

SACRAMENTO

A bi-monthly publication of the Sacramento Blues Society



BLUE NOTES!

MAY - JUNE
2023
ISSUE 44
VOL. 3



President's Column

By Sally Katen

March came in like a lion and we were inundated with plenty of rain, as well as snow for some of us. But we were also inundated with some fabulous blues shows, which you can read about in this issue.



More good times ahead continue through May and June beginning on Thursday, May 4 with the annual BITS Showcase at the Woodlake Lounge, located at 1328 Del Paso Blvd., Sacramento, next to Stoney's Rockin' Rodeo. Doors open at 5:00 pm with the first act taking the stage at 6:00. We are proud of our BITS program led by Rick Snyder, and we take great pride in helping to keep the blues alive with this program. I hope you will join me there to listen to some great music and show your support for the program. Tickets are only \$10 for adults and \$5 for students under 18, with all profits going directly into the BITS program.

The BITS Showcase will coincide with the Sacramento Big Day of Giving (Big DOG). Please see Rick's BITS update in this issue to find out how to donate to SBS and direct your donation to one of our programs of your choice.

After a four-year absence, SBS is once again excited to have plans for representation in Memphis at the International Blues Challenge (IBC). Our competition will be held on Sunday, May 21 at the Boardwalk, 9426 Greenback Lane, Orangevale, starting at noon. Admission is \$10 adults and \$5 children. The selected band will be the SBS representative in 2024.

And lastly, please mark your calendar for the 4th Annual Johnny "Guitar" Knox Memorial Pro Jam on Sunday, June 11 at the Torch Club. This show benefits the Sacramento Blues Society Hall of Fame, a committee I have chaired since 2010 and a program near and dear to my heart. The Hall of Fame was also one of Johnny's

favorite events and he was so proud to be a HOF Member. This show will feature many of our Hall of Fame Members, for a mere \$10 donation at the door. Please see the ad for the event in this issue. I hope to see you at one OR ALL of these SBS sponsored events, and thanks for supporting the Sacramento Blues Society!

Blues in the Schools Empowers the Greater Sacramento Area!

by Rick Snyder, BITS Chairman

Another year has passed since we last presented our BITS Showcase. Wow, where does the time go? In 2022 it took forever until our Big Day of Giving/BITS Showcase Event took place. The twelve



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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

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Blues in the Schools Update, Con't. from P. 2

months since our last event have flown by, due partly to how busy Blues in the Schools has been.

- On June 5 last year, we co-promoted a fundraising event at the Bay Area's Club Fox with the John Lee Hooker Foundation.
- On July 7, we presented a BITS assembly for John Reith Elementary School.
- We presented four assemblies for the Natomas Home School Alliance students on October 4.
- We gave a near sellout show/fundraiser at the Sofia with Blind Lemon Peel, The Zach Waters Band, Danny Sandoval and His Amigos, the BITS All-Stars, led by Kyle Rowland and special guest, Mick Martin on November 4.
- On November 7, we had a BITS assembly at Taylor Street Elementary School.
- On November 15, the BITS musicians played and talked about the blues with the Cordova Meadows Elementary School kids.
- In February, we began two Artist in Residence programs; one facilitated by Lew Fratis at West Campus High School and one enabled by Jimmy Pailer at Pacific Elementary School.
- On February 23, we presented a BITS assembly for the kids at Franklin Elementary School.
- On March 1, we went to Martin Luther King Tech Academy and taught the middle schoolers about the Blues.
- April 3 found us at Herberger Elementary School for a BITS assembly.
- We return to Taylor Street Elementary School on April 19 for another BITS assembly. They must have really liked us!
- On April 26, we will be at Foulks Ranch Elementary School,
- May 8 and May 30 at Edna Batey Elementary School.

I can only continue by acknowledging the musicians and committee members without whom this would not be possible.

- Mick Martin
- Kyle Rowland
- Kenneth Marchese
- Mike Phillips
- Myles Silveria
- Beth and RW Grigsby
- Val Starr and John Ellis
- Jimmy Pailer
- AJ Joyce
- Pete Philis
- Lew Fratis

A big shout-out to our committee members:

- Mindy Giles
- Jim Coats
- Steve Boettner
- Ryder Green
- CJ DeAngelus

The BITS Showcase - Thursday, May 4

I have digressed a bit. This year's BITS Showcase will be held at the Woodlake Lounge, located at 1328 Del Paso Blvd., Sacramento. It is right next to Stoney's Rockin' Rodeo. This is a very cool locale, with a huge outdoor patio with a stage for the bands, food, and drinks (both adult and not-so-adult beverages).

Doors open at 5PM. The first act, **The West Campus BITS Band**, takes the stage at 6PM. Blues in the Schools committee member Ryder Green and his band, a three-piece (I love three-piece bands) perform at 7PM. And to cap off our evening, we have BITS alumni Amaya Levels and Sergio Zazueta, on bass the inimitable AJ Joyce, an SBS Hall of Fame alum, Myles Silveria on the skins (you might have caught him in one of Rowland and Tumblin's recent performances) and everyone's favorite teacher, formerly at Rosemont High School, the one and only Steve Boettner.

Tickets are a thrifty 10 bucks for adults and 5 bucks for students under 18. We will have SBS and BITS merch, including t-shirts of all sizes, key rings, pins, hats, totes, CDs, and more!

