

MARCH 2021

Charlotte Blues Society

Monthly E-Bluesletter



IN THIS BLUESLETTER:

- UPDATE ON LIVE SHOWS IN CHARLOTTE
- MARTY GUNTHER "RED HOT & BLUES REVIEWS"
- BLUES FESTIVALS ARE BACK ON THE BOOKS
- DELAY OF GAME FOR THE GRAMMYS



Blues Music Award Nominees are here! If you've been reading the Red Hot & Blues Reviews this past year from our own Marty Gunther, you will have read reviews involving every one of the nominees in one way shape or form.

The best thing about being home bound? Plenty of opportunity to listen to the new music out there. Go through the lists of artists and listen to them all-especially those name you don't recognize. Take the time to savor the talent and then cast your vote!

If you are a member of **The Blues Foundation**, you are eligible to vote. If you are not a member, you can join the Blues Foundation now to help decide the winners. www.Blues.org Nominee info begins on page 9. Some amazing talent there folks! Some of which you have witnessed on stage here in Charlotte, some which may be only known to you by a few tracks you've heard online, or found while browsing the internet. Either way, check out all the artists-then cast your vote and join us online there for the virtual awards ceremony Sunday June 6th.

As you can well imagine, we've been fielding calls lately from members wondering if we are going to have any special events. Well, we wish we could give you a definitive answer today, but we can not. I can tell you our board is hard at work trying to come up with some solutions, and exciting events for us all to enjoy. On March 1st, it will be a full year since we have gathered together for a **Charlotte Blues Society** show, and we miss you all!

But there is great news on the horizon: **Charlotte Center City Partners** are working with us to try to get the **Blue Wednesdays** back on track. We had some great events the end of 2019 at **Victoria Yards**, and a full lineup ready to go for 2020, but then the pandemic hit. We are looking for the possibility of shows this year and we will keep you in the loop regarding when they may be starting again. Announcements will be on our website. Fingers crossed! **Charlotte SHOUT** is slated for late September, and we will be involved with that event.

Another likely source for live music will be House concerts. I anticipate they may well resume with the onset of warmer weather albeit on a smaller scale. **Middle C Jazz** has never shut their doors, and have adapted to the smaller audiences with great shows streaming live for a small fee.

The world of live music is evolving, and like many of us, we are doing our best in a challenging situation. Hope reigns eternal for all of us. Although our much anticipated SPAH Conference scheduled for August here in Charlotte has been postponed. It is being rescheduled for a future date. Please read the announcement on Page 22. Even with this setback, your CBS Board is staying positive as we prepare to celebrate our 28th Anniversary this year - so stay tuned.

As you know by now, **The Rabbit Hole** has been sold, and we have picked up all our equipment and are now in the processing of finding a more permanent location. Ken Deery has been in charge of venue acquisition for us, and we hope to have a new location ready to go once the restrictions are lifted.

We ask that you continue to support us with your membership, or a donation. You can do that on our website right now! www.CharlotteBluesSociety.org. Thank you-we can not survive without your help.

Check out our Merch in our store...[click here](#) or simply go to "Shop" on our website! T-shirts, Hats, koozies, Sweatshirts (it's still cold outside, so please feel free to check out our stock of long sleeve shirts and hoodies!) Look cool, stay warm as you help us "Keep the Blues Alive!" Just sent out a few items this past week! Thank you for supporting us.

And that is also something else worthy to note: *Please go to your favorite artist website and buy merch from them directly.* Their CD's, vinyl, shirts, posters, whatever you may wish to purchase, to help them survive during this time. Support local, regional and national acts, especially those you have seen on the CBS Stage. Like many of us, their livelihood has been severely affected during this pandemic. Major tours and festivals have been cancelled, and just now some are appearing to be rescheduled (that info is on page 11)

Please take the time to read the story on page 5. It proves the passion to save our venues is real and effective.

Stay positive dear Blues Family! We wish you good health, and can't wait to see you again.

Oh, and don't forget to tune in to hear Rick Ballew back on the air every Sunday night with Smokin' Bluz!

~Mary London Szpara President



He's back!

Every Sunday night from 8-10pm, Rick Ballew brings you two hours of great blues and blues rock on WYTX

A "Keeping the Blues Alive" Award winning show

Rick has some great things in the works for his show - stay tuned for more information and updates.

You can find his weekly playlist on our Facebook Group page every Thursday.



Keep Your
Beer Cold



Keep Your
Head Warm

CLICK ON THE IMAGES TO PURCHASE

Please consider a tax - deductible donation to
Charlotte Blues Society

*Your end of year donation is good for you ~
 and your business may have matching funds.*

Your end of year donation helps us continue our mission of
"Keeping the Blues Alive!"

Donate online www.CharlotteBluesSociety.org
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Charlotte Blues Society
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*Charlotte Blues Society is a 501(c)3 organization
 and will provide you with a receipt for tax records*

Keep
the
Blues
Alive

How Music Venues Convinced Congress to Save Live Entertainment

*How Music Venues Got Their Own Covid Relief Plan - Bloomberg
Rebecca Greenwald February 12, 2021, 7:00 AM EST*

The Save Our Stages Act has been described as the biggest show of federal support for arts and culture in U.S. history. It started with a few independent music venues. First Avenue in Minneapolis was one of the original music venues that organized to secure \$15 billion in federal relief for performance venues, theaters, cinemas and museums

On the 50th anniversary of legendary Minneapolis music venue First Avenue, owner Dayna Frank was at home working on her loan application for the federal Paycheck Protection Program instead of hosting the celebration concert she had planned. With the doors to her club shut indefinitely because of the coronavirus pandemic, she had already reduced her staff from 480 employees to a skeleton crew of 24, including furloughing herself. But the real jolt to her business's survival came when she realized by the start of April that the Small Business Administration program was in no way designed for the challenges independent music venues were facing.

The program's mandate to put the majority of funds towards payroll rather than rent, mortgage, utilities and other overhead costs was completely untenable for businesses that weren't open or operational (commercial rents for these venues typically range between \$10,000 and \$60,000 per month). "It was terrifying and an eye-opening moment to realize, oh my God, no one is going to survive this," says Frank.,

Eight months later, an initiative Frank helped to lead may have staved off a mass collapse of America's independent music venues, theaters, cinemas and museums, with the Save Our Stages Act, signed into law on Dec. 27 as part of Congress's Covid relief package. At \$15 billion, the legislation has been described as the biggest show of federal support for arts and culture in U.S. history. (For context, the National Endowment for Arts has awarded a total of around \$5.5 billion since its founding in 1965.) It was also the only industry-specific aid passed during the pandemic outside of the airline industry. The funding was a particular feat for a group that has never been politically organized in the U.S. "This is an industry that's always done everything on its own and never asked for help. Everyone has always just built it ourselves," says Reverend Moose, a New York-based music marketer and producer of industry events including Independent Venue Week. "We weathered the 2008 recession and the mortgage crisis by ourselves. But when this happened there was no amount of creativity and determination that would get us out of this on our own." The group's mass mobilization effort points to a path to resilience for an industry that faces a long recovery even after the pandemic has officially been declared over.

