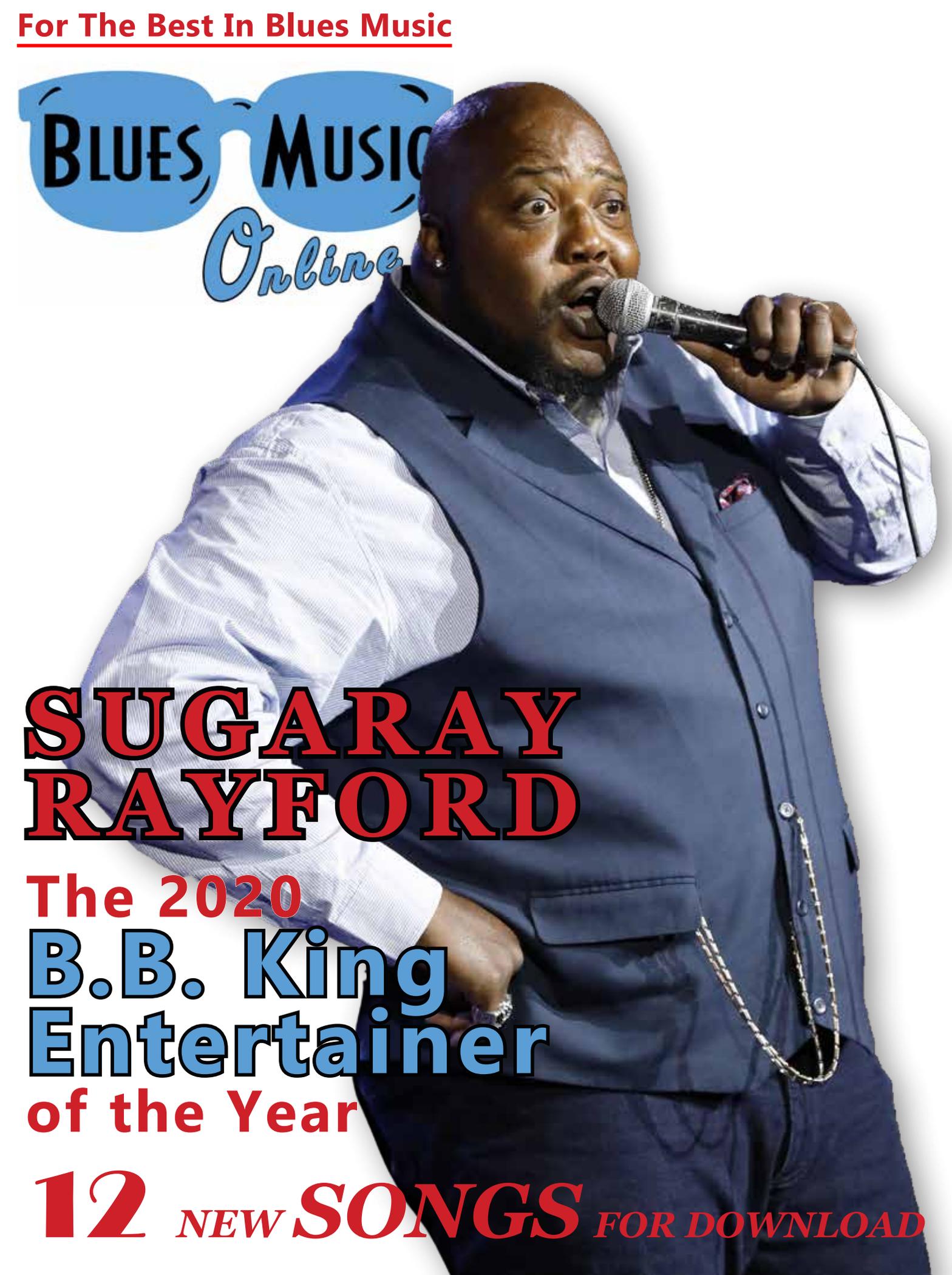


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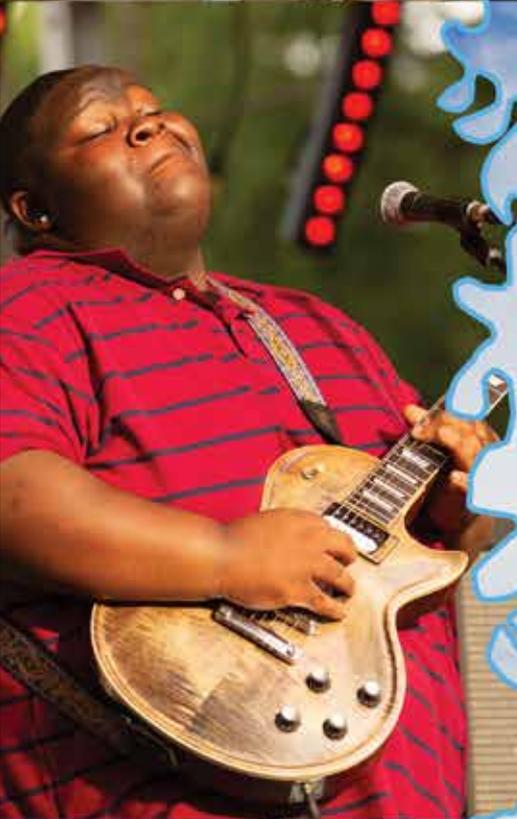
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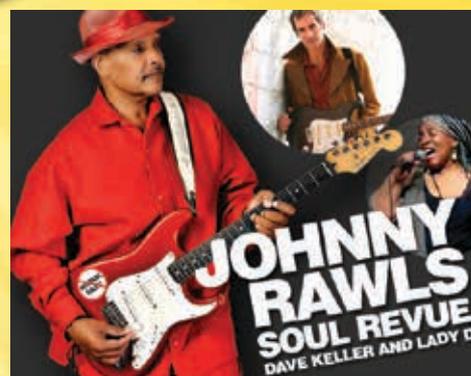
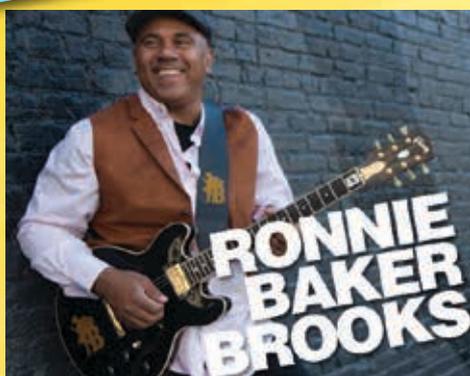
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# SUGARAY RAYFORD

## COVID, You Really Got A Hold On Me

By Jack Sullivan

**G**rowing up poor in Texas with his two brothers all being raised by a struggling single mother Caron ‘Sugaray’ Rayford began his musical career singing and playing drums in church at age seven. After his mother succumbed to her battle with cancer Sugaray and his brothers were raised by his Grandmother. Rayford said. “Then, we moved in with my grandmother and our lives were a lot better. We ate every day and we were in church every day, which I loved. I grew up in gospel and soul.”

His musical career began with an R&B Funk band called the Urban Gypsy’s before breaking into the blues scene in San Diego, CA with Aunt Kizzy’s Boyz. Competing at the 2006 International Blues Challenge in Memphis, Tn and placing second in the finals made the light at the end of the tunnel a little brighter and closer. Moving on to Los Angeles and hosting blues jams at Cozy’s in Sherman Oaks Sugaray met and played with many world class musicians. These moments in time expanded his desire to explore and expand his musical vision.

This led to becoming one of the lead vocalists for the Mannish Boys under Delta Groove’s management. Singing lead on nine songs of “Double Dynamite” released in 2013 and winning the Blues Music Award for Best Traditional Blues Album. After two solo albums and a successful collaboration with Delta Groove he knew that the decision to follow his heart and soul to the blues was the right path.

Fast forward six years and five solo releases with a of 12 Blues Music

career really took off. 2019 and 2020 was a breakout year for Sugaray with six nominations and three wins including Soul Blues Male Artist in 2019 and 2020 and 2020 winning the B.B. King Entertainer Of The Year while being nominated Soul Blues Album, and also Band of the Year. His release *Somebody Save Me* was also nominated for the Grammy for Best Traditional Blues Album.

Any artist experiencing these types of successes coupled with the discipline he learned serving ten years in the US Marine Corp. Sugaray was hungry for more mid-2019. His touring was heating up, he was ready to roll, and he did right until Covid hit him and the band hard. Losing all his 2020 tours, putting a new album on hold, and still not touring yet. Covid, you really got a hold on me, for real.

*Blues Music Magazine* featured Sugaray in the Winter 2020 January issue. That feature is republished in this issue after the upcoming interview conducted recently.

## ***Interview***

**Blues Music Magazine:** Your new album *Somebody Save Me* was nominated for a Grammy. Tell us about the concept, making, inspiration, musicians, and production people behind this new album.

**Sugaray Rayford:** This album came about after a chance meeting in Memphis with Eric Corne. I wanted my music to keep going in the direction of my previous album, *The World That We Live In*. I wanting to keep blues alive but



and experience new styles. Eric Corne was beyond instrumental in this process along with a great group of musicians, including Sasha Smith, Rick Holmstrom, and Taras, Amon, just to name a few.

**Blues Music Magazine:** What impact has all the nominations and award wins had on your career?

**Sugaray Rayford:** I have not really felt an impact yet, well I should say the impact that I was expecting. I did sign a deal with a top booking agency, and I did get a top agent and new manager who also manages George Benson, but Covid put a hold on touring and leveling up in the concert and festival circuit.

**Blues Music Magazine:** Who were the blues artists that first spoke to you and you listened too?

**Sugaray Rayford:** The first blues artists I listened to was ZZ Hill, BB King, Son House, and Ronnie Lane and the Texas Twisters.

**Blues Music Magazine:** When did blues speak to you?

**Sugaray Rayford:** Blues spoke to me after 17 to 18 years of not playing music. It reminded me of my gospel roots. I feel joy when seeing people moved by voice and song. I literally started singing at the age of five in the Sunshine Band at Bethel Temple Church of God in Christ in Tyler Texas led by Bishop SD Lee Senior!

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**Blues Music Magazine:** Can you explain your musical learning process?

**Sugaray Rayford:** I learned music by living life and I've lived a very interesting life. I've had many jobs and have been blessed to see and live in many places. I've met many people of different walks of life. I take these life experiences and write and emote the feelings that I've actually felt into the songs. Music is about feeling, not just hearing. This is how I approach songs and why I sing them the way I do.

