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THE TOP TEN ALBUMS OF 2020

18 Writers & Editors Share Their Picks For The Best Recordings Of This Year

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THE TOP TEN ALBUMS OF 2020

BLUES MUSIC ONLINE
December 24, 2020 - Issue 24

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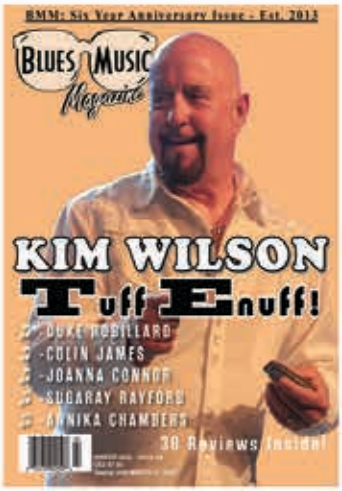

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THE TOP TEN

By Vincent Abbate

Albums listed in no specific order.

♫ Victor Wainwright & The Train, *Memphis Loud*, Ruf
♫ Sonny Landreth, *Blacktop Run*, Provogue
♫ Larkin Poe, *Self Made Man*, Tricki-Woo
♫ Robert Cray, *That's What I Heard*, Nozzle
♫ Thorbjørn Risager & The Black Tornado, Ruf
♫ Walter Trout, *Ordinary Madness*, Provogue
♫ Jeremiah Johnson, *Unemployed Highly Annoyed*, Ruf
♫ The Proven Ones, *You Ain't Done*, Gulf Coast
♫ Marcus King, *El Dorado*, Fantasy
♫ Various Artists, *Lockdown Sessions*, Crosscut

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THE TOP TEN

By Grant Britt

Albums listed in no specific order.

♫ John Nemeth, *Stronger Than Strong,* NOLA Blue
♫ Dan Penn, *Living On Mercy,* Last Music Co
♫ Various Artists, *Hanging Tree Guitar,* Music Maker
♫ Henry Gray & Bob Corritore, *Cold Chills,* VizzTone
♫ Mike Zito, *Mike Zito & Friends-A Tribute To Chuck Berry*, Ruf
♫ Dave Alvin, *From An Old Guitar,* Yep Roc
♫ Kim Wilson, *Take Me Back,* M.C. Records
♫ Shemekia Copeland, *Uncivil War*, Alligator
♫ Tony Holiday, *Soul Service,* VizzTone
♫ Elvin Bishop & Charlie Musselwhite, *100 Years Of Blues,* Alligator

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—American Blues Scene

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THE TOP TEN

By Tom Clarke

Albums listed in no specific order.

- Bobby Rush, *Rawer Than Raw*, Deep Rush
- Jimmy "Duck" Holmes, *Cypress Grove*, Easy Eye Sound
- Kim Wilson, *Take Me Back*, M.C. Records
- Tinsley Ellis, *Ice Cream In Hell*, Alligator
- John Nemeth, *Stronger Than Strong*, Nola Blue
- Ruthie Foster Big Band, *Live At The Paramount*, Blue Corn Music
- Linsey Alexander, *Live At Rosa's*, Delmark
- Larkin Poe, *Self Made Man*, Tricki-Woo
- Johnny Nicholas, *Mistaken Identity*, Valcour Records
- Duke Robillard, *Blues Bash*, Stony Plain

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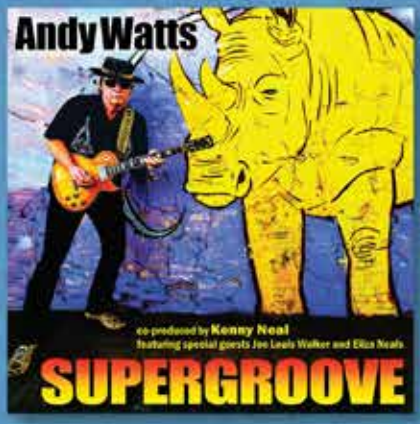

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THE TOP TEN

By Michael Cote

Albums listed in no specific order.

