

SACRAMENTO

A bi-monthly publication of the Sacramento Blues Society



BLUE NOTES!

NOV.-DEC.
2023
ISSUE 44
VOL. 6



President's Column

By Sally Katen



Last *Blue Notes* issue, my President's Message was on how I often manage to get great seats at blues (and other) shows I attend. As you may know, my cousin Barbara calls me "The Ticket Whisperer"! I also stated in the last issue that I would address concert etiquette in this issue. Several events I have recently attended, and even *Rolling Stone Magazine* and *Emily Post*, have addressed the need of late for a few concert rules, so I have put together the ones that I, several friends and some Board members have come up with and think are important:

1. Do not invade the personal space of other concert attendees.
2. Limit conversations with others not sitting with you to a minimum, or take it elsewhere.
3. Do not check your email, fb or twitter accounts every couple of minutes. Your cell phone emits a harsh distracting glow. You should have dimmed it.
4. Do not stand up at your seat at venues with reserved seats. Please stay seated, except for ovations or encores and excitement that gets you up, for just a few moments. This particularly applies to those with seats in the front. You already have the best seats and nobody behind you can see if you are standing.
5. Most importantly, be mindful, respectful, and attentive to the artist and other concert goers and you will have an exciting time!
6. Do not record the entire show, take pictures, or text the whole time, it can be irritating to those sitting next to you. (Take it elsewhere).
7. I've noticed that blues lovers are generally good about alcohol at events but try not to overdo it and get sloppy, spill drinks, stumble into people. (It is rude and unwelcome!). And if the venue has a dance floor, do NOT bring your drink onto the dance floor while

you're dancing. Find a spot to put it down before getting out there!

8. I cannot imagine this happening at a blues show, but the newest thing is throwing things on stage. Please, how rude!

9. Please, do not yell out "Free Bird" – ever!

Here's what's happening in YOUR Blues Society – join us! We are excited to bring the fabulous Sugaray Rayford back for our Annual Holiday Membership Gala at Harlow's on December 3rd.

We are raising monies to send our IBC winner Kyle Rowland to Memphis TN. in January 2024. Liz Walker is also setting up travel information for the upcoming IBC so we can go and support Kyle! Contact Liz at lizwalker53@yahoo.com.

2023 Committee Chairs

Blues in the Schools - Rick Snyder

Hall of Fame - Sally Katen

Events - Mindy Giles

Membership - Linda McShane

Sponsorships/Fundraising - Open

Public Relations & Social Media - Mindy Giles

Volunteer Coordinator - Lynette Shumway

Big Day of Giving - Rick Snyder

Merchandise - Lynette Shumway

Blue Notes Newsletter - Cari Chenkin & Jan Kelley

IBC Competition - Renee Erickson Sullivan

Webmaster - Mindy Giles

Board of Directors Development - Open

Help keep the blues alive - Contact a Chair or Board Member to volunteer for the Board or a Committee!

The Sacramento Blues Society (SBS) is one of the oldest blues societies in California, founded in 1979. SBS is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization formed to preserve and promote blues music as an art form. SBS has kept the blues tradition alive in the Sacramento area by promoting the local blues music scene, bringing internationally renowned artists to the region, educating students with "Blues in the Schools", acknowledging our local blues artists, providing a Musicians' Crisis Fund and publishing the **Blue Notes** six times a year. SBS is an affiliate member of The Blues Foundation (which honored us with a 2015 Keeping the Blues Alive Award) which provides educational opportunities for young people with The Blues Foundation's "Blues in The Schools" Program.

Board of Directors Meetings - 2nd Tuesday of each Month, 7:00 p.m.

All SBS Members in good standing are invited to attend.

Meetings are held via Zoom; to request an invitation, email: president@sacblues.org

2023 Board of Directors

Sally Katen, President

Barbara Katen, Vice President

Jim Coats, Secretary

Renee Erickson Sullivan, Treasurer

Rex Smith, Parliamentarian

Cari Chenkin

Rick Snyder

Lynette Shumway

Julio Covington

Marcel Smith

Sacramento Blues Society Publications

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Facebook: facebook.com/sacblues/

Instagram: instagram.com/sacramentobluesociety/

Twitter: @SacBluesSociety

It's Election Time!

As mandated by our bylaws, the Sacramento Blues Society will hold its Annual Membership Meeting December 3, concurrently with our Holiday Party. This is the time we conduct any business requiring a vote from our overall membership. We will be voting to fill openings on our Board of Directors.

The Elections Committee will mail ballots to all SBS members in November, and ballots must be received by mail NO LATER THAN DECEMBER 3, 2023 to be counted. Ballots have the SBS address right on them, and all you need is an envelope and stamp.

If you plan to attend the Holiday Party, you may also BRING your completed ballot to the party and deposit it into the ballot box that will be there. All votes, whether mailed or dropped off, will be counted at the party, and the newly elected Board Members will be introduced to the membership at the end of the party.

There are four BOD positions to fill, with three candidates up for election. Each candidate has submitted a brief statement for your consideration. Please take a moment to read them over, and when you receive your ballot, please VOTE!

SBS Board of Directors Candidate Statements

Rick Snyder - Passionate about preserving the soulful rhythm of the blues? Look no further! As a dedicated Curator of the Museum of the Strange and Unusual and the Chairman of the Blues in the School Committee, I've been deeply entrenched in the blues community. I'm committed to ensuring the blues continue to thrive in Sacramento. Re-elect me to the Sacramento Blues Society Board of Directors, and together, we'll keep the blues alive and vibrant in our city.



Renee Erickson Sullivan - Hi, my name is Renee Sullivan, and I am running for the Sacramento Blues Society Board of Directors. I have served on the Board for several years now, most recently as Treasurer. However, I am also a Past President, and I have held many different positions over the years. I am proud of where the Board has taken SBS during the last several years. We have made great strides with our scholarship funds, bringing great shows to Sacramento, and promoting the blues in our city. I am asking for your vote so that I can continue to serve on your Board of Directors.