The coalition of music venues now known as the National Independent Venue Association (NIVA) started with Moose and Hal Real of Philadelphia's World Café Live. After South by Southwest was canceled on March 6, Moose had initiated an informal weekly Zoom town hall to collectively navigate new social distancing guidelines and limits on in-person gathering. The group included representatives from beloved music clubs like the 9:30 Club in Washington, D.C, the Hideout in Chicago, the Rebel Lounge in Phoenix and Le Poisson Rouge in New York City. While venue owners had previously viewed themselves as competitors for audiences and talent, they would spend these sessions comparing notes on how to handle postponing and canceling shows, refunding ticket buyers, furloughing their staff and dealing with insurance.

By April, members of this core group were coming to terms with the severity and duration of the pandemic. As bills piled up, there was growing acknowledgement that they didn't just need this group to coordinate. They needed it to advocate, too: Federal relief tailored to their needs might be the only way to prevent widespread permanent closures. "Our rent was still due, along with property taxes, licensing fees, remaining salaries, and refunds of hundreds of thousands of dollars for canceled shows," said Frank. "I was going through all this while also hearing on these town hall calls how ill-prepared our industry was.

"Once they committed, Frank and her fellow organizers threw themselves into the organizing work with the same gusto they had previously devoted to hosting artists. On April 9, they announced the idea of setting up a formal trade association during one of their weekly town halls and by the following Thursday, NIVA had been formed, with a website and 450 members across 48 states and the District of Columbia.

"As soon as we didn't have shows to throw, us group of hooligans in the business had to turn our attention and energy to something," says Stephen Sternschein, owner of Austin's Empire Control Room and Garage. Frank, who had never spoken to a politician in her life, convinced NIVA that they would need to bring on a lobbying firm to help give them a voice in Washington. By April 14, NIVA brought on Casey Christine Higgins, a seven-year veteran of retired Congressman Paul Ryan's office before coming to Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld.

The following week on a Sunday afternoon, Frank got the call she had been waiting for. On the line was Minnesota Senator Amy Klobuchar. Motivated both by Frank's commitment and her own personal connection to Minnesota's music legacy — from Prince (who first performed "Purple Rain" at First Avenue) to Bob Dylan to newer artists like Lizzo — Klobuchar became an early champion for NIVA. "Music is a hugely emotional thing for people. Even those who've discarded or seen the arts as something boutique or elite start to realize the role these venues have played in their lives."

Both Higgins and Klobuchar leveled with the group: If they were to have any chance of securing federal support for their industry, they would need to get bipartisan buy-in across the House and the Senate."

I knew we had our work cut out to get people on the Hill to know who they were, to get our message across, to cut through the noise of all of the other industries suffering from Covid," said Higgins. "But the biggest thing that concerned me was the challenge of us being able to bring in bipartisan support and not relying on Democrats alone. And asking ourselves: How do we get Republicans on board to support something like this?"

In July, NIVA found that bipartisanship in Republican Senator John Cornyn of Texas, who reached out to NIVA with a game-changing proposal. He said he would introduce his own piece of dedicated legislation, the Save Our Stages Act, and NIVA then secured Klobuchar as the Democratic lead on the bill.



NIVA and Higgins won this bipartisan support after choosing a message that was more focused on small business and economic recovery than the arts. They made the case that the industry had been one of the very hardest-hit by the pandemic, with music venues “first to close, last to re-open,” as many owners experienced 90-100% revenue loss since March.

Unlike larger venues that had access to private equity and capital during the pandemic, most of these venue owners were on their own; some reported taking out second mortgages and emptying their 401k accounts in order to stay afloat. They positioned these small and mid-sized venues as linchpins in their communities, key to driving other economic factors like restaurant and hotel visits. But they also paired this with a campaign that emphasized the emotional connection people have to their local music clubs and theaters, laying the groundwork for a message that applied just as much to towns and small cities as to New York, Los Angeles and Austin.

This emotional strategy took the form in a letter-writing campaign. NIVA worked with more than 1,000 musicians and comedians, including Margo Price, Jason Isbell, Dave Grohl, Sarah Silverman and the Louisville band My Morning Jacket. to encourage their fans to reach out to their members of Congress. These fans ended up sending over 2 million emails, reaching all 535 members of Congress. “People have embraced this in a personal way,” says Klobuchar. “Music is a hugely emotional thing for people. Even those who’ve discarded or seen the arts as something boutique or elite start to realize the role these venues have played in their lives.

“The central pillar of NIVA’s strategy was an elaborate grassroots advocacy campaign powered by thousands of music venue owners who set up meetings with their representatives in every U.S. congressional district. Their experience as promoters and producers turned out to be effective in political organizing and lobbying too. “There were a lot of out-of-work musicians and theater people who are really good at their jobs, and they put a lot of that energy toward this,” says Klobuchar.

“This group of people — who were never affiliated with each other before and had never asked the government for anything — now have a newfound political power.” In early October, U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi included Save Our Stages in the second iteration of the broader Covid relief package known as the HEROES Act. That bill failed to ultimately make it through the Senate, but the support NIVA garnered in the process gave organizers the momentum they needed to keep going.

By now, Save Our Stages had expanded to include other cultural businesses and organizations. The original \$10 billion exclusively for independent venues had ballooned to \$15 billion that would also include a lifeline for theaters and performing arts centers, independent cinemas, nonprofit museums and zoos.

For many NIVA members, media coverage of Save Our Stages and the involvement of congressional leaders was the documentation they needed to show their landlords to stave off eviction. “We never gave up hope or let others give up hope,” says Frank.

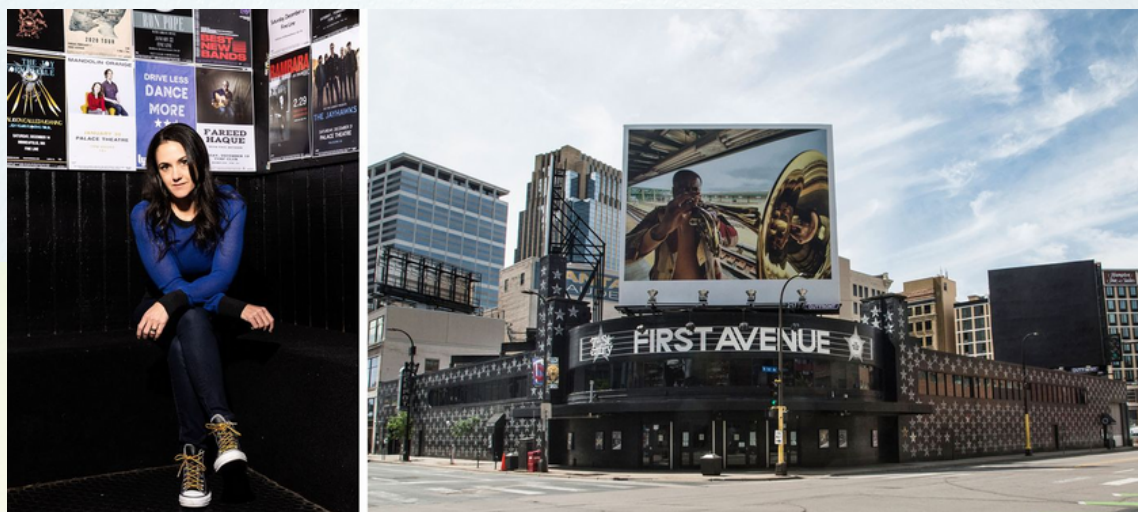


On Dec. 21, Save Our Stages passed the House and the Senate with 234 co-sponsors across both parties. For Klobuchar, it also marked the first time she was able to quote Bob Dylan on the floor of the Senate: “Come senators, congressmen please heed the call / Don’t stand in the doorway. Don’t block up the hall.