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

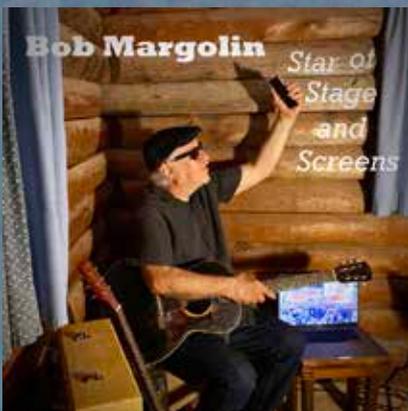
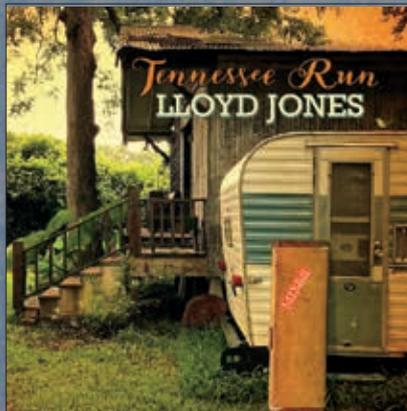
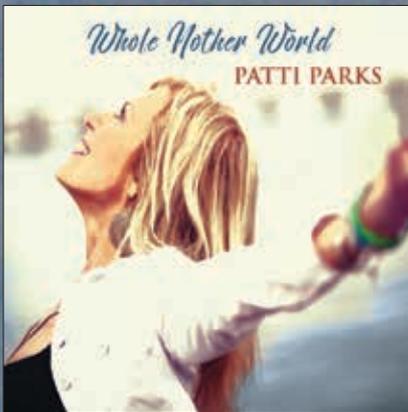
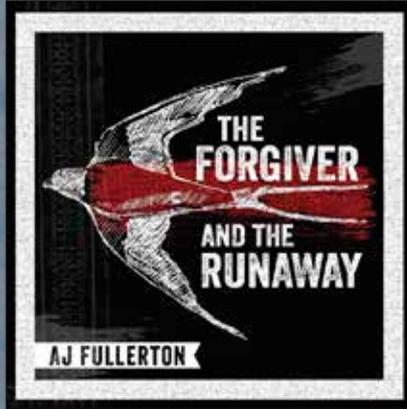
**Sugaray Rayford:** Wow Al Kooper, Dennis Quaid, Kal David, Jimmy Vivino, Lazy Lester, Bernard Purdie, The Mannish Boys, Lighthouse, Henry Gray, The Phantom Blues Band, and many many others!

**Blues Music Magazine:** What are some of the most important musical lessons you've learned from a mentor?

**Sugaray Rayford:** My grandma taught me that if you believe in something and you want something, you need to work hard. That means when you're sick, tired, hoarse or in pain. If it means that much to you, you should show up and you should give 110%.

**Blues Music Magazine:** What has recording different albums has taught you.

**Sugaray Rayford:** It has taught me that I am more versatile than I ever thought!





**Blues Music Magazine:** Which musicians were your inspirations?

**Sugaray Rayford:** The musicians from my gospel upbringing Tony Williams, Alvin Mason, Ricky Warren, Jr. Brown, Larry Wade, and my mama!

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

**Sugaray Rayford:** The traditional element is kept alive in my songs even though the songs are contemporary. I come from an area and a time that influences me so even if I am singing a new song the realness of the tradition comes through in my beliefs anyway!

**Blues Music Magazine:** Any other info you would like to include for fans regarding your music or related subjects please include here.

**Sugaray Rayford:** Well the songs were written by Eric Corne and myself, but they come from my life experiences. From wanting to help people enjoy life and my desire for all people to treat each other with dignity and my respect for the sanctity and gift of life.

**Blues Music Magazine:** Where can people follow your musical journey?

**Sugaray Rayford:** My website is [sugarayrayford.com](http://sugarayrayford.com)

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# SUGARAY RAYFORD

*Jamming His Way To The Top*

Reprinted from *Blues Music Magazine* January 2020

By Matt MacDonald

PHOTOGRAPHY © LAURA CARBONE

**S**o boomed Sugaray Rayford – all 300 some odd pounds and 6 foot 5 inches of him – across the crowded grounds of the North Atlantic Blues Festival, the downtown area of Rockland, Maine, and the inner portion of Penobscot Bay as he prepped the audience for his headline set at this past summer’s North Atlantic Blues Festival.

And a party he soon made it, as he sang, danced, bantered, encouraged the crowd, and otherwise led everyone through his show with charismatic, good-natured command.

The festival was the latest stop in a zigzagging, wide-ranging, densely packed 16-day stretch of performances that had crisscrossed both Europe and North America, its itinerary representative of Sugaray’s career since it took off in Europe with 2017’s *The World That We Live In*, and as it has broken out in the States with 2019’s *Somebody Save Me*, his subsequent Soul Blues Male Artist of the Year Blues Music Award, and his 2020 Grammy nomination for best Contemporary Blues Album.

Zigzagging, wide-ranging, and densely packed could also describe the path of Sugaray’s life as a whole which, when he’s not on the road, is now based in Los Angeles. Born and raised in Texas near the Louisiana border, Caron Rayford was deeply involved with gospel music throughout his early childhood and youth, taking on leadership responsibilities in a number of different choirs that would travel through Texas and neighboring states to take part in Church of God in Christ (COGIC) musical revivals that, as he described them, were actually serious

bragging rights competitions.

Chatting after his show – during which he had ratcheted up the power with his gospel blues “Ah Ha” – he reflected on those formative years. “Some of the stuff I’ve seen in the secular world can’t even come *close* to it. Not even the theatrics, just the playing ability, the vocals that were going on on those Monday nights at those revivals.”

But that immersive Church experience had also left the young man gasping for air, and after high school he joined the Marines and consciously left that part of his life behind. And, by Rayford’s rough estimate, he didn’t sing again for nearly 20 years.

He chuckled as he described his music experience during that time. “It’s funny because sometimes the guys and different people would be talking, and they would start talking about bands or songs from the ‘60s, ‘70s, and ‘80s, and sometimes I’d just sit there dumbfounded because I didn’t know these songs because I was strictly – literally, strictly – gospel.”

In the context of the show he had just put on, his statement was even funnier. Although Sugaray’s music is his own unique form of soul blues (check out *Somebody Save Me*’s “The Revelator” and “Dark Night Of The Soul” for samples), during a show he’ll often reference other genres, breaking into catchy snippets of hip-hop, reggae, country, rock, or whatever style he feels like singing at that moment.

Sometimes this is done to make a point, as he did while freestyle rapping his way into Albert King’s “Born Under



A Bad Sign” (*“The blues is the roots, everything else is the fruits.”*). Other times, it’s done for laughs, as happened at the set’s beginning, when his band’s keyboard player, Drake Shining, broke into a verse of Sir Mixalot’s 1992 hit “Baby Got Back” in reaction to Sugaray’s build up to “Big Legs, Short Skirt.”

Which is why – toward the end of the set – when Drake began to play and sing Pink Floyd’s 1979 hit “Comfortably Numb,” few in the audience seemed to take it seriously. But, as the song kept moving at its trancelike pace, conversations began to quiet down and people began to look, now less certain, until Sugaray took three long strides up to the microphone stand and literally threw everything he had into the full-blast scream that is the song’s wake-up call. And everyone within earshot knew all at once: This is real.

After finishing a ten-year stint in the Marines, Rayford took a job in San Diego as a bouncer and, working a show one night, was given the unexpected chance to sing again when the band’s frontman stuck a microphone in his face to put him on the spot and had the tables turned when the bouncer – to everyone’s surprise – delivered. That impromptu performance was impressive enough that his friend Pam – who was in the club that night – began encouraging him to continue with it and, in so doing, established a pattern that she maintains today as his wife, manager, and driving force.

However, it wasn’t until about a year later that his music career took form. After being hospitalized with injuries sustained in a work related brawl, Ray acquiesced to an ultimatum from Pam (with whom he had, by that time, gotten serious) and quit his job. The two soon moved in together and, in an effort to cheer him up and keep him engaged with music, she employed for the first time a strategy that she would go to twice more with consistently magical outcomes: she brought him to a local blues jam.

Each of these three jams quickly produced for Rayford the sort of results that the vast majority of scuffling musicians across the world don’t even bother daydreaming about. The first led to the creation of his inaugural band, the locally popular Urban Gypsies, which also landed him his nickname due to his penchant for bright, candy colored threads.

But growing tired of it, Sugaray quit, and in 2003 moved to Fallbrook to work

the 400 tree avocado ranch that he had built as his “forever home.”

And Pam found another jam. There, Sugaray was introduced to Jimmy King of Aunt Kizzy’s Boyz and, soon after, was asked to be their lead singer. Over the next five years, they would play 200 to 300 shows a year, record two albums, and place second in the International Blues Challenge.

However, restless with his place in the band (“...you know, it wasn’t *my* band, and you’re hearing sounds, and stuff.”) and dealing with the effects of the 2008 economic crash on his avocado ranch, Sugaray left Aunt Kizzy’s Boyz, sold his property, and moved to L.A. where, as he described it, “I’d just sit around moping and feeling bad about the ranch.”

And so Pam looked up one last jam: one that would change everything. “It all goes back to Cozy’s. It *all* goes back to Cozy’s.”

When Sugaray speaks of his two years hosting the Monday blues jam at the sorely missed Cozy’s Bar & Grill, it’s in the glowing reverie of one recounting an incredible instance of good fortune that they almost can’t believe happened, even though they’re sure it did.

After writing his name on the list for two Mondays in a row without hearing it, on the third Monday – which was slow – Sugaray was called. “And so I got up... I’ve got all these months of pent up frustration and, you know, I just have at it.” About a week later, he received another call. On the telephone. From Steve Rakoczy – the club’s owner – who offered him the jam.

And although new to L.A. and a little apprehensive, Sugaray took him up on it and brought in Aunt Kizzy’s Boyz to back him up.

But the foundation of the jam’s fame was laid when Sugaray’s friend Chuck Kavooras – who had produced an album for Aunt Kizzy’s Boyz – offered to provide a different house band each week that would be made up of an assortment of L.A.’s top musicians. As word of the jam spread, touring musicians began to sit in, from Honeyboy Edwards to Hubert Sumlin to Slash to the Pussycat Dolls to a long, eclectic list of music masters.

