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ALASTAIR GREENE

THE NEW WORLD BLUES

★ NEW ALBUM ★

Produced by Tab Benoit for WHISKEY BAYOU RECORDS

Available October 23, 2020



"Fronting a power blues-rock trio, guitarist Alastair Greene breathes in sulfuric fumes and exhales blazing fire."

- Frank John Hadley, Downbeat Magazine

"Greene is a no frills rock vocalist. His fiery solos prove him a premier shredder who will appeal to fans of Walter Trout, Joe Bonamassa, and Albert Castiglia."

- Thomas J Cullen III, Blues Music Magazine

"On THE NEW WORLD BLUES, Alastair makes it clear why he is a 'guitar player's guitar player,' and this recording will surely leave the Alastair Greene stamp on the Blues Rock World."

- Rueben Williams, Thunderbird Management, Whiskey Bayou Records



alastairgreene.com whiskeybayourecords.com



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ALASTAID GDEENE

The New World Blues

By Art Tipaldi & Jack Sullivan s Alastair Greene's prolific and acclaimed career rounds the corner into a third decade, Greene arrives at a new, yet familiar destination. Following a 2018 live album that celebrated the 20th anniversary of his noteworthy Alastair Greene Band, the singer-songwriter/guitarist returns with an inspired solo collection, The New World Blues, and a tonic for the times.

A native of Santa Barbara, CA. Greene has ridden his blues-soaked rock into the 21st century, traversing a constantly changing global (and landscape. musical) He's wellequipped for the challenge, carrying the diverse musical interests he developed at an early age, intrigued by his mother's piano playing and a record collection that included The Beatles. Stevie Wonder, and Elton John. His father introduced the youngster to the sophistication of Bach and Beethoven, yet it was Greene's grandfather, the late trumpeter Chico Alvarez, a member of the Stan Kenton Band in the 1940s and '50s, who inspired him to pursue a life in music.

Over nearly 20 years, Greene has released eight solo albums. His 2017 studio effort, Dream Team, landed a four-star review and Best Album of the Year nod in DownBeat and 2018's Live From The 805 was nominated for Rock Blues Album of the Year by Blues Blast Magazine. A much in-demand guitarist and vocalist,

Greene traveled the world, touring with the legendary Alan Parsons Live Project from 2010 – 2017, as well as stints with Starship featuring Mickey Thomas and, most recently, Blues Music Award-winner Sugaray Rayford.

The New World Blues displays Greene's lifelong reverence for Delta and Chicago blues, respectfully and affectingly, detailing each of the eleven cuts with honesty and respect yet perhaps most often guided by the roadmap of Gov't Mule and that band's synthesis of The Allman Brothers Band's improvisational firepower and the raw, stripped-down electric bluesrock of Cream. "I endeavor to play the blues. It's some of my favorite music. And I have a responsibility to inform where this music comes from," Greene says. "This is a Black, African-American art form that is basically responsible for everything we love today. I want to be true to what I love."

We reached out to Alastair recently to inform our fans about an artist that is comitted to the blues and we believe he will be around a long time creating the music we all love.

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

Alastair Greene: This is a great opportunity to connect with blues fans through one of the most, if not the most, respected publication in the genre.

Blues Music Magazine: Your new album *The New World Blues* dropped on October 23, 2020. Tell us about the concept, making, inspiration, musicians, and production people behind this new album.

Alastair Greene: When Tab Benoit told me he wanted to make a record with me for his label, I was incredibly excited, honored, and in my native of Southern California. language totally stoked! I knew I wanted to reach deeper into my blues influences and take advantage of Tab's feel and expertise of music from Louisiana. Tab played drums, produced, mixed, and mastered this record as well as lending a hand to writing a few songs. His bassist Corey Duplechin played bass on the record as well. I also wanted to utilize the fact that both those guys can sing really well so I wanted to include vocal harmonies.