“It was a momentous occasion for the group, but a month and a half later, venue owners are still warding off the imminent threat of closure as they wait for the Small Business Administration to issue the regulations needed to distribute funds. For some iconic venues like Threadgill’s in Austin and U Street Music Hall in D.C., the relief has arrived too late. But for those that remain, the organization has pivoted to the task of making sure this implementation happens, and raising money to shore up the most vulnerable businesses in the meantime with a new PSA featuring Dolly Parton.

The group faces many other future challenges that will benefit from its new organizing and lobbying prowess. Among them: To get the industry back on its feet, they’ll need to coordinate the reopening of a critical mass of venues around the same time, because these venues, talent buyers and artists rely on one another to plan regional and national tours. NIVA has broader lobbying ambitions after that, including improving the diversity of venue workforces.

“The silver lining of this whole thing,” says Higgins, “is this group of people — who were never affiliated with each other before, and who had never asked the government for anything — now have a newfound political power and they will continue to use it for good and to be a player in Washington.”



Dayna Frank, owner of Minneapolis music venue First Avenue.
Photographers: Caitlin Abrams, Stacy Schwartz





The 42nd BMAs will be presented as a virtual event on Sunday, June 6, 2021 starting at 4 p.m. CT. The world is invited to watch the celebration, which will be streamed on our Blues Foundation Facebook and YouTube channel.

AND THE NOMINEES ARE...

B.B. King Entertainer of the Year

Shemekia Copeland

Rick Estrin

John Németh

Sugaray Rayford

Lil' Ed Williams

Album of the Year

100 Years of Blues, Elvin Bishop and Charlie Musselwhite

Rawer Than Raw, Bobby Rush

Rise Up, Ronnie Earl & The Broadcasters

**Too Far From the Bar, Sugar Ray & The Bluetones featuring
Little Charlie**

Uncivil War, Shemekia Copeland

Band of the Year

Anthony Geraci & The Boston Blues Allstars

John Németh & The Blue Dreamers

Rick Estrin & The Nightcats

Southern Avenue

Sugar Ray & The Bluetones

Song of the Year

"All My Dues Are Paid", written by Kathy Murray, Rick Estrin, Frank Bey, Kid Andersen

(performed by Frank Bey)

"All Out of Tears", written by Walter Trout, Marie Trout, and Teeny Tucker

(performed by Walter Trout)

"Blues Comin' On", written by Dion DiMucci and Mike Aquilina

(performed by Dion Feat. Joe Bonamassa)

"Is It Over", written by Don Bryant and Scott Bomar

(performed by Don Bryant)

"Uncivil War", written by John Hahn and Will Kimbrough

(performed by Shemekia Copeland)

Best Emerging Artist Album

Hard Workin' Man, Andrew Alli

Harlem, King Solomon Hicks

Here I Come, Jose Ramirez

High Risk Low Reward, Ryan Perry

Peace In Pieces, Betty Fox Band

Acoustic Blues Album

Dustin Arbuckle & Matt Woods, Dustin Arbuckle & Matt Woods

Prove It On Me, Rory Block

Rawer Than Raw, Bobby Rush

Three Pints of Gin, Richard Ray Farrell

Traveling Man - Live, Watermelon Slim

Blues Rock Album

Ain't Done Yet, Savoy Brown

Ice Cream In Hell, Tinsley Ellis

Mike Zito and Friends - Rock 'n' Roll: A Tribute to Chuck Berry, Mike Zito

Mississippi Suitcase, Peter Parcek

Ordinary Madness, Walter Trout

Contemporary Blues Album

Cry Out, Kat Riggins

My Blues Pathway, Kirk Fletcher

Self-Made Man, Larkin Poe

Stronger Than Strong, John Németh

Uncivil War, Shemekia Copeland

Soul Blues Album

**All My Dues Are Paid, Frank Bey
Found! One Soul Singer, Sonny Green
That's What I Heard, Robert Cray Band
Where Have All The Soul Men Gone, Johnny Rawls
You Make Me Feel, Don Bryant**

Traditional Blues Album

**100 Years of Blues, Elvin Bishop and Charlie Musselwhite
Blueswoman, Nora Jean Wallace
Every Day of Your Life, Jimmy Johnson
Rise Up, Ronnie Earl & The Broadcasters
Too Far From the Bar, Sugar Ray & The Bluetones featuring Little Charlie**

Acoustic Blues Artist

**Dom Flemons
Catfish Keith
Harrison Kennedy
Doug MacLeod
Keb' Mo'**

Blues Rock Artist

**Tinsley Ellis
Reverend Peyton
Ana Popovic
Kenny Wayne Shepherd
Mike Zito**

Contemporary Blues Female Artist

**Shemekia Copeland
Samantha Fish
Sue Foley
Ruthie Foster
Shaun Murphy**

Contemporary Blues Male Artist

**Selwyn Birchwood
Chris Cain
Rick Estrin
Christone "Kingfish" Ingram
J.P. Soars**

Soul Blues Female Artist

Annika Chambers
Thornetta Davis
Bettye LaVette
Dorothy Moore
Terrie Odabi

Instrumentalist Guitar

Christoffer "Kid" Andersen
Chris Cain
Laura Chavez
Kirk Fletcher
Christone "Kingfish" Ingram

Soul Blues Male Artist

William Bell
Don Bryant
John Németh
Johnny Rawls
Curtis Salgado

Instrumentalist Harmonica

Billy Branch
Rick Estrin
Dennis Gruenling
Jason Ricci
Kim Wilson

Traditional Blues Female Artist

(Koko Taylor Award)

Rory Block
Rhiannon Giddens
Diunna Greenleaf
Trudy Lynn
Teeny Tucker

Instrumentalist Horn

Mindi Abair
Jimmy Carpenter
Doug James
Mark "Kaz" Kazanoff
Nancy Wright

Traditional Blues Male Artist

Billy Branch
Sugar Ray Norcia
John Primer
Jontavious Willis
Kim Wilson

(Pinetop Perkins Piano Player Award)

Mike Finnigan
Anthony Geraci
Johnny Iguana
Bruce Katz
Jim Pugh

Instrumentalist Bass

Willie J. Campbell
Larry Fulcher
Danielle Nicole
Patrick Rynn
Michael "Mudcat" Ward

Instrumentalist Vocals

Thornetta Davis
Ruthie Foster
John Németh
Sugar Ray Norcia
Sugaray Rayford

Instrumentalist Drums

Tony Braunagel
June Core
Derrick "D'Mar" Martin
Bernard Purdie
Kenny "Beedy Eyes" Smith

GET READY TO VOTE!

