



Inclusive - a newsletter for the
Prairie Crossroads Blues Society

December 2015 Holiday Edition



Views

By PCBS President Dennis Wismer

It is a time for sharing, friendship, food and family. Making new memories and savoring old. Remembering and cherishing the past while relishing in the future and most importantly enjoying the present. We should do that all days because each day brings opportunities for greatness if we let it.

With that in mind some of our fellow blues fans have offered their ideas for ways to share some blues inspired gifts or ways to spend quality time sharing music.

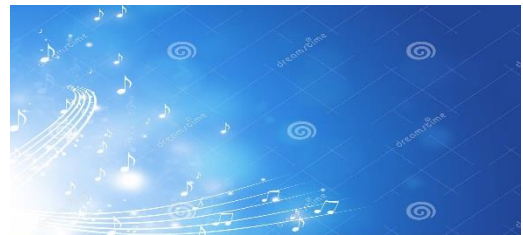
I would like to take second and ask you all to consider ways to help support the amazing music and musicians we have the opportunity to enjoy. Musicians give up time with family, other possible lucrative financial endeavors and sleep to provide us with their art and the fruits of years of work and learning.

There are many local musicians that perform here with great regularity...support them, pay a cover, buy a shirt and tip the band. I find myself skipping shows all too frequently and regretting it later.

Many of these musicians have the talent and experience to be touring nationally but don't and we have the opportunity to enjoy them. Take advantage.

Here is my suggestion for a way to share the gift of music. Have a conversation with a fan or musician. Find out what they might enjoy to listen to, read or where they might especially enjoy visiting.

One of the things I enjoy most about the Blues scene is that it is accessible. Most shows, even at some of the biggest festivals in the land the artists make themselves available to discuss their music or just converse. Take the time to immerse yourself and share stories with fans and musicians of the music we love.



CD Review

Submitted by Dennis Wismer

Let me tell you about Mississippi Hill Country, better yet get on down yourself. Feel the calm warm winds and the Mississippi Mud in your toes with music that transcends time and senses and massages your marrow.

If you cannot fly, drive, ride or walk there grab a copy of Descendants of Hill Country the latest CD from Cedric Burnside Project, put it in a player and if your spine doesn't move. Turn it off, get in the car and get to a show cuz you need some soul shaking.

Descendants of Hill Country is the latest CD from the Cedric Burnside Project. The album kicks off with two driving songs relying on the unmistakable Hill Country rhythm forcefully performed by multi-instrumentalist/bandleader Cedric Burnside.

The opening song explains Trent Ayers, Cedric and Garry Burnside's familial connection to the Blues. They were Born With It. Trent Ayers is born with it being the son of Joe Ayer's a collaborator of Junior Kimbrough and the Burnside's family heritage is as rich and deep rooted in the Mississippi Hill Country as possible. What stands out further is the amount of time these musicians performed with their legendary relatives and forefathers of Hill Country Blues RL Burnside and Junior Kimbrough.

Front Porch departs somewhat with a melodic jam of mesmerizing guitars and fine vocals inviting in tone and word to come join on the front porch. The skillful guitar interplay emulates the casual pace of the Delta. Where you can let time flow by listening to guitar or watching Big Muddy flow and feel at peace.

Then Bam! Trash talking, dice rolling kicks up the tempo again with the message Don't Shoot the Dice, they could be crooked and you can bet it all and you'll never see it again. This song has a more urban feel fueled by a searing guitar solo that would be home at any big city club and a rhythmic accompaniment worthy of Motown.

The Seventh offering You Just Wait and See stays upbeat but the dynamics brought forth from the acoustic guitar is a welcome respite, while the preceding songs...mainly hard driving...are unique and tremendous, the laid back downplayed instrumentation and vocals is welcome, giving pause.

An anthemic homage to soldiers helps to display the depth of this album, ranging from a patriotic tribute to fighting men and their return, sitting on a porch jamming, gambling cash in rigged dice games and the tried and true Blues love themed tales.

This CD covers a wide range of emotions and styles but remains firmly rooted in Burnside's and Ayer's roots singing about love, hardship and life ending with a simple yet moving love song and basic yet intriguing style and simplicity. I echo the feeling in the song towards a lifelong love for this CD. I will Love Love it Love it...Till I die!!!

BLUES DANCING

Submitted by Jennifer White



Discover another way to enjoy Blues! Learn to Dance!