Not so coincidentally, this gig takes place on the same day as the annual **Sacramento Big Day of Giving**, colloquially known as Big DOG. If you cannot attend this event and lend your support in person, we have several convenient online locations where contributions can be made if the spirit moves you.

If you would like to support the Sacramento Blues Society general fund, then this is for you ~ <https://www.bigdayofgiving.org/story/Blues>.

If you want your contribution to go to BITS, use this one ~ <https://www.bigdayofgiving.org/story/Sac-Bits>.

Maybe the SBS Hall of Fame is near and dear to you ~ <https://www.bigdayofgiving.org/story/Sbs-Hof>.

Maybe someone has helped you out in your time of need, and you would like to pay it forward via the Gene Chambers Musicians Crisis Fund ~ <https://www.bigdayofgiving.org/story/Gcmcf>

To assist budding musicians who still need help to afford their own gear, we have the Mick Martin Student Fund ~ <https://www.bigdayofgiving.org/story/Mmstudentfund>.

And last but not least, you may want to assist one of the music students at Sac State by contributing to the SBS Little Charlie Baty Memorial Music Scholarship ~ <https://www.bigdayofgiving.org/story/Charliebaty>.

I know I will see you at the BITS Showcase because you folks read *Blue Notes* and support the Sacramento Blues Society. Until we meet under the stars at the Woodlake Lounge on May 4th, oar reservoir!

SBS IBC Competition Coming Soon!

Plans are underway for the SBS's first foray back into the Blues Foundation's International Blues Challenge, after an absence of several years.

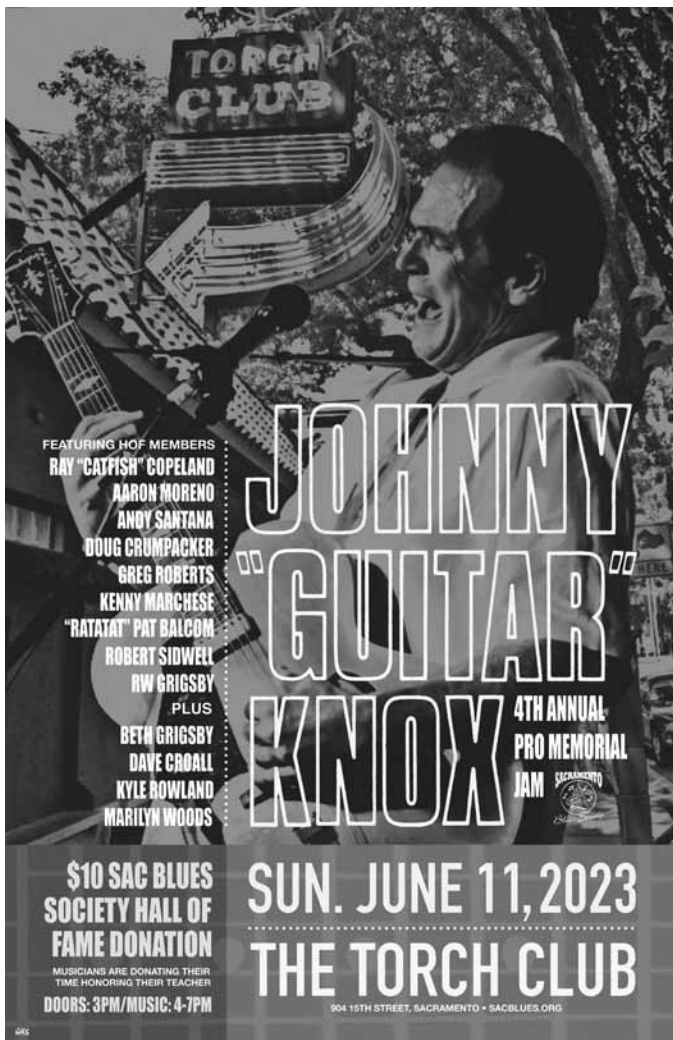
We extended the deadline for band registration from April 15 to April 30, and opened registration up to both bands and solo/duo acts. As of press time, we don't have all the details for the competition, but we do know the date, time and place! Mark your calendars for Sunday, May 21, starting at noon (times subject to change depending upon number of performers). at the newly remodeled Boardwalk, 9426 Greenback Lane, Orangevale, CA.



Johnny "Guitar" Knox Memorial Jam

We have a great group of musicians ready to celebrate Johnny on Sunday, June 11, 2023, at the Torch Club, 4 – 7pm. It will be a great event and I hope to see you there. All monies made at the door will go to the SBS Hall of Fame. something that was very dear and special to Johnny.

See the ad below for the lineup. And see you there!



FEATURING HOF MEMBERS
RAY "CATFISH" COPELAND
AARON MORENO
ANDY SARTANA
DOUG CRUMPACKER
GREG ROBERTS
KENNY MARCHESE
"RATATAT" PAT BALCON
ROBERT SIDWELL
RW GRIGSBY
PLUS
BETH GRIGSBY
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KYLE ROWLAND
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**JOHNNY
"GUITAR"
KNOX** 4TH ANNUAL
PRO MEMORIAL
JAM

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FAME DONATION**
MUSICIANS ARE DONATING THEIR
TIME HONORING THEIR TEACHER
DOORS: 3PM/MUSIC: 4-7PM

SUN. JUNE 11, 2023
THE TORCH CLUB
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What's on your Playlist?