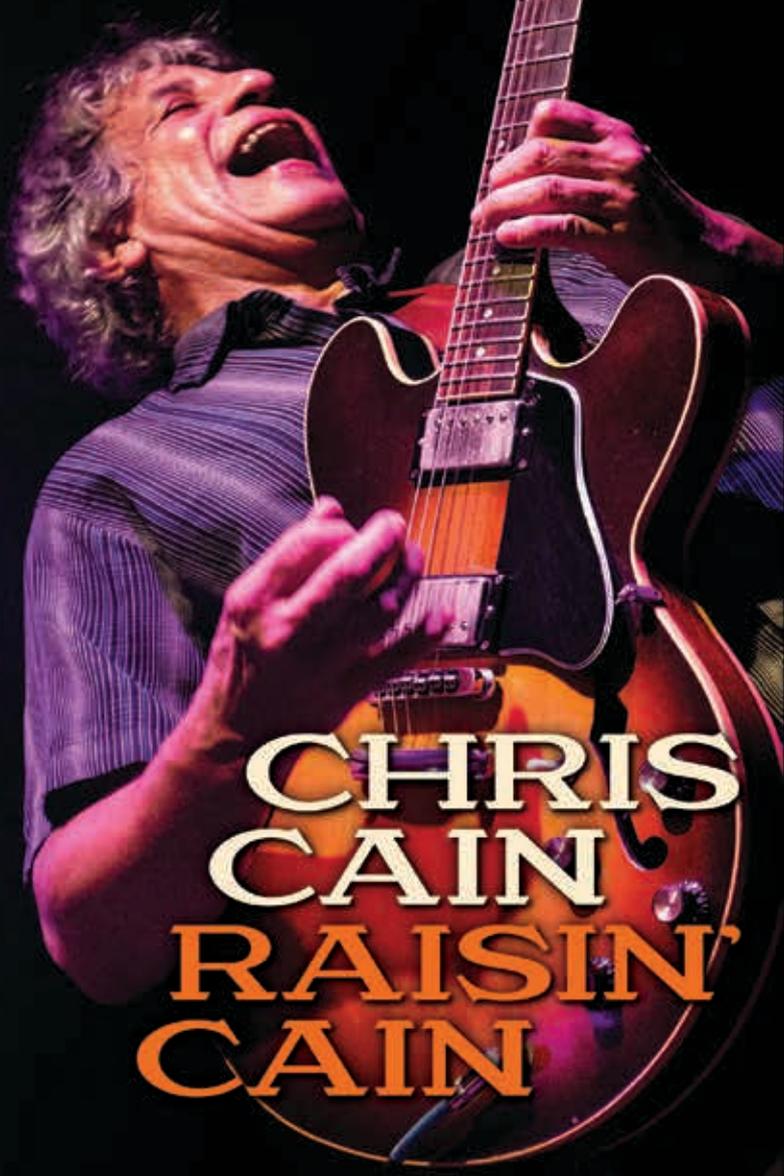
“*Everybody* that was anybody during that time in L.A. played at my jam.” And Sugaray – who wasn’t particularly star struck over these music people because he didn’t know who most of them were – was making connections with all of them.

Which led to more connections, which led to his first album, 2010’s self-released *Blind Alley*. Another led to an invitation to sing with the Mannish Boys at a 90,000 person show in Spain, which led to an immediate offer to join the band, which he accepted. “Mind you now, I had never heard of the Mannish Boys,” Sugaray made clear. “But I remember thinking, you know, this could help me in the blues world.”

It did, leading to the exposure that a high profile gig can provide. It also led, in 2013, to his second album – *Dangerous* – on which he was backed by some blues heavyweights. But it’s on 2015’s *Southside* – released on his and Pam’s NimoySueRecords and co-written with longtime collaborator Ralph

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Carter – that Sugaray let his inner voice out.

"A lot of people don't realize that *these* songs I wrote to go on *Blind Alley*." Sugaray explained that he had been persuaded to go with mainly non-originals for his debut, and that, "it finally got to the point where I realized that my stuff is as good as anyone else's." Later, he added that "now, after 73 percent of the world and thousands, literally *thousands* of shows, I know exactly where I'm going. So it's different."

Different it is, as labels, producers, and writers now come looking for him, much as Luca Sapio did, with an album's worth of songs that he had written expressly for him that would become *The World That We Live In*. And much as Eric Corne would do after hearing it, with *another* album's worth of songs that would become *Somebody Save Me*.

Which had put Sugaray Rayford in Maine that day, headlining on yet another international tour. "I've paid some dues," he said at one point, responding to nothing specific. "But, it's, like, I don't know why, I'm not going to knock it, I've just been really lucky."

Reflecting on this after hearing all that he had said, Sugaray's final song of the day – which had at first seemed a little incongruous – now felt entirely fitting. Standing alone onstage, he sang – easily and warmly – what he announced as his favorite song, "What A Wonderful World."

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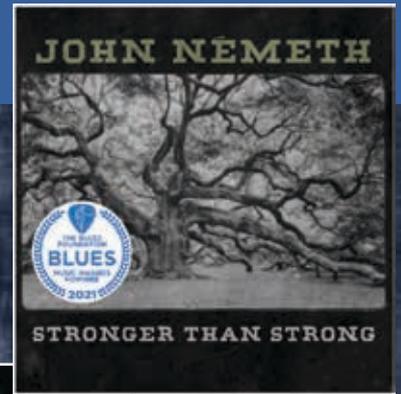
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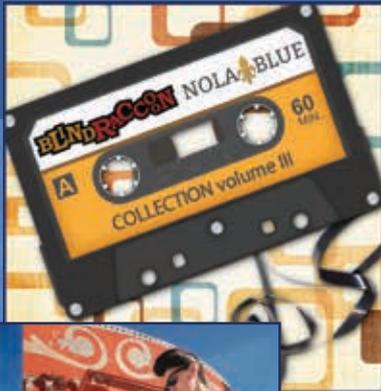
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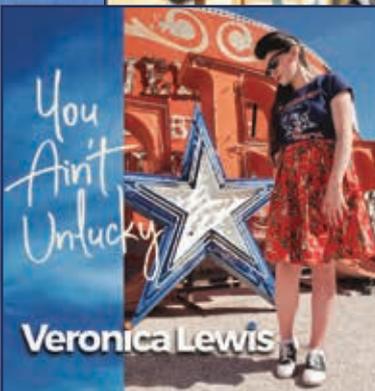
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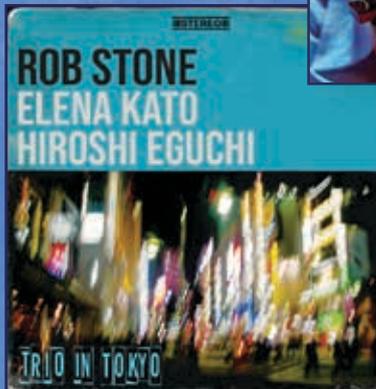


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# ALBUM REVIEW

**SUGARAY RAYFORD**

*Somebody Save Me*

Forty Below Records



**S**omebody Save Me is Sugaray Rayford's fifth studio release, and it features ten tracks – written by producer Eric Corne – that the singer delivers with tremendous command and conviction, an impressive accomplishment considering the styles presented here. Backed by a large supporting cast including – on different tracks – horns, strings, backing vocals, and a small choir, Rayford runs the show, which he establishes with the bass and organ prowl opening track “The Revelator,” the lyrics of which invite the listener in while alluding to what is to come, all while maintaining its chant

punctuated groove.

From here, Rayford effortlessly changes gears with the rhythmic and unstoppable “Time To Get Movin’” as he blues shouts its upbeat message of unity and mobilization. Shifting yet again into the horn backed soul of “You And I” and “My Cards Are On The Table” – two of the four love songs on the album – Rayford presents them all as refreshingly affirming proclamations, albeit with “I’d Kill For You, Honey” (a swampy guitar and harmonica track) delivering this message in a distinctly blues sort of way.

Although the material here is mainly positive and uplifting, the light of *Somebody Save Me* is often balanced by a certain amount of darkness. This can be seen just by looking at the track titles (Ex: “Angels And Devils”) but it can best be heard in the title song itself. Rayford’s intensity is understated on “Somebody Save Me” – with its sweet sounding strings and backing singers lulling the listener along – but this all belies the fact that it is a desperate call for help with no hint of whether or not things will finally turn out okay.

This is counterbalanced by the resolution of the blues rumba that precedes it. “Sometimes You Get The Bear” (And Sometimes The Bear Gets You) traces the ups, downs, struggles, vagaries, and general complaints in the life of one man from youth to adulthood to old age to Heaven, which he makes “by the skin of his teeth” and where “it’s all peace and love and kum ba yah. Cognac, Cuban cigars, and caviar.”

The album closes much as it begins, with a deep title and a unique sound. “Dark Night Of The Soul” is an ominous, lurking, bluesy (with heavy reverb) commentary on debts inexorably coming due for the one percenters. It closes a very strong album very well. *Somebody Save Me* is an outstanding showcase of Sugaray Rayford’s great talent.

– Matthew MacDonald



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*Magazine*

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# ALBUM REVIEW

## JOHNNY RAWLS

### *Where Have All The Soul Men Gone*

Third Street Cigar Records



Looking for a new favorite love song? You might find it on Johnny Rawls' new album. This 39-minute set of ten Rawls originals includes a handful of tunes you can cuddle up to your baby with. But there's more going on than that. Mississippi-born Rawls, 69, has (perhaps grudgingly) accepted his status as one of the last remaining true soul crooners. His "creds" speak loud – five Blues Blast winners, four Living Blues winners, and 20 BMA and Handy nominations for Soul Blues Male Artist and Soul Blues Album, winning the latter category twice, last in

2019 for *I'm Still Around*.

Carrying on that theme from 2019, Rawls delivers my pick for the best tune among a plethora of possibilities, "Keep On Doing My Thing." It is an organ-and-trombone-driven, toe-tapper with backup harmonies, making clear he knows his place and purpose. Rawls sings, "Now I've been singing a long, long time/Giving up never crossed my mind/I've been up/And Lord I've been down/People say that I'm insane/But I want the world to know/I'm gonna keep on doing my thing."

The title tune is an homage to all the great singers Rawls has known and worked with. He name checks Z.Z. Hill, B.B. King, Bobby Bland, Otis Clay, and O.V. Wright for whom he was band director. Again accepting his challenge, he sings, "Sometimes I get tired/But I got to keep the dream alive." As for the love songs, you can't go wrong with "Can't Leave It Alone," "Love, Love, Love," or the funkified "Baby, Baby, Baby." Still, my pick is the exhilarating "Bottom To The Top" that tells a moving story of finding love, and hope.

This album was recorded in Denmark and in Ohio, where engineer Travis Geiman (trombone) teams with Mike Williams (alto sax) as the Waterville Horns, adding immensely to the sound and feel. Rawls also plays tasty guitar and keyboards, and Alberto Marsico's exceptional organ riffs are out front during both sessions. Rawls' European touring band is nothing short of terrific, emulating perfectly the R&B sound of Stax and Motown and adding superb background vocals. You would be hard pressed to find any Rawls recording that does not satisfy. This one definitely does.

