



#### In this Issue:

- Susanne Smith Band Dec 7 at 6:30
- The Charlotte Blues Challenge - Band, Solo/Duo, Youth Winner send off is 1/4/26 at 5PM at Heist Barrel Arts. Please support their travel expenses. Opportunities Online & at the show.
- RED HOT'n BLUES REVIEWS

#### Nov

- Mud Morganfield - *Deep Mud*
- Doc Pomus - *You Can't Hip A Square: The Doc Pomus Songwriting Demos*
- Roomful of Blues - *Steppin' Out*
- Garry Burnside - *It's My Time Now*
- Erin Harpe - *Let the Mermaids Flirt with Me: A Tribute to Mississippi Hurt*
- Mississippi Heat - *Don't Look Back*
- Anthony "Big A" Sherrod - *Torchbearer of the Clarksdale Sound*
- Kent Burnside - *Hill Country Blood*
- Robbin Kapsalis - *The Blues Is in the House*
- Tav Falco - *Desire on Ice*
- The Lucky Losers - *Arrival*
- Robert Finley - *Hallelujah! Don't Let the Devil Fool Ya*
- Gemini! DRAGON with Linwood Taylor - *Midnight Movin' & Groovin'*
- Fred Hostetler - *Blues Back Pages*
- Jimmy Burns & Soul Message Band - *Full Circle*

#### Dec

- Sean McDonald - *Have Mercy!*
- Dave Weld & the Imperial Flames - *Bluesin' Through the Years*
- Al Basile - *Blues in Hand*
- Ben Rice & the PDX Hustle - *Fallen Angel*
- The Name Droppers - *Cool Blue Shoes*
- The Grocery Story - *Situation on Aisle #3*
- Billy Branch - *The Blues Is My Biography*
- Various Artists - *Jack Town USA*
- Emanuel Casablanca - *Jubilee*
- Shirley Johnson - *Selfish Kind of Gal*
- The Soul of John Black - *Soul Salvation*
- Albert White - *The Definitive Albert White*

- Captain Buckles - *Hurry Up!*
- Jay Hooks - *Tequila & Bullets*
- Bob Corritore & Friends -
- New hats for Holiday Gifts
- Our newest fundraising guitar the BLUESCASTER - she is a beaut
- The Rooster Series - Save the 3<sup>rd</sup> Fridays for a Blues Concert
- The Local Concerts and Open jams- see the full list
- Guitar Raffle update Fender Squire Strat



## PRESIDENT'S HOLIDAY MESSAGE

As I prepare this final newsletter of the year, I want to pause to give Thanks to all our supporters. I feel blessed that we have such a vibrant live music scene in the Charlotte area. The volunteers and board members show up and work hard to keep our society going. Of course, we are in a constant state of fundraising (along with all other non-profits) and we trust you see value in our offerings. We still need likeminded individuals to help us. 2026 will no doubt be another challenging year as we all worry about the economy and our families. We plan to bring Blues to you every month, so save the first Sundays. Remember that music is healing and can lift you up. So turn up your volume, give tickets for gifts, buy music from artists every chance you get (or just put a buck in the tip jar). The most important thing is to go see live music! Smile and dance. – Bonnie Spalding



**New hats just  
in time for  
Christmas.**

\$25 each. One size fits all. [On sale now.](#)





Thank you to Tom Pacheco for his wonderful photos of our group.  
Please follow him on [Facebook](#).



Thank you to our Sponsor Intrepid Artists International for their generous contribution. If you are interested in sponsoring or just donating, please email [CLTBluesSociety@gmail.com](mailto:CLTBluesSociety@gmail.com) for more information.

In-Kind donations for printing, marketing, merchandise & music are always welcome.





**MIGHTY FINE BLUES JAM**  
**SUNDAY DEC. 7, 2025**  
**DOORS AT 6:00**  
**SUSANNE SMITH BAND AT 6:30**  
**JAM 7:30- 10:00**  
**JAMMERS FREE ADMISSION, GA \$10**  
**SIGN UPS AT DOOR ONLY. BACKLINE PROVIDED. ELECTRIC & ACOUSTIC ACTS**  
**WELCOME**  
**LOCATION:**  
**HEIST BREWERY & BARREL ARTS**  
**1030 WOODWARD AVE. CHARLOTTE, NC 28206**

The poster features a photo of Susanne Smith performing on stage. In the bottom left corner is the 'BARREL ARTS' logo, and in the bottom right corner is the 'Charlotte Blues Society' logo. The background is green with a festive border of yellow and red lights.

## Susanne Smith Band

Maybe you saw Susanne play at the SRR Festival in Sept. You will want to catch her set on Dec 7 at 6:30 PM. \$10 [Tix on sale now](#) and at the Door. Jammers get in free. Sign up at the door only.

### A BIG VOICE IN A SMALL PACKAGE

Susanne Smith, Charlotte's award-winning international R&B recording artist, is recognized for her powerful four-octave range and tremendous versatility. She has attained numerous "Top 10" songs on both National and Global Indie Soul Charts and has received accolades from Spotify, Radio and the Recording Industry Association of America.

Throughout her career, Susanne has shared the stage with many Grammy-winning and chart-topping Jazz, Blues and R&B artists.

In addition to her music career, Susanne is a Real Estate Consultant here in Charlotte and brings the same passion and dedication she's known for in her music.

"A force to be reckoned with", Susanne continues to captivate her audience with her emotional style and powerful energy! [www.susannesmithmusic.com](http://www.susannesmithmusic.com)



Hand crafted by Randy Honeycutt. The Bluescaster raffle tickets are on sale now, \$10



For memberships and raffle tix, please go our [website](#).

*Please let us know at [CLTBluesSociety@gmail.com](mailto:CLTBluesSociety@gmail.com)*

*Or post to the [Facebook Group](#).*

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/www.charlottebluessociety.org>

So many ways to listen to the Blues... Do you know about these regional radio shows?

- WNCW 101.3 Charlotte, 97.3 Greenville SC, 88.7, Spindale NC, 92.9 Boone, 90.9 Wilkesboro
- WNRN                      Virginia Fresh Roots & New Blues                      Saturday 6 - 8PM
- WSGE 91.7                      Dallas NC                      Monday- Thursday 7 - 10PM
- WYTX                      Rock Hill, SC                      Streaming or Mobile App only
- WNCU 90.7                      Durham, NC                      Saturday 7-9PM & 9-11Pm

Who did we miss? Send us your personal favorite to [cltbluessociety@gmail.com](mailto:cltbluessociety@gmail.com)





## *Please join us Sun., Jan 4 for our Blues Challenge Sendoff*

Come out and see our Youth  
showcase artist, The Giftt.