Blues I, a blues dance class for beginners will be offered this January at Defy Gravity Pole and Aerial Arts Studio so you can not only sit and listen, but get up and *dance* to the band!

Blues is an improvisational dance that is led and followed based on various dance techniques and concepts rather than a repeated pattern of steps. You will be introduced to these concepts and given time to practice applying them as you learn some basic moves. You will be dancing in no time with an introduction to the basics. Or come to the entire semester of classes to increase your skills and enjoyment as you explore how to interweave your own creative movement with that of your partners to the rhythms and emotions of the blues. This class is open to everyone. No dance experience required.

The instructor will be local dancer Jennifer White. Although her dance history began thirteen years ago with a passion for Argentine Tango and Salsa, she added Blues and Swing to her repertoire in 2010. And shortly after that began to take on the role of lead as well as follow. Jennifer travels regularly to attend dance workshops and events throughout the United States. Dance has taken her to many places including Chicago, Indianapolis, St. Louis, Minneapolis, Ann Arbor, Albuquerque, Tampa, New York, Philadelphia, San Francisco, and even Buenos Aires. Jennifer was co-founder of BluesCENTRAL and continues to promote the development of a blues dancing community in C-U.

Convenient and accessible, Defy Gravity is a tiny gem of a studio located on Green street just West of campus town with plenty of free parking.

To sign up for Blues I and/or other dance, pole or aerial classes, please refer to the Defy Gravity website or contact Jennifer White or Sarah West.

Don't forget to add this to your Christmas wish list. Or better yet give the gift of dance! Gift certificates are available!

But wait, that's not all!

Regularly scheduled evening dances will also be offered at Defy Gravity to give our dancers plenty of practice. Non-dancers are welcome to attend to find out what blues dance is all about. The best way to keep updated on this and other local or regional blues dance events is to join the Facebook group BluesCENTRAL.

Please join us in bringing more dancing to our C-U blues scene. See you on the dance floor!

Lessons will be Fridays 8-9:

January 22, 29
Feb 5, 12, 19, 26
March 4, 18
April 8, 29,
May 6, 13

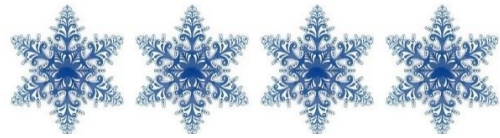
Dances will be Fridays 9-12:

January 22 at Memphis on Main

And all the others will be at Defy Gravity:

February 5,
February 19
March 4
April 8
April 29
May 13

Schedule subject to change. Please check the most updated version of the schedule at www.defygravitycu.com and the BluesCENTRAL Facebook group. Questions? Email defygravitycu@gmail.com or call 217-419-8053"



CD Review

Submitted by James "Dobro" Walker

Matt Woods – *Sawdust and Gasoline*

Self Release

www.mattwoodsmusic.com

8 tracks; 30:59 minutes; Suggested

Styles: Acoustic Blues, Delta Blues – played on a National steel bodied guitar

As a promoter of live Blues music shows, I find it bitterly ironic that I cannot book a solo acoustic act and expect but about half the attendance that will come to an Electric Blues act. What would Charley Patton, Son House, Robert Johnson, Skip James, Booker White and countless other originators of the genre say? Thankfully, there are still artist practitioners of the original Blues style. Doug MacLeod, John Hammond, Jr., Rory Block, John Mooney and Eric Bibb seem to do alright, and now, I am introduced to an adept wood-shedder and native Iowan, Matt Woods.

Probably mid-30s and providing the young blood that Blues needs, Woods has been performing regularly since 2002 and has released three previous albums (one solo album, and two backed by his electric band, The Thunderbolts). Three times he has won the Iowa Blues Challenge and gone on to represent the State in the International Blues Challenge. Matt's first solo album, "If I Was a Fish," finished in the top five of the International Blues Foundation's "Best Self-Produced CD" category in 2006.

Matt plays finger-picking style on a metal bodied guitar. In the videos on his website, he is playing a National brand, and he is also endorsed by Eastwood guitars. All eight songs are originals and were "honestly" recorded "live, in studio" in Ames IA. Left handed Matt's guitar playing is first rate; he wears a slide on his ring finger and tastefully (and rapidly) mixes picked notes with both fret holds and slide applications. His heartfelt voice rapidly

grows on and entertains the listener and serves Matt's purpose well as he avoids contorted extremes of range.

