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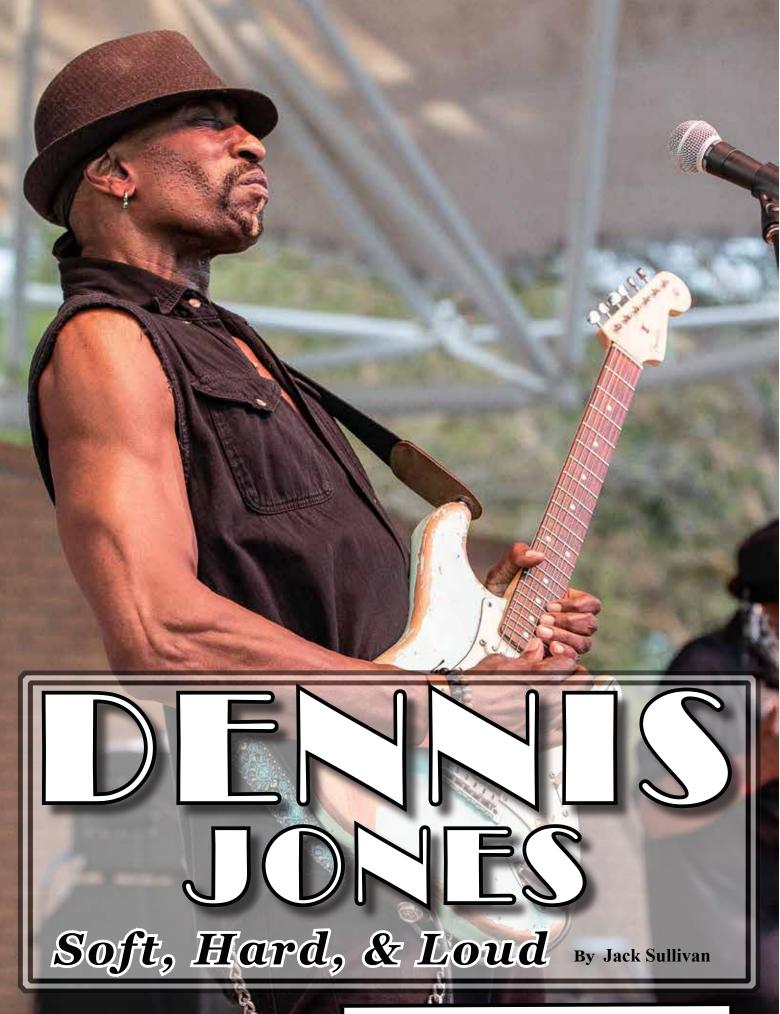
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"Though the road's been rocky it sure feels good to me." - Bob Marley

r. Marley's quote is the perfect expression of how Dennis Jones feels about his blues music career. Being a fan since 2004 when Dennis was a member of the Zac Harmon & Mid-South Revue Band and finished in first place at the 20th International Blues Challenge, it's been my pleasure to watch him evolve from side man to band leader of the Dennis Jones Band. The band has released six albums and a live DVD to date. His guitar prowess and powerhouse vocals compliment his thoughtful, passion-filled original lyrics. His seventh and newest CD Soft, Hard, & Loud released October 16, 2020 featuring all originals, some very special quests, and in Dennis's own words "makes this my favorite album so far."

We caught up with Dennis this week as he's releasing his newest album and while rehearsing his upcoming acoustic album.

Blues Music Magazine: In your own words what would you like to use this article to help your career with?

Dennis Jones: I want readers to understand that the blues is the foundation and inspiration of the songs that I write. To explain my background and make new fans around the world that enjoy the music I love and perform.

Blues Music Magazine: When did you first discover the blues?

Dennis Jones: It was the late '70s. At the time I didn't know that Santana, Led Zeppelin, Humble Pie, and Fleetwood Mac were playing the blues, but they were.

Blues Music Magazine: Who were the first blues artists you were listening to?

Dennis Jones: My parents played B.B. King and Bobby "Blue" Bland records at home, so they would be the first.

Blues Music Magazine: What was it about the blues that spoke to you?

Dennis Jones: The feel, the soul, the passion, and depth of the music. Blues music always felt familiar and good.

Blues Music Magazine: When did you first pick up your instrument?

Dennis Jones: My parents bought my first guitar when I was 13. It was the best Christmas gift I have ever received. I wanted drums but they said they were too loud. Two years later I had a Marshall stack. Whoops, even louder.

Blues Music Magazine: Can you explain your learning process? Do you use records, take lessons, attend jam sessions?

Dennis Jones: I am self-taught. I had a few lessons as a kid but listening to records over and over. Jamming with other musicians was a great way to learn.

Blues Music Magazine: Who were some of the mentors you were able to play with, tour with, or work with?

Dennis Jones: Playing lead guitar with the BusBoys in the early 2000s was a great experience. My band has opened for Johnny Winter, Buddy Guy, and Dick Dale. I have never really had a mentor. It is more like I have been inspired by other musicians.

Blues Music Magazine: What are some of the most important musical lessons about the blues these musicians have taught you?

Dennis Jones: I had a chance to spend over an hour speaking with Robert Jr. Lockwood. He was very humble and full of knowledge about the blues and the business of the blues. And a chance to talk about one of his relative Robert Johnson.

Blues Music Magazine: What has recording seven different albums and a DVD taught you.

Dennis Jones: Each album is a new fun adventure and experience. This is my seventh original album. I have learned a lot over the years from different producers and musicians I've recorded with. My biggest lesson is trust. Sometimes it is hard to let go of what you think is right or wrong. A good for instance is when someone brings good things out of you have never heard before. Wow, that is my reward and you have to trust!

Blues Music Magazine: Which musicians were your inspirations? What did they teach you?

Dennis Jones: My favorite musicians are all self-taught. From Jimi Hendrix to Stevie Ray Vaughan, Eric Gales, and Eddie Van Halen. They never had boundaries and they love breaking the rules. That was a great lesson!

Blues Music Magazine: How do you keep the traditional elements of the blues alive in your contemporary songs?

Dennis Jones: Blues is my foundation. Anything I build on, it will have elements of the blues. Some people will not get it, but people who are open to change and freedom of expression will surely get it.

Blues Music Magazine: What new projects if any are you involved in that you would like to share with fans.

Dennis Jones: My new album will be released by the time people are reading this. I am immensely proud of this record. In a few weeks, I will start recording my acoustic album. This is something I have been planning for a long time. I have a lot of songs that have been waiting to be heard.