Rick Tobey - Solo



Mojo Stomp - Band

Heist Brewery & Barrel Arts

1030 Woodward Ave, Charlotte, NC

Doors at 5:00. First Act at 6. [Tix \\$15](#)

# Queen City Blues Challenge Winner 2025



## Rick Tobey

[www.rickyt.rocks](http://www.rickyt.rocks)



THE BLUES  
FOUNDATION  
AFFILIATED BLUES SOCIETY



Solo



# Queen City Blues Challenge Winner 2025



BAND



THE BLUES  
FOUNDATION  
AFFILIATED BLUES SOCIETY

# Mojo Stomp

# Queen City Blues Challenge Winner 2025

QUEEN CITY  
BLUES  
THROWDOWN



## The Giftt



THE BLUES  
FOUNDATION  
AFFILIATED BLUES SOCIETY



Youth





# 2025-2026 Guitar Fender Squire Stratocaster

**CHARLOTTE BLUES SOCIETY**  
GUITAR RAFFLE 2025-2026  
\$10 each

**ARTIST'S WHO HAVE SIGNED THIS AWESOME GUITAR:**

- Albert Castiglia • Jackie Venson
- Chris Cain • Kingfish
- Ana Popovic • GA-20
- Ally Venable Band
- Zach Person • Bywater Call
- ShinyRibs • Paul Thorn
- Duane Betts
- Atlanta Rhythm Section

Donated by **VERA GUITARS**

Drawing Spring 2026

Charlotte Blues Society on the Web

- Shelley Ruffin
- Mr. Sipp
- Melissa McKinney
- The BoneShakers
- Mac Arnold & Plate Full O'Blues
- Carolyn Wonderland
- Shelley King
- Tinsley Ellis
- The Chris O'Leary Band
- D.K. Harrell
- California Honeydrops
- ...and others!

This beauty is filling up! On our raffle guitar for 2025-2026, most recent: Tab Benoit.

[Tickets available at all shows, \\$10 each.](#) and Online now. Drawing not later than April 2026.



Consider one of these annual Sponsorship levels



**Blue Diamond \$500**

**Sapphire \$275**

**Friends of CBS \$100**

Please help us keep the Blues Alive.



Save the dates for the Blues Sunday events.

First Sunday of the Month

All events at Heist Brewery & Barrel Arts

Dec 7, Jan 4, Feb 1, Mar 1



# SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR BLUES FRIENDS



[U.S. National Whitewater Center](#)

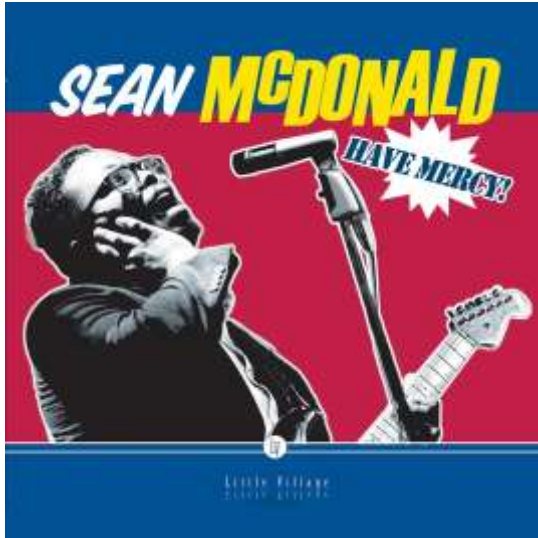


# RED HOT'n BLUES REVIEWS by Marty Gunther

## SEAN MCDONALD - *HAVE MERCY!*

LITTLE VILLAGE FOUNDATION

[www.littlevillagefoundation.com](http://www.littlevillagefoundation.com)



Augusta, Ga., native Sean “Mack” McDonald is an old-soul in a young man’s body. Only 22 years old and a recent college graduate, he’s a guitarist/vocalist who debuts here in the best way possible, blending classic and contemporary stylings into an attack all his own -- something certain to establish him as a giant in the blues and soul markets very soon.

Recorded at Greaseland Studios in California under the supervision of Kid Andersen, who co-produced and handles second guitar, Mack possesses a precise, single-note attack and a voice that will touch you to the core. He’s backed by June Core (drums), Jim Pugh (keys) and D’Quantae “Q” Johnson (bass). Mike Rinta, Eric Spaulding and Jack Sanford add horns.

Don’t miss “My Soul,” “Fakin’ It,” “Killing Me,” “Rocking in the Same Old Boat,” “Shuffleboard Swing,” “Angel Baby,” “Don’t Let the Devil Ride,” “That’s All I Need” and “Let’s Call It a Day.” Give it a listen and you’ll be saying: “Have mercy!”

## DAVE WELD & THE IMPERIAL FLAMES - *BLUESIN' THROUGH THE YEARS*

DELMARK RECORDS 894

[www.daveweld.net](http://www.daveweld.net)

Fronted by J.B. Hutto-trained guitarist Dave Weld and his vocalist wife, Monica Myhre, the Imperial Flames have kept the heat on high out of Chicago since the '80s, and they celebrate their longevity in style with this disc, a red-vinyl LP/digital offering that includes nine tracks culled from their long partnership with Delmark.

It’s a raw, take-no-prisoners set that features guest appearances from Bobby Rush, Dave’s former bandmate Lil’ Ed Williams, sax players Abb Locke and Sax Gordon and Grammy winner Tom Hambridge, who sits in for regular drummer Jeff Taylor on one cut. Play it loud and play it proud! Choice cuts include “Don’t Ever Change,” “Don’t Tell Mama,” “Red Hot Tabasco,” “Lookin’ for a Man,” “May Be Right May Be Wrong,” “Ramblin’,” “Slip into a Dream” and “She’s Lyin’.”





# RED HOT'n BLUES REVIEWS by Marty Gunther

## AL BASILE - BLUES IN HAND

SWEETSPOT RECORDS 9952

[www.albasile.com](http://www.albasile.com)



One of the deepest thinking artists in the blues world, cornet player/vocalist Al Basile is far more than an eight-time Blues Music Award nominee, he's a master wordsmith and poet, too. And – for the first time ever – he turns to contemporary recording equipment as he updates his sound for the next generation.

Captured at Lakewest Studios in West Greenwich, R.I., and at Greaseland, too, Al's trumpet soars with backing from the Duke Robillard Band -- keyboard player Bruce Bears, drummer Mark Teixeira and Brad Hallen, Doug James on tenor sax and Jeff "Doc" Chanonhouse on trumpet. Jhett Black sits in on six-string for one cut, and Kid's on guitar, too.

Choice cuts include "All of Your Lies," "Blues Is My Roommate," "Blues After Blues," "Good Friends," "Leave It All Behind You," "Ain't What You Say," "Older by the Minute," "Think, You Fool," "My Dearest Dream," "You Ain't That Fine" and "When You Lose Your Money."