– Dan D. Harrell

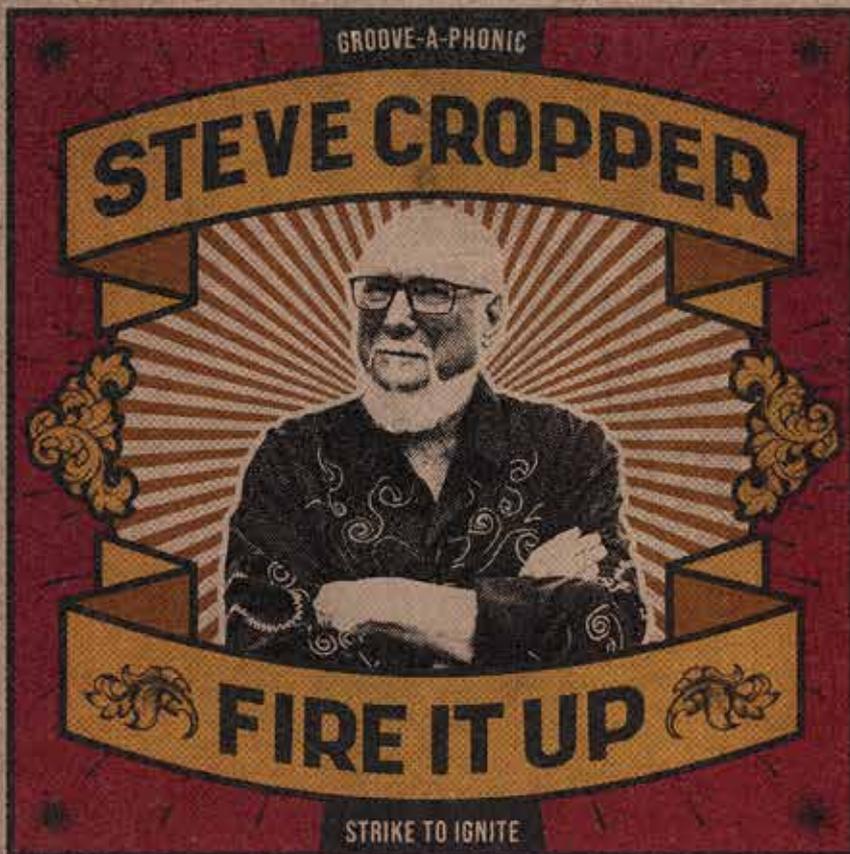


## QUINN SULLIVAN WIDE AWAKE

“Matured and owning his words, specifically the ones he’s now writing, Sullivan returns more as a singer-songwriter than just a prodigal guitarist.”

- *American Songwriter* -

Out Everywhere  
June 4, 2021



## STEVE CROPPER FIRE IT UP

“ In soul, many claim legendary status but few merit it. Without doubt, one who does is guitarist STEVE CROPPER.”

- *Soul and Jazz and Funk* -

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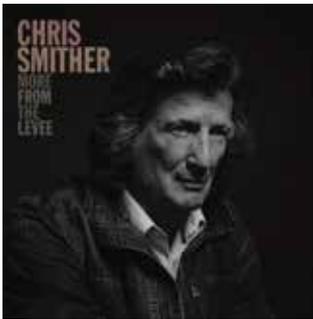


# ALBUM REVIEW

**CHRIS SMITHER**

*More From The Levee*

Signature Records



If you have to read this review to figure out this is a good album, you haven't listened to this guy through his 18 LPs in half a century. But if you're curious, you'll read it anyway. So, go ahead, take off your shoes. I'll wait. Chris Smither is one of the most consistent singer/songwriters in the business. This 18<sup>th</sup> release in half a century is a set of ten more recordings from the 24-song New Orleans session that gave us 2014's *Still On The Levee*. It contains adult love songs. And by adult, I don't mean X-rated. These are the thoughts of a man whose

lived life well spent.

He's as casual as John Prine and as comfortable as Tom Rush. Both he and Rush came out of what Dave Van Ronk called, "the Harvard Square folk scare" of the mid-60s. Smither was one of those Boston folkies you knew was more Cambridge Club 47 and not Greenwich Village Gaslight, academic and not commercial. As always, his songs here are as soothing as Constant Comment tea without ever being boring. And if that sounds like what you need in these jarring times, you're exactly right.

The lyrics of his songs follow threads that progress like the old Burma Shave signs that used to dot the highways. Follow his threads to the conclusion and you have a complete idea, sometimes within one or two lines. His couplets say more and/or beg more questions than many artists' entire careers. On "What I Do" he sings, "Birds don't understand the air/they don't even know it's there." Or on "Confirmation:" "If I tell you what the hell I'm up to/Maybe you can tell what's on my mind." On "I'm The Ride" he sings simply, "I'm not the passenger/I'm the ride." On songs like "Old Man Down" he sounds weathered, but not brittle. I imagine Ray Wylie Hubbard after a rare good night's sleep.

The other musicians here including the late and legendary Allen Toussaint on piano and drummer Billy Conway from Morphine and Treat Her Right, but you almost forget they're there, this CD is that intimate.

– Don Wilcock

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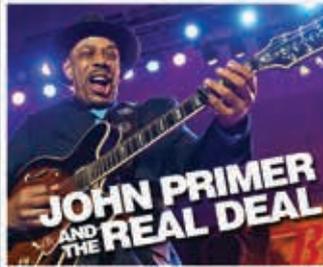


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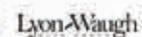
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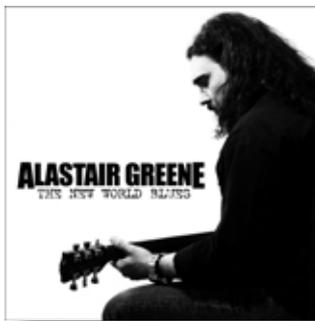


# ALBUM REVIEW

## ALASTAIR GREENE

### *The New World Blues*

Whiskey Bayou Records



**T**he *New World Blues* (TNWB) reminded me of something I learned in NYC a longtime ago. It's that good bread is as important, or more, than anything else in a sandwich. With TNWB, to torture a metaphor, you have two powerhouse tunes to open and close the 11-song, near-48-minute set – and lots of your favorite fixings in between.

“Living Today” opens – a glass-shattering, five-chord rocker that makes you jump up and down, and implores us: “remember to let your love shine through.” (Check out the official video on YouTube.)

Greene closes with the high-velocity, slide guitar-driven title cut, another genuine blues-rocker that has you clapping from the first chord, and proclaims: “hope is in your heart/hope is in your hands”.

Greene’s bucketful of credits includes seven years with Alan Parsons, a year-long touring stint with Sugaray Rayford, and annual appearances as guitarist with the Big Blues Bender Brass. He’s fronted his own band for two decades. Multi-BMA-nominated saxman and Bender Musical Director Jimmy Carpenter says, “He’s a total pro, solid in every way. I saw him put a huge smile on Bobby Rush’s face, which put a huge smile on mine.”

After signing with Tab Benoit’s Whiskey Bayou Records, Greene packed up his guitars and headed to Louisiana to record this stripped-down, still multi-dimensional collection, his ninth release, accompanied only by producer Benoit on drums and bassist Corey Duplechin. They all sing, but Greene is out front on every tune. Benoit helped with lyrics and music, especially on two of the best songs, “Bayou Mile,” a lovely ballad reminiscent of early Allman Brothers, and “Heroes,” a heartfelt, swaying salute to our inspirations.

Oxnard-based Greene, 49, dedicates the album to original The Pontiax bassist Jack Kennedy who died unexpectedly in 2019. Greene’s first blues band included Kennedy and Tom Lackner (former Pontiax drummer). They also anchored his first recording in 2000. “Jack was like the big brother I never had,” says Greene. “I can’t say enough good things about him and [his] positive impact on my life and career.”

Primarily a live-in-studio recording, TNWB has a truckload of sizzling, tasty guitar, from low-down blues on “No Longer Amused” and “Alone And Confused,” to rock scorchers “Wontcha Tell Me” and “Lies And Fear.” From first bite to last, this mouthwatering blues-rock sandwich is certain to satisfy even the most discerning palate. (Read a full profile on Greene at our weekly online magazine, [bluesmusicstore.com/bmo\\_nov\\_11](http://bluesmusicstore.com/bmo_nov_11).)

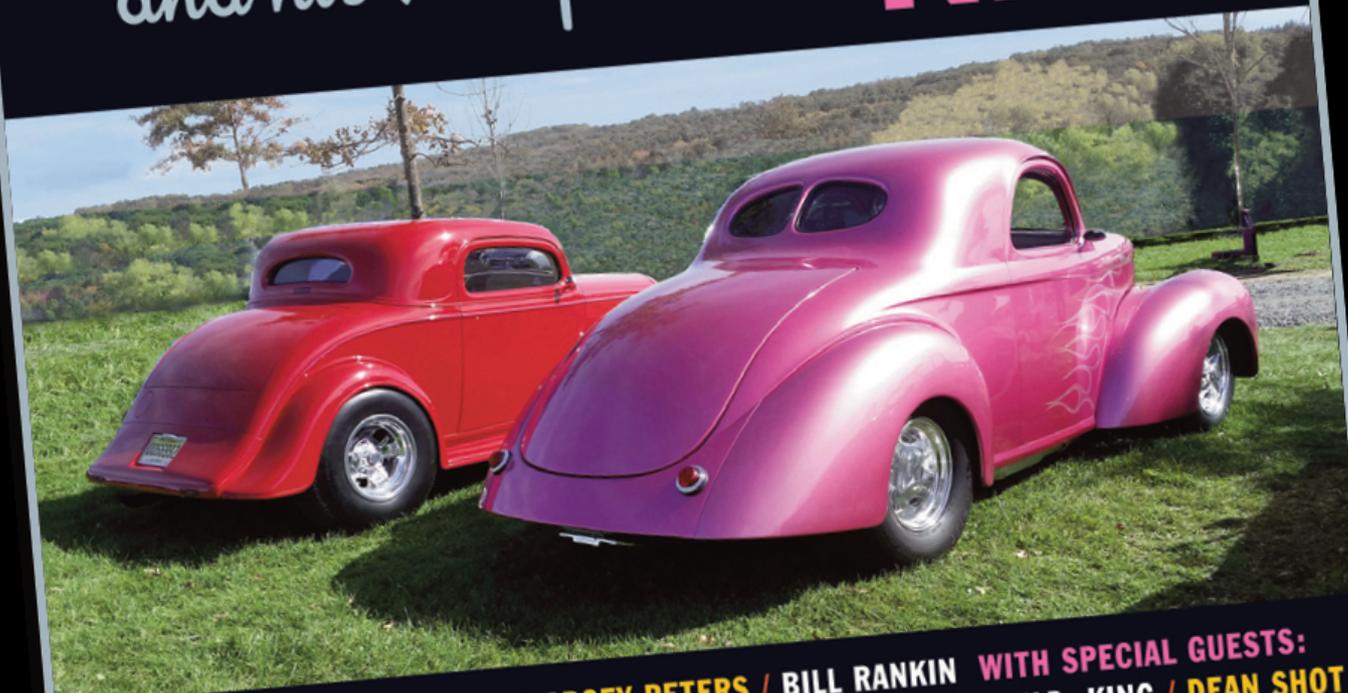


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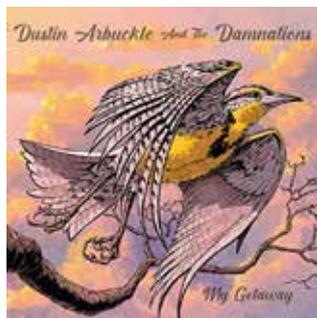
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# ALBUM REVIEW