The first song that became an ear-worm (got stuck in my head), and, therefore, my pick for best on the album is "I'll See My Father There." Positioned last on the album, the Gospel themed number says, "When I get to heaven, I won't have a care; I'll see my father there." Does he mean earthly father or heavenly father? I think the answer to that question is "Yes". Clearly some of his best song writing and singing is found here.

Clever questions requiring an impish sense of humor are found in the opening song, "It Ain't Stealin'". "Are you really running if your feet don't touch the ground? Are you hiding if no one is looking for you? And, is it really stealing "if you are giving it away?"

Being a rural Midwesterner myself, I had to chuckle at "Snow Drivin'." Using North Mississippi Hills rhythms, Woods avoids the often distastefully monotonous, droning trance by adding sliding harmony chords. The effect is perfectly congruous with the simple message, "we got to get to town" and it is slick and white-out dangerous. Another song, this time with a more plodding rhythm, is also based on Midwest weather "Tornadoes Are Bad for Everyone." Rural living will certainly find one on a "Rock Road" at some point; Woods uses it as a metaphor for that country living (and, indeed, he does own a farm).

"JP's Boogie" is an instrumental that is masterfully presented. Even a non-guitar-player can distinguish the intricacies involved. The title track is a lament of a bad love full of pain and loss. The girl was the "prettiest little girl [the protagonist] had ever seen," but she took the tractor and [saw] mill and left him with nothing but "Sawdust and Gasoline."

For fans who avoid solo acoustic shows, Matt does have the ability to plug his National guitar into an electric amplifier. So, here this CD is – the best of all worlds: acoustic music, electrically amplified, stomping rhythms, deft song writing, honest no-studio-tricks singing, and straight forward pure Blues.



CD Recommendation

Submitted by David Berchtold

www.davidberchtold.com

[Electronic Press Kit](#)

[David' CDs](#)

My suggestion is Hot Tuna's first album. Just titled "Hot Tuna." The one recorded live at the Berkeley coffeehouse. Chock full of great acoustic Blues and the album that got me interested in playing blues. Also got me started investigating many of the great old masters, like Reverend Gary Davis, Manse Lipscomb, Blind Blake, and many others.

Link:

[https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hot_Tuna_\(album\)](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hot_Tuna_(album))



WEFT's Top Blues CDs of 2015

Submitted by Bob Paleczny

Are you looking for some quality blues music to give as a gift this Holiday Season? Well here's a list of new blues CD's that received the most spins at WEFT 90.1 FM Community Radio station during 2015. WEFT has 14.5 hours of blues programming each week. There's about 8 DJ's, or as WEFT calls them air-shifters, who typically do the shows, so there's a variety of blues styles represented in this list.

WEFT broadcasts throughout Champaign and the surrounding counties and streams worldwide through their website; weft.org

Charlie Musselwhite - I Ain't Lyin'

Omar Coleman - Born And Raised

The Cash Box Kings - Holding Court

Junior Wells - Southside Blues Jam

JJ Grey & Mofro - Ol' Glory

Smokin' Joe Kubek & Bnois King - Fat Man's Shine Parlor

Tad Robinson - Day Into Night

Rockin' Johnny Burgin - Greetings From Greaseland

Carolyn Wonderland - Live Texas Trio

Brandon Santini - Live & Extended

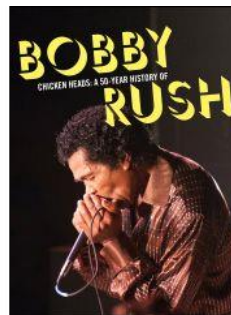
Buddy Guy - Born To Play Guitar

Here's a few words about why you might want to give some of these disks to those on your Christmas list. Charlie Musselwhite is one of the premier blues harmonica players currently recording and touring. As Kilborn Alley's featured singer Abraham Johnson would say "I Ain't Lyin'". Omar Coleman is a young harp player and vocalist out of the Chicago area. Also from Chicago, The Cash Box Kings play originals and covers in a classic Chicago blues style. Delmark's re-release of Junior Wells Southside Blues Jam includes all the songs on the original album plus several additional previously unreleased alternate takes. Perhaps you caught JJ Grey & Mofro and their rockin' country blues style when they played at last summer's Phases of the Moon festival. Their newest CD is titled "Ol' Glory".

