



Inclusive - a newsletter for the Prairie Crossroads Blues Society

April 2016 Edition

Prairie Crossroads Blues Society



Champaign-Urbana IL

Views by Dennis Wismer

Hi all - I want to touch base on a few things going on.

As a society we appreciate your membership and support. It is a big time for renewals and plenty of events to enjoy and participate in. That being said we need help to grow and continue with events we support. If you have any inclination to be a part of a meeting or event, please do! It might not be your thing but most have a lot of fun at our events and meetings. We try to provide an open and laid back environment for all to help and enjoy.

Another January recorded and one more International Blues Challenge season completed...while another begins. The 2016 IBC was as winding and inclusive as the Mississippi River for me.

I am sure some bands planning on competing start their plans well before the previous year is completed, and competitors done competing prepare for the next step while a new champion is still practicing. The next

winner might not be an entity as one duo explained in the final they were as surprised as the viewers since it was only 7 months previously they had been formed. Local societies are preparing and setting logistical plans in motion continuously and all the while the music plays. Of course the Blues Foundation is the biggest player in the IBC which is arguably their biggest event in impact on the Blues World.

Cutting to the chase my Blues Foundation International Finals week began in and around Clarksdale, MS. Needing some nourishment, I ended up in the shadows of the Crossroads at Abe's for some barbecue. Winding through Clarksdale and visiting briefly local and international icons Red Paden and Roger Stolle they both advised that Hambone Gallery had live music this night.

I was already aware of that before leaving my home but was hoping an unannounced show might have developed or under promoted show was available. The quick mini tour and fact finding mission completed, our group headed to The Shack Up Inn. While not for everyone it is perfect for me and my usual lodging in Clarksdale area. The Shack Up Inn features comfortable casual lodging in a musical and retro plantation environment.

Plowing ahead we motored to the aforementioned Hambone Gallery and proprietor, artist, musician Stan Street was hosting a jam. While there, art was bought and music enjoyed as the house band performed and

2 International Blues Challenge acts appeared on stage as well. Dixie Street manned the bartending duties and helped provide the southern hospitality on a low key predecessor of the high energy Memphis scene.

While in Clarksdale a quick trip to Deak Harp's Mississippi Saxophone Emporium is always a highlight. Our troupe was fortunate Deak was in that morning and ushered us on to Memphis with a live outro as only Deak can.



Deak Harp at Deak Harp's Mississippi Saxophones and Blues Emporium



Jiggy and Source at Deak Harp's Mississippi Saxophones and Blues Emporium



Jamaih Rogers at Memphis IBC

Johnny Rawls returns to the Iron Post

Submitted by Lorri Coey

Johnny's resume includes sixteen Blues Music Award nominations including 2016 Soul Blues Male Artist, a Blues Music Award in the Soul Blues Album of the year category in 2011, a discography that runs back to 1994 and credits for producing, song writing, horn arrangements, vocal, guitar and band director.

Johnny's been called the Master of Southern Soul Blues and he will be bringing his act to the Iron Post on Friday, April 22 at 9pm.

If you haven't seen Johnny before, put this one on your calendar. Johnny loves performing, connecting with the audience and schmoozing with blues fans.

After starting to play professionally while still in high school, Johnny worked with O.V. Wright until his death in 1980 and then he continued with the band, Ace of Spades Band, for another 13 years, when he began touring as a solo artist.

Johnny's discography includes Ace of Spades, which won Soul Blues Album of the Year, and Remembering O.V., a tribute to O.V. Wright, in 2013.

Johnny collaborated with Otis Clay, another Catfood Records recording artist, in 2014 for the CD Soul Brothers, which was nominated for Soul Blues Album that year. Johnny and Otis both received nominations for Soul Blues Male Artist that year as well. Sadly, Otis Clay passed away suddenly January 11, 2016.

Johnny's latest CD includes covers of Beast of Burden and Your Love is Lifting Me as well as originals such as Every Woman Needs a Working Man, Keep It Loose and Southern Honey. One of my favorites off this CD is Lucy. Be prepared to dance.