Shirley McCoy - I've been a member of the Sacramento Blues Society for the past two or three years, during which time I've worked for the Chico-based community radio station KZFR 90.1FM. KZFR is a non-profit just like Sacramento Blues Society, so I am extremely familiar with how a non-profit Board of Directors works.



I hope to facilitate collaborations between the Sacramento Blues Society and Chico with my various connections through the radio station, whether that be through hosting some events together and/or further promoting of Sacramento Blues Society's events.

I have already worked with Mindy Giles of Swell Productions, coordinating on-air ticket giveaways for the *Blues and Bourbon* series as well as having aired interviews I've conducted with several blues musicians such as Val Starr, Angel Reyes, and Kyle Rowland whom I've met through Sacramento Blues Society events.

If you vote for me, you'd be voting for a person who's always willing, eager, and is actively seeking opportunities to help further the blues and keep it alive. I love the Sacramento Blues Society community and I would be honored to have your vote and have the chance to help guide this wonderful organization in any way that I can!

"When I think of true blues lovers on the West Coast scene, Shirley McCoy is on top of my list. As a dedicated blues radio DJ, event organizer and promoter, she is a real asset to our blues world. I highly recommend her to any blues society seeking to sign her up as a board member!"-Aki Kumar

Catherine Russell Appears at the Sofia September 22, 2023

By Linda McShane

The Catherine Russell Quintet featured Grammy award-winner Catherine Russell on vocals with a lovely, strong voice and four other talented musicians: Music Director and guitarist Matt Munisteri, pianist Mark Shane, bassist Tal Ronen, and drummer Mark McLean.

Known more for jazz than blues, many of the tunes from the 30s and 40s brought to my mind hearing my dad professionally playing drums and singing similar songs. While jazz is perhaps not everyone's cup of tea, it was enjoyable and it works for me!

The Sofia is a great venue right here in River City! Perhaps the more we support it, the more choices they'll be able to offer?



My Love Letter to Boz Scaggs

August 22, 2023, Harris Center, Folsom

By Barbara Katen

Photo by Barbara Katen



It all began almost 50 years ago, in 1976 when I saw Boz perform live for the first time at the Memorial Auditorium in Omaha, Nebraska. He was promoting his *Silk Degrees* album and I was hooked. That night he got under my skin where he remains all these many years later. Each and every time he performs within driving distance, you'll find me somewhere at that show, transfixed and listening to him sing.

Most recently, I saw him on August 22 at one of his two sold-out shows at the Harris Center in Folsom. As we all have, Boz has aged but I go to

Boz Scaggs, Con't. from P. 3

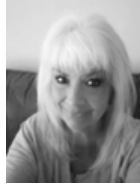
see him so often, I really don't notice the physical changes, I just know his voice has stayed the same, the voice I could listen to for hours on end.

Boz sang most of his hits throughout the show, too many to list each one. Do I love Boz Scaggs? You bet I do. We've been together for many, many years and he's been with me and comforted me with his warm, leathery voice many times when it was needed. If I said listening to him was like being "home," would you understand what I mean? There is nobody like Boz Scaggs. To me anyway.

What's on your Playlist?

By Barbara Katen

Tell me what's on your Playlist. Every issue, five people, five songs! Please send your Playlist to me at bkaten2@gmail.com and write "Playlist" in the subject line!



Chrissie O'Dell - "I Can't be Satisfied" – Muddy Waters

"Wild Horses" – Otis Clay

"A Song for You" – Ray Charles

"Valerie" – Amy Winehouse

"Hole in My Head" – Chris O'Leary

David Dot Hale - "I'm Bad Like Jesse James" – John Lee Hooker

"Bacon Fat" – Andre Williams

"Katie Mae" – Lightnin Hopkins

"It's Bad You Know" – R L Burnside

"Rattlesnake Woman" – Alabama 3

David Croall - "Freight Train Boogie" – Delmore Brothers

"Found Me a Man" – Chrissie O'Dell

"Meet Me on the Coast" – R J Mischo

"Creep Returns" – Mark Hummel

"Zoo Bar" – James Harman

Zane Toberer - "We're All Alone" – Boz Scaggs

"Homeward Strut" – Tommy Bolin

What is Hip – Tower of Power

"Keep Your Hat On" – Joe Cocker

"Tip of My Tongue" – The Tubes

Alex Simmons - "Europa" – Carlos Santana

"Gimme Shelter" – The Rolling Stones

Say A Little Prayer – Aretha Franklin

"Dock of the Bay" – Otis Redding

"I'd Rather Go Blind" – Etta James

The SBS Annual December Gala is on! Sugaray Rayford and His Seven-Piece Band!!

By Mindy Giles, SBS Events Chair/ Publicist

Sunday, December 3 is the date, Harlow's is the place. We really are incredibly pleased we got the man and the band who was Number One on our wish list-- SUGARAY RAYFORD and his seven-piece band!! He is the 2023 Blues Music Award Winner – "Best Soul Blues Album of the Year" for *In Too Deep* (FortyBelow Records). Sugaray was also nominated for "Vocalist of the Year" and "B.B. King Entertainer of the Year."



The Sacramento Blues Society Presents:
2023 Annual Membership Gala, Starring Sugaray Rayford
Sunday, December 3, 2023.
Harlow's, 2708 J St. Sacramento, CA

Doors: 6pm, Show 7-10pm

Admission: **FREE** to SBS Members with current membership card. You must bring your SBS card and ID.

