

SEPTEMBER 2020

Charlotte Blues Society

Monthly E-Bluesletter

THE LIVE VENUE CRISIS



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SEPTEMBER 2020

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from the President



Just prior to release of this newsletter, **The Blues Foundation**, which hosts the **International Blues Challenge** every year in January or early February, contacted all affiliates to let us know the sad news: Due to Covid 19, the 2021 IBC in Memphis will not be occurring.

For many of us who have enjoyed the event in the past, this was disappointing, yet not unexpected news. As you may recall, last month we began to look for Solo/Duo and Bands to participate in our Virtual Challenge this year, in the hopes that the virus may die off and people will be able to travel to Memphis for this incredible yearly event.

The reality is, this event is a huge undertaking, and the planning requires time, effort, and a lot of organization in Memphis with clubs, bars, venues, not to mention artists traveling to participate from around the country and the world. With the Sword of Damocles hanging over our heads since January of this year, the possibility of being able to present this event the way the **Blues Foundation** has in the past would not be possible. However, the **Blues Music Awards** nominations are still open, and we expect to have a list to vote for in the near future. Blues Artists: we encourage you to see if you are eligible to enter! More information on the Awards in this newsletter. Plus info on **Blues Blast Awards**.

I don't know about you, but being at home has left me time to get in some reading, How about taking a moment to head to our website where you will find the timeline of blues history.

The history is most well documented from 1828, Prior to that, it was recognized as a form of communication among the slaves as they worked in the fields. Stories from 1903 state **W.C. Handy** insisted that he had had the Blues revealed to him by a guitarist at a train station. He discovers the blues and "12-bar format" - his song "**Memphis Blues**" was not published until 1912. It was in 1908 the first piece of Blues music was actually published- Antonio Maggio's 'I got the Blues'

Browse through the page and let us know what you think. If you have suggestions, please let us know! Your input and suggestions are greatly appreciated!

Well, the Charlotte area is opening up a little bit. Seems the bowling alleys were finally able to open by Labor Day, and kids can now play in the park. But the venues that have been the life blood of live music are in dire straits. I wish I were referring to Mark Knopfler, but sadly I am not. **Please read the Open Letter from CIVA** on the following page in this newsletter to see how you may help/get involved to save our venues. Huge art auction to save Neighborhood Theatre is happening beginning mid September. Please check out the information in this newsletter.

With all the mandates regarding crowd sizes, masks, social distancing etc, I believe the house concert circuit is going to get stronger. I've really enjoyed all that I have participated in thus far. Another one over the Labor Day weekend featured one of our personal favorites: Heather Gillis in Noda. The key for all these shows will be to keep them affordable and to get enough people in the door to support the artist. I'm all for it. Limited people, small gatherings, enjoying live music in a mostly outdoor setting. If they can produce a show like the Avett Brothers did recently at Charlotte Motor Speedway, with great production and live streaming, that may be where we are headed in the short term. I'm not a huge fan of live streaming, but many like it. We would like your input! Please email us : CLTBluesSociety@gmail.com

Covid has left another victim, the annual Taste of Charlotte Event, postponed from June until this month is now cancelled until next June. Better days ahead my friends.

Progress...I really am beginning to dislike that word...They're gonna pave paradise and put up another parking lot where a venue one stood again! Crrrr. We are in search of a new home for Charlotte Blues Society. The pandemic didn't help, and The Rabbit Hole fell prey to the real estate housing craze going on in Plaza Midwood. Our latest member to join our board Ken Deery is in charge of Venue Acquisition. Please welcome him to our board as he helps us navigate through the "where do we all go from here" dilemma. If you have any suggestions, please email us: CLTBluesSociety@gmail.com subject: venue suggestion. Please make sure you supply us with as much information as possible ie: contact person name, phone number, venue address etc.

Happy to report we check in once more with our own Marty Gunther for some incredible reviews of music you **MUST** check out, plus he has information on SPAH and a peek at what they were doing virtually this year and updates on the event we will be hosting next August here in Charlotte.

Don't forget to donate to Loaves & Fishes!!! The kids are not in the classroom in many high risk areas, and food will be in short supply. **THANK YOU!**

Keepin' the Blues Alive, and a smile on my face as we head into fall! Love and God bless to all.

The LIVE VENUE CRISIS

An Open Letter from Charlotte Independent Venues

Released Sept 2 2020

An Open Letter to the Charlotte Music Community and All Who Desire Charlotte to be an Interesting, Dynamic, Thriving City

The breaking point has arrived.

If Charlotte independent music venues don't get the support they need soon, there won't be any left by the time we are allowed to reopen. Independent music venues are much more than bars or restaurants with some music. They are economic engines, neighborhood centers, small business launchpads, cultural accelerators, beloved institutions, and most importantly, community builders.

A recent Chicago study estimated that \$1 spent at a small venue resulted in \$12 of economic activity in their neighborhoods -- meals, coffee, local transportation, hotels, retail, parking, etc.

Can Charlotte really afford to watch local music venues close their doors for good? In March, soon after the last local live music shows, thirteen local independent music venues formed the Charlotte Independent Venue Alliance. The original impetus was to develop a shared set of safe reopening guidelines. Local venues are still committed to opening safely when they are allowed to do so, but it has become clear that without financial relief from available federal CARES Act dollars, many local venues will not reopen, ever.