## BEN RICE & THE PDX HUSTLE - *FALLEN ANGEL*

SELF-PRODUCED CD

[www.benricehustle.com](http://www.benricehustle.com)



A small-statured man who's larger than life with a guitar in his hand, Ben Rice possesses a powerful voice and an inventive, in-your-face and fearless playing style on six-string. And the Oregon native holds nothing back on this satisfying horn- and keys-filled set that covers the gamut of blues, R&B, folk and more.

Ben surrounded himself with several stalwarts from the Pacific Northwest blues scene for this one: keyboard player Pat McDougall, horn players Pete Petersen and John Dover, a funky, skintight rhythm section and a guest list that includes percussionist Chuk Barber (WAR, Lowrider Band) and others. You'll dig "Good Lord Bad Lord," "Get Down," "Even on a Good Day," "Trust," "Fallen Angel," "Storm," "Trouble," "Crushing on the Bartender," "Retreat" and "I Like It Better Lonesome."

# RED HOT'n BLUES REVIEWS by Marty Gunther

## THE NAME DROPPERS - *COOL BLUE SHOES*

HORIZON MUSIC GROUP

[www.thenamedroppers.net](http://www.thenamedroppers.net)

An organization born out of the last bands of Johnny Winter and Connecticut Blues Hall of Famer Charlie Karp, who worked with Buddy Miles and penned tunes for Joan Jett and Joe Perry, The Name Droppers haven't dropped a beat since forming in 2019. They're a high-octane quartet that swings from the hip as they travel a path that honors their fallen leaders but cuts new ground, too. The group features Karp regulars Ron Rifkin on keys and vocals and Rafe Klein on guitar anchored by Winter's rhythm section: drummer/vocalist Bobby T. Torello and bassist Scott Spray. Singers Carole Sylvan and Simone Brown sit in along with sax player Bill Holloman and keyboardist/producer Vic Steffens. Rock along to "Killing Floor," "Cool Blue Shoes," "Be Alright," "Keep Pushin'," "Hard Way," "I Cry for You," "Yes I Will" and "Out of This Blue."



## THE GROCERY STORY - *SITUATION ON AISLE #3*

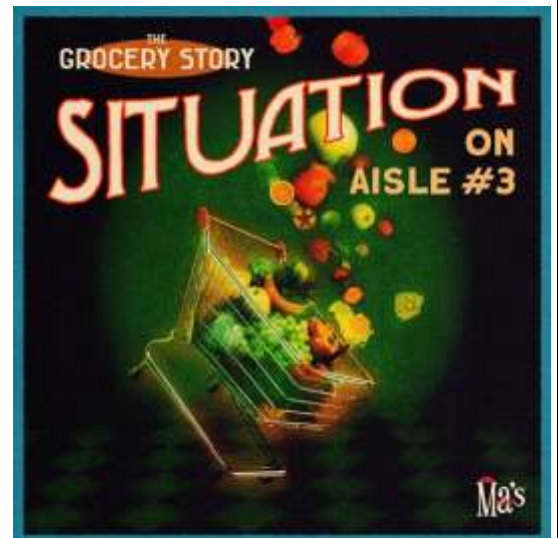
MA'S RECORDS

[www.thegrocerystory.com](http://www.thegrocerystory.com)

They're based out of Fort Collins, Colo., but the eight-piece band The Grocery Story delivers blues with a heaping helping of the Big Easy thanks to former Subdudes keys/accordion player John Magnie and percussionist Steve Amadee. And they'll keep you up and dancing with this groovy debut.

The group features three lead singers – Peaches Embry, Rhonda Merrick and Erik Lunde – with Mike Finders on lead guitar and a steady-driving rhythm section that includes bassist Marty Rein and drummer Jess Amadee, too.

Get up and get down to "Situation on Aisle #3," "Plaquemines Parish," "You Don't Knock," "Call Me Up," "Big River," "Far Country," "Always Come Back Home" and "Too Hurt to Cry."

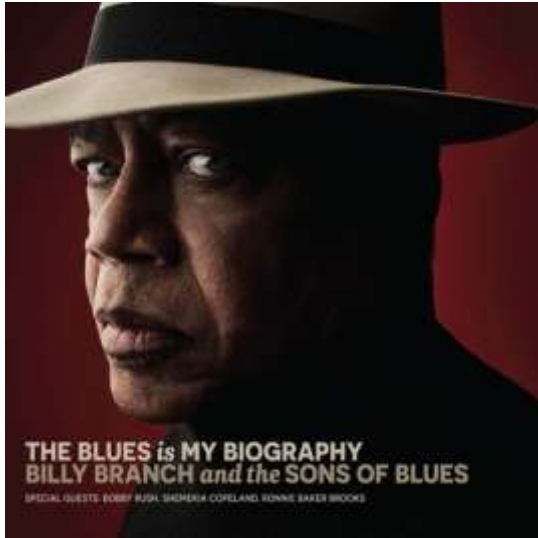


# RED HOT'n BLUES REVIEWS by Marty Gunther

## BILLY BRANCH - THE BLUES IS MY BIOGRAPHY

ROSA'S LOUNGE RECORDS

[www.billybranch.com](http://www.billybranch.com)



Chicago's beloved Northwest Side club, Rosa's Lounge, launches its own label in world-class style with this offering from Billy Branch, the dean of the city's harp players and one of its brightest stars. It delivers the best of Windy City blues, and it's full of cautionary tales and sound advice -- something certain to make it a contender when the next awards season comes around.

Produced by Larry Batiste, Billy's joined by Shemekia Copeland, Ronnie Baker Brooks and Bobby Rush with backing from the Sons of Blues – Branch's partners for decades: Sumito "Ariyo" Ariyoshi and Tony Lufrano on keys, Giles Corey and Wilton Rabb on guitars, Ari Seder and Troy Lampkins on bass along with the best horn section in the city.

Don't miss "Hole in Your Soul," "Call Your Bluff," "Beggin' for Change," "Blues Is My Biography," "Harmonica Man," "Real Good Friends," "How You Livin'," "The Ballad of the Million Man March," "Toxic Love" and "Roaches."

## VARIOUS ARTISTS - JACK TOWN USA

MIJA RECORDS

<https://music.apple.com/us/album/jacktown-usa/1813260396>

Forget Clarksdale for a moment. The musical hotbed of Jackson, Miss., deserves your attention, too. And this digital download shines the spotlight on nine of its biggest current stars across the blues and soul spectrum. A companion piece to a book of the same name, it'll have you up and moving from the jump.

The project was conceived by Jackson attorney/author Kamel King, and the outstanding roster here includes not-to-be-missed appearances from Dexter Allen, Eddie Cotton, Zac Harmon, Stevie J Blues, Rashad the Blues Kid, Chad Wesley, Four Washington and Jacktown Sons.