\$35-General Admission (includes a one-year membership to the Sacramento Blues Society)

<https://www.harlows.com/event/sacramento-blues-society-membership-gala-featuring-sugaray-rayford/harlows/sacramento-california>

At 6' 5" and 300 pounds, this North Texas-born soul/blues entertainer is making his long-awaited return to Sacramento to help us close out the year with songs from his award-winning record. Rayford is known worldwide for his joy and spontaneity on stage. He is equally known for his truth and fearlessness in advocacy storytelling. A deeply important background in gospel choirs as a child near Tyler, Texas gave him a footing to face poverty and personal loss. His choice to become a Marine, and then become a soul blues singer and songwriter after he served is all there, embedded in his lyrics and cathartic performances. When you witness "Please Take My Hand," (https://youtu.be/vuQvN78_sQQ?si=vcCfxJH1tTJwpr8x) it's his whole story, micro and macro.

The mighty Hammond B-3 and a steppin' horn section means a deep dive throwback into old school party to many of us, but to a younger audience, it's an epiphany. That's what he brings. "You'll be up and dancing to the soulful music," says Rayford, "then you'll start to realize that the song is serious with a fine dance beat." Party Message Music!

"Sugaray Rayford's the total package — brilliant songwriting, energetic performances, inimitable vocals — and In Too Deep reveals every facet of his marvelous gifts to us." No Depression

"Rayford gives voice to people who have faced struggles." - Relix

In Sugaray's own words: "I want all of my albums to be something that I will always be proud of. Life may knock me down, and I might get discouraged, but I will never give up hope. While many of the songs are deep on the new one, we wanted to have some that shared love, because that is at the core of my being. We have given people the truth, we have laid out the vinegar, now we need to lift their spirits.

"It is like the old Black church I grew up in. The preacher hits you with hell and brimstone but leaves you with life is beautiful. The Holy Ghost is moving, the people are shouting, and you had a good time in church. But you also got knowledge. I approached this whole album like I was giving a sermon. I want people who purchase and listen to the album to feel the positivity of love and understanding. That is my core being, and that is never going to change."

Get ready for our concert and spend time with Sugaray's YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/@SugarayRayford213/about>

A year-end soul-lifting finale to another year. Renew your membership, bring a friend to join. Cocktails, food, vote for the new SBS Board members. Dress up, dress down. We are all in this together. Yes, there will be a dance floor!

<https://sugarayrayford.com/the-band>

"Blue Sunday" Update

By Cari Chenkin

As is our normal tradition, we did not have a Blue Sunday in September, as the last Sunday of that month is reserved for our Annual Hall of Fame Member Induction



Blue Sunday, Con't. from P. 4

Ceremony and Afterparty. We got back to Blue Sunday business in October, but because the event happened at the end of the month, it's too late to get into this issue of Blues Notes. Look for it in the Jan-Feb 2024 issue, along with our review of November's event. And speaking of future Blue Sundays, we have Dr. Rock & the Stuff making their appearance on November 26, and the Tim Noxon Rockin' Blues Band is scheduled for our December show, which will occur on the THIRD Sunday of that month, so as not to interfere with the Torch Club's plans for Christmas and New Year's holidays. On deck for January 2024 is the Carmen Ratti Band, featuring Jill Dineen. We're quickly booking up 2024 Blue Sunday slots, so if you're a member band and you haven't yet played a Blue Sunday, please contact me directly at editor@sacblues.org.

August 27, 2023 - The Bill Mylar Blues Band

Photos by Julio Covington & Cari Chenkin

It was a fun time at August's Blue Sunday show, which featured the Bill Mylar Blues Band, comprised of Bill Mylar on guitar and vocals, Hall of



Famers Rataat Pat Balcom on drums and Chris Fraire on bass, Robert Fries on guitar and Steve Krohn on keyboard and



guitar. We had a good, solid turnout, complete with dancers and lots of fun, with Bill's sometimes eclectic set list providing



some surprises.

Some of the songs included "Parchman Farm", a jazzy rendition of the Grateful Dead's "Friend of the Devil", "High Heel Sneakers", Billie Holiday's classic "God Bless the Child", "You're Afraid of Love", Willie Nelson's "The Night Life" and Ray Charles' "Let's Go Get Stoned". Bill also played

some of his own original compositions, including "Just Don't Sound Quite Right" and "Sweet Alibi", showing off his talent as a songwriter, in addition to his musicianship, arranging skills and vocal abilities.

Turned out this was a family affair, as Bill's wife and parents showed up to cheer him on!



BLUES & BOURBON WEDNESDAYS AT THE STARLET

IN MIDTOWN (ABOVE HARLOW'S) (2708 J ST. SACRAMENTO)

THE STARLET ROOM

NOVEMBER 1ST:
"GRIGSBY'S TRUCK STOP"
SONGS OF RW GRIGSBY CD RELEASE PARTY
\$16: GA / \$14: SBS MEMBERS

NOVEMBER 8TH:
GLORIA T & THE MASTER GROOVERS
\$16: GA / \$14: SBS MEMBERS

NOVEMBER 15TH:
ANDY SANTANA & THE WEST COAST PLAYBOYS
\$16: GA / \$14: SBS MEMBERS

NOVEMBER 22ND:
NO CONCERT
HAPPY THANKSGIVING EVE!

NOVEMBER 29TH:
PROXY MOON
\$18: GA / \$15: SBS MEMBERS

UPTOWN & LOWDOWN, 2 SETS OF BLUES, DRINKS/FOOD & DANCE FLOOR. 5:30PM DOORS / 6:30PM SHOW

SBS Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony September 24, 2023 Harlow's Nightclub

By Sally Katen

Photos by Phil Kampel, Mindy Giles & Cari Chenkin

Wow, what a momentous day we had! We all had such fun and joyous celebration at Harlow's and at the Torch Club! I began the event by describing our different committees and how you can help support the Sacramento Blues Society along with our committees. These committees are:

- Blues in the Schools
- Hall of Fame
- Gene Chambers Crisis Fund
- Mick Martin Student Fund
- Little Charlie Baty Musical Scholarship Fund

We received several donations to these committees after the event, and donations are accepted through: <https://www.sacblues.org/support-us.html#fund>.