The Charlotte community has been incredibly supportive of local venues during the shutdown -- contributing to GoFundMes, buying merch, and more. Local artists have played countless benefit livestreams. Venue owners and staff are grateful and moved by the love.

Unfortunately, without additional support from local and state governments, it simply will not be enough. Independent music venues have lost nearly 100% of their revenue since the shutdown began on March 14. Music venues were the first to close and will be the last to open.

While restaurants can offer takeout and breweries have opened patios, music venues are stuck with locked doors, dark stages, and a mountain of bills for mortgages and rent, utilities, taxes, insurance, licensing and staff.

When Charlotte music venues can reopen their stages, they will do so safely for music fans, employees, musicians, and crew.

But when might that happen?

The time to save our local stages is now. Members of CIVA as well as local promoters are a part of the National Independent Venue Association (NIVA), and have been working to garner support for the Save Our Stages Act and RESTART Act in Congress.

Unfortunately, we can't wait for Congress. Charlotte, we're asking for your help. On Monday, CIVA launched a petition for support. In 24 hours, 3,672 people signed.

Please sign it and share it. There are funds available at the local and state level from the federal CARES Act. These funds have to be used by the end of the year.

This is no time for petty politics. Without support from Charlotte's leaders, many of these community anchors WILL close for good, and we'll all be left to wonder why we let it happen when the money was available.

Sincerely, The Charlotte Independent Venue Alliance

IF YOU BUILD IT, THEY WILL COME

NEIGHBORHOOD THEATRE AUCTION

Just days before the COVID-19 pandemic shut down music venues across the country, staff members at Charlotte, North Carolina's Neighborhood Theatre were planning to rebuild its stage.

As North Carolina has slowly looked toward reopening businesses across the state, the Theatre's staff decided they should get on with their plans. However, throwing away the old stage felt wasteful, wrong and disrespectful to the history of so many musicians who had graced it. With so many artists connecting with people and creating lifelong memories, there had to be a better use of the plywood.

A few quick social media texts with @clt.graffiti and Tough Ass Crew later, and Charlotte's artist network has come out in droves to help support the Neighborhood Theatre which is in fear of shutting its doors for good - before it gets to reopen.

Dozens of Charlotte-area artists, including Osiris, Chris Hood, Arko, Btwokat, Mellisa Wineman and many more, have breathed new life into the old wood for more than 40 works of art that will be auctioned off starting on Sept. 17.

The goal is raising enough money for the Neighborhood Theatre to survive long enough to get everyone back together with live music.

It's a great way for patrons to bring home a part of the Theatre, as well as unique art from Charlotte artists.

The 32-foot-by-24-foot stage, which was last rebuilt approximately 20 years ago, was broken down into a variety of sizes for artists to paint. This virtual art auction will be held on the Neighborhood Theatre Instagram page - @ntheatre.

Payments

will be accepted through Venmo @SavetheNeighborhoodtheatre

For more information, contact

MaxxMusic founder/promoter Gregg McCraw (704-942-7995)

or Neighborhood Theatre production manager/auction co-organizer John Brady (828-242-9956).



You may now formally submit your album or minimum 6-song EP for consideration via the Blues Foundation's online service\

.This year, they have added the opportunity to submit a single for "Song of the Year" consideration even if you do not have a full album or EP released. To be eligible for submission, your single must be a first-ever recording professionally released to the public between November 1, 2019 and October 31, 2020 and may not be part of a larger EP or full album release. To submit a single for "Song of the Year," you must contact Joe Whitmer at joe@blues.org. Singles may not be directly uploaded to the online submission platform without a special code.

Submission fees and deadlines:

September 1, 2020 – September 30, 2020 \$180 per album or EP submission / \$80 per song submission
October 1- October 15, 2020 \$225 per album or EP submission submission / \$125 per song submission

The submission process officially closes on October 15, 2020. You must upload your music and artwork and complete payment for your submission transaction no later than OCTOBER 15TH to be considered for a Blues Music Award nomination.

All music must be uploaded as a WAV file with album artwork uploaded as a JPEG or PDF file.

If you need assistance with uploading your music, album artwork, and/or liner notes, please contact Joe Whitmer at joe@blues.org

.As you release future recordings, we encourage you to send at least one copy of your CD to: The Blues Foundation, 421 South Main, Memphis, TN 38103-4464. The earlier you do this the better. It informs The Blues Foundation staff that your CD has been released and allows us to log it for future BMA related communications.

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 due to the COVID-19 virus, and schoolchildren that relied on those meals may now go hungry. Hunger does not take a holiday. 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!

www.CharlotteBluesSociety.org and on our FB Group Page,

KEEPIN' THE BLUES ALIVE!

Support Musicians



STUCK AT HOME AND
NEED A LIVE MUSIC FIX?

Find
your
favorite
artists
online ~
they may be
streaming a
live
performance

IF YOU LOVE
THEM, SUPPORT
THEM!

Keep the
Music Alive!