♫ Fantastic Negrito, *Have You Lost Your Mind Yet?*, Cooking Vinyl
♫ Ruthie Foster, *Live At The Paramount*, Blue Corn Music
♫ Kirk Fletcher, *My Blues Pathway*, Cleopatra Blues
♫ Larkin Poe, *Self Made Man*, Tricki-Woo
♫ Sir Rod and the Blues Doctors, *Come Together*, Modern Blues Harmonica
♫ Marcus King, *El Dorado*, Fantasy
♫ Sonny Landreth, *Blacktop Run*, Provogue
♫ Robert Cray, *That's What I Heard*, Nozzle
♫ Tinsley Ellis, *Ice Cream In Hell*, Alligator
♫ Lucinda Williams, *Good Souls Better Angels*, Highway 20

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Tab Benoit's Swampland Jam *w/* **Big Chief Monk Boudreaux, Johnny Sansone & Waylon Thibodeaux**
Ivan Neville's Dumpstaphunk (T) · Victor Wainwright & the Train *w/* **Dave Gross · Tinsley Ellis**
Mud Morganfield & His Allstar Chicago Band · Roomful of Blues · Coco Montoya
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Ronnie Baker Brooks Band · Deanna Bogart Band · Southern Avenue · Toronzo Cannon
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THE TOP TEN

By Tom J. Cullen III

Albums listed in no specific order.

♫ Big Harp George, *Living In The City,* Blue Mountain
♫ John Primer & Bob Corritore, *The Gypsy Woman Told Me,* VizzTone
♫ Sugar Ray & the Bluetones featuring Little Charlie Baty, *Too Far From The Bar,* Severn
♫ John Nemeth, *Stronger Than Strong*, NOLA Blue
♫ Elvin Bishop & Charlie Musselwhite, *100 Years Of Blues,* Alligator
♫ Jimmy Johnson, *Every Day Of My Life,* Delmark
♫ Lloyd Jones, *Tennessee Run,* VizzTone
♫ Frank Bey, *All My Dues Are Paid,* NOLA Blue
♫ Hurricane Ruth, *Good Life,* American Showplace
♫ Nighthawks, *Tryin' To Get To You,* Ellersoul

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THE TOP TEN

By Hal Horowitz

Albums listed in no specific order.

♫ Peter Parcek, *Mississippi Suitcase*, self-release

♫ Lucinda Williams, *Good Souls Better Angels*, Highway 20

♫ Ronnie Earl, *Rise Up*, Stony Plain

♫ Larkin Poe, *Self Made Man*, Tricki-Woo

♫ Sonny Landreth, *Blacktop Run*, Provogue

♫ Robert Cray, *That's What I Heard*, Nozzle

♫ Ruthie Foster Big Band, *Live At The Paramount*, Blue Corn Music

♫ The Third Mind, *The Third Mind*, Yep Roc

♫ Sugar Ray and the Bluetones, *Too Far From The Bar*, Severn

♫ Fantastic Negrito, *Have You Lost Your Mind Yet?*, Cooking Vinyl

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THE TOP TEN

By Stacy Jeffress

Albums listed in no specific order.

♫ Fantastic Negrito, *Have You Lost Your Mind Yet?*, Cooking Vinyl

♫ Micke Bjorklof and Blue Strip, *Let The Fire Lead*, Hokahey! Records

♫ Joanna Connor, *Rise*, M.C. Records

♫ Sugar Ray and the Bluetones Featuring Little Charlie Baty, *Too Far From The Bar*, Severn