The *Gone But Not Forgotten* video, produced by Bob Cosman, followed, which always brings out the tears and the memories of those who left us too early. If you have not seen this video, it is on the SBS Facebook page and website.

A 90-minute musical set, performed by the



fantastic Marcel Smith with the Bob Jones & the Chosen Few Band, was danced to and sung along with, and everyone had an awesome time!



After a quick break,



what everyone had been waiting for was up! The Induction Ceremony! Rataat Pat Balcom inducted Angel Reyes,



RW Grigsby inducted his wife Beth Reid-Grigsby (First HOF Couple!), Mick Martin inducted Jeff Hughson, Frank Dupree was inducted by Rataat Pat Balcom, and Sally Katen



inducted Pinkie Rideau. It was evident in their faces and words just how much being inducted meant to all of the inductees.



A big "Thank You" goes out to Emcee Liz Walker and Stage Manager Mindy Giles! Kudos to Lynette Shumway (Merchandise and Memberships), Earl Withycombe & Julio Covington (set up and tear down), Barbara Katen (my helper), Jan Kelley (GBNF), Bob Cosman (GBNF Video

and Torch Club Wall Photos), Roni Cook (HOF Certificates),



Harlow's Restaurant & Nightclub, Jim Cornett, A J Johnson (manager), JT (sound) and staff. Matt K. Shrugg (poster & program design), Phil Kampel (photos), Bill Layne (SBL), Esther & Ernie Vasquez, Bobbie Felt-Armstrong (the raffle queen) and her staff Donald Jacobson, and Cathy Monroe. I truly appreciate every one of you for your continued support every year!



We continued on from Harlow's to the



fabulous Torch Club where the Hall of Fame Wall is homed and can be viewed at any time the club is open. The new inductees and



other HOF members then proceeded to jam for a couple hours, while the crowd got in

some dancing. Upon completion of the Wall Hanging (pictures of the new inductees) with friends and family watching, the SBS President declared that each inductee is officially inducted into the 2023 SBS Hall of Fame!





Another memorable HOF induction ceremony for the books! Thank you to all who support the Sacramento Blues Society, the Hall of Fame and all our committees! With your support we can continue to be the second



oldest Blues Society in the U.S.!



THE TORCH CLUB

NOVEMBER

THU 2ND - JW JONES 9PM
 SAT 4TH - PAULA BOGGS BAND, MELI LEVI 9PM
 WED 8TH - KATY GUILLEN & THE DRIVE 6PM
 FRI 17TH - DARYL ROWLAND BLUES BAND 9PM
 WED 22ND - LEW FRATIS 9PM
 SAT 25TH - DANIEL CASTRO 9PM
 SUN 26TH - SBS BLUES W/DR. ROCK & THE STUFF 4PM

DECEMBER

SAT 2ND - HUCKLEBUCKS 9PM
 THU 7TH - UNSUPERVISED BENEFIT SHOW 9PM
 FRI 8TH - JINX JONES 9PM
 WED 13TH - NTH POWER 9PM
 SUN 17TH - SBS BLUES W/ TIM NOXON ROCKIN BLUES 4PM
 WED 20TH - TROPICALI FLAMES 9PM
 SAT 23 - STACIE EAKES & THE SUPERFREAKES 9PM
 THU 28TH - MICHAEL BAKER & THE MIDNIGHT OIL 9PM
 FRI 29TH - DANNY SANDOVAL & HIS AMIGOS 9PM
 SUN 31ST - THE GOLD SOULS 9PM

www.torchclub.net

SBS Volunteer Appreciation Reception

by Lynette Shumway

On September 30th, the SBS Board of Directors held a Volunteer Appreciation Reception. The purpose was to thank current volunteers for all their hard work and to introduce new volunteers to the work that the board does and positions staffed by volunteers.

The event was hosted by Renee Sullivan (Treasurer) at her home and co-hosted by Lynette Shumway (Volunteer Chairperson and Merchandise Director) who conducted the proceedings. In the months leading up to the event there was a drive to sign up new volunteers.

The reception was attended by seven new volunteers, six board members and one merchandise roadie (Earl, you are much loved!) Each attendee introduced themselves. Board members explained what they do and their needs for volunteers. Board President Sally Katen spoke some great words of thanks and encouragement. Then it was time for some most important business: Lunch!

After lunch, Lynette gave detailed instruction on the volunteer calendar for signing up to work events and how to work the merchandise table (one of the biggest volunteer needs). Goodie bags were given to the new volunteers including a discount voucher for an SBS logo shirt, should they want to represent SBS and merchandise while working an event.

The event was well received by all and some new volunteers have already started working. It really does take a village to fulfill the mission of The Sacramento Blues Society. Thanks, everyone!!!

Bernard Allison Rare Appearance in Sacramento!

By Daryl Hawkins

Photos by Daryl Hawkins & Barbara Katen

On August 24th, 2023, the Sacramento Blues Society hosted Bernard Allison and his band at Harlow's nightclub in Sacramento. The blues virtuoso delivered an electrifying performance that showcased his exceptional guitar skills, soulful vocals, and groovy



short of incredible, effortlessly switching between tight riffs, lightning-fast solos, and soulful bends. His voice was equally impressive, delivering heartfelt



musical arrangements.

Kicking off the show with the funky blues jam "Intro/So Excited", the band immediately got the crowd going. Bernard's guitar playing was nothing



and powerful vocals that perfectly complemented the band's dynamic sound.

The band was equally impressive, with Matthew Mwangi delivering thunderous drumming and laying down the grooving bassline, George Moyes on bass and Eric Robert on keys, whose keyboard work was impeccable, adding layers of depth and emotion to the band's sound. The chemistry between the musicians was evident, as they seamlessly played off each other's energy and kept the crowd engaged and dancing throughout the entire performance.