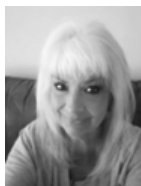
By Barbara Katen

Ever wonder what music everyone else is listening to? I do. So, being a "nosey parker", I decided to ask what some of the music is that we consider staples on our respective playlists. I asked for five songs and found some of us just couldn't be constrained by the five-song limit (Rebel #1) and some of us were even broader in scope and just said "anything" by their favorite artists (Rebel #2).

Please don't think my music playlist curiosity ends here, as I'd like to include this as a *Blue Notes* feature. SO if you are interested in sharing your top five songs, please email me at bkaten2@gmail.com. And please be sure to put Playlist Songs in the subject line.

Bo Ely

"The Thrill is Gone" – B.B. King
"Wang Dang Doodle" – Koko Taylor
"Boom, Boom" – John Lee Hooker
"Mannish Boys" – Muddy Waters
"Evil" – Howlin Wolf



Julio Covington

"Summertime" – Billie Holiday and/or Janis Joplin
"Voodoo Child Blues" – Jimi Hendrix
"Louisiana Fog" – Charlie Musselwhite
"The Thrill is Gone" – B.B. King
"Texas Flood" – Stevie Ray Vaughan

Daryl Hawkins

"Hoodoo Man Blues" – Junior Wells
"Nine Below Zero" – Muddy Waters
"The Sky is Crying" – Stevie Ray Vaughan
"Careful with a Fool" – Johnny Winter
"Leaving Trunk" – Taj Mahal

Sally Katen

"Damn Right I Got the Blues" – Buddy Guy
"Still Got the Blues" – Gary Moore
"Lie to Me" – Jonny Lang
"Blue on Black" – Kenny Wayne Shepherd
"Amazing" – Aerosmith

Mick Martin (aka Rebel #1)

"Everything's Gonna Be Alright" (live) – Butterfield Blues Band
"Help Me" – Sonny Boy Williamson
"Wang Dang Doodle" – Koko Taylor
"Whiskey & Wimmen" – John Lee Hooker & Canned Heat
"Forty Days and Forty Nights" – Muddy Waters
"Damn Your Eyes" – Etta James
"The Cat" – Jimmy Smith
"Jumping at Shadows" – Peter Green

Liz Walker (aka Rebel #2)

Anything by:
Keb Mo
Zac Harmon
Bonnie Raitt
Koko Taylor
Muddy Waters
Kenny Neal

"Blue Sunday" Update

by Cari Chenkin

February's band was Zola Moon, and March's band was Neon Moon. Please see their reviews below.

April's "Blue Sunday" occurred on April 30, too late for review publication in this issue; look for it in the July-August issue. May's "Blue Sunday" will feature The Bobby Young Project, and on deck for the June date are The NJR Trio. See you at the Torch on the last Sunday of each month!



February 26, 2023 - Zola Moon

by Julio Covington & Cari Chenkin

Photos by Cari Chenkin & Julio Covington

ZOLA MOON put on a Sunday show fit for a FRIDAY NIGHT! She has a style in her voice that, once you hear her, you will know Zola Moon. It's a Rock/Blues sound that'll keep you moving ... if there's enough space to move at all!

Her harmonica playing





is an added bonus to her performance! The band was engaged with the crowd and it was a fun attitude! Band members Justin Morelli on guitar, Daryl Singh on bass and Bob Hudson on drums kept things rockin' and rollin' throughout the afternoon. Special guest vocalist Chrissie O'Dell sat in for a tune or two as well.

Zola performed a mix of blues covers (some standouts were "Piece of My Heart", "Night Life",



and "I'd Rather Go Blind") and original songs ("Drive By", "Snake Eyes", "No Laughing Matter" and "Coins from a Dead Man's



Eyes" to name a few), all of which were well received by the audience.

SBS members and friends made it a packed house for the duration of the show!! Thank You EVERYONE: Cari Chenkin SBS VOLUNTEER & BLUE SUNDAY DIRECTOR, SBS VOLUNTEERS Lynette Shumway, Earl Withycombe, Julio Covington; Torch Club management, sound man Warren and mixologist Marissa.

March 26, 2023 - Neon Moon

By Julio Covington

Photos by Janet Hongola

The Neon Moon Band made their first appearance at the SBS' Blue Sunday at the Torch and the atmosphere was happening. It was a packed house, and the music was rockin.' bluesy and all-day danceable! Band members are: Brian Lemley (guitar & vocals): Michael Powers (drums); Don Schmidt (bass & vocals); Bob Stromberg (guitar); Johnny Tindel (keys, guitar & vocals).

I was able to enjoy a great conversation with bass player Don Schmitt, who mentioned after 40



plus years of touring the United States and Europe, the Torch Club had long been on his to-do bucket list! I'm grateful I was there to be a part of his experience. The band was tight, professional, and fun to



watch and I'm sure they'll be back.

Thanks to Renee Sullivan, SBS Board mem-

ber and Treasurer, for stepping in for Cari Chenkin, "Blue Sunday" Director, and thank you Marina Texeira, owner,



and staff of the Torch Club as well as a lifelong SBS sponsor.