I left a lot of the grooves of the songs open for Tab's and Corey's interpretation. I didn't want to go down there and make the same kind of studio record I made last time around. Dream Train in 2017 was very much a rock record with some blues sprinkled in. For The New World Blues. I wanted to make a blues record that has some rock aspects and included as much Louisiana groove as possible. As far as the concept, I wrote the majority of the songs in early 2019. I knew then what I wanted to name the record as well. I don't claim to be a prophet, but I can't help but feel that so many of these songs have taken on a new and more important meaning as time has gone on. The world does indeed have the blues, so I want to let people know they are not alone in feeling that, and I also want to try to spread some positivity, as we need that now more than ever.

Blues Music Magazine: Congratulations on the new recording contract with Tab Benoit's Whiskey Bayou Records Label. How did that come about?

Alastair Greene: I met Tab at the Big Blues Bender in Las Vegas in 2015. At the time, I was playing guitar for the Alan Parsons Project. To most people in the blues world, that's not really a name they're familiar with or necessarily a fan of. So I would get introduced to people as a guy with a blues rock power trio and the guitarist with the APP. It turns out Tab is a fan of a lot of '70s rock, so we connected on that aspect as well as comedy. Tab is hilarious, and I like to think I can tell the occasional joke, so it was a fun hang.

I kept coming back to the Bender as part of the Bender Brass backing band as well as my band getting invited to play a few times. Tab and I would hang, and in 2018 he said, "I've got a label, you should come down to my place and make a record." I was like, hell yes! At the time I had signed on to play guitar with Sugaray Rayford for his current tour which I knew was going to last a year or so. I told Tab that I'd find a gap in Sugaray's tour





schedule and come make the record. And that's what I did.

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

Alastair Greene: My first guitar teacher told me if I wanted to learn rock guitar, I had to have some basic building

blocks so gave me a cassette tape of where he thought should start. That tape has a little Freddie King, Hendrix, and some Cream. I was still obsessed pretty with hard rock at that time in the mid-'80s. Artists like Van Halen, Ozzy Osbourne, etc. A few years later a friend of my father loaned me some records that changed my whole world.

B.B. King - *Live At* The Regal

Buddy Guy - A
Man And The Blues

Johnny Winter - Second Winter

The Allman Brothers Band -

The Allman Brothers Band – At Fillmore East

Jimi Hendrix - Cry Of Love

Stevie Ray Vaughan's first 3 solo records and *Live Alive*.

After that I got pretty obsessed with

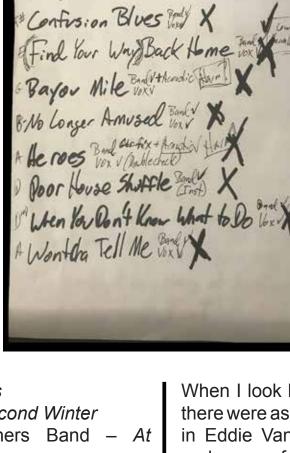
the blues.

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

Alastair Greene: Those records were a great start. After that, I just found anything I could blues related. Muddy

> Waters and Howlin' Wolf came next. and then some of other blues the rock guys like Rory Gallagher, early Jeff Beck Group, Clapton with John Mayall. I then got into the Kings and finally got to two of my favorite blues players, **Albert** Collins and Magic Sam.

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



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Alastair Greene:

When I look back now, I can see that there were aspects of blues that I heard in Eddie Van Halen's guitar playing, and some of the other guys from that era. When I finally heard the records I mentioned, it all came together for me. It was a real light bulb moment. It was the honesty and rawness and feeling



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of blues. I know I've been talking very guitar-centrically, that's what drew me in originally. I fell in love with the singing and songwriting a little later.

Blues Music Magazine: When did you first pick up your instrument? Please explain all instruments you play and why you choose them?

Alastair Greene: I started playing guitar in 1985 or '86 so I was 14 or 15. Before that I had taken piano lessons for a few years age 10-13. That was under the suggestion of my mom. I also played saxophone from 4th grade until my first year of college. I just knew I wanted to play music, and the saxophone was the first thing that popped up. I was more of a concert or marching band sax player. I didn't really learn how to improvise. My first stringed instrument was upright bass in junior high. By that time, I knew I wanted to play rock and roll. The band director had an electric bass in his office, and I asked if I could borrow it to take home to try to learn some Black Sabbath songs or something. He said, "Sure! As long as you play the upright in the orchestra!" So I did that for a couple years while also playing saxophone in the junior high jazz band and marching band. By the time I got to high school I thought that's cool and all, but I want to try to play GUITAR! My parents got me some classical lessons with a great teacher, Reid Alburger, and after a few weeks on the guitar I knew I'd found the instrument

for me.