The show had several standout moments, including the soulful ballad "Night Train" and the funky blues shuffle "Bad Love", which showcased the band's exceptional musicianship and versatility. Their rendition of the classic blues standard "Side Step" was also a highlight, with Bernard's intense guitar solo leaving the crowd cheering for more.

Overall, Bernard Allison and his band delivered a fantastic performance that highlighted their outstanding musicianship, songwriting, and stage presence. The Sacramento Blues Society did an excellent job of hosting the event, creating a welcoming and inclusive environment for all blues fans to enjoy.

If you're a fan of blues music, or simply want to experience a fantastic live performance, I highly recommend checking out Bernard Allison and his band. They are truly a world-class act that will leave you in awe and make you want to get up and dance.

A Casual Conversation with Sugaray Rayford

By Barbara Katen

To say the Sacramento Blues Society loves the amazing Sugaray Rayford and his band would be an understatement. A HUGE hit at our Holiday Membership Gala in 2018, we received numerous requests to try and bring him back for our Gala this year. AND WE DID IT (thank you, thank you Mindy Giles!). Sugaray and his merry band will be the entertainment at our Annual Holiday Membership Gala on December 3, 2023 at Harlow's!



Since appearing at our Gala in 2018, Sugaray has gone on to be nominated for a Grammy in 2020 in the Best Contemporary Blues Album category for his 2019 album, *Somebody Save Me*. Also in 2018, Sugaray was nominated for four Blues Music Awards (Soul Blues Album, Soul Blues Male Artist, Instrumentalist – Vocals, and B.B. King Entertainer of the Year) for the 39th annual Blues Music Awards. In 2020, Sugaray was presented with two Blues Music Awards for 'B.B. King Entertainer of the Year' and 'Soul Blues Male Artist of the Year'. His latest album, *In Too Deep*, was released in 2022 and was cited as 'Soul Blues Album of the Year' at the 2023 Blues Music Awards.

I think Sugaray has a fondness for the Sacramento Blues Society, and this fondness is reciprocated ten-fold! Not only an amazing talent, he's a terrific human being. I reached out to do this interview

Casual Conversation w. Sugaray Rayford, Con't. from P. 8
and he responded with an affirmative right away. He's the real deal.

Blue Notes (BN): What was your inspiration to start singing?

Sugaray Rayford (SR): My motivation to start singing, seeing my mother singing.

BN: What role did music play in the early years?

SR: It was crucial because between that and basketball, it kept me out of trouble.

BN: When and how did you get your start in music?

SR: I got started on music to breakdancing, and the church loved every minute of it.

BN: If you hadn't become a musician/singer, what do you think you would be doing right now?

SR: Minister of Music!

BN: Who have been your biggest musical influences?

SR: Ricky Warren, my mother, Shirley Caesar.

BN: Do you have a favorite song to perform and why?

SR: My favorite song to perform, and I haven't done it in a while "Just Can't Hide Love" by Earth Wind & Fire, and "Wonderful World" by Louis Armstrong.

BN: Is there anything special you do to prepare your voice before performing?

SR: I do like to do warm-ups and try to drink as much water as I can. The rest is a secret!

BN: With what musician would you most like to collaborate?

SR: I would have loved to be able to play with the group Loose Ends.

BN: What are you most excited about in your life right now?

SR: What I am most excited about in life right now is the anticipation of what tomorrow brings.

BN: What has been the highlight of your career so far?

SR: I'm proud of the BB King Entertainer of the Year nominations, Grammy nominations, and all the dozens of awards I have won. But what I'm looking for I hold it close to the vest.

BN: If you could have your fans remember one thing about you, what would it be?

SR: That I gave everything I had at every performance.

BN: If you have a life motto, what is it?

SR: "It's not the age of the Vehicle, it's the Mileage."

BN: What poster, if any, did you have on your wall growing up?

SR: I had a signed poster of the Clark Sisters from back in the day.

BN: If you were to have a dinner party and could invite any guests (living or dead) who would you invite?

SR: My mother and grandmother.

BN: If you could snap your fingers and change anything in the world, what would it be?

SR: Discrimination between ethnicities.

BN: You are so loved by your many fans/friends in the Sacramento Blues Society. Do you have any thoughts or a message you would like to share with us?

SR: I would like them to remember it's not a concert, it's a party and just as in life, you only get out of it what you put into it.

Now, just for fun, please answer these rapid-fire trivia questions.

BN: Favorite album of all time?

SR: I couldn't begin to answer with just one album.

BN: Favorite quote?

SR: "I am on this side of the grass."

BN: Favorite Movie?

SR: *The Unforgiven.*

BN: Favorite Food?

SR: Too many to list.

BN: Favorite Book?

SR: *My Friend Biff*

BN: Favorite Drink?

SR: Cognac

BN: Favorite guilty pleasure?

SR: That's a secret.

BN: Favorite leisure activity?

SR: That's also a secret.

BN: Favorite City?

SR: New Orleans, Louisiana

BN: Pet Peeve?

SR: People with no civility.

BN: Cat or Dog?

SR: Dog.

BN: One thing you can't live without.

SR: The one thing I can't live without is People.

For more information on Sugaray Rayford, please visit his website at sugarayrayford.com and be sure to see him December 3 at Harlow's! It will be a party!!!