A winner on all counts, you'll love "Hold Up," "Hooked," "Delivered by the Blues," "Dancing in Our Love," "Juke Joint Lover," "I Still Got the Blues," "Slow Down" and "Girl You Got It Going On."





# RED HOT'n BLUES REVIEWS

by Marty Gunther

## EMANUEL CASABLANCA - JUBILEE

SELF-PRODUCED CD

[www.emanuelcasablanca.com](http://www.emanuelcasablanca.com)

Known as The Bad Boy of Blues, Emanuel Casablanca is a blues-rockstar who's a cut above. A guitarist and songwriter, he's taking the music in entirely new directions, and he's doing it in partnership with a rotating cast of Grammy and Blues Music Awards recipients, too.

This disc is a welcome continuation of 2024's *Strung Out on the Blues*, which set the stage for this one in style. His minor-key delivery comes baked into a cinematically gritty feel. His originals are loaded with contemporary themes, some of which are targeted for adults only.

Hide the kids and give a listen to "Kiss So Good," "Dick in My Hand," "Pistol," "I Don't Need to Be Your Lover," "Jubilee," "Hate to Break the News," "Rain on My Window," "Put on Your Groove," "Leave" and "Rock Me All Night Long."



## SHIRLEY JOHNSON - SELFISH KIND OF GAL

DELMARK RECORDS 893

[www.delmark.com](http://www.delmark.com)

A polished alto who's been delivering stylish Chicago blues for decades, Virginia native Shirley Johnson celebrates her legacy with this disc, which features ten tracks that have made her as a crowd favorite. It's released digitally and as a mocha-colored vinyl, too. Shirley's backed by a top-shelf lineup that includes Luke Pytel, Herb Walker and Robert Ward on guitars, Roosevelt "Hatter" Purifoy on keys and horns from Hank Ford, Lawrence Fields and Willie Anderson. The late Tim Austin, Buddy Guy's longtime drummer, sits in on two songs, too.

Sultry and smooth throughout, grab your honey and dance to "I'm Going to Find Me a Lover," "Selfish Kind of Gal," "You Shouldn't Have Been There," "Your Turn to Cry," "Blues Attack," "My Baby Played Me for a Fool," "Take Your Foot off My Back" and "The Blues Is All I've Got."



# RED HOT'n BLUES REVIEWS by Marty Gunther



## THE SOUL OF JOHN BLACK - *SOUL SALVATION*

YELLOW DOG RECORDS YDR 2878

[www.yellowdogrecords.com](http://www.yellowdogrecords.com)

Lovers of groove-filled blues and roots will rejoice with this long-awaited release from The Soul of John Black. A “band” composed solely of multi-instrumentalist, vocalist/songwriter John Arthur Bigham, the “group” returns to the studio in style after a nine-year absence here, delivering original material that delivers a vintage sound with contemporary vision.

A native Chicagoan who grew up on Jimmy Reed and Muddy Waters, Bigham spent his youth playing percussion with Miles Davis and enjoyed an eight-year run with the ska-rock group Fishbone. He’s graced tours and albums for Dr. Dre, Eminem, Nikka Costa and Everlast, but he’s all azure through and through – something you’ll understand from the first notes.

Give a listen to “Begging You Baby,” “Georgia Peaches,” “Take Your Time,” “Been Gone too Long,” “That Thang,” “Right Now,” “Get Closer,” “The First Time” and “Saving It All for You.”

## ALBERT WHITE - THE DEFINITIVE ALBERT WHITE

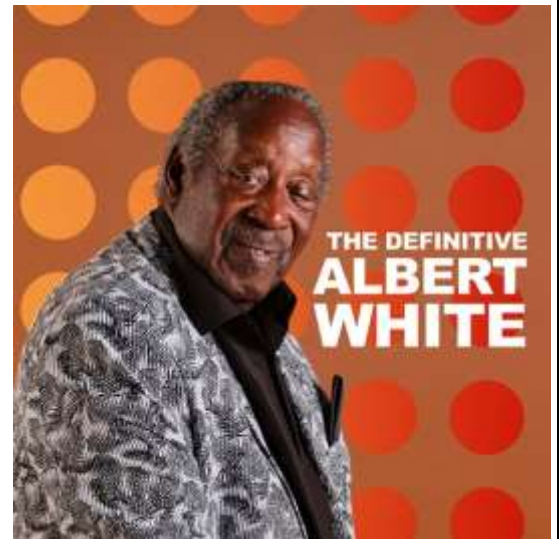
MUSIC MAKER FOUNDATION MMCD222

[www.musicmaker.org](http://www.musicmaker.org)

A stylish guitarist with an expressive, sugar-sweet voice, Albert White’s professional career began with his uncle, Piano Red, in the late ’50s. A longtime sideman with Clarence Carter, Ben E. King, Joe Tex and others, he’s now in his mid-80s but remains as timeless throughout this album as the many hits he recorded.

A cherished member of the Music Maker Revue, Albert released one previous CD as a frontman. This is his second CD as a frontman. He puts his own energetic spin on several familiar tunes here with a helping hand from a lineup that includes Blues Hall of Famer Elvin Bishop.

Turn back the clock for a while and enjoy new takes on “Let’s Go,” “Untie Me,” “Little Mixed Up,” “Tore Down,” “What Am I Living For,” “Rivers Invitation,” “Let’s Stay Together,” “Times Getting Stronger” and the Ann Peebles classic, rebranded as “Feel Like Breaking.”



# RED HOT'n BLUES REVIEWS by Marty Gunther

## CAPTAIN BUCKLES - *HURRY UP!*

SELF-PRODUCED DIGITAL RELEASE

[www.captainbucklesband.com](http://www.captainbucklesband.com)

Do you love deep funk bands like The Meters, the Allman Brothers and The Band. If so, you'll adore Captain Buckles, a skintight confederacy of first-call New Orleans sidemen. Despite working together in different formats for decades, this is their first-ever release as a group, and it comes to you thanks to a grant from the Threadhead Cultural Foundation.

Artists who've toured with Eric Lindell, Samantha Fish, Russell Batiste, John "Papa" Gros and others, the lineup includes guitarist Alex Mallet, keyboard players Rob Davis and Phil Breen, bassist Smitti Supab and drummer Ezell "EZ" Smith Jr. Together, they'll rock your socks off.