♫ John Nemeth, *Stronger Than Strong*, Nola Blue

♫ Duke Robillard, *Blues Bash*, Stony Plain

♫ Avey Grouws Band, *The Devil May Care*, Self-release

♫ Gregg Martinez, *Mac Daddy Mojeaux*, Nola Blue

♫ Dudley Taft, *Cosmic Radio*, American Plus Artist Group

♫ Eric Hughes Band, *Postcard From Beale Street*, Endless Blues Records

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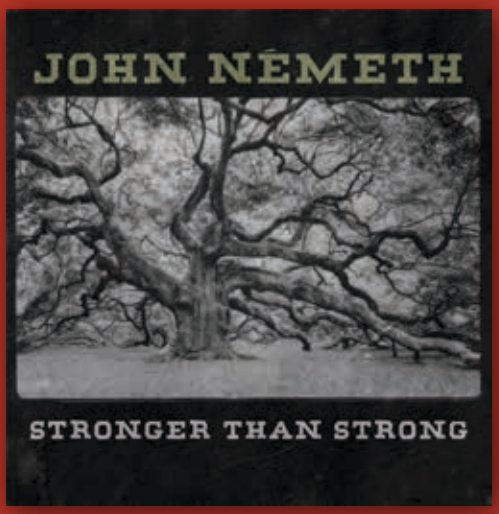
"Somewhere between soul, blues, and the early years of rock, John straddles the divide with a wonderful sense of style!" -*New England Blues Review*

LATEST NEWS

NEW ALBUM AVAILABLE OCTOBER 16

Award winning singer, songwriter and harmonica player John Németh releases his 10th album, recorded with his seasoned road band of young gun players, The Blue Dreamers

"Stronger Than Strong" will be released in multiple formats including digital, CD, and vinyl!



"I wish you all the greatest of health during these difficult times. I hope this new album brings you excitement and joy! I had a ball writing and recording it and feel so grateful to have the opportunity to share new music with you. Please be careful and be well ... I look forward to the day when I can see you all at a live show! Thank you for your support." - John Németh

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THE TOP TEN

By Michael Kinsman

Albums listed in no specific order.

- Kevin Burt, *Stone Crazy*, Gulf Coast Records
- Larkin Poe, *Self Made Man*, Tricki-Woo
- John Nemeth, *Stronger Than Strong*, Nola Blue
- The Jimmys, *Gotta Have It*, Brown Cow Productions
- Jimmy Johnson, *Every Day Of Your Life*, Delmark
- Kirk Fletcher, *My Blues Pathway*, Cleopatra
- Kim Wilson, *Take Me Back*, M.C. Records
- Robert Cray, *That's What I Heard*, Nozzle
- Sonny Green, *Found! One Soul Singer*, Little Village Foundation
- Dion, *Blues With Friends*, KTBA Records

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- American Songwriter

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- Billboard

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AND THE BETTE

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- Jeremiah Johnson

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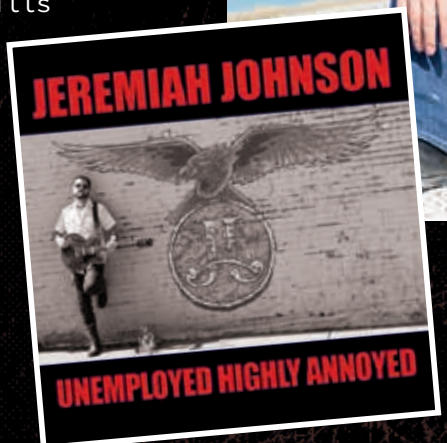
- Rock and Blues Muse



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THE TOP TEN

By Matt MacDonald

Albums listed in no specific order.

♫ Fantastic Negrito, *Have You Lost Your Mind Yet?*, Cooking Vinyl
♫ Joe Bonamassa, *Royal Tea*, J&R Adventures
♫ Thorbjørn Risager & The Black Tornado, *Come On In*, Ruf
♫ Jeremiah Johnson, *Unemployed Highly Annoyed*, Ruf
♫ Bette Smith, *The Good, The Bad, And The Bette*, Ruf
♫ Andrew Alli, *Hard Workin' Man*, EllerSoul
♫ Harry Hmura, *All I Need*, Stormcloud Records
♫ Dennis Jones, *Soft Hard & Loud*, Blue Rock Records
♫ Grant Dermody, *My Dony*, Thunder River
♫ The Proven Ones, *You Ain't Done*, Gulf Coast Records

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By Karen Nugent

Albums listed in no specific order.

