabaldon
Photographer: Dennis Browne

Title: Bluesletter Cover Photo of Taj Mahal
Photographer: Linda Wolf

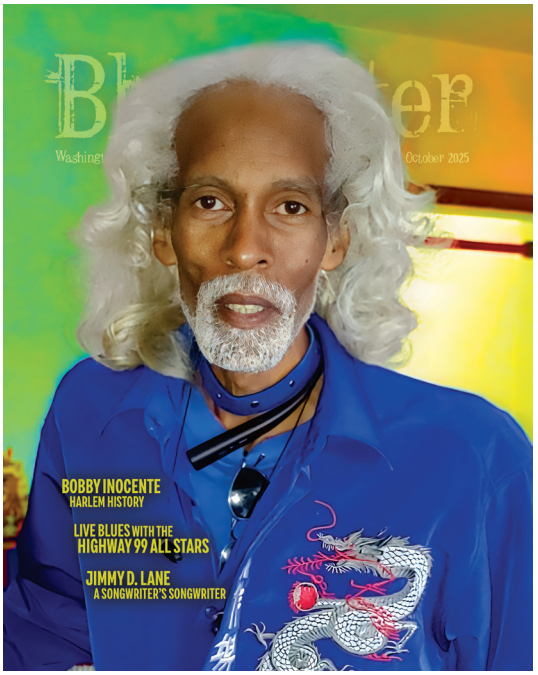
Title: Tab Benoit, Too Slim and Corey Duplechin
Photographer: Steve Mitchell

Title: Pitman and Sutton at the Triple Door
Photographer: Dennis Browne

And The Nominees Are...

Here are the four nominees for Best Blues Graphic

Title: Winthrop R&B Fest Poster
Artist: Sean Donovan



Title: Blues Letter Cover Bobby Inocente
Artist: Sean Donovan

Title: Annie Eastwood and Her All Star Band Self-Titled CD Cover Art
Artist: Annie Eastwood

Title: Kitsap Blues Fest Poster
Artist: As yet unidentified

A Conversation With Fantastic Negrito

Bluesletter's Kirk Anderson talks with the three-time blues Grammy Winner ahead of his April PNW run

By Kirk Anderson

Few modern artists embody resilience and reinvention like Fantastic Negrito, and Seattle gets a chance to enjoy a stop on his 2026 international tour. The three-time Grammy-winning singer, songwriter and guitarist has become one of the most electrifying forces in contemporary blues—fusing blues, funk, soul and rock while confronting real-world struggles with honesty and grit. Born Xavier Amin Dphrepaulezz, his life story reads like a blues epic. Raised in a strict household before finding his way to California, he pursued music in the 1990s and landed a major-label deal early on. But everything changed in 1999 when a devastating car crash nearly took his life and permanently damaged his guitar-playing hand. His career stalled, and for years it seemed his musical chapter had closed. Instead, it set the stage for one of the most remarkable comebacks in roots music. Like Django Reinhardt before him, who became a jazz guitar god after a burn injury left him only able to use two fingers of his left hand, Xavier created new sounds using innovative techniques he developed for the hand he now calls "the claw." In 2015, performing under the name Fantastic Negrito, he won NPR's first-ever Tiny Desk Contest. The victory launched a new era for him at age 47, introducing audiences to his raw, genre-bending sound—gritty blues traditions infused with funk grooves, social commentary and deeply personal storytelling. Since then, he has earned three Grammy Awards for Best Contemporary Blues Album and built a reputation as a fearless innovator. His music pushes beyond traditional boundaries while staying rooted in the blues' core spirit of truth-telling and survival.

A New Chapter: Son of a Broken Man

In October 2024, Fantastic Negrito released

Image Credit: Bruce Baker

"Son of a Broken Man" on his Storefront Records label. It stands among his most personal albums, exploring family trauma, identity and reconciliation. A live track is expected to accompany his highly anticipated summer tour across the U.S. and Europe. The record blends heavy guitar riffs, soulful ballads and the genre-bending arrangements that define his sound. Songs like "California Loner" and "Runaway From You" showcase his ability to pair emotional narratives with infectious grooves.

A Fierce Live Performer

Though his recordings are powerful, Fantastic Negrito's music reaches full ignition on stage. His concerts are known for explosive energy, vivid storytelling and a band that moves effortlessly between gritty blues riffs, deep funk rhythms and gospel-tinged soul. He has performed around the world at festivals including Glastonbury, Lollapalooza, WOMAD and Newport Folk Festival, sharing stages with artists from Sturgill Simpson to Bruce Springsteen. His 2026 touring schedule remains packed. International dates include Australia's Port Fairy Folk Festival and additional headline shows in March, followed by appearances across Europe and the U.S., including a spring stop at the Rumba Cafe in Columbus, Ohio, and summer festivals in Italy.

Roots and Community

Beyond music, Negrito invests deeply in community work. In Oakland, California, he founded Revolution Plantation, an urban farm and education project teaching youth about agriculture, sustainability and entrepreneurship. The mission mirrors the spirit of the blues itself—a tradition born from resilience and collective experience.

The Future of the Blues

Fantastic Negrito represents a bold vision for the future of blues music. Rather than treating the genre as a museum piece, he approaches it as a living tradition—absorbing new influences and speaking to modern struggles. His blend of Delta roots, funk grooves, rock energy and socially conscious lyrics creates a sound both timeless and urgent.

The Fantastic Negrito Takes Time to Talk to the Washington Blues Society

WBS: Your career has had several rebirths. Looking back, what have you taken from these changes?

Xavier: When I was young, I wasted a lot of time looking for something. I learned to just move forward and do something.

WBS: After your accident and the years away from music, what brought you back?

Xavier: The time made me look back and realize the last half of my teen years were spent feeling defeated by the events around me. I found a creative wisdom from my grandfather. I found the fun in music outside of chasing what the industry put in front of me—the joy of creativity.

A Conversation With Fantastic Negrito

Continued from previous page

WBS: Your songs often confront injustice, inequality and identity. Do you start with the message or does the message emerge from the music?

Xavier: Neither. Both. Songs are like planes, or trains ... or automobiles. I just get on it and then go with it.

WBS: Your live shows are incredibly raw and energetic. What do you want your audience to feel?

Xavier: Church without religion. Great energy. They are organic and I want the audience to contribute. Inner freedom.

WBS: What advice would you give to young musicians discovering blues today?

Xavier: Be interested in something rather than just what is put in front of you. For Immediate Release:

The Washington Blues Society Announces their

Album Reviews

Charles Tiner, Pontchartrain Shakers, Eric Madis

Charles Tiner

Good Soul

(Self-Released)

"Be a Man" opens *Good Soul* with a commanding organ line and stinging guitar riffs before Charles steps in with a clear, church-rooted vocal that leaves no doubt about his foundation. The influence of the Baptist tradition—straight from his father's congregation—runs deep, and it sets the tone for where this record stands and where it aims to go.

Released Jan. 30, 2026, Good Soul delivers fresh soul-blues straight from the studio to the speakers with warmth, grit and conviction. "Bad Woman" wastes no time. A sharp piano riff from Charles sets it up, a blasting sax answers the call and the groove locks in. The beat shifts, but the pocket never wavers. Before long, your head is nodding and your foot is keeping time. This band understands dynamics—when to push, when to lay back—and that control makes the track hit harder. This is Charles' second release, following N'Treble (2021), and it shows growth. If you've read my past reviews, you know I'm grounded in the history of blues and soul. But I'm equally interested in where the music is headed.