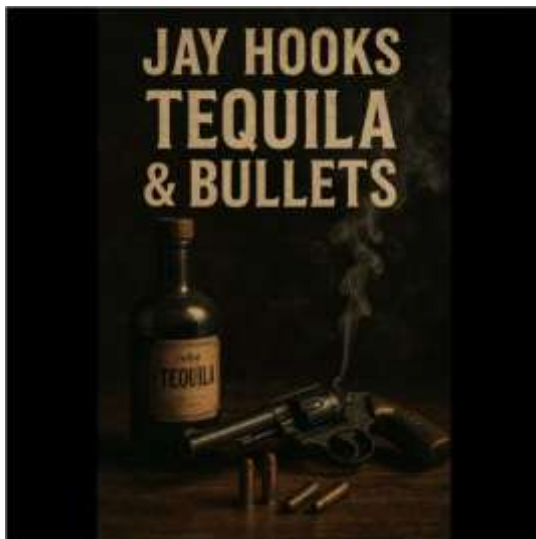
Get up on the dance floor and groove along to "Hurry Up," "Bus Station Blues," "Itis," "Cringe," "This Time," "Acting Up" and "Raindrops on Mardi Gras."



## JAY HOOKS - TEQUILA & BULLETS

JOPLIN STREET MUSIC

[www.jayhooksband.net](http://www.jayhooksband.net)



A Houston native who cut his teeth in the '90s backing firecracker vocalist Lavelle White, guitarist Jay Hooks is an explosive blues-rocker, too. And he lays down an intense, driving beat as he powers through this raw, but enjoyable set, which comes with a definite Gulf Coast swagger.

Jay's a woefully under-recorded-but-deserving talent whose career was interrupted thanks to an extensive break to care for his family, Jay's most recent album was issued by Provogue in 2002. A powerful guitarist, notes fly off his strings like bullets, delivering originals that would have made Johnny Winter smile. Produced by Matthew R. Johnson, it's delivered in a power-trio format.

Down a couple shots and buckle up for "Evinrude Boat Motor," "Tequila & Bullets," "A Woman Like You," "Your Touch," "Left Me Cold," "Mind Full," "Mississippi Sheiks," "I Was Wrong," "My Kinda Fine" and "Mexican Larry."



# RED HOT'n BLUES REVIEWS by Marty Gunther

## BOB CORRITORE & FRIENDS - *EARLY BLUES SESSIONS*

VIZZTONE/SWMAF RECORDS

[www.bobcorritore.com](http://www.bobcorritore.com)

One of the world's most dedicated folks in keeping the memory of blues originators alive, harp player Bob Corritore has recorded dozens of albums that shined the spotlight on others throughout his career. But he steps out of the shadows and turns the light on himself in this dazzling 16-track effort.

Bob blows the back off it here, but there's plenty of giants lending support throughout, including vocalists Little Milton, Sam Lay, Jimmy Rogers, Chico Chism, Robert Lockwood Jr., Henry Gray, Lil' Ed, Clarence Edwards and Lowell Fulson -- all of whom are backed by Pinetop Perkins, Bob Margolin, Rusty Zinn, Richard Innes and far too many other familiar talents to name.

Old-school, golden and true blue, don't miss "I Want to Be the One," "So Glad I'm Living," "She Loves Another Man," "Five Long Years," "Naptown Blues," "Hip Shakin'," "Showers of Rain," "Hear That Rumbly," "Ramblin' on My Mind," "Tired of Being Alone" and "West Texas Blues."



Former board member Marty Gunther has moved from Charlotte, but he remains dedicated to the CBS family. A musical nomad who grew up in Rhode Island and attended App State, his baptism to the blues came while listening to Muddy Waters at the 1960 Newport Folk Festival. A longtime member of the Chicago Blues community, he was taught harmonica by Sugar Blue before founding the Nuclebusters, a fixture in South Florida since the late '80s. An in-demand journalist with broad knowledge across the music spectrum, his "Red Hot 'n Blues" column also appears monthly in Chicago Blues Guide and he serves as senior writer at Blues Blast magazine and a contributor to the newsletter of Crossroads Blues Society (IL.), too.



Look out for and listen [to WSGE 91.7fm](http://wsge91.7fm) HWY 321 Blues program Monday - Thursday 7 to 10 PM, to hear about their featured Blues artist who has a recent release. Marty's reviews will be featured on the website. Nobody plays more blues than WSGE! Your Independent Music Source

*Thanks for helping to Keep the Blues Alive!*

## LOCAL JAMS, SHOWS AND FESTIVALS

### **Dec CBS Board meeting**

**Tuesday Dec 16, 2025**

**Time: 6:00 Social, 6:30 Business**

**Location: Caswell Station 366 N Caswell Rd, Charlotte**

Watch for the Email reminder and Agenda. Google meets option available

Have shows to contribute? Send a PM or email to [CLTbluessociety@gmail.com](mailto:CLTbluessociety@gmail.com)  
Be sure to join our Charlotte Blues Society [Group page on Facebook](#).

*OTPH Funky  
Blues Jam*  
*2<sup>nd</sup> Thursdays  
7-10PM  
Cornelius, NC*



MusicEverywhereCLT has a great calendar and an open mic listing.

<http://musiceverywhereclt.com/calendar/>



**MUSIC  
EVERY  
WHERE**  
CHARLOTTE  
presented by  
**avidxchange**

# LOCAL JAMS, SHOWS AND FESTIVALS



VFW Post 1160 and Guitars 4 Vets  
host the Charlotte Blues Jam  
**3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday 5-8PM**

*Please check the dates before you go.*



## TOSCO MUSIC OPEN MIC

First Tuesdays  
at the  
Evening Muse



Holiday Party Dec 15

Smokey Joe's Anniv Show 11/26 – Mama

**Blues Sunday: Holiday party & Open Blues Jam**  
**Dec 7, Heist Brewery & Barrel Arts**  
**Featuring the Susanne Smith Band**

[Tickets at Ubme.com](https://www.ubme.com)

**Open Jam follows**

**Red Dress Amy 12/12 Evening Muse**



## LOCAL JAMS, SHOWS AND FESTIVALS

**Blues Sunday: Jan. 4, 5PM Heist Brewery & Barrel Arts**  
[tickets at Ubme.com](https://www.ubme.com)

**Featuring the Winners from the Queen City Blues  
Throwdown**

Kendall Town Social Club, the Rooster Jan 16

DejaBlues at Smokey Joes Jan 31

Blues Sunday, Feb 1, Rockaholics/Jam

Keb' Mo, 2/19, Knight Theater

DejaBlues, The Rooster, Feb 20

Blues Sunday March 1, DejaBlues/Jam

Robert Jon & the Wreck, 3/5, NT

Eric Gales, Cain Ctr, 3/7

CBS Anniversary show Tentative 4/2/26 Thursday

Joanne Shaw Taylor, 4/4 Cain Ctr

# RED HOT'n BLUES REVIEWS by Marty Gunther

## MUD MORGANFIELD - *DEEP MUD*

Nola Blue Records NB047

[www.nola-blue.com](http://www.nola-blue.com)