- Shemekia Copeland, *Uncivil War*, Alligator
- Bob Margolin, *Star Of Stage And Screens*, VizzTone
- Ruthie Foster Big Band, *Live At The Paramount*, Blue Corn Music
- Tinsley Ellis, *Ice Cream In Hell*, Alligator
- John Primer and Bob Corritore, *The Gypsy Woman Told Me*, VizzTone
- Henry Gray and Bob Corritore, *Cold Chills,* VizzTone
- The Barrett Anderson Band, *Hypnoboogie*, Whitaker Blues
- Kenny “Blues Boss” Wayne, *Go, Just Do It!*, Stony Plain
- Duke Robillard, *Blues Bash*, Stony Plain
- Bernard Allison, *Songs From the Road,* Ruf

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- Nora Jean Wallace
- Kirk Fletcher
- Ruf Blues Caravan

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THE TOP TEN

By Brian M. Owens

Albums listed in no specific order.

♫ Paul Gabriel, *Man Of Many Blues*, Smoke Ring Records
♫ Frank Bey, *All My Dues Are Paid*, Nola Blue
♫ Diane Blue, *Look For The Light*, Regina Royale Records
♫ Sonny Landreth, *Black Top Run*, Provogue
♫ Gary Moore, *Live From London*, Mascot Music
♫ One Dime Band, *Hoodoo & Holy Water*, Toneblanket Records
♫ Crooked Eye Tommy, *Hot Coffee And Pain*, Blue Heart Records
♫ Eric Johanson, *Below Sea Level*, Whiskey Bayou Records
♫ John Nemeth, *Stronger Than Strong*, Nola Blue
♫ Johnny Nicholas, *Mistaken Identity*, Valcour Records

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THE TOP TEN

By Pete Sardon

Albums listed in no specific order.

- Dion, *Blues With Friends*, KBTA Records
- Walter Trout, *Ordinary Madness*, Provogue Records
- Rob Ickes & Trey Hensley, *World Full Of Blues*, Compass Records
- Larkin Poe, *Self Made Man*, Tricki-Woo
- Savoy Brown, *Ain't Done Yet*, Quarto Valley Records
- Tinsley Ellis, *Ice Cream In Hell*, Alligator
- Dustin Arbuckle and Matt Woods, *2020*, Self-release
- Bernard Allison, *Songs From The Road,* Ruf
- Kat Riggins, *Cry Out*, Gulf Coast Records
- Luther "Guitar Junior" Johnson, *Won't Be Back No More,* Crossroads Blues Media

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IMAGE OF ALLIGATOR RECORDS ARTIST CHRISTONE "KINGFISH" INGRAM BY ROKY DOYLE

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- January 29 - 31: Clarksdale Film & Music Festival
- April 11: Mr. Tater's Memorial Birthday Bash - Bad Apple Blues Club
- April 15 -18: Juke Joint Festival & Related Events - Main Day April 17
- April 18: Cat Head Mini Blues Fest
- May 8: Clarksdale Caravan Music Fest
- May 29: Red's Old-Timers Blues Fest
- May 29 - 31: Goat Fest VII

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THE TOP TEN

By Dan Stevens

Albums listed in no specific order.

♫ John Blues Boyd, *What My Eyes Have Seen*, Gulf Coast Records
♫ Alastair Greene, *The New World Blues*, Whiskey Bayou Records
♫ Elvin Bishop/Charlie Musselwhite, *100 Years Of Blues*, Alligator
♫ Kevin Burt, *Stone Crazy*, Gulf Coast Records
♫ Jimmy Johnson, *Every Day Of Your Life*, Delmark
♫ Rory Block, *Prove It On Me*, Stony Plain
♫ Dion, *Blues With Friends*, KTBA Records
♫ Franck Goldwasser, *Sweet Little Black Spider*, Slim Byrd
♫ Erin Harpe, *Meet Me In The Middle*, VizzTone
♫ Bobby Rush, *Rawer Than Raw*, Deep Rush

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GENUINE HOUSEROCKIN' MUSIC SINCE 1971

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THE TOP TEN

By Mark Thompson

Albums listed in no specific order.