## DUSTIN ARBUCKLE & THE DAMNATIONS

*My Getaway*  
Self-release



Dustin Arbuckle doesn't mess around. He jumps right into this impressive recording, singing the first song, "Say My Name." It has a strong roots-rock back beat pace, broken up by a few dramatic intervals. Then there's Arbuckle's superb handling of his diatonic, custom-made Spiers Hohner harmonica. At which he excels, much like John Nemeth, someone he knows and to whom he has been compared. More harp, in the intro to the next tune, "Across The Desert." I like the driving quality of its rhythm. The lyric is punctuated by a chorus of moans which blend nicely as Arbuckle sings, "Now I'm standing on a mountain/Looking far as I can see/And I cried out to the heavens/What's become of me? ... Now the redtail, he's flying with me/Said he's come to be my guide/he said, 'Follow me, my brother, I'll take you across the great divide.'"

Guitarist Brandon Hudspeth, who replaced Arbuckle's long-time partner, Aaron Moreland, in 2017 after more than a decade together, offers shimmering and slippery chords to support this composition, a cooperative effort among Arbuckle, Hudspeth, bassist Professor Mark Foley (and sometimes Caleb Drummond), and Moreland & Arbuckle holdover drummer Kendall Newby. Captivating! And these are just the first two tracks on *My Getaway*. I could expound on the others, mostly originals – they nearly all match the polish and panache of these two – but space limitations demand a more focused approach. Then, there's the title track, a bright, skip-along instrumental intro leads up to Arbuckle's vocal. This one reminds me of the classic blues leitmotif, an interloper on a domestic scene, someone engaging in a bit of illicit concupiscence, and an abrupt escape before physical confrontation. You've undoubtedly heard many a take on this scenario: Lynrd Skynrd's "Gimme Three Steps"; the Allman Brothers' "One Way Out"; maybe even Treat Her Right's "I think She Likes Me" cast the same shadow, if perhaps from another spot in the room. Getting beyond the reach of the cuckolded boyfriend or spouse is the main idea. The dynamic is timeless and none of the aforementioned approach the subject any better than Dustin Arbuckle and The Damnations on this, their initial full-length album. You owe it to yourself to check them out.

– M.E. Travaglini

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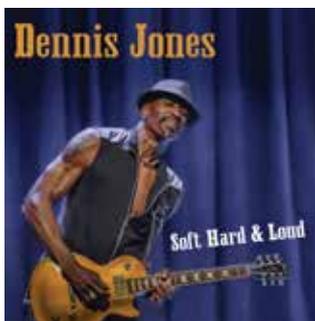


# ALBUM REVIEW

**DENNIS JONES**

*Soft Hard & Loud*

Blue Rock Records



This is the sixth studio release from L.A. based singer/songwriter/guitarist Dennis Jones (he also has a live CD) and, on it, listeners are treated to ten well-crafted originals that – as a whole and, in some cases, individually – more than live up to the album’s title. *Soft Hard & Loud*’s main sounds can be heard in the opening “Revolves Around You,” as Jones’ starts each verse off with a stripped down blues guitar riff before shifting into a smooth West Coast backing line and then finishing with a rock blast; he builds, layers, and mixes things together through variation, well-designed solos, and catchy grooves.

That noted, *Soft, Hard & Loud* isn’t a guitar album because it doesn’t need to be one. While Jones’ playing takes his trio to some interesting places, he has written these songs well enough to stand on their own and they do. Whether in the form of a chill ode to his chosen music (“I Love The Blues”), a 12-bar flip side to a standard (“Front Door Man”), or a reggae fueled social commentary on racism that had me looking up the 25th Dynasty and the first university and coming away more educated for it (“I Hate Hate”), the music here is always about getting the message across, whatever it may be. There are, in fact, several social commentaries on this album, and they’re all strong, with Jones’ heavy riff and questioningly disdainful vocals on “Like Sheep” making his opinion clear on the thinking and behavior of present day society.

But “Burn The Plantation Down” is commentary from an entirely different angle. On its surface, it’s a slave’s murder fantasy, and its music, lyrics, and vocals are racing, raging, frenetic, and defiant, matching the mindset of someone impotently (“Bullets in my hand/ Wish I had a gun”) trapped in a waking nightmare, with only their disturbed plans of getting even and getting out to sustain them... barely.

Going deeper, it’s an exercise in empathy. Jones’ slave wants to protect his family and himself, but he can’t, so he’s left to work and re-work how he’s going to destroy all of the threats assaulting them. So, yes, it’s a murder fantasy, but it’s also as human as it gets, which enables it to hit home while closing the album with intense artistic style.

*Soft Hard & Loud* – Jones’ first studio album since 2016 – was well worth the wait. (Read a full profile on Jones at our weekly online magazine, [bluesmusicstore.com/bmo\\_oct\\_17](http://bluesmusicstore.com/bmo_oct_17).)

– Matthew MacDonald

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# ALBUM REVIEW

## BOB MARGOLIN

### *Star Of Stage And Screens*

VizzTone



Remember that a record is exactly that – a record of that day it was recorded. As such, the words a singer articulates are an accurate record about the times it captures. Bob Margolin, valued columnist for *Blues Music Magazine*, has now released *Star Of Stage And Screens*, a follow-up acoustic CD to his 2019 *This Guitar And Tonight*, a 2020 Blues Music Award winner as Acoustic CD of the Year. Throughout these six offerings, Margolin again picks acoustic slide and gently offers lyrics that definitely capture these Covid times through the eyes of a

touring musician.

Each tune addresses that world when the music abruptly screeched to a grinding halt. The title cut laments about how Margolin used to “play all night for you in nightclubs, theaters and bars.” But accepts that he now shoots himself with a video app and pretends we are there. “Love And Thanks” is Margolin’s mournful love song directed to those gave everything to the fight and did not make it through this devastating pandemic. It’s his “Thank You Essential Workers” lawn sign. His clever “After Party” is a guitar boogie announcing that “the after party starts today.”

Margolin finds strength in “For My Teachers” by remembering the advice passed along by his mentors. “Let It Go” advises that, in these times, one should let things go instead of letting those frustrations bring you down, singing, “You can’t make it better, but you sure can make it worse.” He ends the six-song CD with the longest cut, “March 2020 In Stop Time.” Musically, it connects with classic Muddy Waters stop time Chess blues; lyrically, Margolin recalls his last stage appearance on March 7, 2020. This is an all-encompassing narrative of the effects of the virus during that first month. By the two-minute mark, it becomes a scathing commentary on the current administration’s handling of the illness.

Years from now, when America wants to remember the changing world of 2020, Bob Margolin’s truthful record of the times will stand out as an honest reminder of what the world experienced in these devastating times.

– Art Tipaldi

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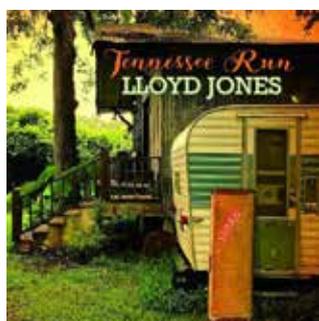


# ALBUM REVIEW

LLOYD JONES

*Tennessee Run*

VizzTone



Fifty year veteran of the Pacific Northwest scene, Lloyd Jones, the Portland-based singer/songwriter/guitarist, traveled to Franklin, Tennessee, to record at keyboardist/producer Kevin McKendree's Rock House studio. Jones' first album since 2012's *Doin' What It Takes* (Fresh Reference) is a brilliantly varied collection of 14 originals. McKendree, long time Delbert McClinton accompanist, leads the tight and versatile band of drummer Kenneth Blevins, bassist Steve Mackey, percussionist Reinhardt Melz, saxophonist Jim Hoke, trumpeter Quentin Ware, trombonist Ray Agee, and backing vocalists Etta Britt and Jackie Wilson. The menu has blues, funk, NOLA R&B, rock, and Southern soul.

The auspicious ear-grabbing opener, "You Got Me Good," features hard-charging horns that evoke the iconic riffs of Otis Redding's "Can't Turn You Loose." The tunes are mainly concerned with the vicissitudes of love and romance except for "Where's My Phone?," a funky tale of frustration about Jones' stressful search for his missing phone and "Bayou Boys," a boisterous tribute to the unwavering resilience of Louisiana music propelled by pounding drums, percolating percussion, and exuberantly serpentine horns. Funk also abounds on "Love Is Everything," a strident shuffle bump about the eternal truth, "Chevrolet Angel" who "loves like the devil but is heaven sent in her midnight blue Corvette," and the sparsely slinky "Chicken Bones" about the aftermath of a moribund affair (50 years ago Bobby Rush gave us "Chicken Heads," and now we have "Chicken Bones").

The blues are covered on the admonitory shuffle about a reluctant, evasive lover "Dilly Dally" and the pleading jumper "Turn Me Loose." Delbert McClinton duets with Jones on the loping rocker "Everybody's Somebody's Fool." Jones' vocals are reminiscent of McClinton's at times; however, I find Jones' vocals raspier and McClinton's twangier. I also hear echoes of Eddie Hinton and Billy Price in Jones' soulful vocals. L.A.-based Teresa James duets with Jones on the wry memory-lapse jeremiad "I Wish I Could Remember Loving You." The lone slow tune is the Southern soul ballad "A True Love Never Dies."

McKendree's robust playing is one of the album's highlights as is Jones' tasteful, economical string bending. This thoroughly enjoyable album has something for everybody. I considered Jones' 1995 album *Trouble Monkey* (Audio Quest) to be one of the best album of the nineties. The exemplary *Tennessee Run* is one of the best albums of 2020.