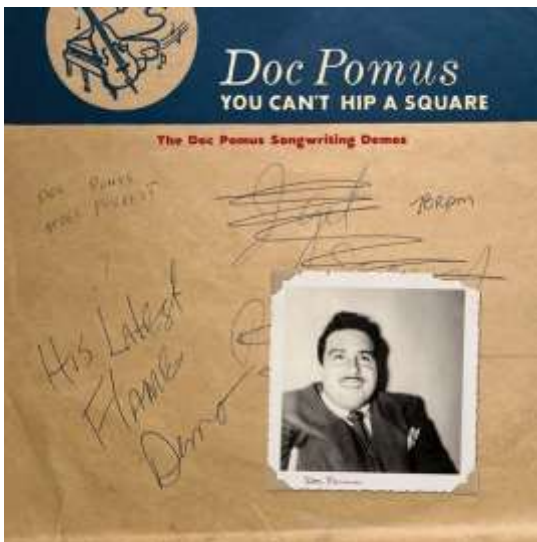
The physical embodiment of his dad, Muddy Waters, Mud Morganfield has faithfully kept his father's memory alive through the years by frequently dipping into his forebear's catalog on several previous albums. But he steps out of Muddy's shadow in a big way here, delivering 13 originals in a 14-song set guaranteed to represent the family well in the 21st century.

Mud surrounded himself with Windy City royalty here. Rich Kreher and Mike Wheeler handle guitars with E.G. McDaniel and Rodrigo Mantovani on bass and Melvin "Pookie Styx" Carlisle on drums. Spicing things up are Sumito "Ariyo" Ariyoshi and Roosevelt "Hatter" Purifoy on keys and Studebaker John on harp. Dad would beam if he could hear "Bring Me My Whiskey," "Big Frame Woman," "Don't Leave Me," "She's Getting Her Groove On," "Ernestine," "Cosigner Man," "In and Out of My Life," "The Man You're With," "Carolina" and "A Dream Walking."

## DOC POMUS - YOU CAN'T HIP A SQUARE: THE DOC POMUS SONGWRITING DEMOS

Omnivore Recordings

[www.omnivorerecordings.com](http://www.omnivorerecordings.com)



If you're a music lover who likes to take a deep dive into music history, you'll adore this six-CD set, which is accompanied by a 48-page book. Tunesmith Doc Pomus was a hitmaker's hitmaker, and if you're too young to know his name, you'll be shocked at the number of familiar tunes you find in this 160-song set.

Most of the demos feature Doc's songwriting partner Mort Shuman at the mic showing off for the first time future hits across the blues, R&B, pop and rock spectrum. The set was curated and co-produced by Pomus' daughter Sharyn and Grammy winner Cheryl Pawelski. They provide liner notes along with Peter Guralnick, one of the foremost music writers in the U.S.

A small sample of the songs you'll hear here include "A Teenager in Love," "Troubled Mind," "Hello World," "It's a Man's World," "Icy Teardrops," "Lonely Avenue," "Here Comes the Blues," "Viva Las Vegas" and "She's Not You." Pricy, but worth every penny!



# RED HOT'n BLUES REVIEWS by Marty Gunther

## ROOMFUL OF BLUES - *STEPPIN' OUT*

Alligator Records 5028

[www.roomful.com](http://www.roomful.com)



They're a beloved horn band who've been delivering the best of the blues out of Rhode Island since the '60s, so you might think that Roomful of Blues can't deliver something new with a lineup that's included Duke Robillard, Curtis Salgado, Sugar Ray Norcia, Phil Pemberton and several other top vocalists at the mic. But that's what they do here.

For the first time ever, they're fronted by a female vocalist, and they don't lose a step in doing it. They're now fronted by DD Bastos, a powerful alto and music educator who's been a presence in New England for decades, and she blows the back off of it! Longtime members Chris Vachon and Rich Lataille handle guitar and tenor sax in an eight-piece alignment that's impossible to beat.

Percussive from the jump, swing along to "Satisfied," "You Were Wrong," "Steppin' Up in Class," "Tell Me Who," "Good Rockin' Daddy," "Tend to Your Own Business," "Well Oh Well," "I've Got a Feelin'," "Dirty People" and "Boogie's the Thing."

## GARRY BURNSIDE - *IT'S MY TIME NOW*

Strolling Bone Records

[www.garryburnsidemusic.com](http://www.garryburnsidemusic.com)



The youngest son of Hill Country blues legend R.L. Burnside, Garry Burnside started playing professionally at age 11, spent years with mentor Junior Kimbrough, Jesse Mae Hemphill, the North Mississippi Allstars and other members of his extensive family. But with this set, he proves beyond a doubt that he deserves your attention, too.

A searing mix of nine originals and tunes penned by R.L. and Junior, the album was produced by Boo Mitchell at the legendary Royal Studios in Memphis. Garry handles guitar and vocals with backing from Andrea Stanton on rhythm guitar, Pinky Pulliam on bass and Avery Dilworth on drums.

Tune in to "High," "Young Country Boy," "It's My Time Now," "Hanging in There," "Holdin' My Woman," "I Been Looking," "She's Gone," "AGF Out" and "Garry's Night Out."

# RED HOT'n BLUES REVIEWS

by Marty Gunther



## ERIN HARPE - LET THE MERMAIDS FLIRT WITH ME: A TRIBUTE TO MISSISSIPPI HURT

VizzTone Label Group VT-EMH-01

[www.erinharpe.com](http://www.erinharpe.com)

Mississippi John Hurt had few peers in the world of post-War songsters, and there's no better person to keep his passionate Piedmont playing style alive than Erin Harpe, the award-winning singer/acoustic guitarist who's delivered the best of country blues to eager listeners across the Northeast for decades.

Erin's a honeyed vocalist who delivers a master class on the strings here. Every note she hits rings like a bell, and her fingerpicking is beyond compare. She's joined by hubby/bassist Jim Countryman who provides fit-like-a-glove support throughout.

Turn back the clock awhile with "Candy Man," "Casey Jones," "Let the Mermaids Flirt with Me," "Got the Blues (Can't Be Satisfied)," "Make Me a Pallet on the Floor," "Nobody's Business," "Stagolee" and "You Are My Sunshine."

## MISSISSIPPI HEAT - *DON'T LOOK BACK*

Delmark Records 895

[www.mississippiheat.net](http://www.mississippiheat.net)



Led by fluid harp player Pierre Lecocque, Mississippi Heat has gone through multiple lineup changes since their founding in the '90s, but that hasn't hindered them from remaining a force to be reckoned with in the world of Chicago blues. And that's crystal clear from the jump of this powerful disc, which features guest stars at every turn.

Produced by multiple Grammy winner Michael Freeman, Sheryl Youngblood handles most of the vocals but shares them with Inetta Visor, Danielle Nicole and Omar Coleman, too. Add guitarists Billy Flynn and Giles Corey and keyboard masters Johnny Iguana and Brother John Kattke along with other talents and you know you're in for something special.