Blues Music Magazine: Can you explain your learning process? Using records, taking lessons, jam sessions. How do you learn new music basically is what I looking to share with readers?

Alastair Greene: As mentioned I took lessons from Reid and I also took lessons from a well-known rock virtuoso named Bruce Bouillet. I always tried to pick up things from records. There were also quitar magazines that had lessons in them. I just grabbed knowledge where I could get it. I had friends who played guitar who were already really good, so I'd try to learn things from them. It was really a combination of things. I was fortunate to get a partial scholarship to the Berklee College of Music in Boston, MA, so after high school, I spent a year at Santa Barbara City College before going to Berklee for two years that would have been 1990 - 1992.

As far as learning new music, I start with trying to learn things by ear. I teach guitar lessons, and I encourage students to try figuring things out by ear before they go YouTube or one of the many sites online you can learn from. That said, many of those sites and YouTube videos are not correct. Once you get stumped, and you've put in some time ear training, then it's ok to look at a chord chart or whatever else you need. Learning by ear is the key though.

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

Alastair Greene: When I came home from Berklee, I immediately called Tom Lackner, a great drummer who is a friend of my dad's. Tom was then playing in the great West Coast blues band, The Pontiax. They were local, but obviously world class and had already toured all over and made records. Mitch Kashmar was the leader of the band, and I just started showing up at gigs and learning from those guys. Asking to sit in and all that.

I can't stress how huge that was for me to learn from them. Tom and the bassist, the late Jack Kennedy, ended up being the first rhythm section I had when I started my namesake band

in 1997. I ended up doing a bunch of gigs with Mitch in the mid-2000s and learned so much from him. Also in the area at the time was Little Jonny Lawton who is a great guitar player. He got me started on slide guitar. Tom Ball and Kenny Sultan are from Santa Barbara, CA, and they are a wellknown and respected acoustic blues duo. I would go see them and took a couple lessons from Kenny. So as much as Santa Barbara, CA, may not be known world wide as a "blues hot spot," there was a ton of inspiration that I got from these great musicians right there in my hometown.

In the ensuing years, I met and learned a lot from Franck Goldwasser, who is the most insanely good traditional blues player I know. He took me to Europe for the first time in 2004.

More recently, Debbie Davies moved to the area. We have become friends, and she has been an incredible mentor to me. We've done a bunch of shows together, and I just can't say enough good things about her, her playing, and her guidance. She played on my last studio record. Her mentorship has been a real blessing.

I've also been fortunate to become friends with some of my blues-rock heroes. The one who has been such an amazing guiding light has been Walter Trout. He's had me sit in with his band on several occasions, and he also played a guest solo on my last studio record.

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

Alastair Greene: To keep going. To stay true to your vision. Life isn't easy in general for most of us, and you have to persevere. Obviously there are more lessons musical and careerwise, but that's my main take away. Never surrender.

Blues Music Magazine: Explain what recording different albums has taught you.

Alastair Greene: I learn something every time I go into the studio. I've made records in a lot of different ways, from making straight up live records to trying to capture as much of the songs live in the studio as possible,

to constructing songs from the drums up and overdubbing tons of stuff. Everything has its place. Different songs and styles can be approached in different ways. There's no "right" way to make a record. As long as you capture the song, and it speaks to you, and hopefully others, then it doesn't matter how you get there. For *The New World Blues* we recorded that record as live as I've ever done in the studio. There are very few overdubs. It's three guys in a room playing their hearts out.