Out of 12 releases on my desk, I chose *Good Soul* because it carries that lineage while still sounding present. The five-piece band plays with authority—tight rhythm section, tasteful keys, horns that punch without overpowering. The 11 original tracks are built on strong arrangements and lyrics that feel lived-in rather than borrowed. The lone outside cut, "Don't Be a Fool Too Long," written by Rev. Orvis Mays in 1968, taps directly into that Chicago soul current. It fits seamlessly among the originals, proof that when the groove is authentic, decades don't matter. The closing track, "Put Your Money on Me," may be the album's emotional anchor. It's a universal ask—believe in me. Tiner's keyboard work anchors the optimism, while the harmonica intro lifts the mood from the first notes. You can hear Charles enjoying himself, even laughing in spots, fully inside the song. That joy is contagious. Good Soul isn't chasing trends. It's grounded in faith, groove and tradition—and confident enough to stand on its own. For listeners who value roots with forward motion, this one deserves a spin.

-By Kirk Anderson

Pontchartrain Shakers

Love, Peace, and Chicken Grease

(Southland Records)

Featuring Amedee "A5" Frederick, guitar and vocals; Jojjo Wight, guitar and vocals; Earl Smith Jr., drums; and Red DeVecca, bass, with special guests Amedee "The Creole Blues Man" Frederick, guitar and vocals; Jamie Wight, cornet; Heidi Wight, trombone; and Michael Loupe, alto sax. Founded in 2018 by Amedee "A5" Frederick and Jojjo Wight, longtime traditional blues musicians, Ponchartrain Shakers is a polished ensemble of singers and musicians reflecting the best of New Orleans blues. Fittingly, they perform in the guise of an informal gathering of front-porch players, reveling in the joys of everyday life with family, friends and neighbors.

When I contacted the band requesting additional info and perhaps some personal insights into the band's vibe and voice, co-leader Jojjo Wight responded with an overview of each performer's background and role, then added this revealing notion that seeps out of every track of this album: "For us, being the adult children of professional musicians is to carry the torch from our fathers and remember the legacy that they've passed down. ... we pride ourselves on being the band you can bring your children and grandchildren to see and have a great time. ... Being born into the blues and jazz involves working hard, singing songs about the things we face in life, and finding Love, Peace, and Chicken Grease in our daily lives."

Performing in many Southeastern Louisiana venues and touring throughout the United States, Ponchartrain Shakers weave an engaging blend of blues, funk and jazz, emphasizing a soulful interplay among guitars, voices, horns and percussion. Jojjo learned her groove under the tutelage of her mother, Heidi Wight, trombonist for the Shakers and retired music educator, while Amedee "A5" Frederick learned his craft from his father, Amedee "The Creole Blues Man" Frederick, starting at age 10, performing at Ruby's Roadhouse and the Gibson Street Club in New Orleans.

And there's a reason why every one of these tracks—from rollicking, grooving originals like "Lucy Mae" and "Going to Kentucky," more pensive numbers ("Christmas in New Orleans," "Don't Ask Me How I'm Doing") and innovative yet true-to-form covers ("You Don't Miss Your Water," "Freight Train," "Jumper on the Line")—impress with their tight arrangements, spot-on dynamics and roots-bound voices. These seasoned singers and musicians often orchestrate a given song in the moment, as Jojjo explains: "If we have a bigger than normal instrumentation, sometimes we will also visually check in or head-nod to let others know who is ready to step up into the next part of the arrangement."

According to my ears, these 10 tracks come across as polished arrangements; every chord, every phrase contributes to a compelling story born out of rich imaginations, steeped in the gumbo that is New Orleans blues. "Sunshine," the album's first cut, is a bouncing, engaging bit of traditional storytelling. Setting the standard for crisp guitar picking, a grooving bass and solid percussion work, "Sunshine" features strong vocals, a delicious blend of regret and celebration ("That white lightning going straight to my head"), and a sweet wind-down where guitars, drums and that compelling voice seal the deal. "St. James Infirmary" finds its way into many a great blues performer's cover list. In their rendition, the Ponchartrain Shakers mix precise, melodic and harmonic picking backed by

the pulsing beat of bass and rhythm guitar, plus full-on driving drums. And then a mellow sax solo jumps in, capturing this classic blues number's strong themes and haunting mood—a classic New Orleans vibe. All of the musical elements here work together beautifully.

Composed by Amedee Frederick, father and son, the first of this album's seven engaging original tunes, "Lucy Mae" is a bright, shiny number, featuring some fine guitar picking along with an interactive bass line that perfectly frames a story theme that threads through many a blues track. It's a voice that pulls us into the speaker's grief—and hopeful pleas—a tightly composed, truly polished performance. Arguably the most sophisticated, intricate piece in this eclectic collection, "You Amaze Me" is a dream, opening with sweet guitar strains and dramatic percussion hits, introducing a deeply emotive voice. A rich baritone voice, melodic, heartfelt, full of believable emotion. Coupled with gorgeous guitar solos, deft harmonic bass and solid drums, this is the blues at its most personal, full of hope and love. In an entirely different style and feel, the lively "Going to Kentucky" takes us deep down into the famous Mammoth Caves, toggling between nature and belief. And once again, exquisite guitar work is set against quicksilver drumming and bass. "Christmas in New Orleans" invites us to visit the city during that magical season. Cymbals, drum hits and guitar swoops open this one, and off we go: a swingin' blues Christmas! The song takes us on a tour of the city. One joyous, proud paean to this special city! So many gems here—the band's cover of "Freight Train" is rollicking, even rambunctious, starring Jamie Wight's soaring voice and matched by terrific instrumentation. Listeners of all ages will enjoy this perky number, a lighter take on a deep, dark blues classic. There's even some comical vocal hooting. And Ponchartrain Shakers' cover of R.L. Burnside's "Jumper on the Line" wrings a whole new energy out of this classic, with its fast pace, imaginative guitar solos, and supporting strings and horns.

There's that and more gliding throughout Love, Peace & Chicken Grease—this highly accomplished band's second album—brought to us by a troupe of musicians and singers whose cultural and familial roots inspire and feed these remarkable blues numbers. As I prepared this review, I listened to each track several times, noting many additional amazing bits as I did so. It's no wonder that Ponchartrain Shakers presents at Blues in the Schools for the benefit of more than 500 students a year. Talented teachers and practitioners—yes, they are!

-By Steve Pearse

Eric Madis

Six

Self-Released

Simply titled Six, the new offering from Seattle guitarist Eric Madis demonstrates why he is a highly revered educator and performer. The 12-track collection, released in January 2026, is his first album in 16 years, recorded in Seattle at the legendary Jack Straw and Ironwood Studios and features the rhythm section of Mike Sytcheson on bass, drummer Brad Stoll with guests Ed Conteras on percussion and Alika Madis on guitar. The easy gliding shuffle "Cherry Valley Blues" opens the set, followed by an immaculate take of the Robert Johnson standard "Kind Hearted Woman Blues," the first of four reverent cover songs. The easy swinging "I'm Leaving Town" shows off his superb tone, drawing comparisons to Robben Ford and Larry Carlton. Slinky instrumental "Swimming in Uncertainty" effectively mixes Delta slide guitar with West African djembe, and the southern-fried mover "The Real Deal" demonstrates his love of Alvin Lee, Danny Gatton and, of course, Dickey Betts, while "Gravity Rag" is a masterclass on Piedmont fingerpicking guitar. Madis has a little fun with the Chess Records classic "I'm Ready," then spars again with Conteras for the tribal acoustic duet "Swimming in the Duwamish." He shows off his vocal chops on a lovely reading of "Georgia on My Mind," and the trio swings hard for "Discord dat Chord." He keeps the oft-covered "Milk Cow Blues" firmly rooted in the Delta tradition, and everyone contributes to the expansive finale "Swimming in the Sound."