**SUPPORT
THE MUSIC
YOU LOVE**

FIND LIVE MUSIC EVENTS
ON FACEBOOK, ARTIST
WEBSITES, INSTAGRAM.
BUY THEIR MERCH, THEIR
MUSIC, DONATE TO THEIR
PERFORMANCE AND HELP
KEEP THEM WORKING.

TOGETHER WE SHALL ALL
THRIVE AND SURVIVE



SPAH's coming – and a great time's ahead!

~ Marty Gunther

Big things are ahead for Charlotte Blues Society. For the first time since its founding in 1963, the Society for the Preservation and Advancement of Harmonica (SPAH) will be holding its annual convention east of the Mississippi, and it's coming to the Queen City next summer, and CBS is serving as its host – quite an honor when you consider that we're the first organization other than a local harmonica club ever to receive the designation.

Mark your calendar: Scheduled for Aug. 11-15, 2021, the convention draws more than 500 harmonica players of all styles and skill levels each year as well as representatives from all of the top manufacturers for a four-day event, and it's one of the friendliest, most laid-back gatherings you'll ever attend.

Several blues superstars appear annually. In recent years, Charlie Musselwhite, Dennis Gruenling, Carlos del Junco, Jason Ricci, Will Scarlett Joe Filisko and others have participated. And also in attendance are the cream of the crop of players from all fields, including folks who play in symphony and classical orchestras, carry on tradition of the small groups like the Harmonicats or play country, rock or folk.

Surprises abound everywhere. Here's a taste – a video that capture's Tom Stryker's Harmonica Big Band, a unit composed of several of the most important chromatic players in the world, doing what they do best, performing a piece by Joe Mullendore, the man who composed the Star Trek theme: [video link](#)

In the months ahead, we'll be looking for volunteers to serve as ambassadors for the convention, each of whom will work short shifts. Responsibilities will vary from providing transportation before and after the event to serving as aides for workshops, as door attendants for shows and more. It's an event you won't want to miss. As a bonus: all volunteers will be welcome to attend the full slate of events each day they serve.

CBS is also inviting our fellow Blues Societies in NC, and music societies, to join us in this first ever event on the East Coast!



GOOD NEWS **Artist Support Grants** Guidelines and Information FOR ARTISTS

Artist Support Grants were created to provide direct support to individual artists during and following the COVID-19 pandemic. The initiative will fund professional and artistic development for emerging and established artists to enhance their skills and abilities to create work or to improve their business operations and capacity to bring their work to new audiences.

Artists representing visual, craft, performing, traditional, and interdisciplinary art forms are encouraged to apply. Applicants should demonstrate a commitment to spending a significant portion of their time on their work as artists.

The Artist Support Grants will support projects occurring between January 1, 2021 and June 30, 2021. Artists may request up to \$2,000. Those applications selected for funding will receive the full award they are eligible for.

Eligibility

- **Individuals and Artist Collectives** – Both individual artists and small, unincorporated groups of collaborating artists are eligible to apply.
- **Residency** – Artists should have lived continuously in Mecklenburg, Cabarrus, Cleveland, Gaston, Lincoln or Rowan county for at least one year before October 1, 2020. An applicant must be at least 18 years old and either a U.S. citizen or a permanent resident alien. Artists who live in more than one region should apply only where they spend most of the year. All members of a collaborating team must be North Carolina residents, live in the region in which they are applying, and meet the other eligibility requirements. Resumes documenting residence for all team members should be included with the application. For Gaston County Artists, please direct questions and inquiries to Gaston Arts Council at gac@gastonarts.org.
- **Multiple Awards** – Artists who are sole proprietors of organizations that have already received funding for FY2020–2021 from the N.C. Arts Council are ineligible to apply.
- **Conflict of Interest** – Current board and staff members of the consortium partner organizations and their family members are not eligible to apply for the award.
- **Student Status** – The Artist Support Grant is intended for adult, nonstudent artists. Artists enrolled full-time in undergraduate or associate degree-granting programs may not apply for the grant. Artists in certificate programs are generally eligible. Artists pursuing graduate degrees in subjects other than their art form may be eligible if they meet the other eligibility criteria.

Eligible Projects and Costs

Up to 50 percent of the grant amount may be used for artist fees.

- **Completion/Presentation of a New Work** – Cost of resources necessary to complete or present a significant new work (e.g., purchasing art supplies or equipment (digital may qualify) or space rental)
- **Career Promotion** – Projects aimed at advertising artists' work and/or demonstrating their skill level (e.g., websites, portfolios, audio-visual documentation, and online presentation)
- **Training** – Costs to attend a class or workshop (in-person or virtual) aimed at either enhancing the artist's skill level or professional development (e.g., a master class or workshop taught by acknowledged authorities in the applicant artist's medium)
- **Travel** – Costs of transportation, lodging, and food for training, professional conferences, or research as allowed or possible while adhering to social distancing guidelines

Ineligible Projects and Costs

- Scholarships for undergraduate- or graduate-level education
- Projects that support or oppose a particular candidate for public office
- Projects that are exclusive to members of a particular religious faith group
- Projects that do not have a direct effect on the applicant's growth as an artist (e.g., the promotion of other artists' work)

Deadline

All applicants are required to apply through our online application system before NOON on October 1, 2020.