Blues Foundation members are invited to vote for the Blues Music Awards. The ballot will be open to current Blues Foundation members only until 11:59pm CT Friday, March 12, 2021. To cast your vote, log in to your Member Portal and once logged in, the link to the BMA Ballot will be available at the top of the page.



To become a Blues Foundation member, visit www.blues.org and click on the Join button to learn about the different membership levels and how to easily and securely join online. Upon membership confirmation, new and renewing members will be sent instructions on how to access the 2021 Blues Music Awards Ballot.

If you do not remember your membership login or need assistance logging in, please contact Keisha at keisha@blues.org or 901-527-2583, ext. 10.

BLUES FESTS

rescheduled

RESCHEDULED SAT MAY 22
Whitby Rhythm & Blues Festival
(was Feb-20-2021)
Whitby, North Yorkshire, UK

RESCHEDULED SUN MAY 23
Southport Blues, Rhythm & Rock
Festival
(was Feb-21-2021)
Southport, United Kingdom

RESCHEDULED to SAT OCT 9
Bluesberry Festival
(was Mar-06-2021)
Covington, Louisiana, USA

RESCHEDULED to SAT JUNE 19
Cleethorpes Blues, Rhythm & Rock
Festival
(was Mar-06-2021)
Cleethorpes, United Kingdom

RESCHEDULED to SAT JULY 10
Chelsea Blues, Rhythm & Rock Festival
(was Mar-13-2021)
Fulham, London, UK

RESCHEDULED to DEC 3-5
Looe Blues, Rhythm & Rock Festival
(was Mar-19-2021 - Mar-21-2021)
Looe, United Kingdom

happening

(so far so good)

Blues on Reid
Apr-10-2021
Port St. Joe, Florida, USA

Juke Joint Festival &
Related Events
Apr-15-2021 - Apr-18-2021
Clarksdale, Mississippi, USA

Bob Sykes BBQ & Blues Festival
Apr-24-2021
Bessemer, Alabama, USA

15th Clarksdale
Caravan Music Fest
May-8-2021
Clarksdale, Mississippi, USA

Leeds Blues, Rhythm & Rock
Festival
May-09-2021
Leeds, United Kingdom

Kimbrough Cotton Patch Soul
Blues Festival
May-14-2021 - May-16-2021
Holly Springs, Mississippi, USA

The Blues Bender
September 9-12, 2021,
Westgate Las Vegas Resort &
Casino
Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

BE A PART OF THE BLUES CELEBRATION EVERY WEEK ON

CAN'T STOP THE BLUES

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/cantstoptheblues/>

Any members interested in performing on **CSTB**, please check out their page or group- look at a few previous shows in the video archives to get a feel for what it takes to put a show together, then send your information for consideration to:

booking@can'tstoptheblues.com

LOCAL ARTISTS TAKE NOTE

The goal of **CSTB** is to provide a platform to help full-time touring blues artists, however they would be happy to work with us and other blues societies looking to feature our top local talent in a multi-artist show too.



Curtis Salgado – Damage Control

(Alligator Records ALCD 5002)

www.curtissalgado.com

One of the best soul-blues voices ever, Curtis Salgado continues to age like fine wine with this disc, which was recorded under the direction of three of the top producers in the business – Kid Andersen, Kevin McKendree and Johnny Lee Schell. The end result is a multi-textured album that's so good it'll be hard to imagine another beating it out when the next awards season comes around. Recorded in the San Francisco, Los Angeles and Nashville, the lineup consists of a virtual who's who of talents too numerous to list, all of whom are at the top of their game in support of Curtis' rich, melismatic tenor, delivering a set ranging from West Coast cool to blue-eyed soul and New Orleans funk. Every cut here is a winner, starting with "The Longer That I Live," which expresses the desire for a longer candle to burn. Other pleasers include "What Did Me in Did Me Well," "Always Say I Love You (At the End of Your Goodbyes)," "Hail Mighty Caesar," "Damage Control," "Truth Be Told" and "The Fix Is In." Run, don't walk to pick up this one!

Steve Hill – Desert Trip

(No Label Records)

www.stevehillmusic.com

A multi-instrumentalist who's won multiple honors on both sides of the Canadian border, where he's based, Steve Hill delivers a hypnotic trip through the American west with this tasty collection of original blues infused with elements of folk, country and rock, too. Hill is a master guitar player who works in multiple settings here – from acoustic to full orchestral arrangements. Primarily penned about five years ago, his state of mind and musical journey at the time foretold the concerns many of us are dealing with in the world today. If you're looking for something different, tune in to "Evening Star," "Follow You Down," "Cold Hearts," "Gotta Be Strong," "Make Believe," "Judgment Day" and "Tail Lights."



Skylar Rogers – Firebreather

(Self-produced CD)

www.skylarrogers.com

Soul has played a major role in the fabric of Chicago blues for decades, and Skylar Rogers delivers a potent brand of it here in her full-length CD debut. She calls it "soul rockin' blues," and it's all that -- chockful of tunes based on the trials and tribulations of growing up in one of the toughest neighborhoods in the city. Influenced by Koko Taylor and Etta James, but sounding more like a cross between a young Denise LaSalle and a mature Big Time Sarah, Skylar's a brassy alto with somewhat limited range, but puts her all into every cut. She's backed by The Blue Diamonds, a band based out of St. Louis, and only been touring since 2019. The action opens with "Hard Headed Woman," the realization that a stubborn attitude drove a good man away. Other standout cuts include "Work," "Like Father Like Daughter," "Firebreather," the deeply introspective "Failure," "Drowning," "Thankful" and "Insecurities."