Smokin' Joe Kubek & Bnois King have played together for 25 years. Their two guitar styles complimented Bnois King's vocals and they were known for high energy live shows. Sadly Smokin' Joe passed away in early October. Indiana's Tad Robinson has a smooth soulful vocal style and is another excellent harp player. Rockin' Johnny Burgin's "Greetings From Greaseland" features Johnny's smooth guitar playing. Johnny moved to Chicago to attend the University of Chicago. It was as radio DJ that he acquired the Rockin' Johnny nickname. He's played and toured with Taildragger, Sam Lay, Pinetop Perkins and many others over the years. Carolyn Wonderland is a multi-instrumentalist and was one of the stars at this summer's Champaign Blues Brews & BBQ Fest. Brandon Santini is yet another excellent young vocalist and harp player who is based out of Memphis, TN. Seems like a lot of great harp players put out popular CD's this year.

Chicago's current king of the blues, Buddy Guy, released an excellent CD "Born To Play Guitar" this year. It contains some of his finest guitar licks ever and proves he truly was born to play the guitar. All these disks would make excellent Christmas gifts and many of the artists have ties to the Chicago blues scene which adds a local flavor to these picks.

Here's a couple more gift ideas. These two disks are recent releases so they haven't gotten many spins at WEFT yet, but I think they'll be getting lots of spins over the next few months.



Bobby Rush recently released an impressive collection that spans his entire career. "Chicken Heads: A 50 Year History of Bobby Rush" is a 4 disk set that contains hits from Bobby's early career starting with tracks from the mid '60's and '70's, right up to tracks he released with Blind Dog Smokin' in 2014. In all, there are about 80 tracks of music on this amazing collection.

For the more budget conscious gift giver, there's a special deal on the Nick Moss Band's "Live and Luscious" CD. When you visit nickmoss.com you can get 5 copies of this CD for only \$25. This live CD was recorded at the Baltic Blues Festival in Eutin Germany and features Nick's superb guitar playing and Michael Ledbetter's amazing vocals. Nick Moss is the head of Blue Bella Records, the label that local favorites Kilborn Alley Blues Band record for, and Nick recently played with Kilborn at the Iron Post when they celebrated their 15th Anniversary. Many of you on my gift list shouldn't be surprised when you get this excellent CD from me this Christmas.



A Christmas Tradition – Keith Harden

By Bob Paleczny



For me, one of the highlights of the holiday season every year is the return visit of Tolono native Keith Harden. In 2010 Rich Cibelli, PCBS President at the time, presented Keith an Honorary Membership to

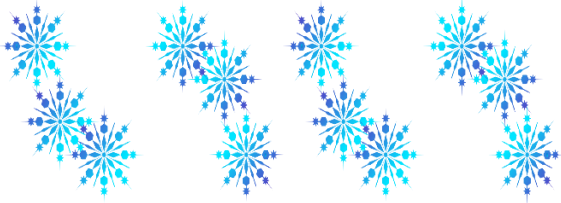
Prairie Crossroads Blues Society. He was honored for his many years of performance and dedication to "The Blues" in Champaign-Urbana, IL. Here's the [PCBS Honors Keith](#) page.

Each December Keith returns to the Champaign-Urbana area to play a series of shows. This year Keith kicks off the series of shows on December 17th at the Clark Bar when he performs with his good friend and fellow guitar master, Matt Stewart for an acoustic duo performance. Friday the 18th finds Keith doing a Happy Hour show at Silvercreek Restaurant and Saturday the 19th Keith plays a solo acoustic show at Huber's on West Church Street in Champaign. Tuesday December 22nd Keith joins another of his good friends, Paul Sabuco for another acoustic duo show, this one at the T'n'T Lounge in Rantoul.

Typically, the featured show during Keith's December visit each year is his Annual Keithmas Celebration on December 23rd at The Iron Post, 120 S. Race St. in Urbana. Keith celebrates his birthday that Wednesday and is joined by a stage full of guests, local musician friends and relatives, such as his sister Kathy Harden, as well as friends from his current residence in Nashville, TN. The show always features plenty of great original music along with some Beatles tunes and a few Christmas songs. This year's show is scheduled to run from 8:00 pm to midnight. Head out for one of the great holiday traditions of the local music scene.

There is a bit of a conflict this year because that same night, Wednesday December 23rd also features The Kilborn Alley Blues Band as host of the PCBS/Bentley's Blues Jam. The Bentley's jams have been a great addition to the local blues scene, happening on the 4th Wednesday of each month. What a great way to wrap up the 2015 series of jams with the premier local blues band, Kilborn Alley. I'd suggest you find a way to watch at least a portion of both the Keithmas Celebration and Kilborn Blues Jam as they promise to be outstanding shows.