Application Link: https://www.GrantRequest.com/SID_672?SA=SNA&FID=35453

Evaluation Criteria

- Overall excellence of the applicant's artwork as demonstrated by work samples
- Feasibility of the proposed project
- Contribution of the proposed project to the advancement of the applicant's professional artistic development and practice

Review Process All completed Artist Support Grant applications will be judged by a multicounty panel of established artists, arts professionals, arts educators and administrators who will review and evaluate the applications and allocate funds for selected projects.

For Gaston County Artists, please direct questions and inquiries to Gaston Arts Council at gac@gastonarts.org.

Upcoming online workshops for prospective applicants:

August 13, 5:30 p.m. August 21, 10 a.m. August 31, 5:30 p.m.

Each workshop will be hosted on Zoom, and RSVP is required to receive the log-in information

If you would like assistance with reviewing your draft materials, please use the "email a draft" option within the application to send your materials and questions to your county's arts council representative.



Shaun Murphy – Reason to Try

(Vision Wall Records)

www.shaunmurphyband.com

Honey-voiced Detroit native Shaun Murphy has been thrilling audiences since the '70s, when she was signed to Motown and shared billing with Meatloaf on an LP. A genuine superstar in the blues world, she's also a longtime member of Bob Seger's Silver Bullet Band and an artist who's toured and recorded with Eric Clapton, Little Feat, Joe Walsh and The Moody Blues, too.

In the blues community, she's a former Koko Taylor Award nominee for traditional vocalist of the year who's released nine solo albums since 2009, piling up multiple honors in the process. But this CD – a rollercoaster of human emotion produced by the talented Kevin McKendree – is her best yet. Shaun takes you to church for the opener, "Hurt Me Good," which vows speedy revenge if you cross her. Other top-notch cuts include "Turn Me On," "Can't Blame Nobody but Me," "Roadhouse Rockin'," "Rumor Mill" and "Same Old You."

Savoy Brown – Ain't Done Yet

(Quarto Valley Records)

www.savoybrown.com

Guitarist/vocalist Kim Simmonds and Savoy Brown are the founding fathers of what we now know as blues rock, and they shine like a diamond on this disc, the 41st album they've released since forming in the bars of London 55 years ago. Working out of their New World base in upstate New York for decades, Simmonds is an enduring presence in a lineup that currently includes longtime bassist Pat DeSalvo and percussionist Garnet Grimm and which still delivers the spirited, hard-driving sounds the band's always been known for.

"All Gone Wrong" opens the action with Kim reflecting on past mistakes. The high points come hot and heavy on this one, and include "Devil's Highway," which features Kim's multi-layered attack on the six-string, the acoustic "River on the Rise," "Feel Like a Gypsy," "Rocking in Louisiana," "Soho Girl" and "Crying Guitar."



Shirley King – Blues for a King

(Cleopatra Records)

(CLO 1768)

www.shirleyking.bandcamp.com

After recording a pair of albums in the '90s, B.B. King's daughter Shirley flew under the radar ever since until this disc hit store shelves this summer, proving it was worth the wait! She delivers a comfortable set of soulful covers here along with a pair of solid originals from producer Jürgen Engler while getting a helping hand from some of the biggest names in the business along the way.

Shirley's a blues shouter whose smoky alto with pleasant, but rough edges might remind some folks of Koko Taylor. Her guest stars include Joe Louis Walker, Duke Robillard, Elvin Bishop, Pat Travers, Martin Barre, Arthur Adams, Robben Ford, Kirk Fletcher, Harvey Mandel, Steve Cropper and the late Junior Wells. A shuffle beat drives almost all of the music here. Top cuts are the two originals -- "All of My Lovin'" and "I Did You Wrong" – and you'll enjoy "That's All Right Mama," "Johnny Porter," "Give It All Up" and "Hoodoo Man Blues," in which Shirley duets with Junior in what was probably one of his final recordings.





Sons of the Soul Revivers – Songs We’ll Always Sing

(Little Village Foundation LVF 1035)

www.littlevillagefoundation.com/the-sons-of-the-soul-revivers/

Considering all the troubles in the world today, we could all use a faith to carry us through, and there’s nothing more uplifting than traditional gospel as delivered by the Sons of the Soul Revivers. Siblings Walter Jr., James and Dwayne Morgan transport us – at least momentarily – to a better place here as they pay tribute to the Pilgrim Jubilees, a group who remain active since being founded in the 1930s. Based out of the Bay Area in California, the siblings have been delivering three-piece harmonies since childhood, and are carrying forward their own family gospel tradition, providing positive declarations atop deeply soulful rhythms with swing overtones sure to heal saint and sinner alike. No matter what your religion, the positive vibes are strong throughout a set that includes “It Isn’t Safe,” “Let Me Come Home,” “We’re the People,” “Time to Testify” “All Things Are Possible,” “The Same Place,” “Step Out” and “Family Prayer.”