Kid Ramos & Bob Corritore – Phoenix Blues Sessions
(VizzTone/SWMAF Records SWMAF16)

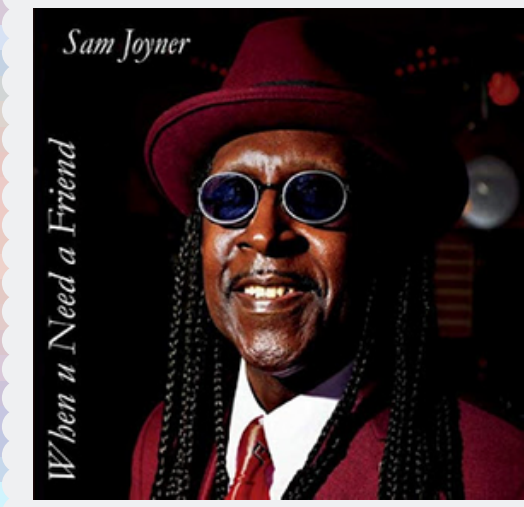
www.bobcorritore.com

Arizona-based harp master Bob Corritore dips into his extensive musical vault for this one, a collection of performances with West Coast guitar superstar Kid Ramos that were captured at Bob's nightclub, The Rhythm Room, in Phoenix. Despite dating to the late '90s and early 2000s, it's as fresh as the day the tunes were recorded. They're joined by a lineup that includes piano master, Henry Gray, blues shouter Nappy Brown, Arizona Music Hall of Famer Big Pete Pearson, Chico Chism -- the legendary drummer for Otis Rush, Sonny Boy Williamson II, Little Junior Parker and others -- in a set of primarily Chicago blues. You'll love "Aw Shucks Baby" with Nappy at the mic, "Come on In," "I Held My Baby Last Night," "Mother-in-Law Blues," "They Raided the Joint," "Baby Don't You Tear My Clothes," "Talkin' 'Bout You" and "Snakes Crawls at Night."

Joyann Parker – Out of the Dark
(HopelessRomanticsRecords 1003)

www.joyannparker.com

Based out of Minneapolis, firebrand Joyann Parker has turned heads with two previous releases, most recently earning a Blues Blast Music Awards rising star nomination for the all-original *Hard to Love* in 2018. She picks up exactly where she left with this one, serving up smoldering ballads and searing dance tunes co-written with guitarist Mark Lemoine. A classically trained pianist and vocalist with a multi-range voice, her material bridges blues, soul and Americana in a slick set co-produced by Kevin Bowe, a hit-maker for Etta James, Lynyrd Skynyrd, Bruce Springsteen and others. Joyann smokes and simmers from the jump with the ballad "Gone So Long," picking up steam with the highly danceable "Carry On" before turning up the heat with "Bad Version of Myself," "Come on Baby (Take Me Dancing)," "Hit Me Like a Train" and "Out of the Dark."



Sam Joyner – When U Need a Friend

(Self-produced CD)

www.samjoyner.com

Keyboard player/tunesmith Sam Joyner teams with several top musicians in greater New Orleans for this unhurried set of deep grooves from the Big Easy and Chicago, where he was born and raised. A fixture at Spirits On Bourbon and Teddy's Juke Joint in Zachary, La., near Baton Rouge, he's backed here by one of the best rhythm sections on the planet -- Benny Turner on bass and Jellybean on drums -- with Lil Ray Neal, Mark Stone and Henry Sterling on handling guitar duties. You'll be grooving across the dance floor to "Must Be Jelly," "Goin' to Chicago," "Hard 4 Your Money," "Them Bluez," "Breakin' Up Our Happy Home," "Natural Born Luvah," "Onions Ain't the Only Thing" and "Long Distance Call." The funk runs deep on this one.



Brad Stivers – Six

(VizzTone Label Group VT-BS02)

www.bradstivers.com

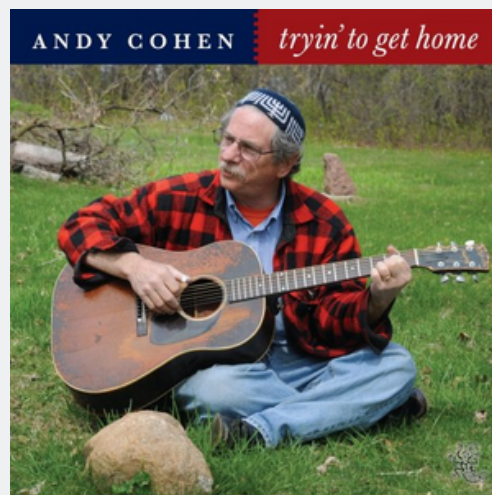
Playing in a driving guitar style that fuses West and Gulf Coast blues with the more traditional sounds of the three Kings, Brad Stivers is a larger-than-life, 20-something character with a light, smooth technique. He's been touring internationally since making it to the finals of the International Blues Challenge a few years ago. Produced by his wife/percussionist Lindsay Beaver – a former Alligator recording artist herself, this set was recorded in their home studio in Driftwood, Texas, and features a classy mix of blues and R&B that's aided by contributions from Sax Gordon, Canadian keyboard veteran Barry Cooke and Dallas-based guitarist Reo Casey. Stivers captures a real throwback feel throughout, loping out of the gate with "Lose Your Love" then picking up steam with "Three Times a Fool." You'll also like "The Very Thought of You" and "Your Turn to Cry."

Andy Cohen – Tryin' to Get Home

(Earwig CD 4976)

www.andycohenmusic.com

A virtuoso fingerpicking guitarist, Andy Cohen is a product of the '60s who intersperses intimate first-generation Delta, Piedmont and big-city covers with a handful of originals here, providing aural relief for anyone seeking a from songs encased in the misery of modern times. Since touring with the Rev. Gary Davis, Jim Brewer, Honeyboy Edwards and others in his youth, Cohen has devoted his life to mentoring others in old-school acoustic blues and by organizing venues and festivals where they can perform. He released this album in conjunction with Small but Mighty: Songs for Growing People, another Earwig release targeted for children and the young-at-heart. In addition to reverent reprises of tunes from Blind Boy Fuller, Charley Patton, Dave Van Ronk, Davis and others, be sure to check out the originals "Louis Jay Meyers Memorial Stomp," "Puffin' That Stuff," "Reverend Gary Rag," "Earwig Stomp" and "Planxty: Miss Joanna Swan."

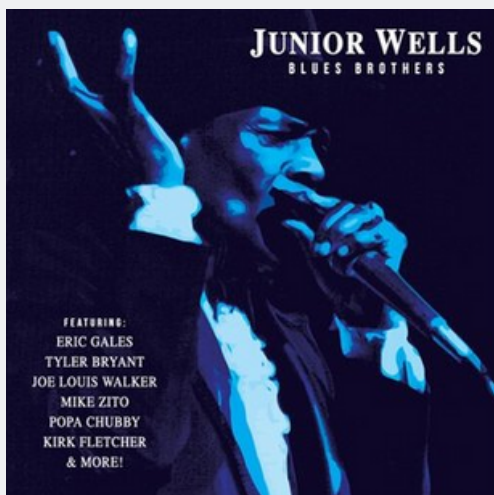


Junior Wells – Blues Brothers

(Cleopatra Blues CLO 1936)

www.cleopatrarerecords.com

One of the most beloved entertainers ever to grace a blues stage, Junior Wells left us in 1998, but he lives on in a new way with this collection, which remasters his original vocal and harmonica gymnastics with new backing from several of the top guitarists on the scene today. Buddy Guy's familiar licks are gone, but the tunes take on new life thanks to Joe Louis Walker, Bernard Allison, Kirk Fletcher, Colin James, Eric Gales, Tyler Bryant, Mike Zito, Bernard Allison, Popa Chubby, Guitar Shorty and Albert Castiglia along with harp player James Montgomery who takes Wells' familiar riffs in new directions on six of the 13 cuts while maintaining deeply respectful throughout. If you liked Junior during his life, you'll love this one, which includes several of his biggest tunes: "Blues Hit Big Town," "Good Morning Little Schoolgirl," "Messin' with the Kid," "Baby, Scratch My Back," "When the Cat's Gone the Mice Play," "Snatch It Back and Hold It," "Hoodoo Man Blues" and more.