See you every last Sunday of the month at the Torch for "Blue Sunday"!! I'm volunteering for every one of them!!

"A Blues Revue"...Reviewed!

By Jan Kelley

Photos by Jack Casey



Author/Producer Nan Mahon's "A Blues Revue" was held on a rainy Sunday

afternoon to a sold-out audience. Held at District 56 Elk Grove Arts Commission on March 12, it was a perfect time to enjoy a musical play.

Directed by Mick Martin, blues man extraordinaire, all performers are local musicians with credits of their own individual/band performances. The cast included: Pinkie Rideau, Katie Knipp, Beth Reid-Grigsby, RW Grigsby, Gary Mendoza, Kyle Rowland, Todd





Morgan, Sid Morris & Steve Freund, Stephen Kimball, Derek Fresquez, Andy Santana, Ray Copeland, David Johnson, Jim Caselli, Jake Houshmand and the fantastic soul man, Marcel Smith.

The entire play was divided into eras of the blues, each one exemplifying how blues music grew through time to become a genre enjoyed by many cultures and races over the years. Each woman was perfectly cast.

A large screen displayed a slide show of historical blues figures that completed the story line, while Gerry Simpson, the narrator, introduced each era and was superb in his



delivery.

The stellar Blues Revue Band consisted of David Johnson, band leader, trumpet and trombone arrangements; Andrew Little, guitar; Jonathan Stoyanoff, bass; Jim Caselli, drums; Otis Mourning, clarinet and sax; and Katie Knipp and Todd Morgan on piano.

This production was extremely well-done and entertaining, evidenced by the joy on everyone's faces – actors and audience members alike. It would be great to see it played in other cities!

Musical Magic with Janiva Magness

By Daryl Hawkins



On March 16, I had the pleasure of witnessing a truly phenomenal performance by a female blues artist, Janiva Magness, at Goldfield in Sacramento. Janiva was stunning in every way, both vocally and in her stage presence. Her voice projected powerfully, filling

the venue with raw emotion from the moment she opened with her first song.

While highlighting her most recent album, *Hard to Kill*, Janiva also belted out some of her classics. I couldn't help but be drawn into her soulful sound. Her music reverberated through my body, stirring up all sorts of feelings within me. She had the crowd in the palm of her hand, captivating and mesmer-



izing us with each song. Through her music, Janiva told stories of heartbreak, loss, and pain, but also of love and joy. Her lyrics were poignant

and relatable, evoking empathy from those who have experienced similar struggles with love and life.

Additionally, we were treated to a surprise when Janiva invited Rick Estrin of Nightcats fame to join her on stage. It added a whole new element of excitement and energy to the performance. The spontaneity and unpredictability of having Rick, with his own unique style and approach, created a dynamic and unforgettable experience for



the audience.

Overall, the concert was definitely musically rewarding. Janiva Magness with her band (Zach Zunis on guitar, Gray Davenport on bass, Matt Tecu on drums and Jim Alfredson on keyboards) delivered a performance that ran

deep, spoke volumes, and left an indelible mark on everyone who was lucky enough to witness it.

And Just Like That - It's Bonnie Raitt

By Barbara Katen

Photos by Barbara Katen & Cameron Christensen

On March 22, I spent the evening with an old friend at the SAFE Credit Union Performing Arts Center. That old friend being the talented songstress and story teller, Bonnie Raitt.

Slide guitar great Roy Rogers opened the show for Bonnie with an acoustic set where he slayed us with his style and wardrobe of guitars as he sang songs we know and love by Robert Johnson, Willie Dixon and others, and shared stories about





being the “real” Roy Rogers. Roy was the perfect opener for Bonnie, two slide guitarists (are you kidding me???) and he had his share of fans in attendance as well. Interestingly, I spied Bonnie in the wings enjoying his set as he ended with “Living in the USA”.

Bonnie took the stage to a standing ovation. The woman is an icon, there is nobody like her. I ran a gamut of emotions, with tears as she sang the beautiful and poignant “Just Like That” (for which she won the 2023 Song of the Year Grammy) but also her dedication of the song “Nick of Time”

to her late parents followed by a dedication to all of our parents. Yep, the tears were flowing.

Of course, Bonnie sang her many toe-tapping hits like “Let’s Give Them Something to Talk About”, “Thing Called Love”, plus the two great songs written by her dear friend and talented songwriter, Bonnie Hayes, “Have a Heart” and “Love Letter.” And yes, also “Angel From Montgomery” written by another icon, the late, great John Prine. I know there were weren’t many dry eyes in the audience when she sang that classic.

Bonnie came back for an encore and took a stool in front of the microphone to sing “I Can’t Make You Love Me” after which she confessed she often gets choked up when singing that song.

Bonnie ended the evening by calling Roy Rogers back to the stage to perform with her for a rousing finale.

I’ve loved Bonnie for almost half a century now. It was a happy, joyous, emotional, and moving evening with a very old friend. I hope she comes back to see us again soon

Bonnie’s Band: Ricky Fataar, drums; James “Hutch” Hutchinson, bass; Glenn Patscha, keyboards/vocals; Duke Levine, guitar/vocals



An Evening with Albert Cummings

By Daryl Hawkins

On March 14 at the Crest Theater in Sacramento, I attended an Albert Cummings concert, courtesy of SBL Productions, and I must say that it was an unforgettable experience.