-by Rick Bowen

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Washington BLUES Society

Vintage Vinyl Vault: Gems from John Henry Kuhlmann's archive

Live at the Roadhouse—Four of the Northwest's Finest R&B Stars (1984)

By John Henry Kuhlmann

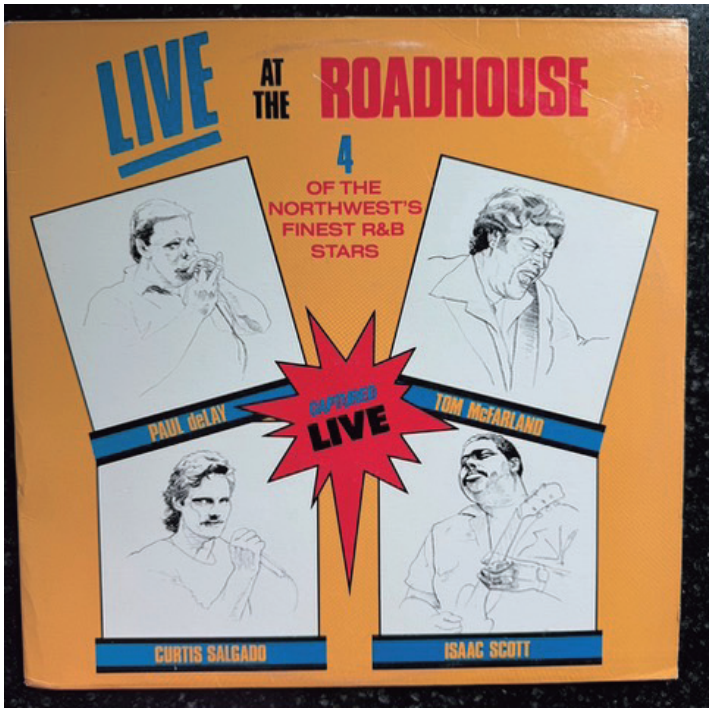
My dad and brother had a Seattle record store for nearly 40 years, and over that time my brother amassed a fine collection of Northwest music, so I get some nice birthday presents, this album being the most recent. Recorded live over four days in February 1984 at the legendary Jolly Roger Roadhouse by local producers Mike and Patrick Lynch, with engineer Bruce Buckner, this album features songs by four of the Northwest's premier R&B bands fronted by Isaac Scott, Tom McFarland, Paul deLay and Curtis Salgado. Each band is stacked with talented musicians, and each reflects the distinct style and influences of its leader. I'd originally planned to review just one tune from each band—but no cut deserved to be left unturned. The recordings are clean, clear and very well-balanced; their quality matches the quality of the performances.

The Isaac Scott Band:

Man, this guy could sing. The driving "Wrapped Up in Love" features his strong and confident voice—first clear, then growly—alongside guitar work that is clean and spacious, never piercing; it reminded me immediately of Dion Payton's sound. Anthony Thomas (bass), Rick Howell (drums) and Mark Oslund (guitar) lay down the groove, and you can tell right off that it's Steve Bailey playing harp, comping behind the vocals and soloing. When Isaac sings "she don't want to marry me, just wanna be my friend," this is blues. The easy-tempo "Same Old Blues" delivers that and more; Steve plays excellent third position on this minor-key tune, and the overall groove and his playing "forced" me to grab my kit and start playing along. Still socially relevant, "I Don't Know" again shows Isaac's confident voice and Steve's harp skills, with wonderful backup vocals from Sadie Goodwin, Diane Copeland and Shirley Mann—now I want backup singers!

Tom McFarland Blues Band:

Tom had been playing bars, dives and nightclubs for more than 20 years before this recording, and the statement on his original slow tune "Doghouse Blues"—"saw my first paycheck, I felt just like a fool"—is sung from that experience; the IRS troubles are all too familiar. I'd never encountered Perry Lewis before; his harmonica has excellent tone and feel. Mark Dalton (bass) and J.W. Moore (drums) cook right along on the medium-tempo blues "I Am a Witness," supporting the space and dynamics of Tom's (and the band's) tight playing. Tom's was a band I never caught live; judging from the audience's reaction, I really missed out.



Paul deLay Band:

Nobody sang the word "baby" like Paul deLay, nor played the harp like he did. Dave Stewart (organ), Paul Jones (drums) and Jim Mesi (guitars) open "Nothing to Go On" before Paul's ultra-smooth voice takes over—pure slow rhythm from the band and pure blues from Paul: "yet you still do me wrong." On the boogie-woogie "Tiger in Your Tank," the trio sets a fast pace with strong solos while Paul's innuendo-laced car-and-driving metaphors describe a familiar relationship, and his crazy-fast harp solo drives the tune home. The bass-forward third number, "Who'll Be the Next," features a standout piano solo from Dave and again shows that Paul was never afraid to let the harp sound like a harmonica—see the wonderful Jason Ricci story about Paul. His "cursed be your name" and "treat me unkind" are sung from a very blue heart. Every time I heard him play, in person or recorded like here, I've been struck with the same question: "How did you think to play it that way?" His playing is so different from my expectations that I learn from it every time I find my way back to him—which should be more often.

Curtis Salgado & In Yo' Face:

The sole slide guitar on the record belongs to Lloyd Jones on the slow blues "Cryin' Won't Help You," a showcase for both his slide work and his vocal talent. Along with Joel Foy, Eddy Campy and John Moore on guitar, bass and drums respectively, he completes the In Yo' Face band. They give him plenty of room, and when Curtis adds his huge, fat harp tone it completes the slow power of this song. To me, their second tune—the medium-tempo "I've Got to Find a Way"—is Curtis Salgado at his strongest, full-on R&B, the bass laying down a classic rhythm meter and Curtis' edgy, throaty vocals driving "bring your lovin' on home" into your soul. Strong, strong R&B. Hard, easy, fast, slow—four mature bands, some players just coming into their own, others at or near their prime. If this isn't in your vinyl collection, it should be; not for nostalgic reasons, but because this is excellent R&B by some of the Northwest's foundational blues musicians.