– Thomas J. Cullen III

*Alafia Moon*  
**DAMON FOWLER**

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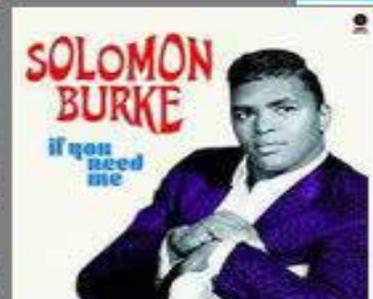
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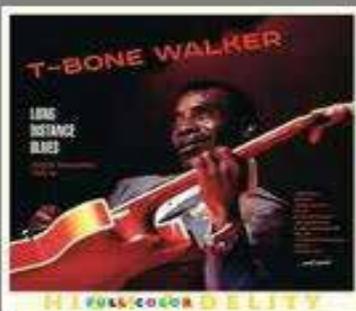
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Bo Diddley Road Runner + 2 Bonus Tracks [Import]

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T-Bone Walker Long Distance Blues

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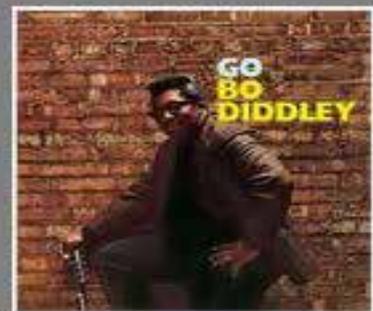
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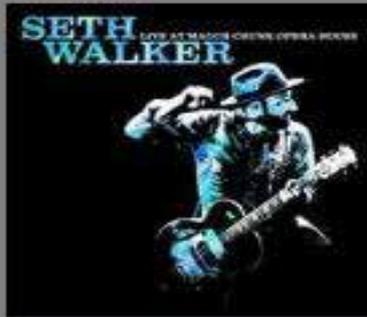


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R.L. Burnside Come on in

\$17.00

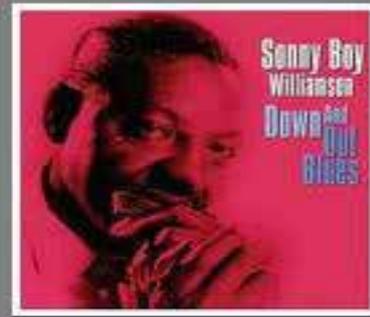
ADD TO CART



R.L. Burnside Mr. Wizard

\$17.00

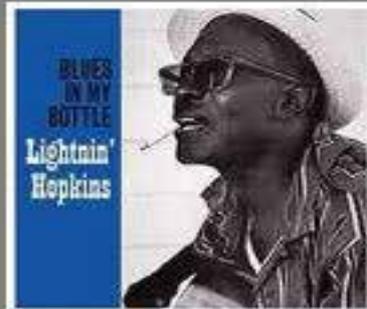
ADD TO CART



Sonny Boy Williamson Down  
& Out Blues

\$17.00

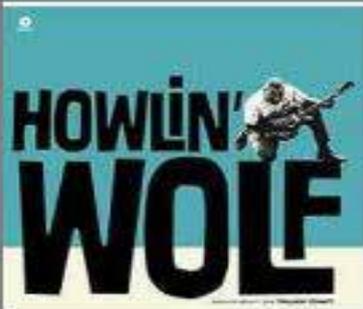
ADD TO CART



Lightnin' Hopkins Blues In My  
Bottle

\$17.00

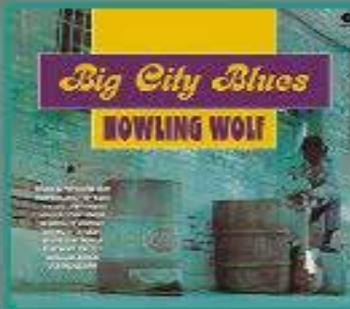
ADD TO CART



Howlin' Wolf - Howlin' Wolf

\$17.00

ADD TO CART



Howlin Wolf Big City Blues +  
5 Bonus Tracks

\$17.00

ADD TO CART



Gary Davis - Harlem Street  
Singer

\$17.00

ADD TO CART



Big Joe Turner Rock & Roll +  
2 Bonus Tracks

\$17.00

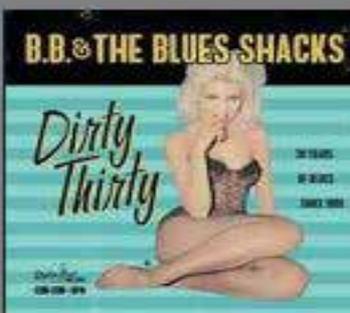
ADD TO CART



Ben E. King Stand By Me  
Forever

\$17.00

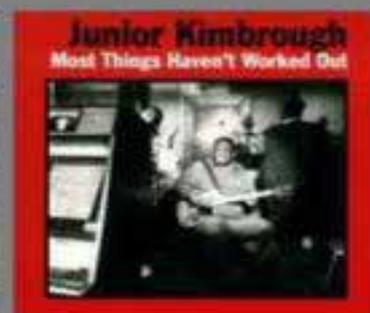
ADD TO CART



B.B. & the Blues Shacks Dirty  
Thirty

\$16.99

ADD TO CART



Junior Kimbrough Most  
Things Haven't Worked Out

\$18.00

ADD TO CART

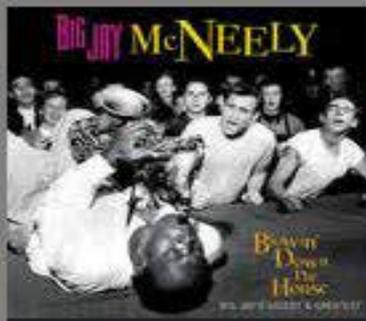
# VINYL ADDED: CLICK THE ALBUM COVER



Junior Kimbrough God Knows I Tried

\$17.98

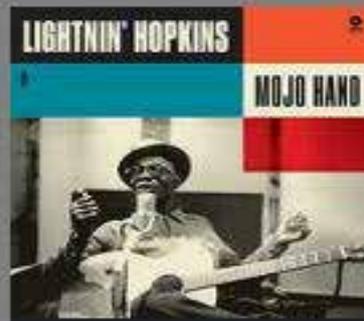
ADD TO CART



Big Jay McNeely Blowin' Down The House - Big Jay's

\$18.00

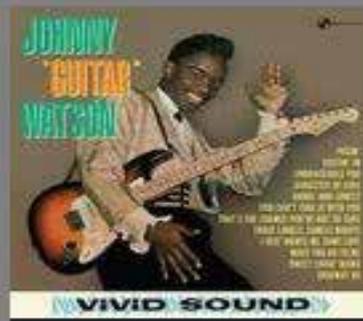
ADD TO CART



Lightnin Hopkins Mojo Hand

\$18.00

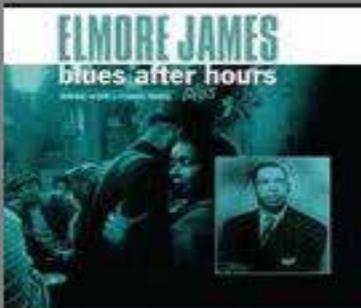
ADD TO CART



Johnny Guitar Watson - Johnny Guitar Watson

\$18.00

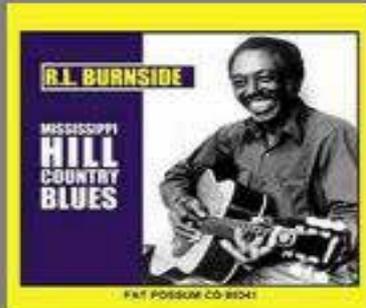
ADD TO CART



Elmore James Blues After Hours Plus + 9 Bonus Tracks

\$18.00

ADD TO CART



R.L. Burnside Mississippi Hill Country Blues

\$19.00

ADD TO CART



Junior Kimbrough You Better Run: The Essential Junior

\$19.00

ADD TO CART



Charley Crockett Lil G.I.'s Blue Bonanza

\$19.00

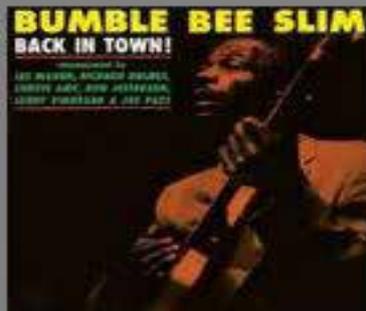
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Cedric Burnside Benton County Relic

\$19.00

ADD TO CART



Bumble Bee Slim Back In Town!

\$19.00

ADD TO CART



Mississippi Sheiks Complete Recorded Works In

\$20.00

ADD TO CART



Mississippi Sheiks Complete Recorded Works in

\$20.00

ADD TO CART

# VINYL ADDED: CLICK THE ALBUM COVER



Boz Scaggs Memphis

\$20.00

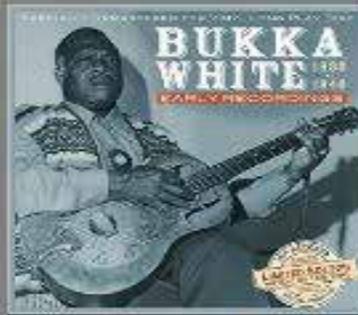
[ADD TO CART](#)



Son House - Live At Oberlin College, April 15, 1965

\$20.00

[ADD TO CART](#)



Bukka White Early Recordings 1930-1940

\$21.00

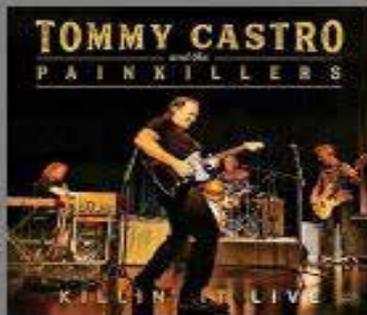
[ADD TO CART](#)



Albert King Big Blues [Import]

\$21.00

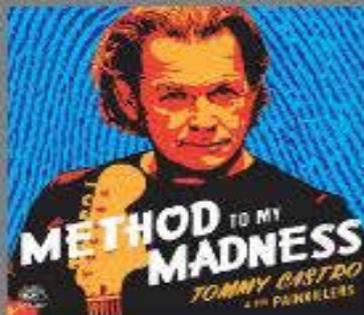
[ADD TO CART](#)



Tommy Castro & the Painkillers Killin' It Live

\$22.00

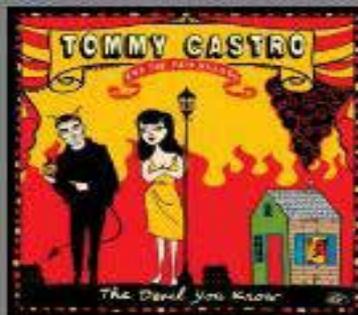
[ADD TO CART](#)