Blues Music Magazine: Any other info you would like to include for fans regarding your music.

Dennis Jones: I am immensely proud to be an independent artist with my own label and publishing company. A good record deal is great, and I understand why so many artists want one. But it is nice when you work extremely hard for yourself and are rewarded for it.

Blues Music Magazine: Talk about inspirations for some of your songs.

Dennis Jones: A lot of my inspiration comes from silence. Also, from something I have read or heard someone say. If you stay open, the universe will reward you.

Dennis was born in the small town (population 4,856) of Monkton, Maryland.

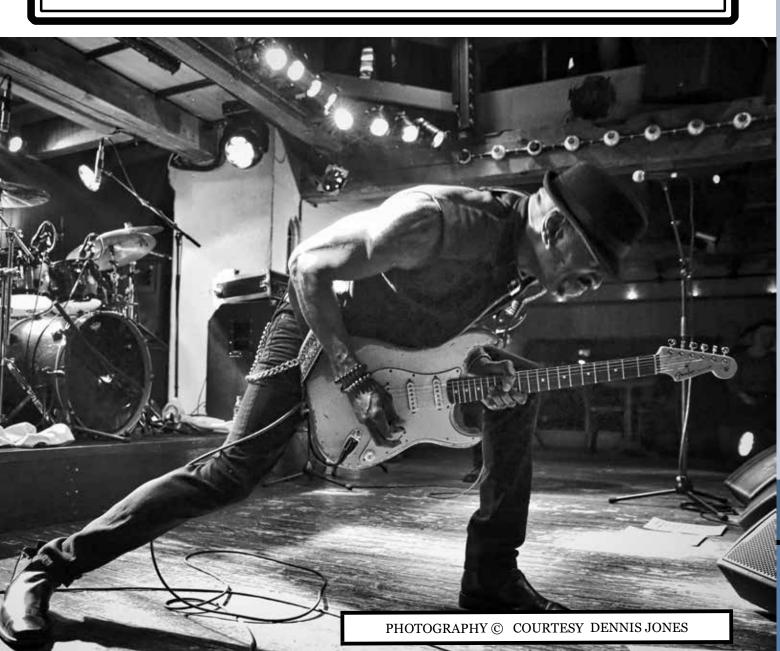




Here is a small biography in his own words about his journey so far: My family did not have much money, but we always had what we needed. Monkton was a great place for a kid to grow up. The area is known for its horse farms, sprawling countryside, and old, stately homes set back from the country roads. It is beautiful.

Some weekends, my family would go to my grandparents' place, which was literally, over the river and through the woods. Pop-Pop kept an old acoustic guitar in the corner, and I would get excited whenever he would pick it up and strum on it. I can still picture him sipping a glass of dandelion wine that he had made a few years before and sharing his amazing stories and adventures from his youth.

At age 13, I got my first guitar on Christmas day and started writing songs soon after. Thankfully, my mom and dad were incredibly supportive of my music. After I finished all my chores for the day, they would let me play and practice as long as I wanted. My parents were happy that music kept me off the streets and out of trouble. By age 16, I was in my first band, playing rock & roll covers at my high school teen centers and "barn parties.





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High school graduation was a highlight because my parents helped me throw a huge party at our house. My band performed, and our entire graduating class showed up. We found kids sleeping in our yard the next morning. Suddenly my older brother and younger sister thought I was cool.

I had big dreams and I was eager to explore the world outside of Monkton, so I left my small town at age 18 to join the military. Stationed in Germany for a few years, I was exposed to a whole new culture. I played in bands and attended some of the greatest concerts in my life, from Rufus Thomas to Rory Gallagher. I also fell head over heels in love.

Then life took over. I first lived with my wife in Baltimore County, and a few years later, we moved to Los Angeles. As a mixed-race couple, not everyone welcomed us, but we managed. I wrote songs and played music on weekends and worked a day job. After almost a decade, our marriage ended, but fortunately we remain friends today.

Around the same time, I started digging deeper into "the Blues." I realized that the main influences of all my favorite bands had come from the blues. So, I started a journey to discover the music that my people created through the pain and suffering of slavery, and then later abandoned, for the most part.

I continued to work for many years as an elevator technician, and toured part-time with my band, often traveling great distances. When I got laid off from my job, it provided the perfect opportunity to pursue what I had always known I was meant to do — MUSIC! I am so grateful to be a full-time, touring musician, and student for life. I never take it for granted. It is not an easy life, but it sure is gratifying to connect with thousands of people a year through my songs and a shared passion for music. I am proud to have released six original blues rock CDs and one DVD to date, all with great reviews. I love what I do, and I would not trade one minute of it. - BMO

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JAMAN ROCK & Roll President

By Bob Margolin



his is an especially uplifting film. As blues music does, it heals, inspires, and moves us with soulful humanity in challenging times. Many mid-1970s great and famous musicians helped introduce Candidate Carter to their large, soulful, voting audiences. President Carter acknowledges and appreciates their help. He made the White House a friendly venue to celebrate American Music. My friend Mike Kappus, Blues Hall of Fame as Agent/Manager, sent me this screenshot when he watched the film:

I was in Muddy Waters' band when we played at a White House Staff Picnic in August, 1978. It's one of the highlights of my life to stand between between President Carter and Muddy Waters.

When I saw the first publicity for this film, I hoped for some performance footage. Apparently because our concert was a picnic, not an official show, there are only photos and my memories of the surreal and profound honor for Muddy and his band. President and Mrs. Carter greeted each musician. When the President shook my hand, I said, "You have the hardest job in the world. God help you." He smiled,



went on with his gracious greetings, and gave a speech of appreciation for Muddy and blues music. Way past my personal experience, the film brought memories of hope after a hard time in American History.

"I've never had more faith in America than I do today. We have an America that, in Bob Dylan's phrase, is 'Busy being born, not busy dying." – JIMMY CARTER, Democratic nomination acceptance speech, 1976

I feel those hopeful, promising days in the context of all that's happened since and where we are today. In the film, President Carter comments incisively in recent interviews, with his dignity, history, wisdom, and the perspective of time. So do Gregg Allman, Bob Dylan, Willie Nelson, Chuck Leavell, Garth Brooks, Trisha Yearwood, Paul Simon, Bono, Rosanne Cash, and Nile Rogers. The concerts and Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter's participation are sweetly moving. The film presents their historical perspective on his presidency too. What does that mean to you, today, as the world is "at the crossroads" so dangerously?