Ghalia Volt – One Woman Band

(Ruf Records RUF 1288)

www.ghaliavolt.com

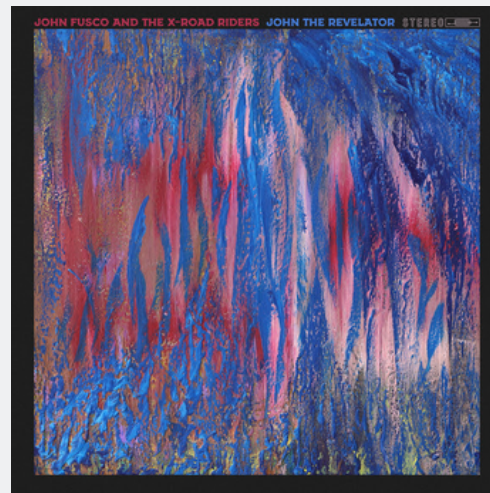
Belgian-born vocalist Ghalia Volt delivers Hill Country blues with punk-rock attitude on her third since crossing the Atlantic to follow her musical dream. Her 2019 release, *Mississippi Blend*, topped the charts, but she reinvents herself as a one-person band here, accompanying herself on guitar and percussion and recorded in real time without multi-tracking at Royal Sound Studios in Memphis. A melismatic alto with distinctive delivery, she previously was a fixture on the European rock scene before immigrating to New Orleans, where she recorded with Johnny Mastro & the Mamas Boys. Her only aid here comes from guitarist Monster Mike Welch and bassist Dean Zucchero, who sit in on two cuts each. This is modern Hill Country at its best, showing that Ghalia's fully integrated into the U.S. blues scene. Top cuts here include "Last Minute Packer," "Espiritu Papàgo," "Evil Thoughts," "Reap What You Sow," "Loving Me Is a Full Time Job," "Bad Apple" and "Just One More Time."

John Fusco and the X-Road Riders – John the Revelator

(Checkerboard Lounge Records)

www.john-fusco.com

Best known as the writer of the semi-autobiographical film, *Crossroads*, and as the producer of *Young Guns*, *Thunderheart* and *Hidalgo*, John Fusco's a gifted vocalist and keyboard player, too – something he proved with a debut CD a couple of years ago and proves again with this beefy, two-CD set, a blistering set of blues-infused roots and swamp with touches of gospel and jazz. He's backed by The X-Road Riders, a supergroup that includes Cody Dickinson, Samantha Fish and Memphis soul singer Risse Norman. They're joined by former Dr. John band leader/trombonist Sarah Morrow and guitarist George Walker Petit, who co-produced with Cody. Fusco penned the majority of the 20 tunes, and provides gritty, weathered vocals in two distinctly different settings. Red and Blue State musicians back him on separate discs with distinctly different, but compatible feels throughout. Like many of John's films, this one's strongly recommended.



Cousin Harley – Let's Go!

(Little Pig Records LPR011)

www.paulpigat.com

Firing on all cylinders, Cousin Harley are a power-blues trio out of Vancouver, B.C., who bill themselves as hillbilly rockers, but they're far more than that. They deliver jump, blues, rockabilly and swing in a pleasing mix that will keep your toes tapping and feet on the floor. They're led by vocalist Paul Pigat who's worked with James Burton, Jeff Beck, Brian Setzer and others. He delivers fat, stinging guitar runs throughout backed by the rock-steady duo of Jesse Cahill on drums and Keith Picot on bass. If you like your blues with a heaping helping of reverb and twang, too, you'll enjoy "Right Back with the Blues," "Let's Go," "Rained Like Hell," "Where'd She Go," "Who's That Lyin'," "Gone, Gone, Gone" and "Merle the Gypsy."

RED HOT & BLUES REVIEWS

By Marty Gunther



Catfish Keith – Blues at Midnight

(Fish Tail Records FTRCD018)

www.catfishkeith.com

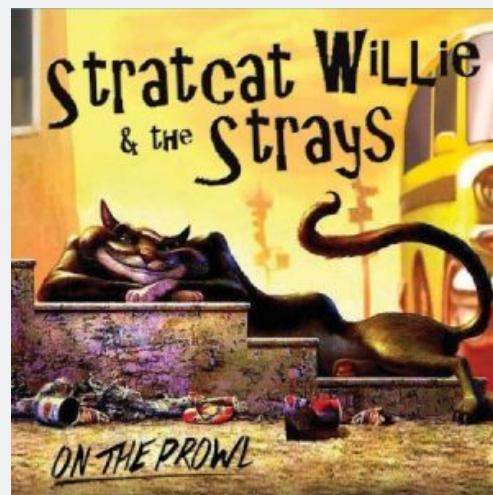
Based out of Iowa City, Iowa, Catfish Keith Kozacik has proven himself to be one of the foremost modern practitioners of first-generation country blues. What separates him from the pack is his ability to deliver originals with a traditional feel – something that rings true in this collection of tunes he's penned across the past 40 years. A four-time BMA nominee and self-described guitar geek, he plays 13 different instruments here, ranging from a 1927 Gibson Nick Lucas Special to a 2018 National Reso-Phonic Exploding Palm baritone Tricone, which provide an aural rainbow as his play hints of David "Honeyboy" Edwards, Johnny Shines and Henry Townsend, all of whom were his teachers. Surround yourself with "Xima Road" as he pays tribute to a dusty road in Mexico to open. Other treasures include, "Pack My Little Suitcase," "Blues at Midnight," "Weep Like a Willow (Hey, Pretty Mama)," "Can't Be Undone," "West Indian Waltz" and "Oh Mr. Catfish."

Stratcat Willie & the Strays – On the Prowl

(Self-released CD)

www.straycatwillie.com

Based out of the Finger Lakes region of upstate New York, guitarist Stratcat Willie Hayes is a 50-year veteran of the blues scenes who hits on all cylinders with this collection of 13 originals imbued with the comfortable feel he acquired through his love of Mike Bloomfield, T-Bone Walker, B.B. King and others as a youth. With a playing style that ranges from swing to blues and funk, Hayes previously recorded four albums with Blue Plate Special. In this new alignment, he's backed by keyboard player Neal Massa and two rhythm sections who are contemporary in their delivery, but never stray far from the root. Be sure to give a good listen to "Come on In," "Sure 'Nuff Got the Blues," the Latin-flavored "I Know," "1:38 in the Morning," the instrumental "Scramblin'," "Life Is Good," "Take It Easy Baby," "Eat, Drink, Boogie, Repeat" and "Good News of the Blues."