Photo credit: Johnny Rawls, 2015 / Photo by © Marilyn Stringer

More Upcoming Events

We are also pleased to announce the return of Kilborn Alley to a recurring show similar to the Juke joint shows. They will be performing the 2nd Thursday of the Month at Po Boy's 202 E University, Urbana Il. The inaugural is May 12th. If that date seems familiar it is no coincidence that PCBS meeting is held at 6:30ish same dates and place.

The Bentley's Blues Jam has an amazing lineup and is growing in popularity with fans and musicians. Bentley's is located at 419 N. Neil St Champaign, Il.

On tap - Noah Williams fresh from performing in Memphis with the Back Alley Blues Players, Aaron "A Train" Wilson and the Soul on Sunday's Band, Blues Brews and BBQ performer David Dunavent from Clarksdale, Mississippi, the return of Groove Avenue

and the long awaited debuts of Bruce "Bruiser" Rumenie and Doc LeCouris and David Adcock and the Painkillers Blues Band!!!

For more upcoming events, visit Prairie Crossroads Blues Society at www.prairiecrossroadsblues.org



A Perfect Blues Song: "The Breakaway" by The Kilborn Alley Blues Band

From the 2005/2006 CD, *Put It in the Alley*, Blue Bella Records

A Blues Review by James "Skyy Dobro" Walker

"I listened to that music; that's rock, that's not 'Blues'"

"Oh, yeah, who are you – The Blues Police?"

"Screw you – you're just a Blues Nazi!"

If you are a Blues fan of long standing, you have probably heard, read, or said one of the above phrases yourself. Part of the experience of being a music fan of any genre is guarding (or not) it against pretenders. So, here is a challenge and appeal to all Blues fans: find and report on a song that perfectly embodies "The Blues" to the extent there can be no argument - it "is" The Blues! I'll start with a bona fide Blues song by Champaign IL's Kilborn Alley Blues Band, "The Breakaway."

What's funny is – the first three times I heard this song, I did not like it. I never doubted its Blues authenticity, it just did uncomfortable things to me

physically and mentally - like no other song. It is just that powerful! Like smelling and eating cooked cabbage, it became a delicious acquired taste.

The power of this song comes from the fact that it is a true story about loved individuals known personally by the band. The song testifies and manifests the strife and emotion of good love gone bad (or maybe, bad love gone worse). Recorded in 2005, it is found on their CD, *Put It in the Alley*, their first on the Blue Bella Records label, owned and operated by Nick and Kate Moss.

The Song (7:21):

00:00 "The Breakaway" begins with ear-grabbing chromatic harmonica played solo by Joe Asselin. The warning-alarm-edginess of the harp sets the mood for this slow paced tune. Like a passage in a movie soundtrack warning viewers of danger nearby, the harp foretells that the tale about to unfold is a sad one. Again, its power made me unexplainably uncomfortable the first few listens.

00:20 the full band joins with Chris Breen (bass) and Ed O'Hara (drums) in the engine room, Josh Stimmel on lead guitar, and vocalist Andrew Duncanson adding rhythm guitar. Stimmel's shimmering punctuations intensify the foreboding mood.

01:12 Andrew Duncanson begins the vocals by talk-singing the story's beginning and providing the setting for the listener.

01:30 Up to this point, the music and vocals have been mellow. At one minute and 30 seconds into the song, Andrew stops the talk-singing and begins his fully earnest vocals. He sings two words, "I believe..." with such power and volume that I, literally, get goose bumps every time I hear it. Now, honestly, I had heard people say, for years, that such-and-such a song gave them cold chills, made the hair on the back of their neck stand up, or some other physical reaction. I thought they were exaggerating as I had never had a true physical response (other than joy) to any song. But here, it happens, my body experiences something akin to electricity – a true physical reaction!

01:35 As Andy narrates the plight of the protagonist, his sobbing desperation builds to sheer hopelessness of saving his relationship.

03:04 Right on cue, Stimmel takes a guitar solo which accentuates this desperation with a series of notes played on the bass strings simulating a low guttural growl.

03:20 As the mid-song guitar solo continues, the notes turn on a dime and take flight into the upper registers. Now the notes are piercing, pleading, and staccato-paced, simulating painful crying. Meanwhile, Asselin's harp is continuing mournful edginess underneath the guitar solo.

04:00 The guitar solo ends and the vocals continue the second half of the story with the equally desperate perspective of the female involved.