SACRAMENTO BLUES SOCIETY PRESENTS

THE SBS ANNUAL HOLIDAY GALA STARRING

SUGARAY RAYFORD

WINNER: 2023 BMA AWARD FOR BEST SOUL BLUES ALBUM OF THE YEAR: "IN TOO DEEP"

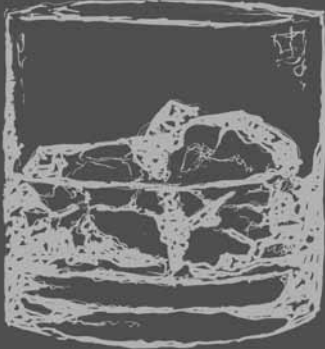
"Sugaray Rayford's the total package - brilliant songwriting, energetic performances, inimitable vocals - and "In Too Deep" reveals every facet of his marvelous gifts to us." - *No Depression*

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DECEMBER 20TH:
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CD Review

The Nick Moss Band Featuring Dennis Gruenling - Get Your Back Into It

Alligator Records

By Jay Samuelsson, aka Not Too Slim

After establishing their bona fides with legends like Jimmy Dawkins, Jimmy Rogers, Kim Wilson and Rick Estrin guitarist Nick Moss and harmonica player Dennis Gruenling joined forces in 2018 on Alligator Records. This is their 3rd release with a very tight quintet and what a joy!



With a vintage combo sound that evoked Little Walter and the Aces at times and William Clarke at others, the NMB gives us 11 varied vocals and 3 instrumentals, all originals in keeping with Bruce Iglauer's imprint's ethos. On fast numbers, Moss's voice reminded me of John Hammond, Jr., and his guitar work is compelling throughout. Gruenling's voice is not my taste but his harp solos and fills are delightful. The rhythm section of Taylor Streiff, Rodrigo Mantovani and Pierce Downer merit accolades, too.

The set kicks off with "The Bait in the Snare" which grabs you right off- these guys can really lay it down! I particularly liked the alternation of fast grooves like "Man on the Move" and "Your Bark is Worse Than Your Bite" with bluesy ballads "Living in Heartache", "Choose Wisely" and "Lonely Fool." The instrumentals are great romps that allow the band to demonstrate its chops and the shout out to Jimmy Johnson "The Solution", wonderfully encapsulates his mournful

wisdom.

If ever there is doubt that the torch of the blues tradition has been extinguished, Nick Moss, Dennis Gruenling and their band mates put that to rest on this album. Chicago is still loaded with the blues.

James Hunter at Harlow's

September 12, 2023

By Jan Kelley & Cari Chenkin

Photos by Cari Chenkin & Mindy Giles



Opening for James on this Tuesday night was a young man from Kentucky named Nat Myers. As soon as he spoke, he reminded me of a young Elvis Presley, with that slow, Southern drawl. He



thanked the audience and proceeded to awe us with songs from his newly released album *Yellow Peril* on Easy



Eye Sound Label. Keep an eye on this up-and-coming artist!

Performing solo, Nat did all original songs with great finger picking on a resonator, peppering his singing with stories about life, with James Hunter joining in a bit later.



A short break, then James Hunter came onstage, with bass man Miles Weeks, Christopher Hazelton on keys, and Rudy Petschauer on drums and of course, the man everyone came to hear, James Hunter on guitar and vocals.

Beautifully mixing their repertoire, the band tore into

"I Can Change Your Mind", "Til I Hear It From You", with a kind of a waltz tempo, and then going into a reggae beat, cha cha, swing and more that got the crowd up on the dance floor having a grand time! James' vocals were as smooth and soulful as ever!



James Hunter, Con't. from P. 10

Some of the songs were "He's Your Could Have Been", "Never Been in Love Like This Before", "There's Something On Your Mind" and Gatemouth Brown's "Okie Dokie Stomp". James plays with a spare and yet keen sound that somehow manages to be full enough to satisfy everyone.

Nat joined in to do "Baby Please Don't Go", playing his guitar and singing while James played harmonica. A new song



"Get Off the Fence" was a doozy and will be sure to be a hit, along with "Gypsy Told Me So", which had James and his keyboard player trading licks. Fun stuff!

After much applause, shouting & whistling, James returned for an encore singing "Can't Believe I'm Still In Love With You".

His band then joined in for one last tune "Baby Don't Do It" with soul man Marcel Smith jumping up on stage to complete the show with one last hurrah!

Another one of Swell Productions/Mindy Giles' shows to write home about!

"Mick Martin's Blues Party," Radio Show Is Back Home at K-ZAP!

By Mindy Giles

Mick Martin, smiling like the original KZAP Cheshire cat, is back happily presenting the "Blues Party" at the station where it all started.

When the news broke on Wednesday, August 30 that numerous long-running, locally-produced and hosted music programs on Capitol Public Radio were being axed, and that the "Blues Party" was one, the reaction from Martin's large contingency of listeners was swift. Fans went into action, calling, writing, railing at the station, ceasing their financial support.

And then, one more person stepped up. Dennis Newhall, the man who led the 2015 team that phoenix-like, revived the legendary KZAP after 23 years off the air, was there with the solution. In 2020, when COVID hit, the "Blues Party" went from being live-in-the-studio to pre-produced. Newhall had become Martin's engineer and collaborator at CapRadio, and so was already hands on with production.

"We've been friends since high school and share a passion for music," says Martin. "When the show was canceled by CapRadio, Dennis' K-ZAP (93.3FM and streaming worldwide at www.k-zap.org) was the perfect choice for its new home." Mick and his "Blues Party" went back on the air on Saturday, Sept. 9!

And thus the serendipity, back where it all began. "In 1989, I had been doing



movie reviews during drive time when KZAP asked me to do a blues show," Martin says, "I jumped at the chance. I've loved the blues for as long as I can remember. They say you don't choose the music you love; it chooses you."

Music fan/tech man Frank Farmer has remained with these two old friends, researching, compiling the music files of Mick's imagination. Martin adds, "We three musketeers are still having a ball keeping the blues alive."

If you'd like to keep the "Blues Party" on the air, go to k-zap.org/ blues <https://k-zap.org/> and scroll down until you see "Support the Blues!" and Mick's face underneath. There's a donate button there.

Blues fans with businesses are encouraged to become underwriters by contacting K-ZAP Promotions honcho Peter Rizzo at (916) 470-9629.