Fourteen tracks that sear, you'll dig "You Ain't the Only One," "Third Wheel," "Quarter to Three," "Can't Take It," "Moonshine Man," "Champin' at the Bit," "Shiverin' Blues," "Blue Amber," "I Ain't Evil," "Don't Look Back" and "Four Steel Walls."



# RED HOT'n BLUES REVIEWS

by Marty Gunther



## ANTHONY "BIG A" SHERROD - TORCHBEARER OF THE CLARKSDALE SOUND

Music Maker Foundation MMCD225

[www.musicmaker.org](http://www.musicmaker.org)

In a world where artists claim titles they don't deserve, Anthony "Big A" Sherrod has earned the label that adorns this sensational EP. The son of gospel singer E.J. Johnson and godson of Big Jack Johnson, he started playing blues at age five. Forty years later, he's a mainstay in the city where the blues was born.

Produced by Jimbo Mathus and laid down off the floor with two mics, Big A recorded this set at Clarksdale Reels, an old brick storefront, where the sound quality emulates what you'll find across the city. He's backed by bassist Heather Crosse and drummer Lee Williams.

Get down to "Baby That Hurt," "Don't Make Me Pay," "Good Woman," "My Life" and "Everybody Ain't Your Friend."



## KENT BURNSIDE - HILL COUNTRY BLOOD

Strolling Bone Records

[www.kentburnsidemusic.com](http://www.kentburnsidemusic.com)

Like his nephew Garry, Kent Burnside's musical fruit from grandfather R.L. Burnside's bountiful family tree. But he's one of the most deserving but under-recorded artists in the Magnolia State blues scene despite having been in the Squirrel Nut Zippers in the mid-2000s and enjoyed a successful solo career ever since.

He finally gets to shine and bare his soul to the world in style with this release. Also produced by Boo Mitchell at Royal Studios, it contains eight passionate originals and two covers that put a new spin on the traditional Hill Country sound. Delivered in trio format, he's backed with his Garry on bass and Jake best on drums. Damian Pearson -- aka Yella P -- sits in on harp.

Dial in "Daddy Told Me," "Hill Country Blood," "I Heard," "I Go Crazy," "One More Chance," "Rob and Steal," "I Can Feel It" and "I Miss You."

# RED HOT'n BLUES REVIEWS

by Marty Gunther

## ROBBIN KAPSALIS - THE BLUES IS IN THE HOUSE

Blues House Productions RK 1005

[www.robinkapsalis.net](http://www.robinkapsalis.net)



A Chicago native who grew up in Atlanta, Robbin Kapsalis dazzled audiences for as the front woman of the band Vintage#18 for years with an act that's one part Koko Taylor and one part Tina Turner. But she comes home to the South Side with this all-business debut solo release, and man does she shine!

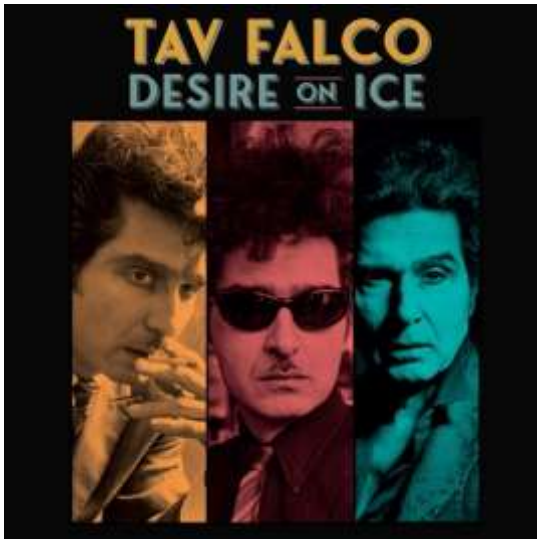
It's an international effort that includes new hubby Giles Robson, one of the top harp players in Europe, dobro player Arnaud Fradin -- founder of the long-running French band Malted Milk -- and countrymen Nicolas Deshayes and Francois Nicolleau who smoke on guitars throughout. The late Joe Louis Walker sits in, too. (Full disclosure: This writer penned the liner notes.)

Sultry and azure, too, you'll enjoy "The Blues Is in the House," "Up the Line," "Lean on Me," "The Comeback," "Rollin' & Tumblin'," "Love Hangover (Redux)," "I Wanna Know," "Shake Your Hips" and "Gotta Hear the Blues."

## TAV FALCO - DESIRE ON ICE

Org Music

[www.tavfalco.com](http://www.tavfalco.com)



An underground filmmaker/vocalist who's fronted the long-running experimental band Panther Burn for decades, Tav Falco revisits original tunes he's penned across his lengthy career and turns them inside out on this interesting set. It's a cinematic, bluesy pleaser delivered with arrangements that would have fit comfortably in another era.

The all-star lineup includes harp master Charlie Musselwhite, multi-instrumentalist Bobby Gillespie of Primal Scream, Reverend Horton Heat, guitarists Jon Spencer, Kid Congo Powers and Chris Spedding along with vocalist Ann Magnuson.

For something different, dial in "Prologue," "Gentleman in Black," "Cuban Rebel Girl," "Sympathy for Mata Hari," "The Ballad of Rue de la Lune," "Lady from Shanghai," "Chamber of Desire" and "Epilogue."

# RED HOT'n BLUES REVIEWS by Marty Gunther

## THE LUCKY LOSERS - *ARRIVAL*

MoMojo Records DCR 1509

[www.theluckylosers.com](http://www.theluckylosers.com)



Cathy Lemons and Phil Berkowitz describe themselves as The Lucky Losers, but the San Francisco-couple duo strike gold every time they enter the recording studio. And they do it again on this all-original offering. It's a blend of blues that packs a punch, humorous funk, '60s soul and more.

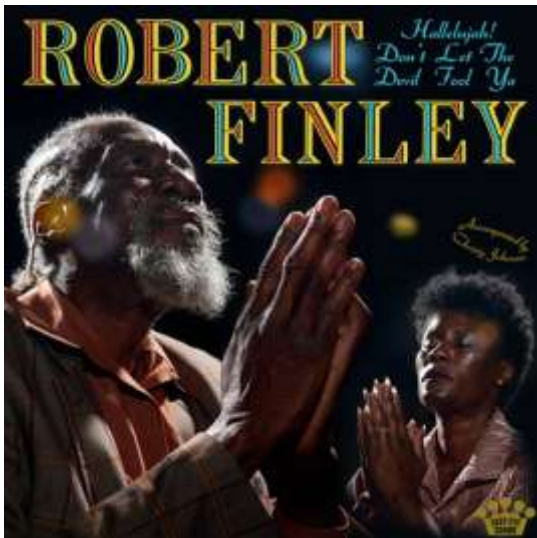
Cathy and Phil trade vocals and Berkowitz plays a mean harp with backing from a top-shelf lineup that includes keyboard player Chris Burns and guitarist Simon Govan Smith with guest appearances from Kid Andersen -- who's produced all six of their albums -- and Danny Garon on guitar and horns from Doug James, Mike Rinta and John Halbieb.