After I saw *Jimmy Carter, Rock & Roll President*, for the first time, blues musician and old friend Bill Wharton, the Sauce Boss, let me know that the film was directed and executive produced by his daughter, Mary Wharton. And she had asked her dad to contribute to the film score with music that would enhance the narration and interviews. I watched again and was even more impressed by their talents to bring us this powerful story. Mary has given us a masterpiece film and Bill has written and recorded a score that makes me await the soundtrack album. Here is more information about the film:

"Looked at today, this story was sort of hiding in plain sight," says *Jimmy Carter, Rock & Roll President* director Mary Wharton. "It was a different time when Carter was running for president and when he occupied the Oval Office. News outlets weren't as celebrity-obsessed as they are now. There was still a huge divide between government, mainstream media, the News with a capital N, and the youth culture."





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Carter bridged that gap, through his friendship with Bob Dylan and others; his 1977 inauguration filled with a bipartisan roster of stars; his first dinner guests in the White House, Gregg Allman of the Allman Brothers and Allman's then-wife, Cher; and a groundbreaking, extraordinary jazz concert on the South Lawn in 1978.

Through illuminating new interviews with President Jimmy Carter as well as with music legends including Bob Dylan, Bono, Paul Simon, Willie Nelson, Gregg Allman, Chuck Leavell, Nile Rodgers, Jimmy Buffett, Garth Brooks, Trisha Yearwood, Rosanne Cash, and Larry Gatlin; political and cultural figures including former U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, former UN Ambassador Andrew Young, Bishop Michael Curry of The Episcopal Church, and *Rolling Stone* founder Jann Wenner; former Carter Administration officials; and Carter's oldest son Chip Carter – who provides insight into his father's influences and eclectic tastes – a portrait emerges of a man whose cultural significance during the 1970s was as relevant and far-reaching as his post-presidency work with the Carter Center has been lifechanging for millions around the world.

Politics may make strange bedfellows, but a love of music made Jimmy Carter the ideal politician for many of the most important artists of the 1970s. Throughout *Jimmy Carter, Rock & Roll President*, we see Carter strolling in shirtsleeves, his trademark smile on his face, embracing musicians from the worlds of rock, jazz, folk rock, classical, R&B, country, gospel, and Southern Rock – a particular favorite of

MARK MAY
DEEP DARK
DEMON





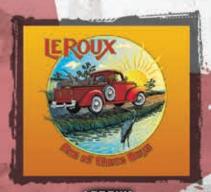
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the Georgia native, who was good friends with Gregg Allman.

"The Allman Brothers helped put me in the White House by raising money when I didn't have any money!" Carter says in the film.

"At the time he ran for president, Carter was in his early fifties, and by most standards then he was considered an 'older person' and maybe even a square from a small southern town," says Wharton. "But in so many clips from the time, you see Carter looking youthful and energetic, with an incredible vigor, and Rosalynn is so beautiful. The two of them together have a 'New Camelot' feel during his years as President from 1976-80."

It was a magnetism that attracted artists and musicians, just as they appealed to him. "You can understand why fans are drawn to musicians, but why was the converse true — why were musicians drawn to Carter?" says producer Chris Farrell. "It's because he was so genuine. That's what made those artists gravitate to him. They knew he was real and trying to include everybody, and didn't believe in the divisiveness that we've come to expect in politics for the last 40 years. It was — and still is — important for Carter to always be true to himself. He didn't change tastes because it might bolster him politically."

Mary and Bill Wharton illuminate further. From Mary Wharton, Director and Executive Producer: "Jimmy Carter, Rock & Roll President truly was a dream project for me, not only for the joy of discovering a great story and being able to combine that with a wealth of beautiful archive performances and an incredible cast



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of interviewees, but for the opportunity to work with people that I love. One of the major highlights was being able to work with my father on the score. It started out by me asking him if he would just send me some of his existing instrumental tracks when we were in the early days of cutting the film. We just needed some music to work with and I knew that if I tried to use stock music up against songs by Bob Dylan and Willie Nelson and the Allman Brothers that it would just be painful. I knew that we needed a score that was going to be able to hold it's own against that level of artistry, and from the very beginning my dad's tracks worked beautifully.

"When we got to a point where we needed a different kind of vibe or a particular track for a scene, I started sending him scenes to score and he would just nail it every time. I have to admit that I was a little bit nervous about it at first, because if it didn't work out it was gonna be really awkward if I had to fire my dad! But I could not be more proud of the work he delivered. The soundtrack of this movie is killer, and the fact that my dad has more music on it than anyone else gives me so much joy."

From Bill Wharton, Sauce Boss: "Mary has always been a storyteller since she was a little girl. She got into media production in high school, then spent her Florida State University internship, working for VH1 in NYC, making herself indispensable. So she kept the gig, spending nearly 20 years working her way up to producer, and winning a Grammy for one of her projects. *Sam Cooke Legends*. Mary produced many more of the Legends Series. David Bowie, Elton John, George Clinton of Parliament Funkadelic, The Doors, U2, and Jimi Hendrix (which she also wrote)...to name a few. David Bowie said her film about him was the best thing he'd ever seen about himself. She has become the go-to pop music producer, with projects for Joan Baez, Phish, Bruce Springsteen, the list is long.

"Mary described her role in executive producing and directing as the monkey in the zoo who escaped with the keys, releasing all her animal friends. She put together her «squad" of mostly women who worked with her over the years in New York City. Together they were a lean machine, producing a mountain of work, which has been distilled into *Jimmy Carter, Rock & Roll President*.

"The monkey with the keys passed my cage and released her daddy-monkey. She asked me to do some music for the score. You hear it during the interviews, news footage, and segues in and out of the different scenes. The movie has gotten raves from all who have seen it. At the screening in Plains, Georgia, Jimmy said, 'I wouldn't change a thing.'

"The Los Angeles Film Awards gave her Best Picture and Best Documentary Feature, which was no surprise to me. The film also received Best Editor for Mari Keiko Gonzalez's seamless flow. However, when they awarded me Best Original Score, I was floored to say the least. They call that a "sweep." Clever monkey. From the beginning, I have seen it take shape and have a life of its own. And like its subject matter, this film has integrity from the top down which is rare these days in both film and politics."

Bob Margolin: Bill, tell us about your music.