CD Review

Joel Astley - Seattle to Greaseland

Blue Heart Records

by Laurel Coppess

Joel Astley's debut album on Blue Heart Records, is a stunner. Made up of eleven original songs, all written by Astley himself and co-produced with Christoffer Lund Andersen, whose famed Greaseland Studio played host to the album's recording sessions, the CD showcases Joel's ability to write, sing, and play. Witty, creative, and occasionally sly, Joel's lyrics have nearly universal appeal. From warm and lighthearted to slow and sweet – or bouncy and sweet, as is the case with the tune "Candy Shop" – the album has something for everyone. While the tunes are all original, they have the flavor and flair of classic blues tunes while still being fresh and new, and it isn't hard to imagine other artists covering these tunes in the future. Yes, they are that good.



With this album, the multi-award-winning lyricist, vocalist, and harmonica player takes us on a musical sojourn from heaven to hell and back again, lyrically speaking. From the first track, "Born Cryin'", which explores and elucidates the deep roots of the blues, we travel with Joel across the breadth of blues music styles. Astley's versatility shines throughout.

Since the album's release, the storytelling saga "Secondhand Kid," has been getting considerable airplay, and deservedly so. But all the songs on the album are worthy of a listen. "Karma Wheel" is the perfect song for your commute, for the times when getting back at that driver who just cut you off in traffic is just about all you can think about. The firmly tongue-in-cheek "Takin' It with Me," which tells the tale of a man who doesn't plan on leaving it all behind, is my personal favorite. "Hot As Hell," which takes the figurative description of the girl that every guy wants to meet and makes it literal, is followed by the semi-educational "Work with What You Got." "Bobby's Place" imagines for us the kind of place that we all wish for in our own neck of the woods. The CD concludes with the beautifully rich gospel sound of "No Brighter Gold."

Along with Joel's excellent harp work, the album prominently features the guitar stylings of Rockin' Johnny Burgin, with Kid Andersen joining in variously on guitar, keyboards, and backing vocals according to the needs of each tune. The rhythm portion on the album consists of the silky-smooth bass playing of Randy Bermudes and June Core's crisp attack on the skins. Together, these two are known for making up the backing section for Charlie Musselwhite's

Joel Astley CD Review, Con't. from P. 11

touring band, and they definitely do not disappoint. The album's sound is rounded out with tastefully done backing vocals by Jill Dineen and Marina Crouse.

Available on Blue Heart Records, *Seattle to Greaseland* may be purchased anywhere you normally purchase music, including from sites such as BandCamp, as well as directly from the artist at www.JoelAstley.com. While you're there, check out Joel's visual art pieces as well. And do your blues-loving self a favor – see Joel perform live if you get the chance. You won't be sorry you did!

Memphis Bound!

IBC Update

By Liz Walker

Have you ever been to the International Blues Challenge in Memphis? It's a four-day blues party with blues men and women from around the world. The competition is exciting and intense. Our hometown blues child, Kyle Rowland, is all grown up and ready to compete with the best, as he represents the Sacramento Blues Society..

I've judged the solo/duo sessions at several past IBCs and truly believe Kyle has an excellent chance of making a favorable impression. He's original, he's personable, AND he's talented. There is a small troop of Sactown fans traveling to Beale Street in support of Kyle and excited to indulge in all Memphis has to offer (absolutely, some of the best fried chicken EVER.) Thank you all so much for your generosity in donating to the IBC travel fund. He's going to be able to get there, sleep there, eat there, and maybe even drink there. The IBC will be held Jan 17-20, 2024. You can follow along with all the excitement on The Blues Foundation's website, www.blues.org.

Johnny Burgin at Harlow's

September 6, 2023 By Jan Kelley

Photos by Mindy Giles

Another outstanding blues show came to Sacramento September 6th! I'm talkin' about Johnny Burgin bringing his masterful guitar playing and singing to Harlow's for the Wednesday night Blues and Bourbon shows produced by Mindy Giles.

Johnny's been on tour for a month now, hitting towns throughout California as well as Stateline, NV, promoting his latest CD *Ramblin' From Coast to Coast*; and giving us a bit of a preview of it.

Chris Matheos on bass and Dennis Dove, drummer, kept it going with their unbeatable energy accompanying Johnny and soon got the dancers out on the floor.

Johnny was gracious in welcoming several guest performers, some of whom are SBS Hall of Famers.



I was reminded once again about what a terrific bluesman Andy Santana (HOF 2018) is when he regaled us effortlessly with his singing and mastery on the harmonica.

Joining in was Kenny Marchese (HOF 2019)

on guitar, making it quite clear why he's in the HOF. Rick Estrin (HOF 2010) stepped right up with Johnny and Kenny to make the crowd happy campers! At one point Johnny had an audience member come on stage to play the shaker while he tore it up on the guitar.



Liz Van Houten (HOF 2015) on bass along with Stephen Kimball on guitar joined Johnny for some hot blues, then last but definitely not least, we were treated to some more hot tunes with RW Grigsby (HOF 2018) joining the group.

A truly splendid show once again from our own talented musicians stepping up to join in the fun with the remarkable Johnny Burgin!

Blues & Bones Festival - Smokin' the Foothills Once Again!

By Julio Covington, Lynette Shumway & Cari Chenkin

Photos by Janet Hongola & Julio Covington

It was an absolutely perfect day for a party on the grass, sunny and warm but not blazing hot! This is a little gem of a festival, small enough for a "down-home" feeling, but big enough to draw some top blues touring acts. Attendees were a lively group of singles/couples/families!! No pets allowed!! The whole attitude was of living and loving music live!



No disappointment was seen anywhere. The food was delicious, if slightly expensive, but hey, you're in the hills of

California!! There was also a good variety of wonderful vendors with all kinds of interesting and fun crafts and merchandise available for sale.