♫ Kim Wilson, *Take Me Back*, M.C. Records
♫ Shawn Pittman, *Make It Right!*, Continental Blue Heaven
♫ Duke Robillard, *Blues Bash!*, Stony Plain
♫ Shemekia Copeland, *Uncivil War*, Alligator
♫ Don Bryant, *You Make Me Feel*, Fat Possum
♫ The Sons of the Soul Revivers, *Songs We'll Always Sing - A Tribute To The Pilgrim Jubilees*, Little Village Foundation
♫ John Nemeth, *Stronger Than Strong*, NOLA Blue
♫ Nora Jean Wallace, *BluesWoman*, Severn
♫ Sonny Green, *Found! One Soul Singer*, Little Village Foundation
♫ New Moon Jelly Roll Freedom Rockers, Vol. 1, Stony Plain

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THE TOP TEN

By Art Tipaldi

Albums listed in no specific order.

- Shemekia Copeland, *Uncivil War*, Alligator
- Nora Jean Wallace, *BluesWoman*, Severn
- Kim Wilson, *Take Me Back*, M.C. Records
- John Nemeth, *Stronger Than Strong*, Nola Blue
- Ronnie Earl, *Rise Up*, Stony Plain
- Mike Flanigin, *West Texas Blues*, Black Betty Records
- King Solomon Hicks, *Harlem,* Provogue
- Kirk Fletcher, *My Blues Pathway*, Cleopatra
- Larkin Poe, *Self Made Man*, Tricki-Woo
- Kenny Wayne Shepherd, *Straight To You Live*, Provogue

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THE TOP TEN

By A. J. Wachtel

Albums listed in alphabetical order.

- The Barrett Anderson Band, *Hypnoboogie*, Whitaker Blues
- Dion, *Blues With Friends*, KTBA Records
- Tom Guerra, *Sudden Signs Of Grace*, Casa Del Sol Records
- Erin Harpe, *Meet Me In The Middle*, VizzTone
- JW-Jones, *Sonic Departures*, Solid Blues Records.
- Shirley King, *Blues For A King*, Cleopatra
- Bob Margolin, *Star Of Stage And Screens*, VizzTone
- Danielle Miranda, *Bright Shifting Stars*, VizzTone
- Tyler Morris, *Living In The Shadows*, VizzTone
- Joe Louis Walker, *Blues Comin' On*, Cleopatra

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To say that these recording sessions were enjoyable experiences would be a vast understatement! Not only are these fellas' great musicians but they are also dear friends of mine and I want to thank them for the incredible performances that they gave.

– Kim Wilson

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Blues Music Online & Blues Music Magazine

THE TOP TEN

By Bill Wasserzieher

Albums listed in alphabetical order.

- Dave Alvin, *From An Old Guitar*, Yep Roc
- Luther Dickinson & The Cooperators Featuring Sharde Thomas, New West
- Dion, *Blues With Friends*, KTBA Records
- Ronnie Earl, *Rise Up*, Stony Plain
- Jimmy "Duck" Holmes, *Cypress Grove*, Easy Eye
- Marcus King, *El Dorado*, Fantasy
- Sonny Landreth, *Blacktop Run*, Provogue
- Bettye LaVette, *Blackbirds*, Verve
- Dan Penn, *Living On Mercy*, Last Music Co.
- Chris Smither, *More From The Levee*, Signature Sounds

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THE TOP TEN

By Don Wilcock

Albums listed in no specific order.

- Shemekia Copeland, *Uncivil War*, Alligator
- Dion, *Blues With Friends*, KTBA Records
- Rev. John Wilkins, *Trouble*, Goner Records
- Nora Jean Wallace, *BluesWoman*, Severn
- Rory Block, *Prove It On Me*, Stony Plain
- Kim Wilson, *Take Me Back*, M.C. Records
- Little Richard, *Second Coming*, Omnivore
- The Barrett Anderson Band, *Hypnoboogie*, Whitaker Blues
- Chris Smither, *More From The Levee*, Signature Sounds
- Albert Cummings, *Believe*, Provogue/Mascot

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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.