"Somewhere between soul, blues, and the early years of rock, John straddles the divide with a wonderful sense of style!" - New England Blues Review

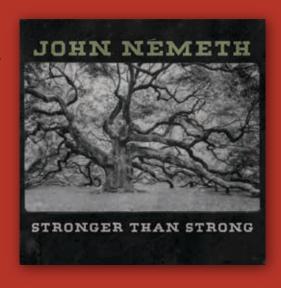
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Thank you for your support." - John Németh



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Bill Wharton: "In 1989 my first national release was on Florida's Kingsnake Records label, *The Sauce Boss*. That record got me touring in the U.S. and France, and I have been touring ever since. Tracks from that album, Let the 'Big Dog Eat' and 'Alligator' are in the film. (Accompanied by Lucky Peterson and harp player Pat Ramsey). And there are some new tracks I recorded in New York City with Mary's production staff.

So Mary first asked me to send some music for consideration, and they picked out a few pieces. They ended up using 18 tracks for the movie. I'd been thinking of Jimmy Carter a lot, and how he's always smiling. I knew that smile went with him everywhere. He sometimes musta had to paste that smile on his face, even if he did not feel like it. Well...while I was working on this little guitar riff, and I was just jammin', I got a call, and she said, 'Hey, I'm gonna need some more music.'

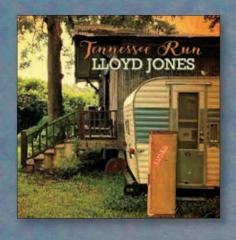
"I immediately said without even thinking, 'I have a great tune. It's called 'Smile In A Basket.' I have no idea where that came from. All I actually had was a guitar riff, and a picture in my mind of the president's smiling face. This is how the song about the basket where you pick up a smile or two on your way out the door, to face the big bad world, was made. It's about positivity, and the power of music. Like Son House said, 'Don't you mind people smilin' in your face.' I've had it bad a few times. Really bad. But none of that compares to the architects of the blues who faced an existential crisis on a daily basis. And the blues got them through. To be able to verbalize. NO! To be able to SING! Like a bird in the morning. 'I AM HERE!' If you can't see this, spend a couple of months in the county jail, and you will understand. I know. I even spent a day swingin' a blade on the highway, a guard with a shotgun by my side. How's that for cred? Well, Jimmy Carter can sing right along, all day long, in the black churches in South Georgia, without missing a beat, without touching a hymnal... And THAT, Brothers and Sisters, is cred.

Bob Margolin: Bill, what are your plans for your music from this movie?

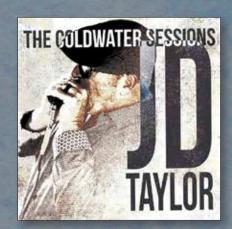
Bill Wharton: "I will be releasing a soundtrack CD this fall with full length versions of my songs that appeared in the movie. I'm stoked that a larger audience is being exposed to my music and am already getting lots of positive feedback about how moved people are by the film. It certainly has already had a huge impact on my life.

Since the pandemic began, I had to quit touring, but that has given me an opportunity to set up a studio in my home and I have been doing live stream videos and some music recording too. When it's safe to go out again, I will. For now, Sauce Boss Bill Wharton Youtube channel is where to find me and my music. The video of "Smile In A Basket" is there. For more about my shenanigans, get "The Life and Times of Blind Boy Billy," available on Amazon. I also do a monthly blog with my recipes, stories, and my concert schedule. Everything's at my website, sauceboss. com.

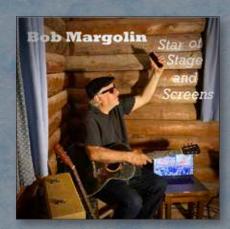
Bob, turning to you, the reader: The Wharton family sure makes fine films and music. Let me add that I have bought Bill Wharton's hot sauce by the case and been caught at 4 a.m. with the refrigerator door open, chugging the sauce right from the bottle. **- BMO**









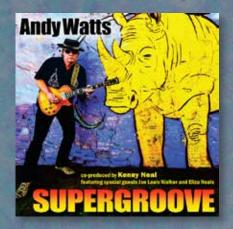










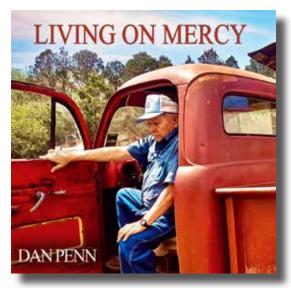






CD REVIEW

DAN PENN *Living On Mercy*Last Music Company



Dan Penn's still got the magic. At 78, the former Muscle Shoals session singer/guitarist/composer/producer still has all the gifts that made him one of soul and R&B's most important contributors. His latest, *Living On Mercy*, sounds like Penn never left the room down in Alabama where all the hits came from

Dripping with soul yet still sounding like it just staggered out of church, the title cut could have been retrofitted for any of the soul men or women who came to Muscle Shoals to bathe in the creative waters. But Penn doesn't need a superstar set of tonsils to sell this one, his own will do just fine. Penn's delivery is smooth and soulful, and easy glide that carries you

along on the current. The lyrics sound ripped from a Percy Sledge out-take: "Too weak to fight, too dumb to quit, too much in love, gotta flow with it/You can't cure a fever, that's got a hold of your soul/More dead than alive, but somehow I still survive."

Penn's writing credits are staggering, a slew of hits composed for soul men and women from James Carr to Aretha Franklin, Otis Redding, Percy Sledge, and Sam and Dave. James and Bobby Purify's "I'm Your Puppet," James Carr's "The Dark End Of The Street," Aretha Franklin's "Do Right Woman, Do Right Man," and Percy Sledge's "It Tears Me Up" are just a sampling of the treasures Penn wrote or co-wrote. He also was a producer at Memphis Sound studios in Memphis, responsible for hits including Alex Chilton's "The Letter" from the Box Tops in 1967. Wayne Carson was the songwriter on that one, and Penn and Carson continued to collaborate on compositions through the years, including several on this outing, including the title cut.

Carson is a co-writer once again on "Clean Slate," with Penn's vocals sounding like the Righteous Brothers, Penn covering both Bobby Hatfield and Bill Medley. "Leave It Like You Found It" sounds like a faded country hit tune from the '70s. Penn's the sole writer on this one.