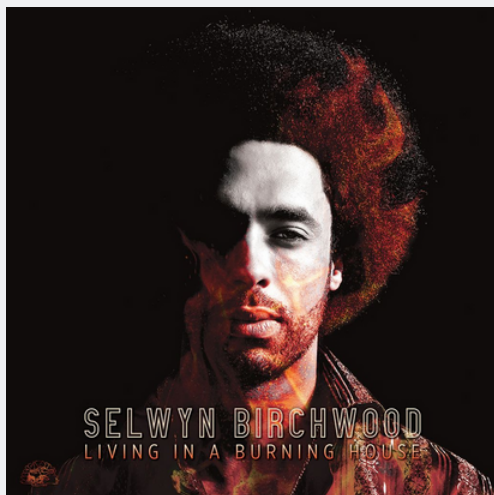


Selwyn Birchwood – Living in a Burning House

(Alligator Records)

www.selwynbirchwood.com

Florida-based Selwyn Birchwood has been making major waves since making his debut on Alligator Records with Don't Call No Ambulance in 2014, winning both the IBCs and the BMA for best new artist in the process. He takes his tunes to an entirely new level with this powerful, mature set of modern blues. The son of a West Indian father and British mother with an MBA from the University of Tampa, Selwyn's all business here, expanding his familiar sound by adding keys to the mix and playing glockenspiel in addition to guitar, lap steel and his usual stellar vocals and Regi Oliver on sax and flute. This is definitely not your grandfather's blues. Birchwood digs a deep hole rhythmically to open "I'd Climb Mountains" and stays there throughout. Among the winners here are "I Got Drunk, Laid and Stoned," "Living in a Burning House," "Searching for My Tribe," "She's a Dime," "Freaks Come Out at Night" and "Through a Microphone."



A member of the CBS board since 2018, Marty is no stranger to the area or the Blues. A native Rhode Islander who attended App State, his first exposure to the music came through Muddy Waters at Newport in 1960. His complete baptism into the Blues came in 1966 when Howlin' Wolf was crawling across the Newport stage and singing "Moaning at Midnight." A longtime member of the Chicago blues community, where many international stars were close friends, he was taught by harmonica player Sugar Blue, and co-founded the Nuclebusters, one of the hardest working bands in South Florida, where he resided previously. In addition to writing the "Red Hot 'n Blues Reviews" column and contributing occasional articles, Marty's an in-demand journalist across the Blues spectrum. Senior writer at Blues Blast Magazine, he's also a contributor to The Groove, the monthly newsletter of the Crossroads (Ill.) Blues Society, and his CBS reviews appear regularly in Chicago Blues Guide.

Loaves & Fishes You are making a difference with every donation!

As we continue our fight against hunger, especially for at risk kids, now more than ever your help is needed. Schools have been closed or have limited attendance due to the COVID-19 virus, and schoolchildren that relied on those meals may now go hungry.

Thank you for your donations in the past, and know we understand that not everyone is in a position to give. If you are, please do so. Thank you.

Normally we ask you to bring multiple cans of food to our next event.

Now we simply ask that you make a donation to Loaves & Fishes during this difficult time. Any amount, small or large is greatly appreciated. Your generosity makes all the difference.

Loaves & Fishes has recently added two mobile units for "food pharmacies". The mobile food pharmacies will travel to communities identified as "food deserts," where access to nutritious, fresh food is limited by the barriers of availability, cost and transportation.

They also have drivers to bring food to the families, since it is unsafe to have them come to the pantry. Please help if you can.

Thank you

*In Search of a
New Home*



OH NO! NOT AGAIN!

sorry... it's true...

THE RABBIT HOLE HAS BEEN SOLD!

Soon we will need a new place to get our blues groove on.

Your suggestions are welcome! New board member Ken Deery is actively researching possible sites for our new home. With lock downs of bars and clubs still in place, it will be a while before we have any details. If you can help in our search, please contact Ken!

www.CharlotteBluesSociety.org and on our FB Group Page, or via email CLTBluesSociety@gmail.com or info@CharlotteBluesSociety.org



2021 Convention Announcement

As you may know, the 58th Annual SPAH Convention was scheduled to be held in Charlotte, NC, from August 10-15, 2021. After considering the alternatives, watching the current progress of the US and international fight against the virus and its new variants, and reviewing alternatives for the 2021 Convention, with very mixed emotions the SPAH Board and Staff has decided to hold the Convention virtually again in 2021: "SPAH Week 2021."

The Sheraton Charlotte is a fabulous facility with two hotels and a large conference area. We hope to schedule a Convention at the same location in the future. Please join us in thanking Don Ceasar for inviting us to Charlotte, and Marty Gunther and the Charlotte Blues Society for their invaluable support

Those of you who attended in 2020 know how much fun we had together and how much financial help we provided our performing and teaching community. We are building on what we accomplished in 2020, adding many of the ideas suggested by members and others, to bring you an even better, more comprehensive and exciting event in 2021.

Paramount in our decision was to ensure the health and safety of our members, their friends & families, and the SPAH staff and performers. Hundreds of people playing harmonica in an enclosed space would be a risky business during these times, even with the most optimistic projections for vaccination and immunity for this August.

Thanks to all prior attendees who replied to our December survey. We know that many of you would love to attend "SPAH" in person soon, when it is safe. We would too!

With more time to plan than last year, we are focusing our energy to bring you the best event possible.

The Entertainment Committee is now recruiting performers, including many of those who were booked to perform in 2020. We will post more in the coming weeks as we confirm participation.

The Youth Committee will also bring some of the best Youth performers to the stage during SPAH Week 2021.

Our seminar team will soon be reaching out to our teaching community to schedule an even more comprehensive seminar series.

Information about registration for SPAH Week 2021 is published here. Further details will be provided in plenty of time to get your seat!

Please stay safe and healthy.

SPAH



RECORDING ACADEMY™ GRAMMY AWARDS™

Congratulations to the nominees of the recently announced
63rd GRAMMY Awards®,
especially those selected for the two blues categories:

BEST TRADITIONAL BLUES ALBUM

All My Dues Are Paid, Frank Bey
You Make Me Feel, Don Bryant
That's What I Heard, Robert Cray Band
Cypress Grove, Jimmy "Duck" Holmes
Rawer Than Raw, Bobby Rush

BEST CONTEMPORARY BLUES ALBUM

Have You Lost Your Mind Yet? Fantastic Negrito
Live at the Paramount, Ruthie Foster Big Band
The Juice G., Love
Blackbirds, Bettye LaVette
Up and Rolling, North Mississippi Allstars

The 63rd GRAMMY Awards® was postponed due to Covid.
The show is scheduled to air on
Sunday, March 14, 2021 live on CBS.