1) The Jimmys – "Ain't Seen Nothin' Yet"' from the album ***Gotta Have It*** on Brown Cow Productions

2) Tony Holiday – **"Payin' Rent On A Broken Heart"** from the album ***Soul Service*** on VizzTone Label Group

3) John Primer & Bob Corritore – **"Little Bitty Woman"** from the album ***The Gypsy Woman Told Me*** on VizzTone Label Group

4) Too Slim & The Taildraggers – "Devil's Hostage" from the album ***The Remedy*** on VizzTone Label Group

5) Greg Martinez – "Eva Delle" on the album ***MacDaddy Mojeaux*** on Nola Blue Records

6) The Nighthawks – "I Hate A Nickel" from the album ***Tryin' To Get To You*** on EllerSoul Records

7) Michael Kaeshammer – "Who Are You" from the album ***Live In Concert*** on Linus Entertainment

8) Tyler Morris – **"Nine To Five"** from the album ***Living In The Shadows*** on VizzTone Label Group

9) Kenny 'Blues Boss' Wayne – "Go, Just Do It" from the album **Go, Just Do It** on Stony Plain Records

10) The Eric Hughes Band – "Follow Your Stupid Little Dreams" from the album ***Postcard From Beale Street*** on Endless Blues Records

11) Tas Cru - **"That Lovin' Thing"** from the album ***Drive On*** on Subcat Records

12) Mick Kolassa– "She Kept Her Head Up" from album ***If You Can't Be Good (Be Good At It)*** on Endless Blues Records

13) Charlie Bedford - "Money Junkie" from the album ***Good To Go*** on Blue Heart Records

14) The Wildcat O'Halloran Band - "Crunch Time" from the album ***Deck Of Cards*** on Self-released

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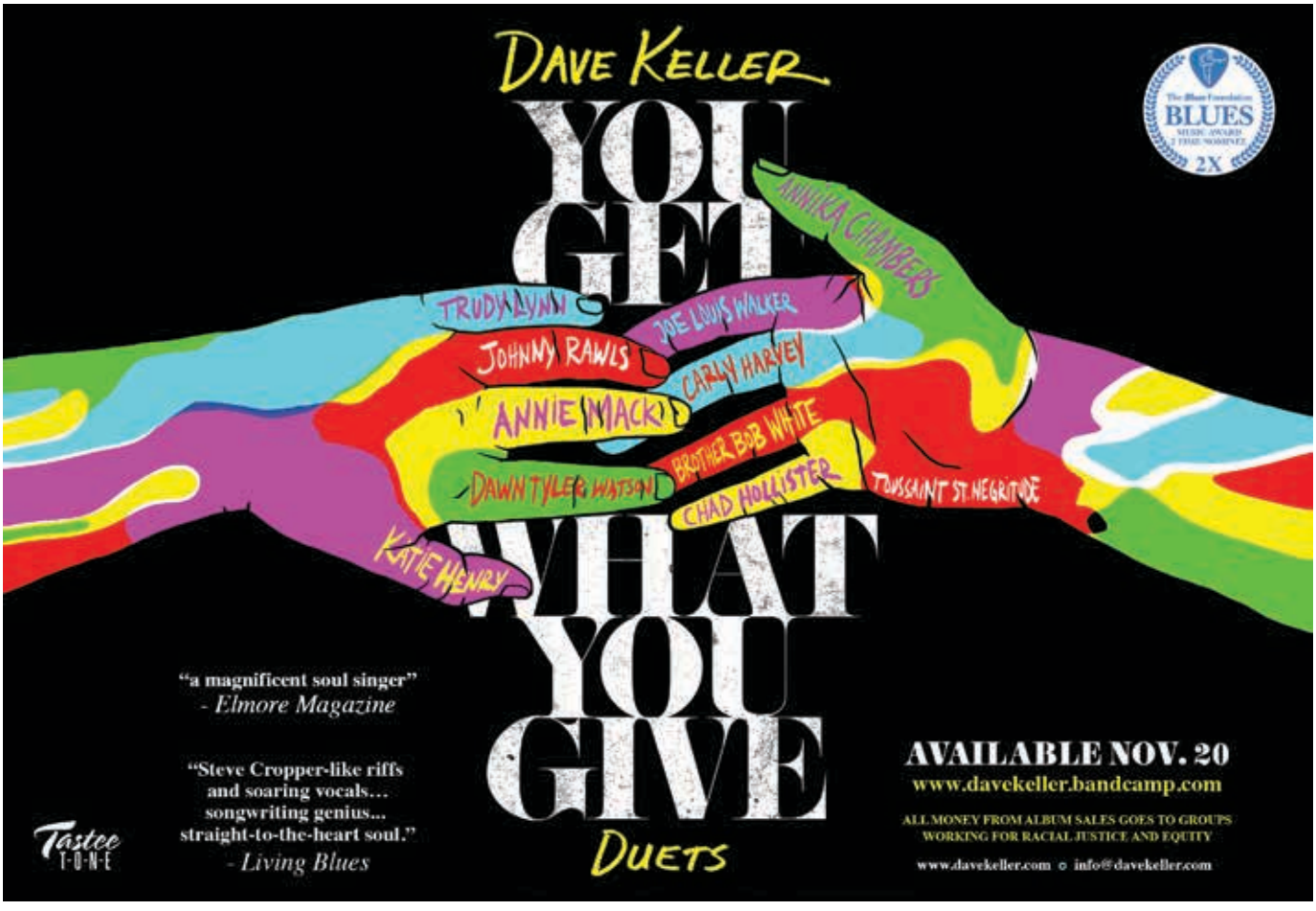