Live at the Roadhouse—4 of the Northwest's Finest R&B Stars (1984)
Fat Cat Productions / Criminal Records

Northern Lights: Colin James, Blue Moon Marquee Hit PNW

Top Canadian blues talent tour through the Evergreen State in April

By Rick Bowen

Colin James, Matt Andersen and Terra Lightfoot unite this Spring 2026 for an 18-city US Coast to Coast Tour celebrating both the rich legacy and electrifying future of Canadian roots music. From blues and folk to rock and soul, audiences can expect powerful individual sets and inspired collaborative performances from three of Canada's most acclaimed and distinctive roots artists. The tour kicks off at the Admiral theater in Bremerton on April 17 then crosses back over the sound for Shows in Bellingham and Edmonds the 18th and 19th before heading east over the mountains and presenting shows in 14 more states. These three dynamic performers have a treasure trove of awards and nominations among them led by Colin James OBC and his 21 studio albums, 8 Juno Awards, 31 Maple Blues Awards. While singer-songwriter from New Brunswick, Matt Anderson took his career to new heights after winning the 2010 International Blues Challenge solo/duo competition (the first Canadian to win the IBC and garnering award from the east Coast Music Association, European Blues Union Awards, and seven maple Leaf Blues Awards including "Entertainer of the Year in 2011and 2024. Terra Lightfoot is a 2025 Juno- and Polaris-nominated guitarist-singer-songwriter from Hamilton, Ontario. These Canadian artist have worked hard to achieve this success and deserve fan support for the upcoming shows.

Blue Moon Marquee West Coast Tour 2026

Winners of the 2024 JUNO Award for Blues Album of the Year, Vancouver Island based Blue Moon Marquee write and perform original compositions influenced by anything that swings, jumps or grooves. Core members A.W. Cardinal (vocals/guitar) and Jasmine Colette a.k.a. Badlands Jass (vocals/bass/drums) are on the road with a full band to deliver a stylish & spellbinding sound that freely reaches back into tradition but is entirely unique. They are returning the Seattle April 2nd on the first stop of a spring west coast tour that hits three states and is their first U.S tour in over four years. As a duo the pair represented the Washington Blues Society at the

Image Credit: MitchellImage

International Blues Challenge in Memphis in 2020. The group will be performing selections from their award winning albums New Orleans Sessions, and Scream and Hollar (Co-produced by Duke Robilard) as well as the ground breaking album 'Get Your Feathers Ready,' a collaboration with the Northern Cree pow wow vocal group just released in November of last year.

While they have primarily performed as a duo since 2013, over the last couple of years they have been performing often as a trio or quartet featuring Darcy Phillips (Jann Arden) on piano and Jerry Cook (Colin James) on tenor and baritone saxophone. The album was also nominated for the JUNOS Indigenous Artist of the Year. Scream, Holler and Howl drew attention in the US with a nomination for the Blues Foundation's Emerging Artist of the Year (2023). The release also swept the 2023 Maple Blues Awards (Canada's highest honor in Blues) with four wins including, Album of the Year, Songwriter of the Year, Acoustic Act of the Year and Entertainer of the Year. More recently they were honored as at the Summer Solstice Indigenous Music Awards with Live Musical Performance of the Year and Roots Album of the Year. In 2024 the accolades continued with a win for Blues Artist of the Year at the prestigious West Coast Music Awards.

Image Credit: Wendy Wei

"To say A.W. and Jasmine are old souls is an understatement. They are poised for worldwide recognition in a brilliant and unique genre-bending ride through American blues and folk, Gypsy jazz, Native American themes, jump blues, swing and more. These century-old traditions have been redefined and delivered in a new light here. They are astounding in their depth, groove and soul" - Duke Robillard, Grammy Award-winning guitar player and producer.

Blues on the Road: April

Selected touring acts headed to the Evergreen State this month

By Eric Steiner

I looked back at last April's "Blues on the Road" preview to see if any acts from last year would return this April to play the Pacific Northwest and British Columbia's Lower Mainland. I was pleasantly surprised that three returning acts are Canadian performers, Colin James, Matt Andersen and Blue Moon Marquee (our own solo-duo representatives in the 2020 International Blues Challenge in Memphis). Over the past few months, I've followed several Canadian artists interested in performing in the USA, and our country's increased visa costs for performers is giving many international artists pause. However, I'm very pleased that Colin, Matt, Badlands Jass and A.W. are in this month's preview as they join regulars like Brandon "Yukon Slim" Isaak, Rick Estrin & The Nightcats, Vanessa Collier, Jake Shimabukuro, Tommy Emmanuel, Tad Robinson, and Paul Thorn and Will Hoge. Finally, last but certainly not least, I encourage Bluesletter readers to read frequent contributor Kirk Anderson's interview in this issue with three-time Grammy winner Fantastic Negrito and support his shows in Vancouver, Seattle and Portland.

Brandon Isaak

Image Credit: Eric Steiner

After playing the inaugural Canadian Blues Music Awards in Toronto at the end of March, British Columbia-based Brandon "Yukon Slim" Isaak returns to Hermann's in downtown Victoria with his trio on April 3 followed by his Saints of Swing at the Rogue Folk Club in Vancouver on April 10. That date in Greektown is in pencil on my calendar as I've followed Brandon Isaak since his early days many decades ago with an exceptionally good jump blues band called The Twisters. On April 24, Brandon Isaak & the Mood Swings play the Duncan Showroom in Duncan, British Columbia before playing the Saskatoon Blues Festival in Saskatchewan on May 1. Representing the Victoria Blues Society, Brandon Issak's latest CD, "Walking with the Blues" was a finalist in the Best Self-Produced CD Competition at this year's International Blues Challenge in Memphis.

Before I continue, the Canadian Blues Music Awards is not a misprint. I've followed the coverage of last year's Maple Blues Awards of the Toronto Blues Society, and there was quite a lot of debate about the former award show's recognition of diverse, Canadian performers. Since then, Canada's largest blues society conducted several town halls to get public input, and as a result, completely changed its awards process and program. The new Canadian Blues Music Awards is a separate entity from the Toronto Blues Society, and I wish this new event well and am glad the blues society supports this new event.

Jake Shimabukuro

Image Credit: Sienna Morales

KNKX welcomes the "Jimi Hendrix of the Ukelele" back to Seattle's Jazz Alley for six special shows beginning on April 2 to begin a great month of live music in the Pacific Northwest. Two years ago, Jake joined fellow Hawaiian resident Mick Fleetwood on their groundbreaking "Blues Experience" CD, and I hope Jake plays "A Whiter Shade of Pale" and "Rollin' & Tumblin'" from that album at Seattle's live music venue that received the prestigious Keeping the Blues Alive Award from The Blues Foundation this past January during International Blues Challenge week in Memphis. After Seattle, Jake returns to the Blue Note jazz club in downtown Honolulu (and I wish I could join him there to escape our liquid sunshine). (Photo by Sienna Morales)

Vanessa Collier

Image courtesy of Doug Deutch

After two shows in Oregon, Vanessa Collier brings her "Keep It Saxy" tour to the Triple Door in Seattle on April 3 and the Creekside Theatre in Lake Country, British Columbia on April 4 before returning to legendary Midwestern blues clubs like Knuckleheads in Kansas City, Missouri and the Zoo Bar in Lincoln, Nebraska. Vanessa is a five-time winner of a Blues Music Award in the Horn Player of the Year category, and four years ago, she won the Contemporary Blues Female Artist of the Year Blues Music Award. When I met her on my first Legendary Rhythm and Blues Cruise in 2024, I asked her to write for the Bluesletter and I hope we'll hear from this very talented blueswomen in these pages soon! Since graduating from the Berklee College of Music (with a double major!), she's used "Object Writing" to spark some considerable creative fires and her streams of consciousness on her website teach this old dog some new tricks. Later this summer, Vanessa returns to our region to play LTD Presents' Downtown Tacoma Blues Festival on August 15!