Gregg Martinez – Mac Daddy Mojeaux

(Nola Blue Records NB/011)

www.greggmartinez.com

One of the foremost active proponents of swamp pop – a blues of New Orleans funk, Memphis and Philadelphia soul and Texas swing, vocalist/trumpet player Gregg Martinez has spent five decades as front man for King Fish, The Boogie Kings and The Heat, but hasn’t lost a step in this set of tunes that draw inspiration from the the ‘60s and ‘70s. A sweet, melismatic tenor, Martinez is backed by horns, keys and backup singers throughout, delivering a wall of sound guaranteed to keep you up and moving on the dance floor. Recorded at four studios in the Gulf Coast and another in New Jersey, it features contributions by Grammy-winning guitarist and tunesmith Tony Goulas. Put on a pair of comfortable shoes and swing the night away to Ray Charles’ “I Believe to My Soul,” which opens and pleasers that include “This House,” “Starting All Over Again,” “Just Stay Gone,” “Moonlight & Magnolias” and “Can I Change My Mind” before ending with Randy Newman’s familiar “Marie.”

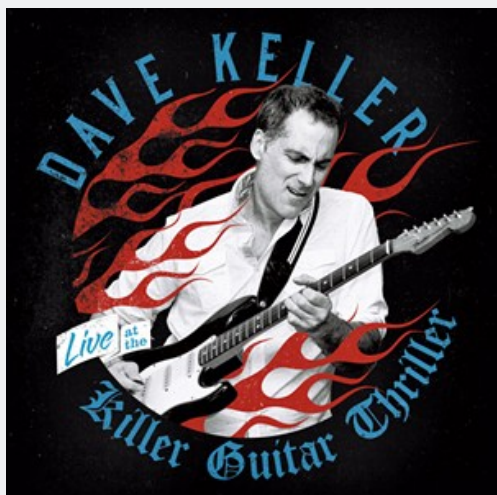


Dave Keller – Live at the Killer Guitar Thriller

(Tastee-Tone Records TT-3044)

www.davekeller.com

A fixture out of New England for the better part of three decades, delivering equal helpings of gutbucket blues and deep soul, vocalist/guitarist Dave Keller has released six previous album in the past decade, but this one – captured at a Bucks County Blues Society event in Edgely, Pa. – is his first live recording ever. A Massachusetts native now based in Montpelier, Vt., Keller was mentored by the late Mighty Sam McClain and tours regularly with soul-blues superstar Johnny Rawls. He’s also served as Ronnie Earl’s vocalist for the award-nominated CD *Living in the Light*, which included some of his original tunes, too. He’s backed here by his regular rhythm section: bassist Alex Budney and percussionist Jay Gleason as they deliver a 77-minute set. A mix of originals and well-chosen covers, be sure to give “Slow Train” a good listen. Other pleasers include “My Younger Days/Moanin’ for Molasses,” a Sonny Boy Williamson II-Jody Williams medley, “Heart on a String,” “Right Back Atcha,” “Every Soul’s a Star,” “Are You Going Where I’m Coming From” and “Hot Tamale Baby.”





8 BALL AITKEN
Swamp Blues 2

8 Ball Aitken – Swamp Blues 2

(indieExtreme/Red Rocker Records)
www.8ballaitken.com

Originally from Australia, but based in Nashville for the past eight years, 8 Ball Aitken demonstrates that the blues are alive and well Down Under with this deep-in-the-pocket collection of modern blues and blues rock that's built atop a swamp blues structure. Aitken's a pleasant vocalist and slide guitarist who swings steadily throughout backed by John Meyer/Tedeschi Trucks drummer JJ Johnson, bass player Glenn Fukunaga (Robert Plant, Dr. John, Dixie Chicks) and keyboard player Buddy Leach (George Thorogood). This album has been topping the Aussie charts since its release. The band lays down a steady groove from the opening strains of "Tremelo Rain" and rolls steadily throughout this interesting set. Some of the highlights include "Week Man," "My Sexy Guitar," "The Bed You Made," "Chocolate, Jack Daniels and LSD," "L.O.V.E." and "Cold Shoulder."

Hurricane Ruth – Good Life

(American Showplace Music ASM 2020)

www.hurricaneruth.com

Hurricane Ruth LaMaster is a petite powerhouse who's been performing since childhood and possesses a voice -- like her stage name -- so commanding that it can rattle windows and doors. The fifth album in her catalog, this is her debut on the New Jersey-based American Showplace label after her stellar 2017 Ain't Ready for the Grave CD. A native of central Illinois, she delivers a collection of eight originals and two covers on this one under the direction of Ben Elliott, the beloved label owner/producer who lost a valiant battle with cancer this past spring. The lineup includes award-winning keyboard player Bruce Katz and Grammy-winning drummer Tony Braunagel. Good Life isn't for the faint of heart. It's mostly hard-driving, balls-to-the-wall blues-rock, beginning with the opener, "Wild Fire." Among the other standout cuts are "Dirty Blues," the silky-smooth shuffle "What You Never Had," the ballad "Good Life," "She's Golden," "Late Night Red Wine" and "I've Got Your Back."