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PHOTO BY ED SAWICKI

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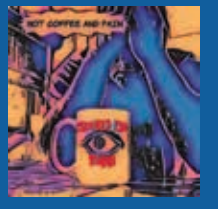

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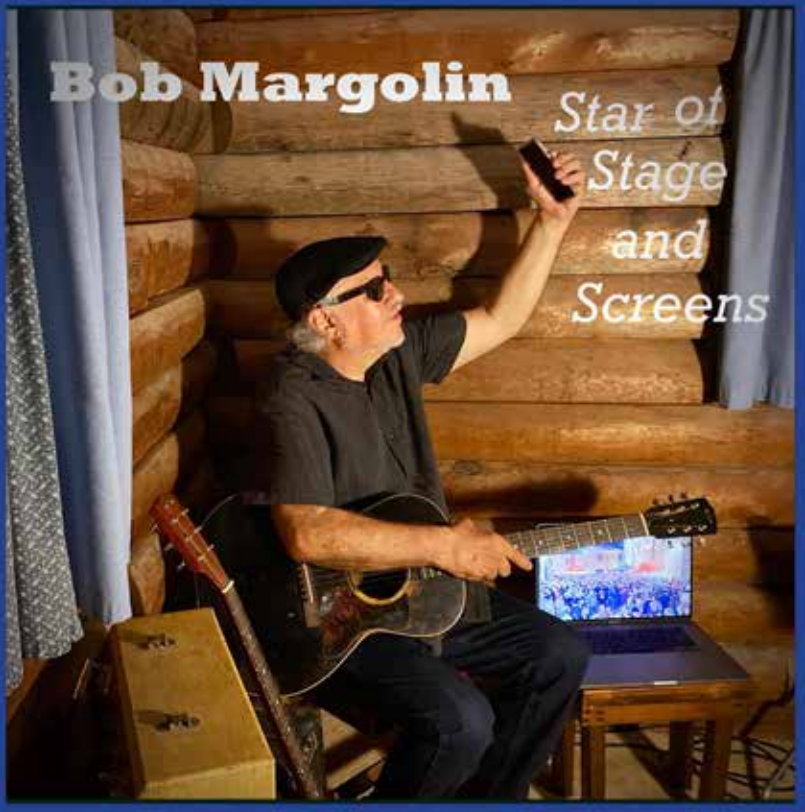

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