Blues on the Road: April

Continued from previous page

Blue Moon Marque

(See Northern Lights, Pg. 17)

Tommy Emmanuel, CGP

Image Credit: Simone Cecchetti

Award-winning Australan guitarslinger Tommy Emmanuel returns to the Pacific Northwest on April 12 at the Egyptian Theatre in Boise, followed by the Fox Theatre in Spokane the next night, before the Tower Theatre in Bend, Oregon on "Tax Day." On April 17th, he plays the Seattle Theatre Group's Moore Theatre before returning to Oregon for two shows. "CGP" after his name was a new "TLA – Three Letter Acronym," for me, and I learned that the legendary guitarist Chet Atkins considered Emmanuel a "fearless" fingerpicking guitar player and awarded Tommy and only three others (John Knowles, Jerry Reed, and Steve Wariner) the title of "Certified Guitar Player." Nashille's Jack Schneider ("Streets of September") joins Tommy on his 50+ date "Living in the Light" world tour that began in Miami last month aboard the Cayamo Cruise.

Highway 99 All Stars

Image Credit: Mike McNett

The Washington Blues Society, in partnership with KNKX, is pleased to support the return of the Highway 99 All Stars to Seattle's Jazz Alley on April 14 and 15. The All Stars feature Blues Music Award winners Bob Corritore on harp, Lisa Mann on bass, Ben Rice on guitar, and Playing for Change's guitarist Robin Moxey and Big Road Blues' alumni drummer Steve Sarkowsky and keyboardist Jeff Conlin. I first discovered Jeff when he represented the other Washington's blues society on the East Coast at the International Blues Challenge 20 years ago with the Westcott Brothers, and I'm glad he's an All Star! (

Rick Estrin & The Nightcats

Image Credit: Steve Jennings

LTD Presents Rick Estrin and the Nightcats for three very special shows! On April 16, these award-winning Alligator Recording artists play Tacoma's Blue Mouse Theatre (and tickets for last July's show will be honored at this show), and Seattle's Triple Door the next night. Before heading down to Oregon, catch the band at the Palindrome at the Eaglemount Winery in Port Townsend. (Photo by Steve Jennings)

Colin James "Coast to Coast" Tour

(See Northern Lights, pg. 17)

Paul Thorn & Will Hoge

Paul Thorn plays on the Blues Cruise by Eric Steiner

After shows in Boise and Portland, singer-songwriters Paul Thorn and Will Hoge bring their "Songs & Stories" tour to Seattle's Tractor Tavern on April 18 and Tacoma's Airport Tavern Music Hall the next night. I particularly like Paul's "Tales & Ales" online video series sponsored by the Lagunitas Brewery that feature conversations with such artists like Keb' Mo,' Tommy Emmanuel, and 2026 touring partner Will Hoge. Check it out on YouTube through Paul Thorn's website. Paul's road to the blues is one of the strangest I've ever read. As a young man, his left hook led him to a pro boxing career (including a match with Roberto Duran that capped his career in the ring at 10 wins, three losses and one draw), a day job in a furniture factory and a pizza parlor at night where he sent cassettes out to producers in the 90s that eventually caught the ears of a producer that landed him a gig opening for Sting (before recording on the A & M and EMI/Back Porch labels.

Tad Robinson

Image Credit: Rich Voorhees

Last year, soul blues singer extraordinaire Tad Robinson recorded his first album for Chicago's Delmark Records since 1998, "Soul in Blue." His last record on the Severn imprint, "Real Street" received one of Tad's 10 nominations for a Blues Music Award since 2005. I'm admittedly biased as I'm amazed that he's not received this honor (yet). I'm looking forward to three shows from LTD presents on April 29 at Traditions in Olympia, followed by the Blue Mouse Theatre in Tacoma the next night, and the Palindrome at the Eaglemount Winery in Port Townsend. Each show features the Tad Robinson Band with Alex Schultz on guitar, Lorenzo Farrell on keyboards, Brady Kish on bass and David Hudson on drums. Don't miss these rare opportunities to experience one of my favorite soul blues singers in the Pacific Northwest!

April 2026 Live Blues Music Calendar

Submit calendar information to wablues.org/events/washington-blues-societys-events

APRIL 1

Shape Shifter: North City Bistro, Shoreline 4:30 p.m.

Velocity: The Spar, Tacoma 6 p.m.

Dear Abbey: North City Bistro, Shoreline 7 p.m.

Usual Suspects: CCR, Snohomish 7 p.m.

Lakecia Benjamin and Phoenix: Jazz Alley, Seattle 7:30 p.m.

SatchVai Band featuring Joe Satriani and Steve Vai with Animals as Leaders: Paramount Theatre, Seattle 8 p.m.

Weinstein Wednesday: Seamonster, Seattle 10 p.m..

APRIL 2

Frank Kohl: 7 p.m. Bamboo and Brass, North City Bistro, Shoreline 4:30 p.m.

Brother John and the Surrogates: Triple Door, Seattle 5 p.m.

Loucas & Lowe: Fiddler's Inn, Seattle 7 p.m.

Blues Ambassadors MRF benefit show: Madison Ave Pub, Everett 7 p.m.

Jake Shimabukuro: Jazz Alley, Seattle 7:30 p.m.

Blue Moon Marquee: Belltown Yacht Club, Seattle 8 p.m.

Jeff Herzog & the Jet City Fliers: Salmon Bay Eagles, Seattle 8 p.m.

Danny Godinez Presents: Owl N Thistle, Seattle 9 p.m.

Marmalade: Seamonster, Seattle 10 p.m.

APRIL 3

Rainbow City Jazz Band: Third place commons, Lake Forest Park 7 p.m.

Howard Mack & Sandy Carter: Port Gardener Bay Winery, Everett 7 p.m.

Elvin Bishop & Charlie Musselwhite: Admiral Theater, Bremerton 7:30 p.m.

Jake Shimabukuro: Jazz Alley, Seattle 7:30 p.m.

Vanessa Collier: Triple Door, Seattle 7:30 p.m.

Birch Pereira and the Gin joints: Bake's Place, Bellevue 8 p.m.

Blue Moon Marquee: The Crypt, Olympia 8 p.m.

Father John Misty: The Paramount, Seattle 8 p.m.

Davanos: Madison Ave Pub, Everett 8 p.m.

Parlor Greens: Hidden Hall, Seattle 8 p.m.

Alicia Healey & Wes Weddell: Mermaid Lounge, Seattle 8 p.m.

Nick Vigarino's Meantown Blues: Salmon Bay Eagles, Seattle 8 p.m.

Half Giraffe: 10 p.m. Funky 2 Death, Seamonster, Seattle 8 p.m.

APRIL 4

Ray Skjelbred Trio: Royal Room, Seattle 3 p.m.

Michele D'Amour and the Love Dealers: Third Place Commons, Lake Forest Park 7 p.m.

Monamor: 10 p.m. Reposado, Seamonster, Seattle 7 p.m.

The Voot: Chinnie's Kitchen, Everett 7 p.m.

Beatdown Saints: Grape and Grain, Everett 7 p.m.

Annie Eastwood & Her All-Star Band: Pub 282, Camano 7 p.m.

Rewind: Port Gardener Bay Winery, Everett 7 p.m.

Jake Shimabukuro: Jazz Alley, Seattle 7:30 p.m.