Another musical highlight of the holiday season is when Kilborn Alley's featured singer, Abraham Johnson, celebrates his birthday on December 29. Typically this is celebrated with a show at The Iron Post. Check the [PCBS online calendar](#) for all the shows in the area this holiday season.



IBC Fundraiser

Submitted by Bob Paleczny

Prairie Crossroads Blues Society is excited to host a Fundraiser for our IBC competitors, The Blues Expressions and Jiggy & The Source on Friday January 22 at Memphis on Main. The show kicks off at 8:00 pm with a set by our Solo/Duo representative, Jiggy & The Source, followed at 9:00 with a full show by the Blues Expressions, who'll represent us in the Band category. This will be a fun evening with a chance to enjoy some excellent blues music as the acts head to Memphis TN the following week to compete in the Blues Foundation's International Blues Challenge. The Fundraiser will help the bands raise some cash for the trip to Memphis.



From **the Blues Expressions bio**, submitted to the Blues Foundation:

Blues Expressions was formed in 2007 by bassist Adrian Muex, Sr. They perform a variety of blues with a twist that leaves a lasting impression. Band members include Charles Tiner on keys and vocals, John Virgin on lead guitar, Adrian Muex, Sr. on bass guitar, Marcus Taylor on drums, Archer Logan on sax and Shayla Logan on sax. The band is led by front man Tony Young who provides an experience that is unmatched.

Blues Expressions is an experienced IBC act, having previously represented the Illinois Central Blues Club (ICBC) from Springfield and the Decatur Blues Society. Each time this Springfield based band has gone to the IBC's they've advanced to the Semi-Finals. It's always a treat to see Archer Logan and his daughter Shayla playing sax together. The Blues Expressions features a tight rhythm section, Charles Tiner excels on keys, Tony's vocals are smooth and soulful and John Virgin is a killer guitar player. Together they are a solid funk-infused blues unit, it's no wonder the Blues Expressions won our PCBS band challenge. We're so proud to have them as our representatives.

From the **Jiggy & The Source bio**, submitted to the Blues Foundation:

What is Source? It is the vibratory resonance that flows to and through all things; the essence that is the energy of creation. What are you? You are a fractal of SOURCE. We are all conduits and manifestations of SOURCE. What is Jiggy & the Source? Jiggy & the Source is but a single entity, which is simultaneously a collective of entities, constantly shifting, in every version of now. The real show occurs when all present are engaged and sharing energy without resistance. Remember to breathe, remember to wake up. You are perfect as you are, always. You are never lost, always found. All is SELF. There is no separation. You are loved, unconditionally. Remember to breathe. Wholeness & balance



SUGGESTIONS FOR SOMEONE BUILDING THEIR BLUES CD COLLECTION

Submitted by Lorri Cooley

Old School Blues

Junior Wells Southside Blues Jam – Buddy Guy, Otis Spann, Louis Myers, Earnest Johnson, and Fred Below

While Hoodoo Man Blues is a classic Junior Wells CD, this one has such a great mix of artists, that I'd recommend adding it to any collection. Liner notes describe this as capturing what a listener might have heard any Monday night at Theresa's Blues Bar (no longer in existence) at 48th and Indiana on the south side of Chicago in the 1960s. The 2014 re-release includes a 16-page booklet and never before published photos.

B.B. King – Live in Cook County Jail

With the passing of the King this year, any blues fan would be happy to add some B.B. King to their library and there are many, many CDs to choose from. I'd recommend this one because not only is it an amazing live performance with an incredible version of The Thrill Is Gone, Everyday I Have the Blues and How Blue Can You Get, but it also shows B.B.'s deep appreciation for his audience.

Ron Levy, the 18-year-old keyboardist touring with King's band then said, "If anybody had the blues, it was those people incarcerated. And B.B. really felt compassion for these guys. People don't realize B.B. King was much more than just a musician and entertainer. He's a human being, a humanitarian. He cared."

Like the Blues Expressions, Josh Spence on vocals, guitar and harmonica has previous IBC experience. Josh has been to the IBC's twice as front man of The Sugar Prophets advancing to the Finals in the band category in 2011. Josh is also a key member of the PCBS Blues In The Schools program, teaching harmonica at several grade schools and library sessions. Add Lolo to the mix on slide trombone and vocals and this unconventional blues act will open eyes in the Solo/Duo category. PCBS is thrilled to send them as our representatives.