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

Alastair Greene: Everyone I've mentioned so far without a doubt. A couple other guys that come to mind from the rock world that are big blues fans are Eric Clapton and Gary Moore. What I like about them is they would reinvent themselves and experiment and then would always come back to the blues. There's something very inspiring and comforting about that. In the blues world, someone like Freddie King comes to mind. He took some different musical approaches during his career, but obviously was a bluesman at heart.

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

Alastair Greene: I have always

aspired to be true to all the music I love and not deny any influences or inspirations. That would be a disservice to myself and where I come from to downplay where I originally came from as a musician. I wanted to get to a point where I absorbed blues so much that it would just come out regardless of what musical situation I found myself in.

I've played in a lot of different kinds of bands, and my goal was always to be able to hear a line back to the blues in what I was doing. The best compliment that I ever got, which wasn't meant as a compliment, was when a live Alan Parsons DVD/CD came out in 2016 that I was on. I was reading some comments on a video that was posted (cuz come on! I have to look at some of the comments!), and some guy said something to the effect of "Hey, Alan. Tell your guitar player to stop playing blues riffs on your songs." Mind you, in that band, a good 80 -90% of the guitar solos needed to be very close to the recorded versions. So it wasn't like I was just jamming over all the songs. I actually commented on the guys post and said, "Thank you, I am glad you hear where my heart is as a guitar player, regardless of the music I'm playing."

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

Alastair Greene: I'm always writing and recording music. Covid times

have allowed me the luxury of doing that a lot. I've always enjoyed playing on other people's records and collaborating with people. I'm set up at home to record remotely, and so I've been working with and contributing guitar to a fair amount of recordings, which has been fantastic. I love that I'm able to do that and keep working from home. As far as names your readers would know I've contributed some guitar to (Canadian blues singer) Layla Zoe's new record as well the new solo album by Fabrizio Grossi, the mastermind behind Supersonic Blues Machine.

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

Alastair Greene: I have always tried to cover as much ground lyrically as I can. Some songs are very personal, others are fictional inspired by actual events or other songs. I don't like to tell anyone what to think or believe. If you know me, you know where I stand on things. Music means so many different things to people. The dark haze that has fallen over the world in the last couple years is, of course, an inspiration for some of the songs on the new album. But regardless of the darkness, I always want to express hope and love because that's what is going to see us through.

Blues Music Magazine: What is life for a musician on the Central Coast of California.



Alastair Greene: I'm trying to stay optimistic in the face of everything and trying to put some positivity out there. As mentioned, I'm fortune to be able to teach, record, collaborate, and be creative at home. So I wake up everyday and create things to do or get busy on projects that I have on my plate. I know I'm not alone when I say I've been itching to go play some gigs. The first few months weren't that difficult for me, but as time marches on, I miss the sound of guitar through a reasonable loud amplifier in a venue. I did a live stream with my band recently that really got me in the mood to play live again.

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

Alastair Greene: Without much in the way of live gigs at the moment I think it's important for us all to stay connected as much as we can through music. Whether that's watching live streams or finding out who's putting out new music, whatever it takes. It's important for the music makers and the music fans to stay connected. We're going to get through the darkness eventually.

- BMM



ALBUM REVIEW

JOHN NÉMETH
Stronger Than Strong
Nola Blue Records



The notion Stronger than Strong can't begin to describe the intense force of these blues. Stronger Than Strong the album, John Németh's tenth studio effort, verifies through 12 livewire cuts that he's a musical dynamo deserving of a much larger audience. Music fans deep into the blues are likely familiar with Németh, but for everyone else, this album is the ideal the place to start. As a teenager in the 1990s, in the "Muddy potato fields of Idaho" as he's jokingly referred to his home, Németh was bitten by the blues bug. Now, in this year of all kinds of shit that's brought on all kinds of blues, Németh and his band have crafted an album that lifts the spirits with loose-as-a-goose excitement and a firm grasp on the issues.