Rosy Rock: Madison Ave Pub, Everett 7:30 p.m.

CSO: The Hangar, Mukilteo 8 p.m.

Father John Misty: The Paramount, Seattle 8 p.m.

X-Statics: Salmon Bay Eagles, Seattle 8 p.m.

APRIL 5

Randy Weeks and the Silent Treatment: 9 p.m. Ron Weinstein Trio, Seamonster, Seattle 4 p.m.

Peabo's Sunday Music Revue: Peabo's, Mill Creek 7 p.m.

Empire Way: Royal Room, Seattle 7:30 p.m.

Jake Shimabukuro: Jazz Alley, Seattle 7:30 p.m.

Herding Cats: The Lime, Kirkland 9 p.m.

APRIL 6

Blue Monday: El Sid, Everett 7 p.m.

MaD BoJo: Madison Ave Pub, Everett 7 p.m.

Andy Coe Band: Blue Moon, Seattle 9 p.m.

Aqualizer: Owl N Thistle, Seattle 9 p.m.

La Luz a social gathering of Latin Funk Afrobeat: Seamonster, Seattle 10 p.m.

APRIL 7

Tuesday Jazz w/ Jonathan Doyle & Friends: Bishop Block Bottle Shop, Port Townsend 5 p.m.

Bruce Govan: The Ten-01, Everett 6 p.m.

Annie Eastwood & Billy Stapleton Duo: Madison Ave Pub, Everett 7 p.m.

Duende Libre: Jazz Alley, Seattle 7:30 p.m.

Ben Rice and the Hustle: Billy Blues, Vancouver 8 p.m.

Joe Doria Trio: Seamonster, Seattle 10 p.m.

APRIL 8

Shape Shifter: North City Bistro, Shoreline 4:30 p.m.

James Lee Murray Band: The Spar, Tacoma 6 p.m.

Usual Suspects: CCR, Snohomish 7 p.m.

True Loves: Jazz Alley, Seattle 7:30 p.m.

APRIL 9

Frank Kohl: North City Bistro, Shoreline 4:30 p.m.

Annie Eastwood and Friends: Bad Albert's, Seattle 6 p.m.

Lisa Mann's Northwestern All-Stars featuring Terrie Odabi: Brewminatti, Prosser 7 p.m.

Singer Songwriter Showcase: Madison Ave Pub, Everett 7 p.m.

True Loves: Jazz Alley, Seattle 7:30 p.m.

Lonnie Williams Band: Salmon Bay Eagles, Seattle 8 p.m.

Danny Godinez Presents: Owl N Thistle, Seattle 9 p.m.

Paige Sandusky Band: Seamonster, Seattle 10 p.m.

APRIL 10

The Foot Stomper: Third place commons, Lake Forest Park 7 p.m.

The Unknowns: North City Bistro, Shoreline 7 p.m.

Stevie Ray Visited & Randy Hansen: Everett Theater, Everett 7 p.m.

Ezekial's Bones: Grape and Grain, Everett 7 p.m.

True Loves: Jazz Alley, Seattle 7:30 p.m.

Caety Sagoian: Bake's Place, Bellevue 8 p.m.

Cloud Cover: Madison Ave Pub, Everett 8 p.m.

Sam Rendo and The Country Brunch: Salmon Bay Eagles, Seattle 8 p.m.

Funky 2 Death: Seamonster, Seattle 10 p.m.

APRIL 11

Delta Blues Bottleneck Slide Guitar Workshop: Dusty Strings, Seattle 1 p.m.

Kalimba: Bake's Place, Bellevue 6 p.m. and 8:30 p.m.

Prairie Moon: Five Rights, Marysville 6 p.m.

Annie Eastwood & Chris Stevens Duo: The Repp, Snohomish 6:30 p.m.

Deb Nielsen Quartet: North City Bistro, Shoreline 7 p.m.

Sound of Swing: Third place commons, Lake Forest Park 7 p.m.

The Problem: Madison Ave Pub, Everett 7 p.m.

Vicious Chipmunks: Port Gardener Bay Winery, Everett 7 p.m.

True Loves: Jazz Alley, Seattle 7:30 p.m.

Cyrus and Boot Juice: Hidden Hall, Seattle 8 p.m.

Tor Dietrichson Band featuring Chava Mirel: North City Bistro, Shoreline 8 p.m.

Davanos: The Hangar at 5x5 Bistro, Mukilteo 8 p.m.

John Stephan Band: Salmon Bay Eagles 8 p.m.

APRIL 12

Peabo's Sunday Music Revue: Peabo's, Mill Creek 7 p.m.

T Town Aces: The Spar, Tacoma 7 p.m.

True Loves: Jazz Alley, Seattle 7:30 p.m.

Herding Cats: The Lime, Kirkland 9 p.m.

Red Dress: 9 p.m. Ron Weinstein Trio, Seamonster, Seattle 5 p.m.

APRIL 13

Blue Monday: El Sid, Everett 7 p.m.

MaD BoJo: Madison Ave Pub, Everett 7 p.m.

Andy Coe Band: Blue Moon, Seattle 9 p.m.

Aqualizer: Owl N Thistle, Seattle 9 p.m.

La Luz a social gathering of Latin Funk Afrobeat: Seamonster, Seattle 10 p.m.

April 2026 Live Blues Music Calendar

Continued from previous page

APRIL 14

Tuesday Jazz w/ Jonathan Doyle & Friends: Bottle Shop, Port Townsend 5 p.m.

Bruce Govan: The Ten-01, Everett 6 p.m.

WBS Blues Bash: Aurora Borealis, Shoreline 7 p.m.

Johnny O: Madison Ave Pub, Everett 7 p.m.

HWY 99 All Stars: Jazz Alley, Seattle 7:30 p.m.

Ben Rice and the Hustle: Billy Blues, Vancouver 8 p.m.

APRIL 15

Shape Shifter: 7 p.m. Janette West Group, North City Bistro, Shoreline 4:30 p.m.

Funky Jazz Wednesdays: The Spar, Tacoma 6 p.m.

Usual Suspects: CCR, Snohomish 7 p.m.

HWY 99 All Stars: Jazz Alley, Seattle 7:30 p.m.

APRIL 16

Eric Madis: SeaTac Airport North Terminal, SeaTac 4 p.m.

Frank Kohl: North City Bistro, Shoreline 4:30 p.m.

Marcia Kester: Port Gardener Bay Winery, Everett 7 p.m.

Rick Estrin & The Nightcats: Blue Mouse Theater, Tacoma 7 p.m.

Singer Songwriter showcase: Madison Ave Pub, Everett 7 p.m.

Brian Kirk Quintet: Royal Room, Seattle 7:30 p.m.

Emmit Cohen: Jazz Alley, Seattle 7:30 p.m.

How Now Brown Cow: Seamonster, Seattle 7:30 p.m.

The Voot: Salmon Bay Eagles, Seattle 8 p.m.

Danny Godinez presents: Owl N Thistle, Seattle 9 p.m.

APRIL 17

Eden: Bake's Place, Bellevue 6 p.m. and 8:30 p.m.

Colin James: Matt Andersen & Terra Lightfoot, Admiral Theater, Bremerton 7 p.m.

Fall Risk: Third place commons, Lake Forest Park 7 p.m.