The high-energy SBS member band The Evan Thomas Band (they were our April Blue Sunday band) kicked off the show with a rousing set that set the tone for the day and had people dancing in the grass. Lead guitarist and vocalist Evan

Thomas roamed the crowd while playing, to everyone's delight. They played the blues with literally a "no hold back" attitude!

Next up were Jeramy Norris & the Blues



Blues & Bones, Con't. from P. 12

Cartel, also an SBS member band, who played a Blue Sunday gig for us back in 2022. They have played almost every single Blues & Bones Fest, and are a perennial favorite. While only three pieces, Jeramy and the Cartel brought their signature big sound as they romped through a blistering set of Jeramy's all-original tunes.



Longtime favorite, but first-time performers at the Blues and Bones Festival, The Laurie Morvan Band (LMB) delighted the audience with high energy "rockin' the blues"! Laurie composes her music from life experiences

and tells us all about it with raucous humor and positive affirmations on the human spirit. Right back at ya LMB, we love ya!!!

Headliners The Blood Brothers, featuring Albert Castiglia and Mike Zito, who are touring to promote



their excellent new 2023 release *Blood Brothers* put on a mind-blowing show

for the closing set of the festival. After enjoying that CD, it was really fun to hear the tunes we'd been listening to played live right in front of us! The



skill and energy displayed by both these "monster guitarists" were truly inspiring. Both Mike and Albert shared vocals duties and it was cool to hear the dif-

ferences in their voices. Mike's smooth and impassioned vocals contrasted well with Albert's raw and tuneful sound.

It was a great Blues & Bones event and everyone was pleased. We had numerous



visitors to the SBS and BITS tents, which also served as the performers' CD and merchandise booth. Our SBS merchandise was also popular. SBS volunteers Lynette Shumway, Earl Withycombe, Rene Sullivan, Liz Walker and Julio Covington had a busy and fun time representing the SBS.

We offer our heartfelt thanks to Festival promoters Ron Rubidoux and Walt Duval for allowing the Sacramento Blues Society to be part of this special and fun annual event.



Samantha Fish – Is Bulletproof!

August 20, 2023, Crest Theater

By Daryl Hawkins

Photos by Daryl Hawkins



Samantha Fish gave a performance to remember. The talented blues guitarist and singer came out smoking hot, opening her show with her hit single "Bulletproof" and wowing the audience from start to finish. From the moment she stepped on stage, Samanta Fish owned the room with her guitar skills and soulful vocals. The energy in the theater was electric, showcasing her trademark blend of blues, rock and Americana.

Throughout the rest of the show she continued to impress. Her guitar solos were breathtaking, displaying a technical proficiency and emotional depth that left the crowd in awe. She also took time between songs to share stories and anecdotes, giving the audience a glimpse into her life and inspirations.

Eric Johansen and his band were incredible opening for Samantha! They set the tone perfectly for her dynamic blues and rock performance. Eric's guitar skills were impressive, and his soulful vocals had the audience captivated. It's always a treat to see talented artists like Eric supporting other musicians.

The most memorable moment of the night was when Eric Johansen came back up on the stage and jammed with Samantha. The energy was electric as they played a medley that included "I Put a Spell on You" and "Bitch on a Run". It was a true highlight of



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Samantha Fish, Con't. from P. 13

the show, showcasing the power and beauty of live music and the amazing talent of both Samantha Fish and Eric Johansen.

All in all, Samanta Fish's performance at the Crest Theater was a triumph. She showed why she is one of the most exciting artists in the blues and rock scene today and left the audience clamoring for more. If you ever get the chance to see her live, it's an experience you won't forget!

Thank You Donors!

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Sacramento Blues Society Member Bands

Need music for an event or an occasion? Hire an SBS Member Band! And buy their CDs!

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www.almostbluesacramento.com

The Angel Reyes Band

m.angelreyes53@gmail.com

The Anthony Paule Soul Orchestra

www.anthonypaule.com

Big Earl & the Cryin' Shame

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Big-Earl>

Blind Lemon Peel

www.blindlemonpeel.com

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nmurray22@att.net

The Bobby Young Project

www.bobbyyoungproject.com

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chrissieodell@gmail.com

The Danny Sandoval Band

<https://dannysandoval.com>

The Daryl Rowland Blues Allstars

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Dave Croall & The Soothers

www.soothersblues.com

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Jeremy Norris & The Blues Cartel

www.dangerousblues.com

Julie & the Jukes

<http://julieandthejukes.com>

The Luni Tones

info@rickreedpr.com

The Mick Martin Big Blues Band

www.reverbnation.com/mickmartinsbigbluesband

The Midtown Creepers

jmcguire@comcast.net

Nedra & Julio NJR Music

www.njrmusic.com

The Neon Moon Band

www.neonmoon.band

Papa Day Blues Band

www.oldbluesdude.com

Pinkie Rideau & Blioux Gumbo

<https://pinkie-rideau-1.ueni-web.com>

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www.raycastfishcopeland.com

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www.redsbluesband.com

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<https://roosterrockandroll.com>

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www.kylerowlandblues.com

Tim Noxon Rockin' Blues Band

www.facebook.com/TimNoxon-RockinBluesBand

Todd Morgan & The Emblems

toddmorganmusic.com

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www.facebook.com/tattblues

The West Coast Playboys w. Andy Santana

<https://westcoastplayboys.com>

The William Mylar Band

www.williammylar.com

Zenn Vudu

www.facebook.com/zennvudu/

Zola Moon

www.zolamoon.com

Blues in the Schools Update

By Rick Snyder, Chair

We are currently stuck in a holding pattern waiting for our contract information with the Any Given Child Program to get sorted out. Once that is done, we will start lining up our Artist-in-Residence programs at High Schools in the greater Sacramento area as well as our in-school assembly programs.

Stay tuned for further information as it develops.



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