Tommy Castro & the Painkillers Method To My Madness

\$22.00

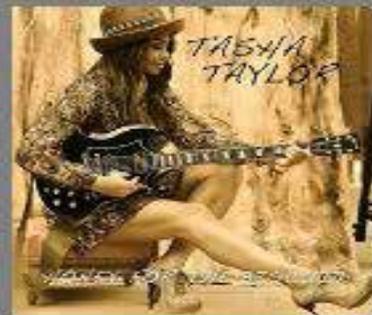
[ADD TO CART](#)



Tommy Castro The Devil You Know

\$22.00

[ADD TO CART](#)



Tasha Taylor Honey For The Biscuit

\$22.00

[ADD TO CART](#)



Sugaray Rayford Somebody Save Me

\$22.00

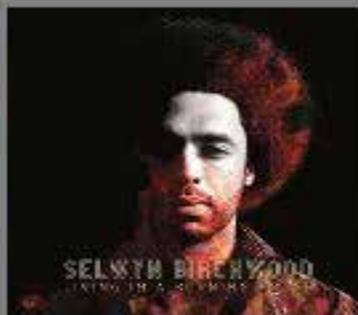
[ADD TO CART](#)



Sonny Landreth Blacktop Run

\$22.00

[ADD TO CART](#)



Selwyn Birchwood Living In A Burning House

\$22.00

[ADD TO CART](#)



Samantha Fish Kill Or Be Kind

\$22.00

[ADD TO CART](#)

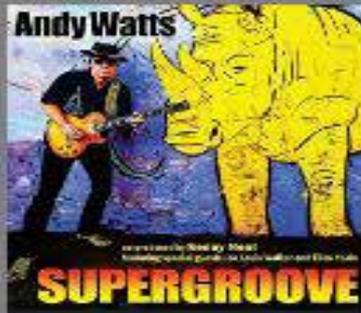
# MORE ARTISTS INFO? CLICK THE CD COVER



MALAYA BLUE - STILL

\$13.00

[ADD TO CART](#)



Vizztone Label Group  
ANDY WATTS -  
SUPERGROOVE Featuring Joe

\$13.00

[ADD TO CART](#)



JOHN MAYALL - FIND A WAY  
TO CARE

\$11.00

[ADD TO CART](#)



Nola Blue Records  
JOHN NEMETH - STRONGER  
THAN STRONG

\$16.00

[ADD TO CART](#)



MC RECORDS  
KIM WILSON - TAKE ME BACK

\$14.00

[ADD TO CART](#)



Alligator Records  
SHEMKIA COPELAND -  
UNCIVIL WAR

\$15.00

[ADD TO CART](#)



Vizztone Label Group  
ALASTAIR GREENE - THE  
NEW WORLD BLUES

\$12.00

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Vizztone Label Group  
ARTUR MENEZES

\$14.00

[ADD TO CART](#)



Vizztone Label Group  
ERIN HARPE - MEET ME IN  
THE MIDDLE

\$14.00

[ADD TO CART](#)



Vizztone Label Group  
LUCKY LOSERS - GODLESS  
LAND

\$12.00

[ADD TO CART](#)



BRANDON MILLER - VIRTUE  
AND VICE

\$12.00

[ADD TO CART](#)



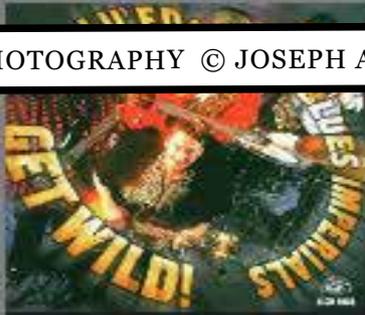
JONNY T-BIRD & THE MPS -  
COMMON CENTS

\$12.00

[ADD TO CART](#)

# MORE ARTISTS INFO? CLICK THE CD COVER

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LIL' ED & THE BLUES  
IMPERIALS - Get Wild

\$17.00

ADD TO CART



LIL' ED & THE BLUES  
IMPERIALS - Chicken Gravy &

\$17.00

ADD TO CART



3 CD SET - DOWN HOME  
BLUES: MIAMI, ATLANTA, &

\$34.00

ADD TO CART



Ruf Records  
BLUES CARAVAN 2020 -  
CD/DVD SET - JEREMIAH

\$18.00

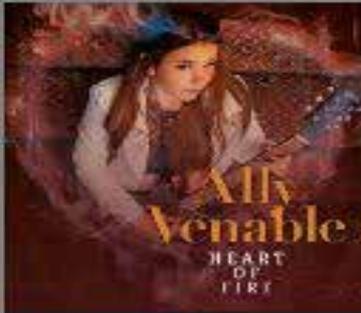
ADD TO CART



Ruf Records  
GHALIA VOLT - ONE WOMAN  
BAND

\$16.00

ADD TO CART



Ruf Records  
ALLY VENABLE - HEART OF  
FIRE

\$16.00

PRE-ORDER NOW



Alligator Records  
CURTIS SALGADO - DAMAGE  
CONTROL

\$17.00

PRE-ORDER NOW



Alligator Records  
SELWYN BIRCHWOOD -  
LIVING IN A BURNING HOUSE

\$18.00

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Nola Blue Records  
VERONICA LEWIS - YOU AIN'T  
UNLUCKY

\$9.00

PRE-ORDER NOW



NORA JEAN WALLACE -  
BLUESWOMAN

\$17.00

ADD TO CART



PAUL BUTTERFIELD - EAST-  
WEST

\$12.00

ADD TO CART



FREDDIE KING - BURGLAR

\$9.00

ADD TO CART

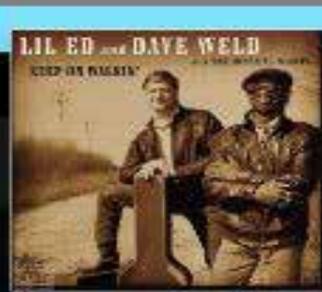
# MORE ARTISTS INFO? CLICK THE CD COVER



Alligator Records  
RICK ESTRIN - GROOVIN' IN  
GREASELAND

\$16.00

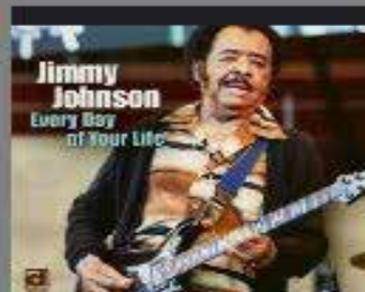
ADD TO CART



LIL' ED & DAVE WELD - KEEP  
ON WALKIN'

\$17.00

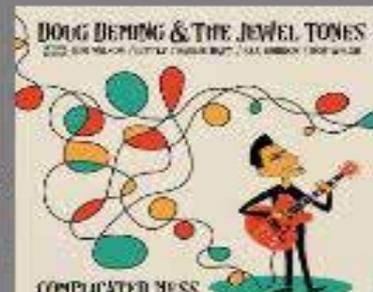
ADD TO CART



JIMMY JOHNSON - EVERY  
DAY OF YOUR LIFE

\$17.00

ADD TO CART



Vizztone Label Group  
DOUG DEMING & THE JEWEL  
TONES - COMPLICATED

\$11.00

ADD TO CART



BOBBY G. PHD In The Blues

\$8.00

ADD TO CART



Vizztone Label Group  
BOB CORRITORE/HENRY  
GRAY - COLD CHILLS

\$14.00

ADD TO CART



Classic Blues Artwork 1920's  
Calendar and 23 Song CD

\$29.00

ADD TO CART



SONNY GREEN - FOUND ONE  
SOUL SINGER

\$14.00

ADD TO CART



ANTHONY WILD - GONNA  
HAVE TO CALL A TOW TRUCK

\$13.00

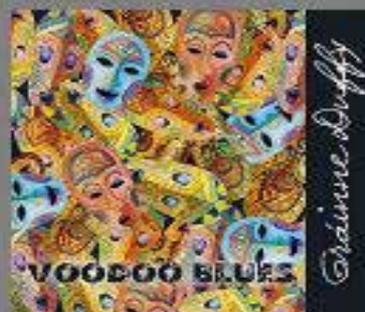
ADD TO CART



MICK KOLASSA - IF YOU  
CAN'T BE GOOD, BE GOOD AT

\$13.00

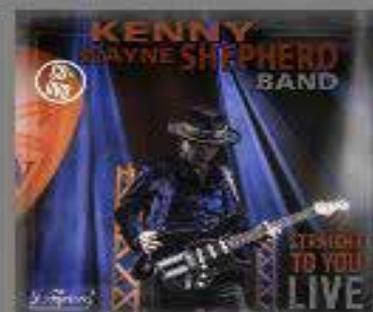
ADD TO CART



GRAINNE DUFFY - VOODOO  
BLUES

\$14.00

ADD TO CART

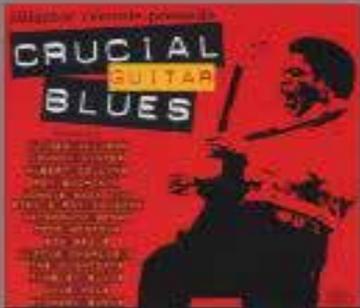


MASCOT LABEL GROUP  
CD/DVD SET - KENNY WAYNE  
SHEPHERD - Straight To You:

\$13.00

ADD TO CART

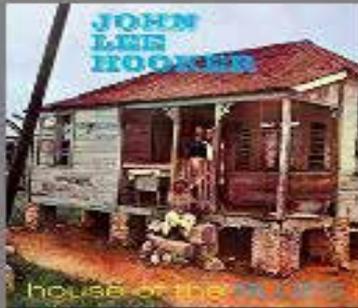
# MORE ARTISTS INFO? CLICK THE CD COVER



CRUCIAL GUITAR BLUES /  
VARIOUS Crucial Guitar Blues

\$10.50

[ADD TO CART](#)



HOOKER, JOHN LEE House of  
the Blues

\$10.00

[ADD TO CART](#)



HOWLIN WOLF Howlin' Wolf

\$10.00

[ADD TO CART](#)



LITTLE WALTER Best of

\$10.00

[ADD TO CART](#)



HARRIS, WYNONIE Best of the  
Best

\$10.00

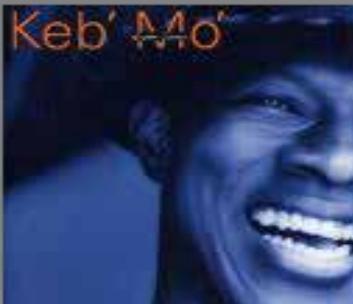
[ADD TO CART](#)