Music with a message, take a deep dive into "S-C-A-M," "Pull on the Rope," "Play It from the Heart," "I Believe (Because I Am Her)," "My Father's Song," "Pig Iron Tough," "Misfit Kids" and "Ain't the Marrying Kind."

## ROBERT FINLEY - HALLELUJAH! DON'T LET THE DEVIL FOOL YA

Easy Eye Sound

[www.robertfinleyofficial.com](http://www.robertfinleyofficial.com)



A native of Bernice, La., Robert Finley spent decades as a street performer and gospel group leader before recording his first CD nine years ago at age 62. Three more albums and an appearance on TV's America's Got Talent have established him as a distinctive force who transcends blues, gospel, soul and more.

Label owner Dan Auerbach (The Black Keys) produced this set and contributes guitar along with Tommy Brenneck (Sharon Jones) and Barrie Cadogan (Liam Gallagher). Malcolm Catto and Lewis Wharton compose the rhythm section. And Robert's daughter, Christy Johnson, provides backing vocals.

A soulful, strong and weathered baritone, Finley will lift your spirit with "I Wanna Thank You," "Praise Him," "Holy Ghost Party," "His Love," "Helping Hand," "Can't Take My Joy," "On the Battlefield" and "I Am a Witness."



# RED HOT'n BLUES REVIEWS

by Marty Gunther



## GEMINIIDRAGON WITH LINWOOD TAYLOR - *MIDNIGHT MOVIN' & GROOVIN'*

Self-produced CD

<https://geminiidragon.bandcamp.com/album/moonlight-movin-and-groovin>

Based out of Thibodaux, La., and possessing a distinctively soulful, smoky voice, GeminiIDRAGON stretched the bounds of the blues with her previous album, but she returns to the root in style with this digital download, which teams with Washington, D.C., legend Linwood Taylor. A love letter to the music she loves, it's a joyous affair.

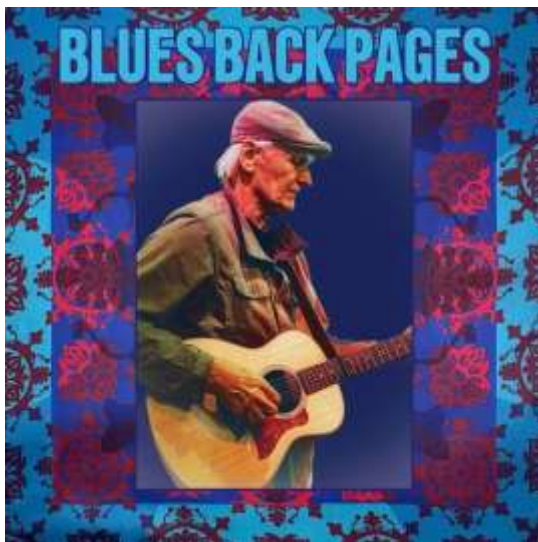
Produced by Christian Simeon, Linwood's bare-boned fluid guitar lines shine throughout as GeminiIDragon delivers her best recording yet. A full-band effort, Santiago Ortega is featured on second guitar and Julia Dill on harp.

Choice cuts abound among "Blues Is Good," "Low Down Dirty (Duck)," "Pressure," "Mr. Slip & Slide Man," "Midnite Call," "Rainy Wednesday," "Sideways Down," "Blues Party," "Juke Joint Jumpin'" and "All Night (Bonafied Heartbreaker)."

## FRED HOSTETLER - BLUES BACK PAGES

Mukthiland Records

[www.fredsheartradio.com](http://www.fredsheartradio.com)



An acoustic guitarist and singer-songwriter born in Indiana who possesses a well-worn tenor voice, Fred Hostetler has been performing since the '70s, when he rejected an offer to join Gram Parsons and the Velvet Underground and sign with Max's Kansas City Records. A former expat and prolific recording artist, he has a lot to say, and he lays it all on the line here.

Mixed by Eric Troyer and Robbie Cribbs, who also laid down backing vocals, this self-produced and recorded set possesses a deep sound despite being a solo effort.

Thought-provoking and interesting from the first note, give a listen to "Hey Corporate Vandals," "Taming the Wolf," "Deep Deep Well," "Orphan Blues," "Shelter from the Storm," "What's Ahead and What's Behind," "Rain on My Window Pane," "New Man" and "You Found Me."

# RED HOT'n BLUES REVIEWS

by Marty Gunther

## JIMMY BURNS & SOUL MESSAGE BAND - *FULL CIRCLE*

Delmark Records 891

[www.delmark.com](http://www.delmark.com)

A beloved elder statesman in the Chicago blues community, Jimmy Burns may be in his mid-80s, but he sounds decades younger in the grooves of this slick, stylish LP/digital release. Composed of ten familiar, totally reworked set of dusties, they celebrate his journey from the Mississippi cottonfields to the bright lights and biggest stages of the big city.

If you like jazz, you'll love this one. The lineup includes the legendary Chris Foreman on Hammond organ, Lee Rothenberg on guitar, horns from Geof Bradfield, Greg Jung and Steve Eisen, and Typhanie Monique sits in on vocals on four tracks.

Groove along to "Express Yourself," "World of Trouble," "I Really Love You," "Ain't That Funk for You," "Give Her to Me," "It Used to Be," "Since I Fell for You," "Rock Me Mama" and "Where Does That Leave Me."





## OUR MISSION STATEMENT

The CHARLOTTE BLUES SOCIETY (CBS) is dedicated to the promotion and preservation of the American Blues tradition through the presentation of concerts, forums, educational programs and support of local musicians in Charlotte and surrounding areas.

## CBS NEEDS YOU !

Please consider volunteering for a committee, board position, or event, Or simply make a Tax-deductible donation. Just a few hours per year will make a difference.

Your memberships fund our shows. We are a 501(c)3 organization and count on members to contribute.

Like us on [Facebook](#). Be sure to post blues related articles on the [CBS group page](#). Follow us on [Instagram](#).

Know of an upcoming show? Share the details with us so we can spread the word!

All are welcome to our monthly Board meetings. These are typically the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month at a local Charlotte establishment. Next meeting is Tuesday Dec 16, 2025 - Location Caswell Station. Please send any agenda items at least one week in advance.

Tell you friends and family, neighbors and co-workers. With your help, we can continue to grow and thrive.

Thank you!

Bonnie Spalding and The CBS Board



[www.CharlotteBluesSociety.org](http://www.CharlotteBluesSociety.org)