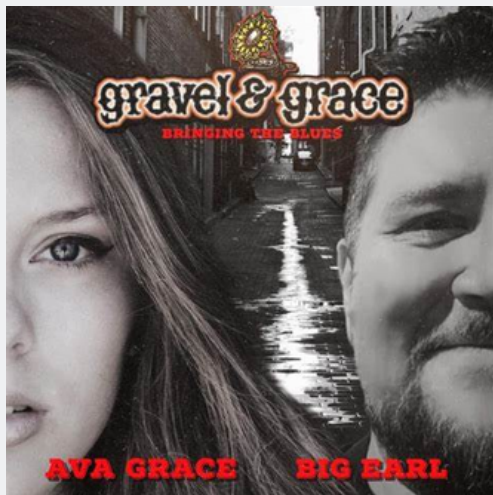


Ilya Portnov – Three

(Self-produced CD)
www.ilyaharmonica.com

The only artist ever to graduate from the prestigious New England Conservatory of Music specializing in diatonic harmonica, Ilya Portnov is one of the classiest, most polished and inventive instrumentalists in the blues world today, something that's instantaneously apparent when you give this stellar, all-instrumental album a spin. Produced at Greaseland Studios in California under the supervision of Kid Andersen, who sits in on guitar and bass, it features the Russian-born, Los Angeles-based Portnov delivering an interesting mix of mostly minor-key tunes that touch on jazz, Balkan folk, Latin and New Orleans music while never straying far from the blues root. An understated talent, Ilya glides effortlessly across the reeds, delivering some of the sweetest riffs you'll hear this year. Some of the top cuts include "Sly Dog," a sweeping blues with jazz overtones, the samba "Corta Jaca," "Crawfish Stomp," "Tilt-a-Whirl," "Big Breaths," "Up in the Sky" and "Sphere Dance."





Gravel & Grace – Bringing the Blues

(Ava Grace Music AVGX1200)

www.avagracemusic.net

Fronted by vocalists Ava Grace and Big Earl Matthews, Gravel & Grace are a smoking hot seven-piece band who united last year in California's Central Valley since forming last year, delivering high-octane original tunes, that quickly made them local favorites and led to national tours. Just 17 years old and still a junior in high school, Ava has a strong, sultry voice with exceptional range that belies her tender age, and she became interested in singing thanks to Mississippi roots. She a good match for Matthews, a 20-year music veteran. The pair work as a duo when not fronting this unit, which includes both keys and sax. A rock-solid debut, give a listen to "Scares Me," with Grace at the mic, "Next Move," featuring Big Earl, the duet "Love on the Brain," the uptempo, gospel-flavored "Sunday Afternoon," the ballad "Not About a Boy," the rocker "Picture Perfect" and "Wash My Blues."

Jimmy Carpenter – Soul Doctor

(Gulf Coast Records)

www.jimmycarpenter.net

One of the most beloved sax players in the business, Las Vegas-based Jimmy Carpenter toured internationally with Tinsley Ellis, Jimmy Thackery, Walter Wolfman Washington and others before becoming a fixture in Mike Zito's band about eight years ago. As a front man, he's an exciting performer who blends blues, R&B and rock into a package that swings from the jump. This is Carpenter's fourth solo CD in a career that began in the '80s with the North Carolina-based Alka-Phonics. Jimmy's joined here by fellow horn players Mark Earley and Doug Woolverton in a large-band setting that includes 10 other musicians – including Zito and Nick Schnebelen – to deliver several originals and three covers. You'll love the funky "Soul Doctor," which opens, "Wild Streak," "Need Your Love So Bad," a modern take on the classic "One Mint Julip," "LoFi Roulette" and "Yeah Man," a redo of a Muscle Shoals classic penned by Eddie Hinton, one of the best and most tragic vocalists of all time.



Rae Gordon Band – Wrong Kind of Love

(Self-produced CD)

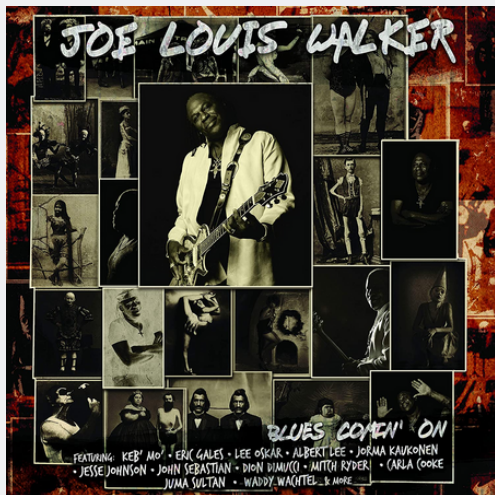
www.raegordon.com

One of the most powerful vocalists in the Pacific Northwest, Rae Gordon teams with producer and percussionist Jimi Bott for this powerful collection of horn-driven blues, showing why she's been a five-time female vocalist of the year in the Cascade Blues Association's Muddy Awards. Originally from Los Angeles, Rae's been based in Portland, Ore., for years. She worked in comedy clubs and piano bars to hone her craft before recording her debut release, Blue Lemonade, which soared to the No. 10 spot on Billboard blues charts. Fronting a six-piece band anchored by guitarist Kivett Bednar and keyboard player Pat McDougall, she's been a fixture at top clubs and festivals ever since. The tunes run hot and deep on this one. Some favorites include the groove-filled "Comin' Back for More," the cautionary, but optimistic "Don't Look Now," "How You Gonna," "Might as Well Be You," "Last Call" and "Get Right with the World." A winner on all counts!