Even as I walked into the venue, the atmosphere was electric, and the excitement was palpable. The stage was set up in such a way that there wasn’t a single bad seat in the house, and the lights and sound system were top-notch.

The concert lasted for nearly two hours, and it felt like it passed in

the blink of an eye. The energy of the crowd, coupled with the amazing music, made for an experience that I will never forget. It was clear that the band, consisting of Albert, Scot Sutherland and Warren Grant, was having an incredible time on stage, and they were able to transmit that joy and excitement to every person in the audience.

All in all, it was an incredible



night filled with great music, amazing stage production, and an energy that simply can’t be put into words. If you’ve never seen Albert Cummings live, I highly recommend that you do so as soon as possible. It’s an experience that I guarantee you won’t forget.

BLUES & BOURBON WEDNESDAYS AT THE STARLET

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

MAY 2023 SCHEDULE

MAY 3RD:
THE ORPHANS
\$15: GA / \$13: SBS MEMBERS

MAY 10TH:
VAL STARR'S BIRTHDAY BASH!
\$15: GA / \$13: SBS MEMBERS

MAY 17TH:
PETER PETTY & HIS MERCEN-AIRES
"TORCH SONGS & SALOON REVERIES"
\$18: GA / \$15: SBS MEMBERS

MAY 24TH:
AKI KUMAR (BOMBAY BLUES!)
\$18: GA / \$15: SBS MEMBERS

MAY 31ST:
HALO RIDER
FEAT. MARKUS JAMES, ANNE HARRIS, WILLIE JORDAN
\$24: GA / \$20: SBS MEMBERS

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

Benefit Concert for the Little Charlie Baty Scholarship

By Lynette Shumway, Julio Covington & Cari Chenkin

Photos by Bob Hakens, Cari Chenkin, Bobbie Felt Armstrong & Julio Covington

To mix genres and quote Frankie Valle (yes, I'm that old) "Oh, What A Night"! March 23 at Harlow's, there was standing room only at the 2nd Annual Little Charlie Baty Celebration Concert, but Earl and I managed to get in several dances.

Swell Productions, Rick Estrin & the Nightcats, The Sacramento Blues Society and Harlow's all teamed up to create magic this night.

It was an evening filled with friends, music, and memories. Rick Estrin and the Nightcats led a variety of artists from local to international stars, including many of the "Once a Nightcat, always a Nightcat" club. It was a heartfelt and joyous night celebrating one of the finest musicians in Sacramento history, Little Charlie Baty. This was a true celebration for the public who knew and loved Charles.



It was a heartfelt and joyous night celebrating one of the finest musicians in Sacramento history, Little Charlie Baty. This was a true celebration for the public who knew and loved Charles.



Rick Estrin is such a consummate performer that he captures your full attention whenever he is on stage. Resplendent in a silvery sharkskin suit with black silk shirt,

polka dot pocket square and gray alligator shoes, he was a lesson in "I Gots the Music in Me"!

The band started out in the current Nightcats iteration, with Rick on

harmonica and vocals, Kid Andersen on guitar, Lorenzo Farrell on keys, Derrick "D'Mar" Martin on drums, plus Ronnie James Weber on bass. The songs they chose to play that night, according to Rick, all go back in Nightcats history, played with Charlie. They included cover songs that the band played "before we wrote our own songs", in Rick's own words.



The band planned an evening of "guest stars" who had a special connection to Charlie. They brought out Texas guitar-slinger Anson



Funderburgh to join them on a number of songs. Spanish harp player/singer Quique Gómez, who was the last person to record with Charlie,



joined the group onstage while Ronnie James left the stage



and Lorenzo covered the bass on keyboards for Quique's cover of "Tangerine".

After intermission, guitarist/vocalist Rusty Zinn joined in, with another bass player, Randy Bermudes. Rusty sang a number of tunes, including a BB King song.



Kyle Rowland stepped onstage next, and Liz Peel Van Houten (another former Nightcat) subbed in on bass.



After Kyle, Andy Santana came up to handle harp and vocal duties. Ronnie James returned to the stage and Rick brought out a "surprise"



guest artist, the inimitable Alabama Mike on vocals.

There was an abundance of Little Charlie commemorative merchandise available for sale at the show, including T-shirts and posters (some of which are still available on the SBS website, BTW!), all of which helped raise monies for the scholarship endowment at Sacramento State in Charlie's name.

Between merch sales, concert proceeds and donations from the band and SBS members and friends, the evening was a financial success as well as an entertainment success, raising a good chunk of our promised endowment.

What a wonderful way to celebrate the life and music of Little Charlie Baty and raise money for the music scholarship fund named in his honor. Thank you everyone! See y'all next year!





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YOUR NUMBERS. OUR STRENGTH.

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**Vanessa Collier at the Starlet
Sacramento, CA, March 19, 2023**

By Jan Kelley

Photos by Bob Cosman

Multi-award-winning Vanessa Collier, vocalist, sax player, multi-instrumentalist and songwriter played to a sold-out, standing room only show, and started off the evening with some kick-ass jump blues, getting the place rockin' right from the start!

Along with her band, Laura Chavez on guitar, Byron Cage on drums and vocals, and bass man Andrew Crane, the full house responded to



her every song, matching her energy by applauding, whoopin' and hollerin', and getting up on their feet when she came into the audience playing her sax!