The crew he's assembled for this one, bandleader Clayton Ivey, on keyboards, Will McFarlane providing guitar, Milton Sledge on drums, and Michael Rhodes on bass, closely resembles the Swampers, the original Muscle Shoals crew that cranked out all the hits from Rick Hall's Fame Studios and later from their own place, Muscle Shoals Sound Studios. "Edge Of Love" boasts a funky horn-sweetened Muscle Shoals classic sound with a relentless groove that keeps sneaking up on you til it gets you swaying along. "Soul Connection" sounds like something you'd hear coming out of the radio late at night in the '60s. "One Of These Days" is '70s-era smooth country sounding like it fell outta Mickey Gilley's catalog Penn's voice still sounds magnificent, smooth country-style soul contained in a forward-looking time capsule that that captures the sounds of the past without sounding dated.



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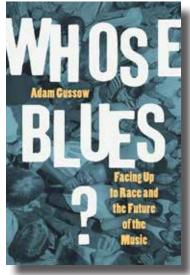


For more than 12 years this recording was mentioned obscurely in interviews as a super-group, old-school jam session by those few witnesses who knew this was a once-in-a-lifetime moment.

BOOK REVIEW

Whose Blues? Facing Up To Race And The Future Of The Music

By Adam Gussow University of North Carolina Press



Nhose Blues? is a 276-page encyclopedic tome that asks the question can a white man sing the blues. I've always had a one-word answer to that question, yes! So, I was curious about how someone, even someone as erudite as Adam Gussow, could fill 276 pages answering that question. And the answer is exquisitely.

Gussow is a white man with a Ph.D. from Princeton who teaches blues at the University of Mississippi. A blues harmonica player also, he's recorded and toured with Sterling McGee a.k.a. Mr. Satan, a black musician from Harlem. Who better to address this issue?

I also wanted to get into the mind of a man who called my 2017 Blues Foundation-sponsored symposium on *Blues As Healer* the best symposium he'd ever attended. I have always considered my career the yin to his yang. Yes, Adam and I are both white, but I have always taken a decidedly nonacademic view of blues and am currently finishing writing my own book *Skin Deep*, one of the threads of which is that very question.

A fundamental function of blues is to provide catharsis for the trouble and heartaches African-Americans go through as a result of slavery in which

white landowners considered them half-human products necessary to the functioning of these slaveowners' business. The "freeing" of slaves after the Civil War in many ways exacerbated the former slaves' lot. No longer were they considered valued possessions of their masters, but rather competitors for the same rights, privileges, and jobs as their former owners. That situation is the basis for the struggle we face today manifested in The Black Lives Matter movement.

Whose Blues? spends a dominant portion dissecting in detail the question of whether it is fair that anyone other than black people co-opt what was once strictly a black genre. The frustration of some blacks that white artists, record labels, concert promoters, festival presenters, and journalists have completely taken over – i.e. stolen – their culture consumes a large portion of the book.

Gussow includes voluminous quotes from educated black writers including Harlem Renaissance authors Langston Hughes and Zora Neale Hurston. At times repetitious in its verbatim transcriptions of Gussow's collegiate lectures, the book is nevertheless revelatory in its presentation of a topic that for its now largely white mass market audience is appreciated on a more guttural than cultural level.

Gussow has a vocabulary that is way more extensive than mine, and his use of that vocabulary as a professor offers the reader revelations galore. Call it arrogance, but before reading *Whose Blues?* I questioned whether a book this long on a topic as fundamental as who has a right to this music to be an issue long since put to rest, if only because of the numbers of people other than blacks, who dearly love this music, myself included.

Gussow's knowledge of blues is encyclopedic in areas shared by few others alive. He takes the reader back to "coon songs" of the 18th century; forward through 20th century icons like Sonny Boy Williamson, James Cotton, and John Lee Hooker; and on to today's artists including Marquis Knox, Jontavious Willis, and Christone "Kingfish" Ingram.

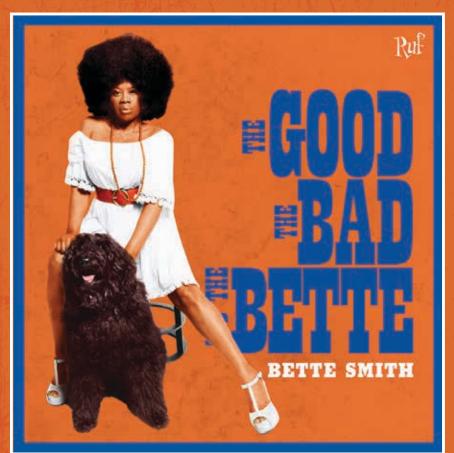
Most jarring to me were the extensive quotes from Harlem Renaissance artists, particularly Zora Neale Huston, explicitly detailing the openly sexual promiscuity of chitlin circuit performers in the age of Bessie Smith and Ma Rainey, how their behavior often led to violence, and their lyrics, while shocking to us even today, didn't begin to tell the story of what went on as a matter of course in their everyday existence.

Gussow's knowledge and ability to cut deeply into areas that most white blues fans don't even think about is a fascinating graduate school course in the blues of and by itself. Just make sure you have a Webster's unabridged dictionary at hand – and a lot of free time –when you read it.

Whose Blues? Facing Up To Race And The Future Of The Music will be published by The University of North Carolina Press on October 19, 2020 is available for preorder at Amazon and UNC Press.

- Don Wilcock

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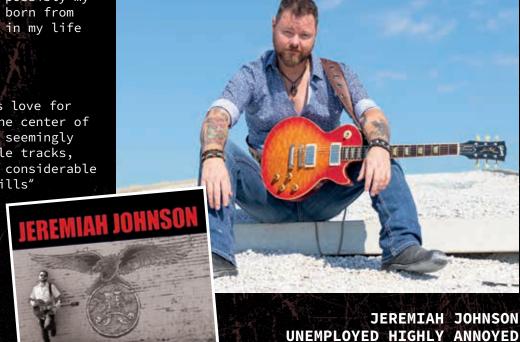
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BOOK REVIEW

Blues Legacy: Tradition and Innovation In Chicago

By David Whiteis

University of Illinois Press



Blues: Portraits and Stories. That 2006 book focused mainly on the lives of selected Chicago blues artists, blues venues, and Chicago artists still active in the genre. In Blues Legacy, Whiteis divides the book into four major sections: Bequeathers, Council of Elders, Inheritors, and Heirs Apparent.

Throughout the stories Whiteis has accumulated, *Blues Legacy* continually reinforces "the blues as a living component of a diasporan culture, dynamic and evolving, rooted in the twentieth century African-American experience but with a universality that speaks to diverse audiences and listeners."