RED HOT & BLUES REVIEWS

By Marty Gunther



Joe Louis Walker – Blues Comin' On

(Cleopatra Records CL 01714)

www.joelouiswalker.com

An enduring force who's been expanding the boundaries of the blues since the mid-'80s, Joe Louis Walker calls out the big guns on this explosive album, delivering a heaping helping of what fans have come to love: red-hot guitar and one of the most distinctive voices in the business. With Eric Gales, Dion, Keb' Mo', Jorma Kaukonen, John Sebastian, Lee Oskar, Arlen Roth, Vanessa Collier, Rick Estrin and a host of others in tow, Walker sets a high bar here, mixing five originals and seven surprising covers to produce a musical stew that ranges from modern urban blues, to soul, gospel, country blues and more. The highlights include "Feel the Poor," co-written with Gabe Jagger, Dion's "Blues Comin' On," "Someday, Someway," "The Thang," "Come Back Home," an amazing version of Charlie Rich's "Lonely Weekends," "Uptown to Harlem" and "7 & 7 Is." Run, don't walk to buy this one. It's that good!

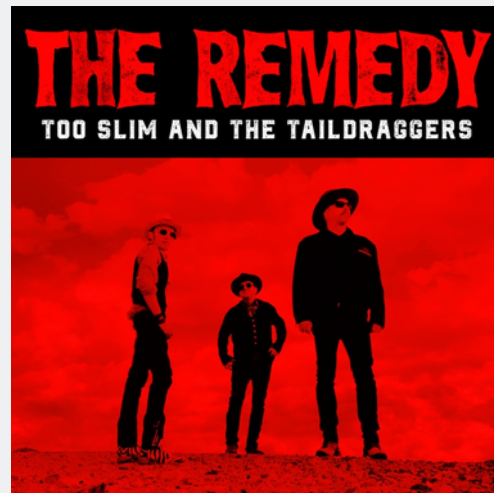
Too Slim and the Taildraggers – The Remedy

(VizzTone

Label Group VT-UW-02)

www.tooslim.net

One of the hardest working bands in the U.S., Tim "Too Slim" Langford and his Taildraggers have been delivering their own brand of blues-rock out of the Pacific Northwest for the past 30 years. They take no prisoners here, powering steadily throughout. The 21st release in a career littered with honors, this one was captured in Nashville at Wild Feather Recording under the direction of Zack Kasik, who doubles as the band's bassist. As usual, Too Slim's guitar pyrotechnics are featured throughout along with a few surprises, including some well-placed banjo and guest appearances from three harp players: Jason Ricci, Sheldon Ziro and VizzTone major domo Richard "Rosy" Rosenblatt. Be sure to fasten your seatbelt for "Last Last Chance," "Devil's Hostage," "Keep the Party Rollin'," "Platinum Junkie," "Snake Eyes," "Think About That" and "Half the World Away." Exhausting – and a whole lot of fun.



Kaz Hawkins – Memories Of

(Self-produced CD)

www.kazhawkins.com

One of the most soulful voices anywhere, Northern Ireland songbird Kaz Hawkins has been known for several outstanding collaborations during the past couple of decades, but nothing better than the "Memories of Etta James" tour she launched with her Band of Men earlier this year. Now, the entire world can enjoy her interpretations of James' classics via this CD. A radio deejay, storyteller and advocate for mental health causes in her other life, Kaz is back with a vengeance after being sidelined with a serious bout of pneumonia, and she's never sounded better, breathing new life into ten classics backed by a full band complete with horn section. From the opening cuts of "Something's Got a Hold of Me" to the closing "At Last," you're in for a treat. All of the cuts are standouts, but don't miss "Miss Pitiful," "Security," "Tell Mama," a stellar retelling of "Blind Girl" and "Just Wanna Make Love to You."

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.

SEPTEMBER 2020

Voting for
BLUES BLAST
MUSIC AWARDS

is now over
Who will win?

Contemporary Blues Album
Traditional Blues Album
Soul Blues Album
Rock Blues Album
Acoustic Blues Album
Live Blues Recording
Historical or Vintage Recording
New Artist Debut
Male Blues Artist
Female Blues Artist
Blues Band of the Year
Sean Costello Rising Star Award

www.CharlotteBluesSociety.org

The SPAH Convention is coming to Charlotte in 2021



Charlotte Blues Society is hosting!



SPAH 2021
Charlotte Sheraton, Charlotte, NC
August 10-14, 2021

What is SPAH?

SPAH is a worldwide harmonica organization based in the United States.

SPAH –the Society for the Preservation and Advancement of the Harmonica –is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit registered in the State of Michigan.

The SPAH 2020 Convention in St. Louis has unfortunately been cancelled due to COVID-19 concerns. However, please keep August 11-15 on your calendar open for “SPAH Week!” The SPAH board is now planning a “SPAH Week” of online seminars, performances, and some “general sessions” where we can all join together for a few moments. Stay tuned to www.SPAH.org and the SPAH Facebook site for details.