Emmit Cohen: Jazz Alley, Seattle 7:30 p.m.

Rick Estrin & The Nightcats: Triple Door, Seattle 7:30 p.m.

Blue 55: Salmon Bay Eagles, Seattle 8 p.m.

The Encounters: Madison Ave Pub, Everett 8 p.m.

Funky 2 Death: Seamonster, Seattle 10 p.m.

APRIL 18

Paul Thorn w/ Will Hoge: Tractor Tavern, Seattle 2 p.m.

Colin James: Matt Andersen & Terra Lightfoot, Mt. Baker Theater, Bellingham 7 p.m.

Mojo Cannon: Madison Ave Pub, Everett 7 p.m.

Seattle Jazz Network: Third place commons, Lake Forest Park 7 p.m.

Staxx Brothers: Treehouse Café, Bainbridge 7 p.m.

Tim Koss: Port Gardener Bay Winery, Everett 7 p.m.

Emmit Cohen: Jazz Alley, Seattle 7:30 p.m.

Jovino Santos Neto Quinteto: North City Bistro, Shoreline 8 p.m.

Criminal Squirrel Orchestra: Salmon Bay Eagles, Seattle 8 p.m.

The Stacy Jones Band: The Hangar at 5x5 Bistro, Mukilteo 8 p.m.

Whalien and The Whags: Seamonster, Seattle 10 p.m.

APRIL 19

Randy Weeks and the Silent Treatment: 9 p.m.

Ron Weinstein Trio, Seamonster, Seattle 4 p.m.

Stephanie Anne Johnson at Blues Vespers: Kilworth Chapel, Tacoma 5 p.m.

Washington Independent Music Awards: Spanish Ballroom, Tacoma 5 p.m.

10 FT GANJA PLANT with Double Tiger: Nectar, Seattle 7 p.m.

Colin James: Matt Andersen & Terra Lightfoot, Edmonds Arts Center, Edmonds 7 p.m.

Peabo's Sunday Music Revue: Peabo's, Mill Creek 7 p.m.

Annie Eastwood All Star Band: The Spar, Tacoma 7 p.m.

Emmit Cohen: Jazz Alley, Seattle 7:30 p.m.

Herding Cats: The Lime, Kirkland 9 p.m.

APRIL 20

Andrew Miles: Royal Room, Seattle 7 p.m.

Blue Monday: El Sid, Everett 7 p.m.

MaD BoJo: Madison Ave Pub, Everett 7 p.m.

Andy Coe Band: Blue Moon, Seattle 9 p.m.

Aqualizer: Owl N Thistle, Seattle 9 p.m.

La Luz a social gathering of Latin Funk Afrobeat: Seamonster, Seattle 10 p.m.

APRIL 21

Tuesday Jazz w/ Jonathan Doyle & Friends: Bishop Block Bottle Shop, Port Townsend 5 p.m.

Bruce Govan: The Ten-01, Everett 6 p.m.

Unbound: Madison Ave Pub, Everett 7 p.m.

The Bad Plus: Jazz Alley, Seattle 7:30 p.m.

Foleada: 10 p.m. Joe Doria, Seamonster, Seattle 7:30 p.m.

Ben Rice and the Hustle: Billy Blues, Vancouver 8 p.m.

APRIL 22

Shape Shifter: North City Bistro, Shoreline 4:30 p.m.

Funky Jazz Wednesdays: The Spar, Tacoma 6 p.m.

Usual Suspects: CCR, Snohomish 7 p.m.

The Bad Plus: Jazz Alley, Seattle 7:30 p.m.

STEBMO / THC.XLR: Royal Room, Seattle 7:30 p.m.

Fantastic Negrito: Triple Door, Seattle 7:30 p.m.

APRIL 23

Music 4 Life benefit w/ Stumbling Fiddler: Shawn O'Donnells, Everett 4 p.m.

Frank Kohl: 7 p.m. Ranger and the "Re-Arrangers," North City Bistro, Shoreline 4:30 p.m.

Annie Eastwood and Friends: Bad Albert's, Seattle 6 p.m.

Singer Songwriter Showcase: Madison Ave Pub, Everett 7 p.m.

Pat Metheny: Jazz Alley, Seattle 7:30 p.m.

True Romans: Pono Ranch, Seattle 8 p.m.

Hillman City Sway: Black N Tan Hall, Seattle 8 p.m.

Sutton Pittman Band: Salmon Bay Eagles, Seattle 8 p.m.

Danny Godinez presents: Owl N Thistle, Seattle 9 p.m.

APRIL 24

Swing Street: Third place commons, Lake Forest Park 7 p.m.

Trischimmel & Co: Port Gardener Bay Winery, Everett 7 p.m.

Pat Metheny: Jazz Alley, Seattle 7:30 p.m.

Billy Brandt w/ The Thing & Stuff Band: North City Bistro, Shoreline 8 p.m.

Crooked Mile: Madison Ave Pub, Everett 8 p.m.

Joel Astley: Bake's Place, Bellevue 8:30 p.m.

Funky 2 Death: Seamonster, Seattle 10 p.m.

APRIL 25

Annie Eastwood All Star Band: Third place commons, Lake Forest Park 7 p.m.

Youforic: North City Bistro, Shoreline 7 p.m.

Dana Osborne: Madison Ave Pub, Everett 7 p.m.

Denny and the Jeffs: Port Gardener Bay Winery, Everett 7 p.m.

Pat Metheny: Jazz Alley, Seattle 7:30 p.m.

Cytrus w/ Eldridge Gravy & The Court Supreme: Apex, Everett 8 p.m.

Tumbling Dice: Salmon Bay Eagles, Seattle 8 p.m.

Northwest Folklife Benefit: Seamonster, Seattle 10 p.m.

APRIL 26

McPage & Powell Band: The Spar, Tacoma 7 p.m.

Peabo's Sunday Music Revue: Peabo's, Mill Creek 7 p.m.

Pat Metheny: Jazz Alley, Seattle 7:30 p.m.

Herding Cats: The Lime, Kirkland 9 p.m.

Ron Weinstein Trio: Seamonster, Seattle 9 p.m.

APRIL 27

Blue Monday: El Sid, Everett 7 p.m.

MaD BoJo: Madison Ave Pub, Everett 7 p.m.

Andy Coe Band: Blue Moon, Seattle 9 p.m.

Aqualizer: Owl N Thistle, Seattle 9 p.m.

La Luz a social gathering of Latin Funk Afrobeat: Seamonster, Seattle 10 p.m.

Continued on pg. 23

Best of the Blues Award Show

Information about the WBS's marquee event

By WBS

The First Annual Blues Awards was held on Blue Monday, March 11, 1991 at the Owl Cafe, and the tradition continues this year with an expanded program and award list at the historic APEX hall in Everett.

Every year the members of the Washington Blues Society nominate and vote for the Best of The Blues in Washington State. This year there are 31 Categories, including a new category (added this year) called Best Blues Rock Band. There are several exciting new comers to the nominations list as well as returning past nominees & previous winners.

You must be a member to vote. To join visit the www.wablues.org. To vote, fill out the ballot in the opposite page and mail it in, or vote online at www.wablues.com. Emails will go out to members this month with a link, as well. Those who voted on the ballot that appeared in the last month's edition were not able to vote on the Best Blues Club, but the blues society is reaching out to those members with a supplementary ballot. All paper ballots must be received by mail, online, or in person at the April Blues Bash, (Tuesday, April 14 at the Aurora Borealis in Seattle at 7 p.m.) by April 14.