The profiles in each section are first person tales expertly framed by Whiteis' exceptional writing and researching style. Thus, Bequeathers, which features five artists at 67 pages, is the longest section per artist – an average of 13 pages per. In those detailed profiles of James Cotton, Eddie Shaw, Eddy Clearwater, Jimmy Johnson, and Jimmy Burns, Whiteis is able to provide the reader with many of the essential elements of their careers.

From those lengthy biographies, the profiles in Council of Elders are shorter, but no less detailed. Here, we read about the careers of Billy Boy Arnold, Buddy Guy, Syl Johnson,

Mary Lane, Sam Lay, Holle Thee Maxwell, Otis Rush, and Byther Smith. Whiteis identifies these artists as musicians who are still important voices on the Chicago blues scene. Predictably, Arnold, Guy, Johnson, and Rush take hold of the longer profiles.

Once Whiteis has laid the foundation of the blues' elder statesmen, the next two sections explore the performers who have received the blues' essential lessons. These lessons have been transmitted either in living rooms, in time-honored venues in and around Chicago, or sitting knee to knee with the genre's elders. Family Inheritors included here are Lil Ed Williams, nephew of J. B. Hutto, Big Bill Morganfield, son of Muddy Waters, Kenny Smith, son of Willie Smith, Shemekia Copeland, daughter of Johnny Copeland, Ronnie Baker Brooks, son of Lonnie Brooks, Floyd Taylor, son of Johnny Taylor, and Eddie Taylor's talented offspring, Demetria, Eddie, Jr., Larry, and Tim.

Also here are performers who, though not related by blood, are Inheritors of the city's blues legacy – John Primer, Sugar Blue, Nellie "Tiger" Travis, and Deitra Farr.

Heirs Apparent, the final section, contains 21 relatively brief profiles. Notable artists here include Lurrie Bell and the Bell Dynasty (in a shortened version as Bell was fully profiled in Whiteis' previous book), Wayne Baker Brooks, Toronzo Cannon, Omar Coleman, Vance Kelly, Big James Montgomery, Mud Morganfield, the Kinsey Report, Tre, and the Original Chicago Blues All Stars. However Whiteis also focuses on some of the more obscure Chicago artists who are rising into notoriety. Book cover girl Melody Angel, Jamiah Rogers, Honeydew, Mzz Reese, and others are clearly exciting voices that are growing the Chicago blues traditions.

As a past recipient of the Blues Foundation's Keeping The Blues Alive for Journalism, Whiteis is a devoted researcher who tells each artist's story with a vivid recount of each person's journey. Whiteis' journey is no less inspiring to blues fans who know and love his dedication. In his profile of Eddie Shaw, Whiteis tells of seeing Shaw and the Wolf Gang in 1978 at a Cambridge, MA, club called the Speakeasy. He writes, "It galvanized me. Before I left that night, I'd made the decision: I had to go where this music came from. I went home and wrote a letter of application to a community organization n Chicago." Within weeks, Whiteis had a job, packed his bags and arrived the Chicago following the Blizzard of 1978, beginning his life's calling.

In many ways, Whiteis' tale mirrors what fans and blues musicians alike have experienced. That hypnotic calling of the blues. These profiles are essential for all fans to understand the universal calling that these musicians felt.

Art Tipaldi



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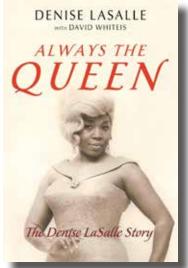
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BOOK REVIEW

Always The Queen: The Denise LaSalle Story

by Denise LaSalle with David Whiteis University of Illinois Press



The most recent volume added to the University of Illinois Press' extensive *Music In American Life* series is the autobiography of soul blues luminary and Blues Hall of Fame member Denise LaSalle (1939 - 2018). Chicago journalist David Whiteis' compiled Ms. LaSalle's story from interviews and discussions he had with her between 2010 and 2017. I've been a Denise LaSalle fan since her Westbound days in the seventies. My soul and blues radio shows were concurrent with her ascension to blues royalty during her Malaco records career (1982 – 1997). I featured her Westbound and Malaco recordings regularly and saw her in Memphis and in Philly during her Malaco tenure.

Mississippi native Ora Denise Allen was one of eight children born to Nathaniel and Nancy Allen. The family were devout Christians and gospel music inspired her as did the Grand Ole Opry. At age 15,

she joined two of her siblings in Chicago. She was discovered, mentored, and managed by singer/songwriter/pianist Billy "The Kid" Emerson who produced her first single on his Tarpon imprint, "A Love Reputation," lilting Northern soul in the style of Motown (think a tougher Mary Wells). It was a regional hit and picked up for distribution by Chess. After her arrangement with Emerson ended she married Bill Jones.

They started several short-lived labels, the best known being Crajon, which released singles by LaSalle and several others. She hit her stride in 1971 on Detroit's Westbound label with her immortal signature tune "Trapped By A Thing Called Love," a Number One hit, which was followed by the Top Ten hits "Man Sized Job" and "Now Run And Tell That." After Westbound, she recorded for ABC and MCA and scored one hit with "Love Me Right."

She moved to Jackson, Tennessee, in 1974 and in 1977 married James "Super Wolfe" Wolfe, a popular disc jockey, radio station owner, and businessman (who later became a preacher). Readers of this magazine know her best from her 11 Malaco albums and tunes like "Someone Else Is Steppin' In" (now an oft-covered standard) and unabashedly salacious classics like "Lady In The Street," and her X-rated version of "Down Home Blues."

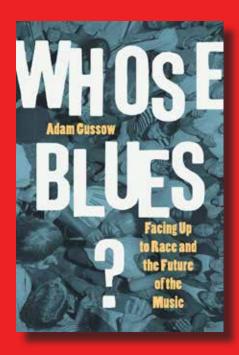
I enjoyed her tales of fellow performers like Bobby Rush and the eye-arching account of one of Millie Jackson's bawdiest stage antics. As an artist Denise LaSalle was a prolific songwriter, prolific recording artist, and an exceptional live performer who combined swagger and glamor like few others. She was a modern renaissance woman as an artist and entrepreneur who had numerous business interests (live music venues, restaurants, even her own wig and nail salon so she didn't have to order her wigs from New York or L.A.).