WORLD CLASS BLUES PRESENTED BY CHARLOTTE BLUES SOCIETY

Charlotte Blues Society Blues Sunday Special Events

HOLD ON TO YOUR TICKETS FOR VANESSA COLLIER. THIS IS A POSTPONED DATE, AND YOUR TICKETS WILL BE HONORED FOR THE RESCHEDULED DATE. WE HAVE HER TENTATIVELY PLANNED FOR 2021



STAY POSITIVE....

WE SHALL ALL CELEBRATE OUR 28TH
ANNIVERSARY TOGETHER.

GUIDELINES & COURTESIES
CHARLOTTE BLUES SOCIETY OPEN BLUES JAMS

Blues Jam Guidelines

YOU ARE PARTICIPATING IN A TRADITION THAT IS OVER 26 YEARS IN THE MAKING. THE CHARLOTTE BLUES SOCIETY HAS CONSISTENTLY PROMOTED A BLUES JAM AS PART OF ITS BLUES SUNDAY. THE CHARLOTTE BLUES SOCIETY'S BLUES SUNDAY OCCURS ON THE FIRST SUNDAY OF EACH MONTH. THE BLUES JAMS DO NOT HAPPEN AT EVERY BLUES SUNDAY. ALWAYS REFER TO CHARLOTTEBLUESOCIETY.ORG FOR DETAILS AND SCHEDULES. WE HOPE YOUR EXPERIENCE WILL BE INSPIRING AND THAT YOUR OWN MUSICAL ABILITIES WILL BE INFORMED BY THESE JAMS.

WE OFFER THE FOLLOWING GUIDELINES TO CONSIDER WHEN SIGNING ON AS A PARTICIPATING JAMMER:

*A PRACTICAL SUGGESTION, SIGN UP EARLY. ON THE SIGN-UP SHEET PLEASE LIST YOUR INSTRUMENT AND/OR ABILITY THAT YOU WISH TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE JAM. WHILE THE BLUES HAS A LOT OF VARIATIONS, PLEASE BE ADVISED THIS IS A BLUES JAM. PLEASE KEEP IT REAL LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.

*BE RESPECTFUL OF ANY EQUIPMENT THAT YOU USE, BACKLINE AND PA, TREAT IT AS YOUR OWN OR POSSIBLY BETTER THAN YOUR OWN. IF YOU HAVE A SPECIAL AMP, PEDAL OR SET-UP THAT YOU NEED TO USE, REMEMBER GUIDELINE #1; COME EARLY

"BRING YOUR OWN GEAR INCLUDING AMP. DO NOT RELY ON THERE BEING ENOUGH AMPS ON STAGE. IF YOU HAPPEN TO BLOW UP AN AMP DURING A RIGHTEOUS JAM, THEN MAKE SURE IT IS YOUR OWN"

*KEEP TRACK OF YOUR PLACE ON THE SIGN-UP SHEET. IT IS NOT UP TO THE JAM MASTER TO TRACK YOU DOWN WHEN YOUR TIME TO SHINE ARRIVES.

*PLEASE BE ADVISED THAT YOU NEED TO BE TUNED AND READY BEFORE YOU GET ON STAGE. ADDITIONALLY, IF YOU ARE A GUITARIST THAT TUNES DOWN A HALF STEP, PLEASE NOTE THE HOUSE BAND WILL BE TUNED TO STANDARD 440. TWO CHOICES REMAIN, EITHER TUNE TO 440 OR MAKE ALLOWANCES IN YOUR CHOICE OF A CHORD VOICING.

*IF YOU ONLY HEAR YOURSELF ON STAGE, PERHAPS YOU ARE TOO LOUD. LIKewise, IF YOU HEAR EVERYONE ELSE, BUT NOT YOURSELF; TURN UP.

*BE RESPECTFUL OF YOUR FELLOW MUSICIANS, NO MATTER WHAT THEIR ABILITY MAY BE. EVERYONE USUALLY STARTS AT THE SAME PLACE.

*IN REGARDS TO SOLOING, AGAIN PLEASE BE RESPECTFUL OF OTHER MUSICIANS IN THE JAM. FOR EXAMPLE, RHYTHM GUITAR IS NOT JUST SOMETHING TO WASTE YOUR TIME ON WHILE YOU WAIT FOR YOUR NEXT SOLO. ONE OF THE LESSONS OF A BLUES JAM IS TO LEARN HOW TO BE AS APT AN ACCOMPANIST AS YOU HOPE TO BE AS A SOLOIST. THE JAM MASTER WILL BE GENEROUS WITH SOLOS, BUT BE MINDFUL OF OTHER MUSICIANS THAT MAY BE WAITING TO JAM.

*LASTLY, HAVE FUN. ALSO RESPECT THE TRADITIONS AS WELL AS THE INNOVATIONS OF THE BLUES. LIKewise, RESPECT THE CHARLOTTE BLUES SOCIETY AND THE RABBIT HOLE FOR PROVIDING THE SPACE AND EQUIPMENT FOR YOU TO JAM.

We are fortunate to have an experienced blues man and great "Jam Master" in Michael Wolf Ingmire. Help him make it a great jam by following our guidelines. No matter what degree of experience you have, Michael will help make your first, and every jam, one that is fun and make you want to come back for more!

IN CLOSING...

FOR MUSIC LOVERS: A STORY OF HOPE

AND A GREAT VENUE TO ADD TO YOUR BUCKET LIST WHEN COMPLETED -BUILD ONE HERE TOO PLEASE!

Coming Soon: Huntsville's New Amphitheater

With plans for a year-round culinary village and the backing of Ben Lovett of Mumford & Sons, the 8,000-capacity venue is slated to open in spring 2022

By DACEY ORR SIVEWRIGHT

edited from February 23, 2021 Garden & Gun



artist rendering

As audiences everywhere look ahead to brighter days, music lovers in Huntsville, Alabama, have another development to anticipate: the Huntsville Amphitheater. Last October, the Huntsville City Council approved plans for the 8,000-capacity venue in MidCity, developed in partnership with global hospitality company Venue Group. Today, Venue Group announced a projected opening date of April 2022, complete with a culinary village and programming well beyond ticketed music events.

"We're excited about broadening the categorization of a night out at a concert," says Venue Group CEO **Ben Lovett**, a founding member of the English folk rock group **Mumford & Sons**. "It isn't just getting back from work, getting the babysitter, wolfing down a quick meal, sitting in traffic, arriving, missing the first ten minutes of the show, downing a couple of drinks, and then trying to get out before the traffic." Rather, Lovett and his partners hope to welcome visitors before, after, and even between shows

The company is currently in conversations with local and regional chefs and makers to create a culinary and entertainment destination. "What we're looking at is how you take the key elements of that evening outside of the show and provide a truly special variety of options," Lovett says. In addition to ticketed events, the team anticipates plenty of community programming, too. "It's great to have twenty major concerts roll through, and there's a pride in being able to say, 'Oh, wow, Paul Simon is playing right around the corner,'" says Ryan Murphy, who will head up Venue Group's Huntsville operations. "But there's also the ability to use a facility like this year-round: You can expose the community to different art installations, farmers' markets, festivals, even use it for graduations."

read complete article [here](#)