They kick off the program of ten originals and two neat covers with "Come And Take It," a scampering blues that mixes equal parts Howlin' Wolf and John Lee

Hooker into a Hill Country-styled, introductory showcase. Its restraint allows the listener to focus intently on the sharpness of each player. Németh bellows his come-hither proposals in a voice of unrestrained emotion, accenting them with peals of harmonica as if a train whistle blaring through the fog. Nineteen-year-old guitarist John Hay adds unpretentious, fuzzy tones, and bassist Matthew Wilson and drummer Danny Banks drive the beat. Each effortless component adds up to a profound rendering of the blues by a tightly-knitted, formidable unit. When they go at it, however, they mesmerize. For "Fountain Of A Man," they dial the heat up considerably, the fierce propulsion of the song displaying their unusually tight bond. Banks simultaneously hammers and rolls the beat with equal parts fervor and finesse. The Jackie Wilson deep inside Németh cries out in release, and his harp playing seems to take on a blazing life of its own. Hay steps up with the first of his many biting, astonishing solos throughout the album, his licks at once Albert King-tough and T-Bone Walker-smooth.

Recorded live off the floor by Scott Bomar at his Electraphonic Studio in Memphis, the retro, real deal feel of it all is nonetheless lush and deep. "Throw Me In The Water" may best exemplify what Németh refers to as "The early East Bay grease sound," a type of barreling soul that he immersed himself in while in San Francisco in the early 2000s. But no matter the pace or the style, every one of these songs links together, forming a continuous, gold-plated chain of riveting, soulful blues music.

And besides his performance chops, Németh writes with uncommon insight and inventiveness. With the persistent "Chain Breaker," he addresses his perception of racial inequality, and a trailblazer of division, culminating in the repeated refrain, "My love is on the other side, and I know what the hell to do." In "Bars," he applies the several meanings of the word to safety, injustice, immigration, social ills, and the American flag. The tender, soulful reading of it belies its stiletto-to-the-heart points.

John Németh possesses one of the absolute best, most hair-raising voices – in melody and in message – in the blues world today, and he and his band deliver here mightly. *Stronger Than Strong* should win them armfuls of awards.

- Tom Clarke

MARK MAY
DEEP DARK
DEMON





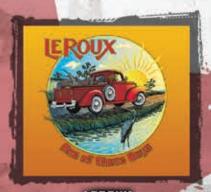
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ALBUM REVIEW

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 standout as an honest reminder of what the world experienced in these devastating times.



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ALBUM REVIEW

SAVOY BROWN Ain't Done Yet Quarto Valley Records



im Simmonds' seventh decade hasn't slowed his productivity. He's delivered three albums in four years that are as good as any of his previous 38. Witchy Feelin' (2017) hit number one on the Billboard Blues Chart. Last year's *City Night* was a sparkling collection of blues rockers. This album, #41, hammers the "I'm still here" point, comprising ten originals and 47 minutes that showcase Simmonds' admirable songwriting, guitar playing, and singing.

Simmonds, 72, is Savoy Brown, one of the longest running monikers in music history, first surfacing in 1965. Since then, many members have moved on to other successes - Dave Walker (Fleetwood Mac, Black

Sabbath), Andy Pyle (Kinks), Bill Bruford (King Crimson), Paul Raymond (UFO), and Foghat founders Lonesome Dave Peverett, Roger Earl, and Tony Stevens.

Savoy Brown's sound is rocking but "clean" blues; little noise or "fuzz" obscures lyrics or instruments. Other power trios produce a wall of sound, with hard-to-distinguish lyrics. Savoy Brown is more like an orchestral ensemble. Each part, including the vocals, is easily discernable, but they come together in a cohesive package. A U.S. resident since 1980, Simmonds' gruff tenor is easily heard over his often-brilliant guitar runs. The impressive backline, Pat DeSalvo (bass) and Garnet Grimm (drums), has been with him for a decade.

If variety was problematic with previous releases, this set erases that criticism. Almost every tune has a different rhythm, melody line, and lyrical style. They all hit the blues bullseye, delivering a pleasing groove and texture that made me want to hear them again. Nearly every tune features a Simmonds' guitar solo with superb, often inspired, riffs. Some songs – the jumping "Devil's Highway," the swaying "Feel Like A Gypsy," and "Rocking In Louisiana" – describe a road-centered life that Simmonds has surely lived. "Jaguar Car" is a playful, ZZ Top-like boogie, and "SoHo Girl" rocks out about an exotic lady. The raucous "All Gone Wrong," the foreboding "River On The Rise," and "Borrowed Time" metaphorically explore emotions experienced by most people, especially as they grow older.