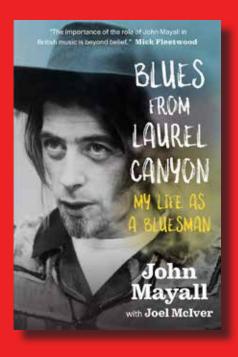
She achieved much through her talent, determination, and resilience. Most impressive was her humanity and her kindness towards others as she "adopted" several children from troubled homes. Denise LaSalle was a very special artist, but most importantly a very special person.

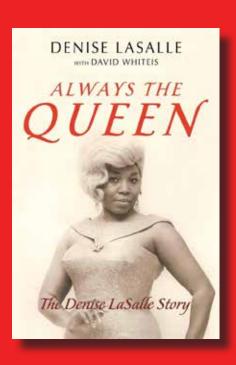
- Thomas J. Cullen III

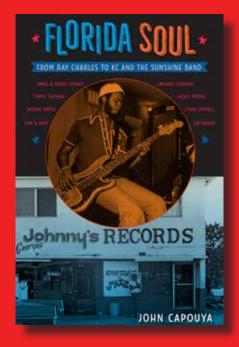


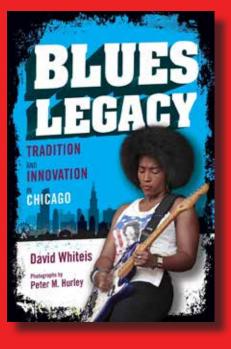
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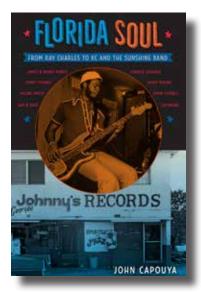




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BOOK REVIEW

Florida Soul: From Ray Charles To KC And The Sunshine Band by John Capouya University Press of Florida



University of Tampa professor of journalism and writing John Capouya has written one of the most important books on Southern soul that didn't emanate from Memphis or Muscle Shoals. I've been a Southern soul aficionado since purchasing the 45 of Otis Redding's "Respect" in 1965.

As a writer, collector, and former soul music radio show host, I have more than a passing familiarity with the history of Florida R&B and soul. That being said, I learned much from this well-researched, delightfully informative history covering four decades that start with Ray Charles and conclude with KC and the Sunshine Band. Besides chapters on Charles and KC, there are

ones of notable artists like Sam Moore (of Sam & Dave), Latimore, Noble "Thin Man" Watts, Little Beaver, lesser knowns like Helene Smith, Jackie Moore, Timmy Thomas, and Willie Clarke, and notable producers/record owners like Henry Stone (Betty Wright's "Clean Up Woman," Latimore's "Let's Straighten It Out," George McCrae's "Rock Your Baby," Gwen McCrae's "Rockin' Chair," and the original version of "The Twist" by Hank Ballard & the Midnighters) and Papa Don Schroeder (Mighty Sam's quintessential Amy recordings of the late sixties, James & Bobby Purify's "I'm Your Puppet," and Carl Carlton's "Ever Lasting Love").

Favorite chapters are the ones on Wayne Cochran, Lynda Lyndell, and Hank Ballard. Cochran was known as "The White Knight of Soul"; I've championed his music since first seeing him on Jackie Gleason's variety show in 1966 and who was mentioned in the first Blues Brothers movie (the Blues Brothers covered Cochran's Mercury 45 "Goin' Back to Miami"). Linda Lyndell, a white vocalist who had to disguise herself as black in some Southern locales, had the original version of "What A Man" released on the Stax subsidiary Volt in 1968 and later popularized by Salt-N-Pepa/En Vogue. "The Twist Came From Tampa" is focused on Hank Ballard, the originator of "The Twist," the most universally popular dance of my lifetime. A book for soul music fans to savor that can be read one chapter at a time.

- Thomas J. Cullen III





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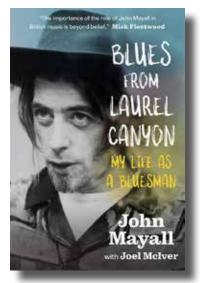




BOOK REVIEW

Blues From Laurel Canyon

By John Mayall with Joel McIver Omnibus Press



Most often called, "The Godfather of the British Blues," one would be hard-pressed to recognize any other band-leader than John Mayall within the United Kingdom, or anywhere else to match his many ensembles' recorded legacy. Today at 86, he is still making music a staggering 60-years plus later, at an age where most players, if they've lived to see that advanced year, have long-since retired to rest on their recorded laurels. Under his own name, or with The Bluesbreakers, Mayall can count at minimum 40-LPs under his still-svelte belt.

Mayall is one of the legitimate progenitors of the British Blues, along with seminal figures such as Alexis Korner, Cyril Davies, Graham Bond, and a very few others. His legendary genius as a blues talent scout has allowed him to grace his band at various (and sometimes miniscule) times with household names

of the British and American blues elite. (Think Eric Clapton, Peter Green, Mick Taylor, Coco Montoya, Harvey Mandel, Walter Trout, Dick Heckstall-Smith, Keef Hartley, Larry Taylor, Andy Fraser, Robin Trower, Aynsley Dunbar, Mick Fleetwood, Don "Sugarcane" Harris, John McVie, John Almond, Jack Bruce, Ginger Baker, and a ton more.) And that's just a few names to get one to start to understand the important musical stepping stone the Bluesbreakers have afforded to those and many other gifted artists.

Blues From Laurel Canyon takes a fairly traditional, lineal approach as most autobiographies do. The book begins by surprisingly recounting many life stories of both sides of his great-grandparents, as well as his paternal and maternal grandparents and of course, his beloved mum and dad. Mayall was born in 1933 outside of Manchester, in Macclesfield, England, to a textile heir and she, at one time, a vacuum-cleaner salesperson. Mayall's parents were lively, adventurous, and very libidinous individuals.

The book follows Mayall's journeys through school, with his coming of age during war-torn England's darkest hours. A youth of multiple abilities, he matriculated as a teen in art school and learned to draw and paint. (He designed and photographed many of his albums over the past 60-years.) He was drafted into service within the British Army in immediate postwar Korea as a clerical worker, and he recounts many chilling and hilarious times of both hardship and resolve. Throughout his post-Korean service, he had oddjobs in department stores, advertising agencies, and as part of a team of store window dressers.

His first and main instruments were banjo, piano, pump organ, harmonica, and, of course, guitar. As a youth, he had built a sizable treehouse in his parent's backyard with studio-size dimensions, where he would practice for the proverbial hours and hours, self-teaching himself valuable chops in what he was to become. He even lived there after his three years of Army service.