Let's get out and raise some money for these awesome Central Illinois musicians heading to compete on the international level!! We're honored to have such great representatives and look forward to rooting for them in Memphis. Come out to Memphis on Main, 55 E. Main St. in Champaign, 8:00 on January 22, 2016. You'll see two great blues acts, an enthusiastic crowd and we'll hold a 50/50 raffle to raise money in support of the bands. Let's send our representatives off to Memphis with plenty of energy and enthusiasm!

Michael "Iron Man" Burks – Show of Strength

Michael "Iron Man" Burks was a blue collar blues man, having worked as a mechanical technician for Lockheed-Martin in order to provide a stable life for his family. He started learning guitar from his father as soon as he could hold one and playing his first gig at the age of 6. Burks went on to front his own band and back up blues greats such as Johnnie Taylor and O.V. Wright.

His final album, Show of Strength, was completed just before his passing and includes everything from smoking guitar work to the haunting lyrics of Charlie Rich's Feel Like Going Home.

Bruce Iglauer, of Alligator Records describes Show of Strength as "sent straight from Michael's heart and soul. Although Michael is not here, the music he recorded is indeed his show of his immense strength and spirit. It will live on, confirming forever his status as one of the greatest bluesmen of his generation."

Alberta Adams & The Rhythm Rockers – I'm On The Move

Alberta Adams started her performance career as a tap dancer and eventually as a vocalist in the club scene in Detroit in the 1940s. In the 1950s she signed with Chess Records and toured alongside Louis Jordan, T-Bone Walker, Duke Ellington, Eddie Vinson, and Lionel Hampton among others. She took a long time off from heavy touring and recording but returned to the scene in the 1990s and performed up until her death at 96. Adams is quoted in the liner notes as saying "I might give out, but I ain't gonna give up."

I'm On The Move was released in 2002 with her backing band The Rhythm Rockers. This CD includes I'm On The Move, I Paid My Dues To The Blues and Come And See About Me.

Etta James – Tell Mama

It's hard to believe that "I'd Rather Go Blind" which became one of James' signature tunes, was not originally a hit when released in 1968. Tell Mama,

the title track, was a hit as well as her rendition of Otis Redding's Security.

While Etta James released upwards of 40 albums, Tell Mama is a classic and was re-mastered and re-released in 1990. If you don't already have a version of James' I'd Rather Go Blind, I'd definitely look into getting one.

New blues artists

Danielle Nicole – Wolf Den

Danielle Nicole is a songwriter, bass player and blues singer who got her start performing in coffee houses, with her parents and finally with her brothers in the Kansas City-based band, Trampled Under Foot. After 13 years in that band, Nicole formed her own band and released Wolf Den in 2015. This album reflects Nicole's move to New Orleans. She teamed up with Grammy winning producer-guitarist Anders Osborne for this one.

Eddie Cotton – One At A Time

Like so many blues artists, Eddie Cotton grew up singing gospel in church in Clinton, Mississippi. He studied music theory and went on to serve as minister of music in his dad's church.

In 2015 Cotton won the International Blues Challenge and released One At A Time in August of this year. He's joined on the recording by J.J. Thames and Grady Champion as well as many others. Cotton composed all 14 songs on this CD.

Laura Rain & The Caesars – Gold

"What do you get if the sound of Detroit is taken and mixed with some old fashioned blues and driven along by a funky backbeat? Answer? Laura Rain and her impressive band," according to LonsomeHighway.com and I couldn't agree more.

This collection of original songs has echoes of Motown, Stax and Muscle Shoals. The recording includes a who's who of Detroit's finest players, all bringing their own unique sound to the sessions.

John Nemeth – Memphis Grease

Does blues belong in Boise, Idaho? You bet it does. That's where harmonica playing, two-time Blues Music Award winner John Nemeth got his start. After a stint in California, Nemeth has relocated to Memphis and the “epicenter for soul and blues” and the inspiration for Nemeth's fourth solo CD.



Cedric Burnside Project – Descendants of Hill Country

No blues CD collection would be complete without a representative from Mississippi hill country and this one from legendary R.L. Burnside's grandson is one I'd recommend.

The Cedric Burnside Project includes Burnside on drums, guitar and vocals and Trenton Ayers on guitar, bass and vocals. Both artists grew up in Mississippi and are on a mission to bring the North Mississippi sound to the world.



PHOTOS THROUGHOUT 2015 OF BLUES EVENTS

Submitted by Zack Widup



2

.....And to all A Good Night!