GUY, BUDDY Damn Right I've  
Got the Blues

\$9.50

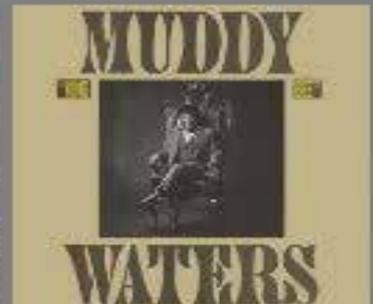
[ADD TO CART](#)



KEB MO Slow Down

\$9.50

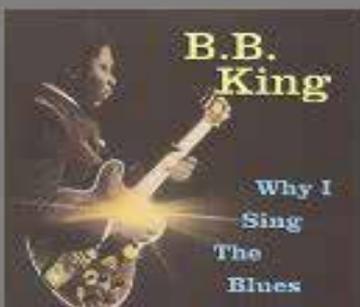
[ADD TO CART](#)



WATERS, MUDDY King Bee

\$9.00

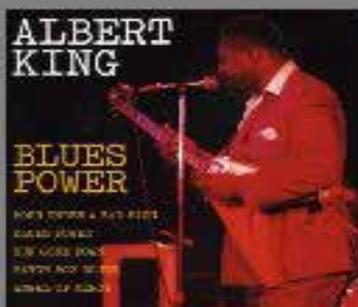
[ADD TO CART](#)



KING, B.B. Why I Sing the  
Blues

\$9.00

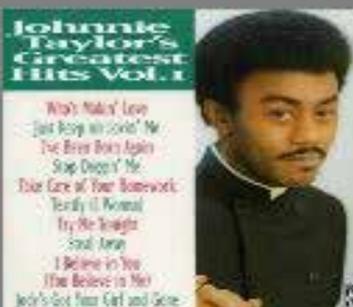
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KING, ALBERT Blues Power

\$9.00

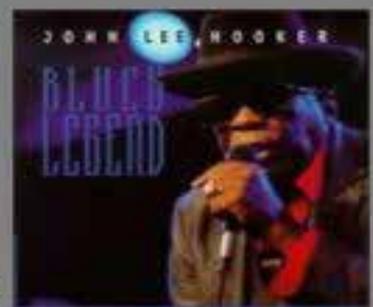
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TAYLOR, JOHNNIE Greatest  
Hits 1

\$9.00

[ADD TO CART](#)



HOOKER, JOHN LEE Blues  
Legend

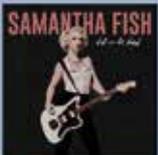
\$9.00

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proudly representing

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Bob Margolin  
Kenny Neal  
Samantha Fish  
Tab Benoit  
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Early Times  
Annika Chambers  
Bob Corritore



Too Slim & the Taildraggers  
Bernard Allison  
Chris BadNews Barnes  
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FOUND!  
One  
Soul  
Singer



## WHAT THE CRITICS ARE SAYING

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**JANUARY 2021**  
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<https://bluesmusicstore.com/download28/>

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Thanks to all the artist who contributed their music to this CD Sampler.  
All the songs are available for download at the [BluesMusicStore.com](https://bluesmusicstore.com).

Duke Robillard & Friends – “Give Me All The Love You Got” from the album *Blues Bash!* on Stony Plain Records

Ben Levin – “Carryout Or Delivery” from the album *Carryout Or Delivery* on VizzTone Label Group

Kevin Burt – “Purdy Lil Thing” from the album *Stone Crazy* on Gulf Coast Records

John Nemeth – “Sometimes” from the album *Stronger Than Strong* on Nola Blue Records

Dave Riley & Bob Corritore – “Way Back Home” on the album *Travelin’ The Dirt Road* on VizzTone Label Group

Steve Strongman – “Tired Of Talkin’” from the album *Tired Of Talkin’* on Stony Plain Records

Kid Ramos & Bob Corritore – “Snakes Crawl At Night” from the album *Phoenix Blues Sessions* on VizzTone Label Group

Dave Keller – “Evil That Men Do” featuring Trudy Lynn, Annika Chambers, Annie Mack, and Johnny Rawls from the album *You Get What You Give* on Taste Tone Records

Mick Kolassa– “If You Can’t be Good” from the album *If You Can’t be Good, Be Good At It!* on Endless Blues Records

Mike Zito – “All I Got For Christmas Is The Blues” from the album *A Gulf Coast Christmas* on Gulf Coast Records

Henry Gray & Bob Corritore - “Birthday Blues” from the album *Cold Chills* on VizzTone Label Group

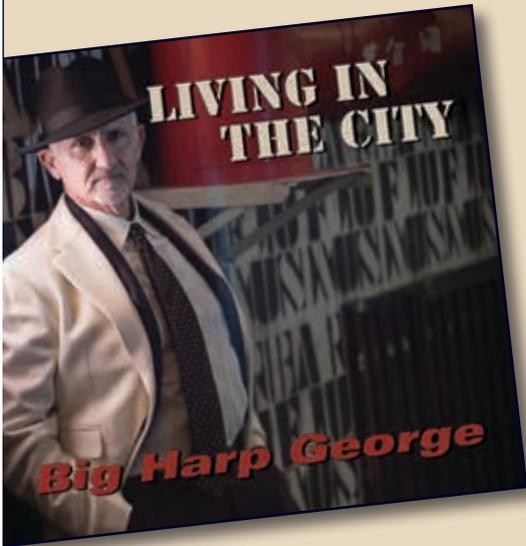
Jonny T-Bird & The MPs– “No Ship” from album *Common Cents* on Neon Grubb Jeer Music

All the CDs listed above  
are available in the  
[BluesMusicStore.com](https://bluesmusicstore.com).  
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*"[Big Harp George] plays his chromatic harmonica with a dynamite combination of rhythm, pitch, intonation, and style. He remains a mighty fine songwriter displaying a keen intellect."*

*Randall Parrish, Vivascene*

*"... [Big Harp George] brings a lifetime of experiences to the table and presents songs that are imbued with a knowing, insightful wit."*

*David MacMurray, Blues Junction Productions*

*"Big Harp George remains an absolute master of the chromatic harmonica, blowing brilliantly sculpted, richly melodic solos and obbligatos throughout ..."* *Lee Hildebrand, Living Blues*

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ALSO AVAILABLE ON  
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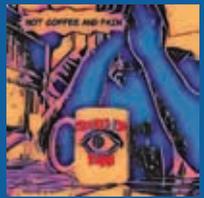
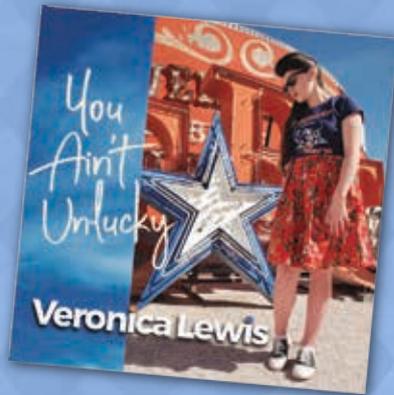


PHOTO BY ED SAWICKI

With one foot in the 50's and one foot in the future, for her debut album Veronica Lewis pays homage to her influences - Katie Webster, Otis Spann, Jerry Lee, Pinetop Perkins and Marcia Ball. Available February 2021!



[www.veronicalewis.com](http://www.veronicalewis.com)

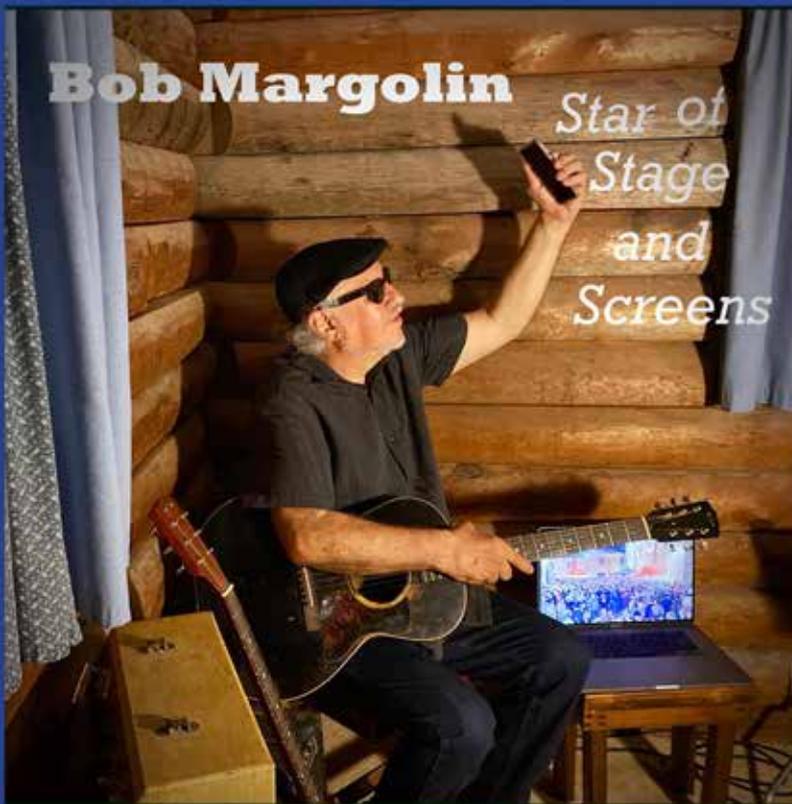
"Blue Heart Records and Malaya Blue are a match made in blues heaven. The support and professionalism is first class; it's clearly a label destined to become a world leader. We are proud to be part of the family" - Steve Yourglivch, Manager- Malaya Blue

[www.blueheartrecords.com](http://www.blueheartrecords.com)

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Star of  
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Screens



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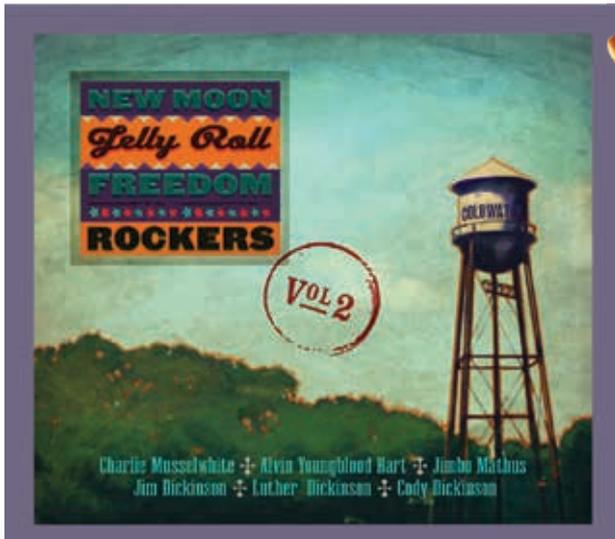
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