SPAH advances its mission of preservation and advancement since 1963 in many ways.

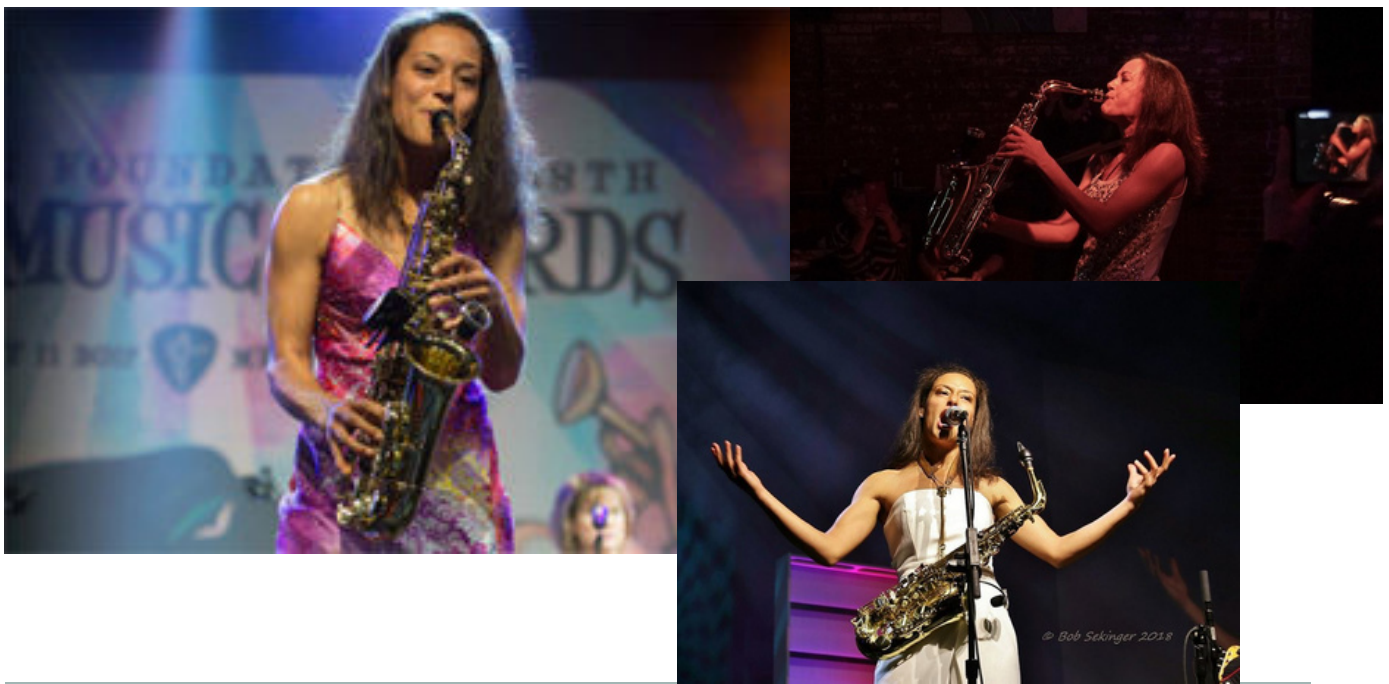
SPAH:

- Produces an annual convention, attended each year by about 500 enthusiasts, to gather, jam, give concerts, share knowledge casually and in seminars, and to spend time with vendors, teachers, experts, manufacturers and friends from across the globe.
- Publishes a quarterly magazine, Harmonica Happenings, for its members, with famous player interviews, historical articles, recording reviews, with advertising by makers and sellers of harmonicas and related products.
- Awards youth scholarships to cover registration and hotel accommodation at each annual SPAH convention. Scholarships aid in the musical development of young harmonica players, aged 21 or under. Scholarship funds are raised both through donations and through raffles & fundraising at the convention.
- Conducts youth outreach with free learning events for local children at the convention.
- Honors excellence with annual awards in musicianship and service to the harmonica community (similar to the Oscars or Grammys for the harmonica world).
- Helps local harmonica clubs get started, keep going, and help one another
- Fosters worldwide communication and exchanges with harmonica players and organizations in many nations.

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 SUNDAY APRIL 4 OR 11 2021



STAY POSITIVE....

WE SHALL ALL CELEBRATE OUR 28TH
ANNIVERSARY TOGETHER.

TASTE of *Charlotte*

Presented by Food Lion

Taste of Charlotte Festival

~ June 2021 ~

Tryon Street Uptown

We hope you will set the time aside next year to help us at the CBS Beer/Wine Tent!

It is our biggest fundraiser for our group every year.

here's the link:

<https://charlottebluessociety.org/taste-of-charlotte>

REMEMBER:

THE VIRUS DOESN'T MOVE.

PEOPLE MOVE IT.

WE STOP MOVING ~

THE VIRUS STOPS MOVING.

THE VIRUS DIES.

IT'S THAT SIMPLE

STAY HOME

SAFE DISTANCE

IT COULD SAVE LIVES

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!