04:57- 05:54 The song reaches its climax with ferocious pleas and statements of life or death intensity. The band at this point is passionately supporting the climactic moment, which is paced in bursts like a person trying to talk while simultaneously sobbing. The words come out in short spurts in between gulps of breath and convulsive sobs. Andy is literally wailing the words at this point.

05:54 Asselin plays a harp solo which continues the established atmosphere. No hope for a happy ending.

06:30 Duncanson sings the final words by repeating the final painful choices the female feels she is facing.

06:45 – 07:21 Joe's harp recapitulates the opening lines and fades away intertwined with matching-mood guitar punctuations, both disturbing to the end.

If you have read this far, it should be obvious that I have acquired a "taste" for this song. It is the best example of the "Perfect Blues Song" that I know, and I have known it for 10 years. It never fails to move me no matter how many times I listen, and after all, isn't that the goal of any great work of art.



Executive Board

President - Dennis Wismer
Vice President - Greg Altstetter
Treasurer – Zach Widup
Secretary - Lorri Coey

At-Large Board Members

Phil Hult - Tony Odendahl

Committee Chairs

Membership - Phil Hult
Merchandise - Greg Altstetter
Marketing - by Committee
Newsletter Editor - Elaine Hult
Entertainment - Bob Paleczny
Web Team - Lorri Coey, Bob Paleczny

Corporate Sponsors

We greatly appreciate our Corporate Sponsors for supporting the PCBS with their funds and their missions.

Memphis on Main regularly brings impressive Blues talent to Champaign.

Fluid Events brings the Champaign Blues, Brews, and BBQs festival to town in the summer, along with other Blues music events throughout the year.

Krannert Center for the Performing Arts supports our Blues in the Schools program with both funding and expertise.

The Pawn Shop in Rantoul has long been a supporter of live blues shows in central Illinois.

Rossville Sound Werx in Rossville, IL manufactures speaker cabinets and hand wired point to point tube amplifiers. They support PCBS with equipment.

Skins-N-Tins Drum Shop has provided a drum set for use in The Prairie Crossroads Blues Society IBC challenges and other events.

Donors

We are grateful to the following individuals and businesses that have provided donations to support the work of the Prairie Crossroads Blues Society.

Cody Sokolski and Marci Dodds

One Main Development

LLC Eastland Suites

Hohner USA

Louie's Dixie Kitchen & BBQ

Orange Krush Foundation

Samuel Music

Slumberland Furniture

Supervalu

Band Memberships

Back Pack Jones Their CD "Betsy's Kitchen" won our Best Self-Produced CD competition.

Benny Jenkins Bloodline Their CD "Can't Take the Blues" won our PCBS Best Self-Produced CD competition in 2013.

Black Magic Johnson has their new CD, "Walk With You Baby" available from their web site

Bluetone Drivers

The Diva and The Dude play regularly throughout the area. Check out their Facebook page for up-to-date information on gigs.

Groove Avenue is one of our newest member bands. They are Joni Dreyer/ Vocals, Bob Watson/ Guitar, Dan Henry/ Bass, Brad Hendricks/ Harmonica, Daniel Casey/ Drums.

Hurricane Ruth released their second CD “Born on the River” in September.

Jackie Scott won a Blues Blast Magazine award in 2010. Check out her website for more on our newest member band jackiescottandthehousewreckers.com

Jerry Lee & The Juju Kings were the winners of the PCBS 2012 IBC Band Challenge. Their new CD “Southside of Nowhere” was released in September and is available on their web site.

Kilborn Alley will be playing their 15th Anniversary Shows on Thursday April 30, 2015 at The Iron Post.

Mary Jo Curry and Tombstone Bullet Tombstone Bullet made a mark during the 2012 International Blues Challenge, being recognized as the fan favorites at their venue and moving forward to the 2012 Beale Street Blues King fan favorite competition.

Matthew Curry and the Fury
<http://www.matthewcurry.com/>

The Low Wines

The Painkillers

The Squires

The Sugar Prophets

Susan Williams
<http://www.reverbNation.com/susanwilliam>

I merely took the energy it takes
to pout and wrote some
blues~~~~~Duke Ellington