Mayall's transition from being a dedicated music fan to his becoming a semi-pro, multi-instrument musician, and of course professional bandleader is recounted in great detail. Throughout *BFLC*, he waxes profusely of his appreciation for musicians of all

BOOK REVIEW

genres. But certainly, his gravitation toward blues was always with an ear for jazz, as his voluminous catalogue will attest.

Certainly, music was part of his life at an early age, as his (chronically-alcoholic) father Murray, an amateur musician and record collector in his own right, gave young John all the impetus he needed to learn to play at an early age. Mayall gravitated toward his dad's jazz records, especially those of the great Gypsy guitarist, Django Reinhardt. He was also, almost mystically, drawn to music of black America with an especial affinity toward American blues.

Mayall's main influence in blues harmonica was through Sonny Boy Williamson II. Readers will have an eye-opening experience in reading about his encounters with that great and irascible bluesman. Later in '65, his band backed up John Lee Hooker, Eddie Boyd, and T-Bone Walker for many separate European dates.

The chapter on Eric Clapton and his dissatisfaction with the direction of the group he was in (The Yardbirds) and of Mayall's luckily finding Peter Green, twice, is illuminating. Although Clapton helped Mayall create an international blues LP classic, (in three days and with just a four-track recording no less,) Clapton quit the Bluesbreakers within a year of joining them to form Cream. Green stayed around for a year and a half before moving on to found Fleetwood Mac.

In 1969, Mayall and family moved to a home in Laurel Canyon in Los Angeles. Tragically that home burned to the ground around ten years later with almost all of his instruments, thousands of tapes, photographs, and possessions. In 1971, Mayall had the privilege of producing and writing a full album's worth of material for an album by Albert King, that finally saw the light of day fifteen years later and named, *The Lost Sessions*.

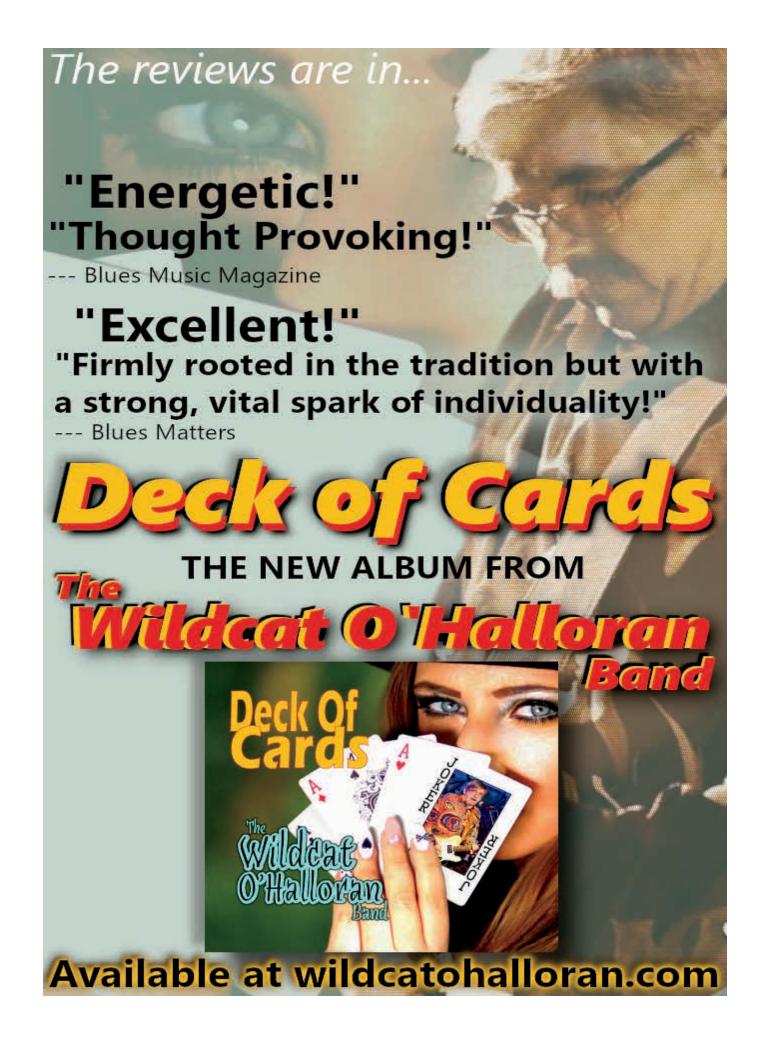
Mayall has always seen his bands as continual musically changing outfits as he wants and demands of himself to have a fresh sound and energy. He has been a stickler for that change, going through what seems like hundreds of players over the years, encompassing many, many unique combinations of instruments and styles of blues and jazz both.

Throughout the book, Mayall remembers a plethora of famous musicians he ran across, and delightfully, has no compulsion against naming names, recounting many, many vices, nasty habits. He nonsalaciously tells all of it with wit, humor, and sometimes enduring pain. Readers will also be intrigued by nearly 50 black and white and color photographs of Mayall, his large family, and the many incarnations of his bands over the years. They add a great deal to the appreciation of Mayall's colorful, energetic, and musically restless life.

The old John remembers the life of the young John with a precision of memory and feeling uncommon among most artists' written remembrances. Toward the end of the book, Mayall states, "I'm proud of my catalogue, which I think is important, because it's going to last and that's something that I hope will continue as times goes by. My music is always from the heart. Life is good."

The book is a fairly quick 221-page read, and at all times a rewarding journey, not a hard road. *Blues From Laurel Canyon* will go a long way toward readers' understanding of the seminal British Blues scene of the 60s, and especially Mayall's complete and tireless dedication to his craft and prolific muse.

Joseph Jordan





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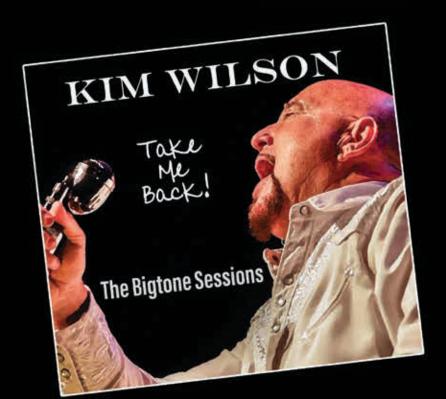
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