The awesome guitarist Laura Chavez had several solos throughout the evening, to the delight of the audience, many of whom have been fans of hers for years. The handsome and talented Byron Cage, who has played with a *Who's Who* of blues musicians, did an outstanding job on the drums and singing with Vanessa and bassist Andrew kept it all

together with his tight bass-playing.

THE TORCH CLUB LIVE

MAY

SAT 6TH: REDS BLUES 6-8
SUN 14TH: SHAUN YOUNG & GEOFFREY MILLER 4-7
THURS 18TH: DANNY SANDOVAL 9-12
FRI 19TH: JIMMY PAILER AND LEW FRATIS 6-8
ELVIS CANTU 9-12
SUNDAY, MAY 28TH THE BOBBY YOUNG TRIO 4-7

JUNE

SAT 3RD: ROOSTER 6-8
SUN 4TH: BEFIT FOR GERRY PINEDA 3-7
SAT: 10TH DARYL ROWLAND 6-8
SUN 11TH: JOHNNY KNOX MEMORIAL BENEFIT 3-7
SAT 17: PETER PETTY 9-12
WED 21ST: TOO SLIM & THE TAILDRAGGERS 9-12
SAT 24TH: DANIEL CASTRO 9-12
THUR 29TH: DANNY SANDOVAL 9-12
FRI 30TH: LEAPING BLENIES 6-8

www.torchclub.net

Vanessa's bluesy voice hit all the right notes, but when she picked up that horn...watch out! She not only packed a punch with her playing she could croon a ballad that made goose bumps. Combining these four talented musicians created a truly enjoyable, put-on-yer-dancin' shoes evening that just didn't quit!



Upon meeting Vanessa after the show, it struck me how lovely a personality she is and genuinely shy and yet prepossessing. She graciously spoke with each fan, giving full attention and interest in each. She is truly a genuine, caring human being, which is evidenced in her songwriting.

Vanessa is fast on her way up to winning many more music awards. She's been nominated seven different times for a Blues Music Award, capturing the BMA for Instrumental – Horn in 2019 as well as 2020. She is currently in the running for the 2023 Blues Music Award for Contemporary Blues Female Artist. Her colleagues competing with her are: Beth Hart, Janiva Magness, Ruthie Foster, and Teresa James. Tough stuff!

Currently touring throughout the United States, the Vanessa Collier Band will be going abroad in May for several months, only to return for the Legendary Rhythm and Blues Cruise in October of this year. To learn more, go to www.vanessacollier.com

A Casual Conversation with Janiva Magness

by Barbara Katen

The Blues Foundation named Janiva the B.B. King Entertainer of the Year in 2009, becoming only the second woman, after Koko Taylor, to be so honored. Not only is Janiva tremendously talented, she's also one of the nicest people I've ever had the opportunity to interview. I am a HUGE fan of both Janiva the artist, and Janiva the human being. I had the good fortune to attend her show at Goldfield Trading Post on March 16th. It was a hella fun evening and Janiva, with her band, put on one kick *ss show. And if you haven't heard her latest album *Hard to Kill*, you don't know what you're missing. Ladies and Gentlemen, meet Janiva Magness!



Blue Notes (BN): What inspired you to start singing?

Janiva Magness (JM): First and foremost, my father's singing and harp playing, then his record collection which was

a lot of early country like Hank Williams, Patsy Cline, Tex Ritter, and some early blues like Bullmoose Jackson and more. Great stuff!

BN: What was the role of music in the early years of your life?

JM: It was very important and everywhere, and I found memorizing melody and lyrics very easy as a young girl – which was great. So, I could sing along to records, TV and the radio!!

BN: How did you get your start in music?

JM: I always had the desire to sing. I mean a lot of people do and when we sing along to records, or commercials or theme songs, it's really fun right? So that turned into an obsession, a really good one, and that turned into a career path. So that desire certainly stayed with me and grew. I started auditioning for gigs with local bands and much to my surprise I would get the gigs for the most part. I was shocked but happy. It seems early on others thought I could really sing and gave me a chance. I was lucky and I have also worked very hard – good combo!

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

JM: Hard to say because music has been a real-life raft for me. I am not sure I would have survived without it honestly. But if I did, a therapist, or a lawyer – IF I could tolerate school, which has always been a challenge for me.

BN: Who have been your biggest musical influences?

JM: Easily my dad, Koko Taylor, Etta James, Bob Tate, Bonnie Raitt, James Brown, Billie Holiday, Joni Mitchell, and Dave Darling my collaborator, producer, and dear friend.

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

JM: Favorite songs change over time for me. Right now, it's the material from my latest release *Hard to Kill*. Especially "Strong as Steel", "Fireman", "Right Here" and "Closer".

BN: What musician would you most like to collaborate with?

JM: My producer and song collaborator Dave Darling.

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

JM: I am in development right now for my memoir *Weeds Like Us*

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to be turned into a screenplay for television – a limited series. That's pretty exciting, surreal and a bit scary!

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

JM: I gotta say there have been a LOT of highlights. First and most importantly is the connection with the audience when we do a live show. It's palpable and wonderful. And I gotta say the night I heard B.B. King call my name as the "B.B. King Entertainer of the Year" in Memphis - was second to none. Getting recognition from the Blues Foundation for my songwriting has been stunning. Certainly, the multiple BMA nominations and several wins and of course, the Grammy nomination. So, like I said there have been quite a few...