The Awards Show will be held on Sunday: May 3rd at a APEX in Everett, WA. The show starts at 4 p.m. Ticket prices are still being established, but dinner is included in the price, as well as performances from many of the evening's nominees. Watch the Washington Blues Society's website, www.wablues.org, for more information.

WBS BB Award Poster by Alishia Ortiz

APRIL 2026 Live Blues Music Calendar

Continued from pg. 22

APRIL 28

Tuesday Jazz w/ Jonathan Doyle & Friends: Bishop Block Bottle Shop, Port Townsend 5 p.m.

Reji Marc: Madison Ave Pub, Everett 7 p.m.

Adam Lee Morgan Jazz Orchestra: Spanish Ballroom, Tacoma 7 p.m.

Karrin Allyson: Jazz Alley, Seattle 7:30 p.m.

Ben Rice and the Hustle: Billy Blues, Vancouver 8 p.m.

Joe Doria: Seamonster, Seattle 10 p.m.

APRIL 29

Annie Eastwood All Star Band: Third place commons, Lake Forest Park 7 p.m.

Youforic: North City Bistro, Shoreline 7 p.m.

Dana Osborne: Madison Ave Pub, Everett 7 p.m.

Denny and the Jeffs: Port Gardener Bay Winery, Everett 7 p.m.

Pat Metheny: Jazz Alley, Seattle 7:30 p.m.

Cytrus w/ Eldridge Gravy & The Court Supreme: Apex, Everett 8 p.m.

Tumbling Dice: Salmon Bay Eagles, Seattle 8 p.m.

Northwest Folklife Benefit: Seamonster, Seattle 10 p.m.

APRIL 30

Frank Kohl: North City Bistro, Shoreline 4:30 p.m.

The Tad Robinson Band: Traditions, Olympia 7 p.m.

Singer Songwriter Showcase: Madison Ave Pub, Everett 7 p.m.

Danny Seraphine Chicago Legacy: Jazz Alley, Seattle 7:30 p.m.

Salmon Dan w/ Special Guest Steve Bailey: Salmon Bay Eagles, Seattle 8 p.m.

Danny Godinez Presents: Owl N Thistle, Seattle 9 p.m.

Best of the Blues Award Ballot

*Ballots must be **received** by mail or online by April 14 (Can be hand delivered at the April Blues Bash)*

E-mail membership@wablues.org to have a ballot sent to you, or vote online at www.wablues.org

Male Vocalist
Mark Dufresne
Kevin Sutton
CD Woodbury
Joel Astley

Kathi McDonald Female Vocalist
Mary McPage
Annie Eastwood
Christi Michelle
Mercedes Nicole
Leah Tussing

Electric Blues Guitar
Billy Stapleton
Dan Abernethy
CD Woodbury
Anthony Estrada

Slide Blues Guitar
Billy Stapleton
Eric Rice
CD Woodbury
Rod Cook

Acoustic Blues Guitar
Brian Butler
CD Woodbury
Chris Stevens
Dan Abernethy

Blues Bass
Guy Quintino
Howard Hooper
Walter White
Rob Baker
Paul Quilty
Kelly Leifer
Patrick McDanel

Blues Drummer
Steve Peterson
Rick Jacobson
Rick Bowen
Aaron Hennings
Greg Lerner

Blues Harmonica
John Kuhlmann
Joel Astley
Bill Davis
Jonathan Pitman

Blues Piano/Keyboard
Billy Reed
Mark Hurwitz
Kevin Sutton
Sheri Roberts Greimes

Blues Horn
Lonnie Williams
Ron Hendee
Mike Marinig
Dream
Don Weaver

Blues Instrumentalist - Other
Angelo Ortiz
Leanne Trevelyan
Laura Hartman
Annie Eastwood
Mark Lagen

Blues Rock Band
Stacy Jones Band
CD Woodbury Trio
Ryan T Higgins
Annie Eastwood
McPage/Powell

Little Bill & The Blue Notes Traditional Blues Band
Mark Hurwitz & Gin Creek
Cold 102s
Stevie and The Blue Flames
Joel Astley

Best Solo/Duo
Sutton/Pitman
McPage/Powell
Blue Healers
Eastwood/Stapleton
Brian Butler

New Blues Act
Sutton/Pitman
Nikhil Bagga
Snakebite
Christi Michelle and her Hired Guns

Patti Allen Blues Performer
Kevin Sutton
Mary McPage
Mark Hurwitz
Joel Astley
Annie Eastwood

Blues Songwriter
Kevin Sutton
Ryan T Higgins
Rick Bowen
McPage/Powell
CD Woodbury
Billy Stoops
Joel Astley

Blues Recording
Annie Eastwood And Her All Star Band
-Annie Eastwood and Her All Star Band
Mercedes Nicole
-Too High A Price to Pay
Jill Newman
-Little Bits of Luck

Blues Jam
Unbound
Salmon Dan's Jam
Lucky 7 Blues Jam
192 Brewing Jam
Dawson's

Blues Writer
Kirk Anderson
Eric Steiner
Carrie Parduhn

Blues Image (Photo/Video)
Joe Gabaldon's Daughter Blanche
-by Dennis Browne
Joe Gabaldon
-by Dennis Browne
-Sutton/Pitman at the Triple Door
-by Dennis Browne
Tab Benoit, Too Slim and Corey Duplechin
-by Steve Mitchell
Bluesletter Cover photo of Taj Mahal
-by Linda Wolf

Blues Graphic (Edited photo/graphic image)
Annie Eastwood and Her All Star Band Self-Titled CD Cover Art
-by Annie Eastwood
-Winthrop R&B Fest Poster 2025
-by Sean Donovan
Kitsap Blues Festival poster
-by (Artist as yet unidentified)
Blues Letter Cover Bobby Inocente
-by Sean Donovan

Blues DJ
John Kessler
Leslie Fleury
Clancy Dunigan
Michael Murphy
Ron McElroy
Leo Schumaker

Blues Venue
Salmon Bay Eagles
Madison Avenue Pub
APEX- El Sid
North City Bistro

Keeping The Blues Alive
Susan Dodd
Anthony Estrada
Tom Jones
Kevin Sutton

Blues Hall of Fame (Individual)
Sheri Roberts Greimes
Annie Eastwood
Brian Butler
Billy Barner
John Stephan

Blues Hall of Fame (Band)
John Stephan Band
Mark Dufresne Band
Two Scoops Combo

Regional Blues Festival (National and Regional Acts)
Winthrop Rhythm and Blues
Sunbanks Blues Festival
Gorge Blues & Brews Festival
Centrum Traditional Blues Workshop and Festival
Walla Walla Guitar Festival

Community Blues Festival (Local and Regional Acts)
Ebey Island Freedomfest
Poulsbo Blues and Jazz Festival
North Bend Blues Walk
Poverty Bay Blues and Brews

Lifetime Achievement
Tony Frederickson
Mark Hurwitz
Mary McPage
Sheri Roberts Greimes

Non-Festival Blues Event
University Place Music on the Square
Madison Ave 25th Anniversary
Blues is the Root Wide Open Mic
Jones Family Christmas
Sheri Robert's Greimes Memorial
Blues Vespers

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