BN: What are some of the challenges unique to being a woman in the music industry and blues world?

JM: There are plenty of challenges to being a musician today regardless of gender identification. The music business is constantly changing. Some parts of the business of music are quite heavily slanted towards men. That's nothing new and even though it's been brought more to the forefront in the last several years, we still need a lot more balance.

Talent buyers, as they are referred to today, need a system to help them determine who to book and still stay current with what's happening in the business AND draw fans AND stay in business. It's a hard balancing act. Artists need to figure out some similar things and more - in order to stay in business and relevant, also a very hard balancing act and the infrastructure is basically set against artists making money. Costs for artists to be on tour have wildly escalated post-pandemic but their pay rate has not necessarily gone up. It's all very challenging.

For women specifically, one example being, there is a sort of practice of fulfilling **quotas** for talent buyers who book shows, and one of those quotas is for women. It's not unusual for a talent buyer to say, "well I need a woman" or "I already have my slot filled for a woman on the festival". So unfortunately, that practice leaves a lot out – ultimately for the audience. So, another female fronted act may not have a shot on the billing "because the quota is filled...". What I see is very little consciousness about this, and there are multiple spots allotted for other types of players, who are primarily male. It's weird and distorted from my point of view and a long-time, widely accepted practice. So, in this example, women have to deal with a lot fewer options of where and when to try and work. I don't see that changing until the audience demands it, frankly. I don't really get upset about these things any longer, as much as it bores me. No one ever said being a musician will be easy – ever!

My personality is such that having a mountain in my way has never been much of a deterrent. If I allow that to stop me - I will get nowhere as an artist or woman in business. For me, it then became almost a discipline about going around it, going through it or over the obstacle! I also learned long ago that if someone has a problem with me because of my gender, it's their problem and not mine. At least I try to not let it be mine. It also helps to not take things so personally, even if they are intended to be!

One pointed example of that was, I was backstage at a festival some years ago and it had been a stressful travel day and things were intense backstage with trying to get set up and get on stage on time etc. We were all treading carefully as we knew the overall vibe was tense and we just wanted to get our job done. I asked for a power strip so I could quickly fix my hair since it was super hot

and humid that day. I was eventually given the power strip and my road manager was immediately told by the buyer "I will never work with her again – NEVER!" As far as I could find out, it was because I asked for the power strip. (BTW that has proven to be the case. Have not worked with that buyer ever since.) It's kinda wild and I can't help but wonder if a male musician had asked for a power strip if they would have been "blacklisted" or labeled "difficult" for their request...? It is important for me to say that I don't see myself or women in general as victims here. Most women I know in music are pretty tough and savvy. We have to be. Do we have "extra" challenges in the business? I tend to think so, based on my experience. Do I let it stop me or push me off my goals? Have not done so yet and have no plans to, for the future. I am sure there are many more stories I can tell, but that in and of itself is an entire article, worthy of its own headline. The problems and solutions to the difficult slant of the music business!

BN: Is there anything special you do to prepare your voice for a gig?

JM: Yes! Always, specific warm up routine along with steam. Dietary restrictions and more. It's a big commitment to keep in vocal shape.

BN: How do you feel about touring? Do you enjoy it?

JM: I love being on tour because it's a sort of singleness of purpose. My band is an amazing group of musicians and excellent humans so it's super fun and we all know that we have each others' backs to get through the challenges that touring often brings. It's a great experience and we get to play music and connect with the fans. Beautiful!

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

JM: I truly love them and am so grateful to see them again!

BN: What do you consider your biggest achievement to date?

JM: That I am living my best life – I'm still here – Just like the song lyrics say!!

BN: You laid your entire life "out there" in your book *Weeds Like Us*. What was your inspiration for writing such an honest memoir, and did you find the experience to be cathartic?

JM: *Weeds Like Us* is a true story. It is my true story and I have long known I needed to write it – but I really didn't want to. I also talk about this in the beginning of the book. I just didn't think it was "anybody's business". But when I came to realize it by sharing my story – it could serve as a way to really help other people who have struggled with their lives, young people, and adults – that changed my thinking. I actually had witnessed that very thing – helping others understand their early struggles or current ones are not the end of the story!!! I witnessed this for many years as a Mentor for Youth-At-Risk and connecting with other foster care alumni - and doing public speaking engagements about my experiences, so I knew what I had to do and yes, it was a difficult and cathartic process. Six years in the writing and a lifetime in the making. BTW - that has turned out to be very true. I know it's a hard read in the first half, it was a hard part of my life. But that part of my life no longer defines me -and THAT is the point, isn't it? I really am living my best life now and it ain't perfect but it's exceptional! I believe we all have access to that kind of life if we are willing to work for it and not give up.

BN: As a silver-haired sister, I have to say that I love your new look. The silver/white hair is gorgeous on you. What inspired you to go from brunette to beautiful silver-haired songstress?

JM: Ahhh I have been a brunette my whole life! My hair color change is one of the results of the pandemic (like a lot of us) and it really grows fast! I do kinda miss it, but I am not willing to do all that again. I got tired of the touch up process and reconciled myself to the platinum. I am grateful I don't have to do THAT work any longer. As long as I can have a fresh haircut – I'm good and I am glad u did it – Yours is gorgeous my dear! I do see a LOT more women who have done the same – I think it's fabulous!!

BN: What is the funniest/weirdest question you've ever been asked in an interview?

JM: I honestly have no idea....!!!! I probably blocked it out' because it was so weird!!!

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

JM: Ha! When a door slams, remember that a window opens... Meantime it can be hell in the hallway!! Just hang on!

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

JM: Franco Zeffirelli's *Romeo and Juliet*. Later it was John Hammond, Jr., Taj Mahal, and Billie Holiday!

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

JM: My dad. Koko Taylor. My brother Jimmie and my last foster mother Carrie.

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

JM: People being more compassionate towards each other. I think it could solve many of our world's problems. Practice more loving kindness.

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

Favorite Album of all time: Album changes over time BUT some of them have been *Etta James Rocks The House*, *BB King Live at Cook County Jail*, Sly and the Family Stone, Aretha Franklin *Amazing Grace*, Bob Dylan *Blood on the Tracks*, Bonnie Raitt's first album, *Bonnie Raitt*, Muddy Waters *Fathers and Sons*, Robert Johnson

Favorite quote: "That which is to give light, must endure burning." – Viktor Frankl

Favorite movie: *What Dreams May Come* - Robin Williams

Favorite Book: Webster's *Dictionary*

Favorite Drink: Espresso in Italy or France. Thank you very much.

Favorite Guilty Pleasure: Dark chocolate

Favorite Leisure Activity: Yoga – in the Redwoods or on the beach!

Favorite City: Paris

Pet Peeve: Ha! Which one? People who don't have your back! (Insert Son House singing "Don't You Mind People Grinnin' in Your Face")

Cat or Dog: love em both – actually love critters, do I have to choose?

Can't live without: Music.

For more information on Janiva, please visit her website at janiva-magness.com

CD Review

Vanessa Collier - Heart on the Line

Phenix Fire Records By Cari Chenkin



This is an embarrassing admission to make, but here it is – I found this CD in a box of magazines in my living room a couple of weeks ago, and I don't know how long it had been there. Since the CD came out in 2020, it's got to have been a couple of years! I guess it came to the SBS mailbox and was given to me to review for the newsletter, and I must've put it down absent-mindedly and forgotten about it.

Lo and behold, it's now 2023, Vanessa Collier comes to town to play a Blues & Bourbon show in March, and the CD magically popped up when I cleaned out my magazine stash! So, since it's still her most recent studio CD (she released a live CD in 2022) I thought it would bear reviewing in this issue of the *Blue Notes*.

Self-produced by Ms. Collier, this 11-song CD is truly a gem! She wrote all but three of the songs on the album, and it really showcases what a "triple threat" she is – as a songwriter, singer and saxophone player.

Her band on this album consists of the blazing Laura Chavez on guitar, William Gorman on keys and clarinet, Nick Stevens on drums, percussion and something called a Shuitar, which I'd never heard of. (Pronounced "Shih-tar", turns out this is a "shitty" guitar that's been repurposed as a percussion instrument - check it out on YouTube!) Bass duties on this recording are handled by C. C. Ellis, Scot Sutherland and Cornell Williams, each performing on different cuts. Quinn Carson played trombone and Doug Woolverton played trumpet. Vanessa Collier provided vocals, background vocals; alto, tenor and baritone saxophones as well as resonator guitar on track number three (which I'll get to in a moment) and cowbell.

The album starts off with a rousing and completely badass, soulful version of James Brown's "Super Bad". Then it moves into a Vanessa Collier composition called "What Makes You Beautiful", which immediately became my very favorite cut on the CD. It had an almost Motown-like quality and melodic feeling that really captivated me. The next cut, titled "Bloodhound" was a real old-style, down-home blues that you'd swear came out of Mississippi in the 1930s but is another Vanessa Collier original, and she completely does it justice on the resonator. Amazing!

Next comes a song called "I Don't Want Anything to Change", a sweet and plaintive ballad written by Elisabeth Wagner Rose, Maia Sharp and Stephanie Chapman. Cut number four is a terrific rendition of the classic Randy Newman tune "You Can Leave Your Hat On", one of my favorites from his catalog. The rest of the album consists of all Vanessa Collier originals including "If Only" which was a great "message song" and the slow blues grind of "Weep and Moan" which had a "St. Louis Blues" type of feeling. The CD closes with the title track "Heart on the Line".

I thoroughly enjoyed this entire CD and it will become part of my regular rotation of what I'm listening to these days. I look forward to hearing her *Live at the Power Station* CD and any new studio albums she cuts. Visit Vanessa's website at: www.vanessacollier.com.

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Bernard Allison to Appear at Special SBS Show August 24, 2023!

The Sacramento Blues Society is thrilled to announce that Bernard Allison, talented son of the blues great Luther Allison, will appear at Harlow's on Thursday, August 24. Currently a resident of Paris, France, this is the first time he will have been on the West Coast in years. His new record, *Highs & Lows* debuted at #1 on the Billboard Blues Chart. Tickets are now on sale, make sure you get yours soon, as we expect a sell-out! Tickets at: www.harlows.com.



Photo by Keith Lambert



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