But the title cut stands tall among this excellent set. It's a triumphant, celebratory ode to carrying on – as good an anthem for survival as any I've ever heard. Simmonds sings: "I don't want no regrets; 'cause I ain't done yet." If this outstanding album is any indication, you can take that to the bank.

- Dan D. Harrell



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

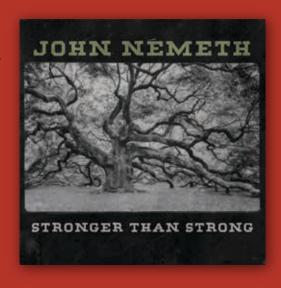
LATEST NEWS

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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ALBUM REVIEW

SUGAR RAY & THE BLUETONES WITH LITTLE CHARLIE BATY Too Far From The Bar

Severn



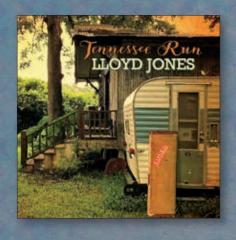
West Coast blues, East Coast blues. This is the nexus, where they meet, with Easterner Sugar Ray Norcia and his lyrical harmonica melding with Californian Little Charlie Baty, guitarist extraordinaire. Norcia, having played with possibly every New England band worth mentioning (Roomful of Blues, J. Geils, Duke Robillard, Ronnie Earl & The Broadcasters among them) brings his evocative musicianship plus his comfortable vocal style throughout this 15-track release, including five originals and an alternate version of "Reel Burner."

What brought me up short is the realization that this might well be the last recording session in which Little Charlie participated – he

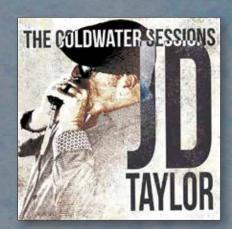
passed away on March 6, 2020 of a heart attack, in Vacaville, California. He was 66. In 1976, he formed Little Charlie and The Nightcats with Rick Estrin and lasting through 2008, much of it with Alligator (starting in 1987). Knowing this is enough to make this a special disc. But there's more to appreciate here, including the fact that Baty was teamed with 40-year Bluetones veterans Neil Gouvin (drums), Anthony Geraci (piano), and Michael "Mudcat" Ward (acoustic bass) as well as their eponymous leader. Baty is on 11 cuts; producer Duke Robillard appears on the others.

The result is highly entertaining. Favorite tracks are: "Don't Give No More Than You Can Take," "Too Far From The Bar" (an original boogie number), the brisk "My Next Door Neighbor," and "The Night I Got Pulled Over" (a pretty cool talking blues composed by Geraci, hopefully not based on fact). Then there are the two versions of the Norcia original, "Reel Burner." The second is listed as an "alternate take." They're both instrumentals with propulsive tempos, a sort of hybrid jump blues and shuffle. Call them both "jump shuffles," maybe. To these ears, they are virtually identical and both are terrific. The alternate is about 27 seconds shorter, and so perhaps it could be considered "tidier." But for me, they could have put an entire CD's worth of "Reel Burner" alternates on this disc and I'd be happy. This is a fun, fun release, made memorable for Charlie Baty's presence.

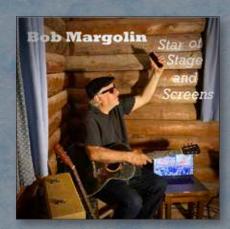
- M.E. Travaglini









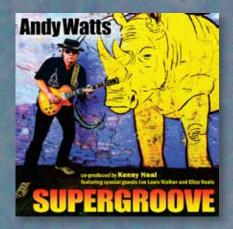


















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ALBUM REVIEW

DEAN ROSENTHAL Mid-Atlantica Roots & Tide II

Jatode Music



very region in the land probably has a Dean Rosenthal, a skilled, veteran musician who is famous right there. This guy has been that person for a few decades, the one everyone seems to know and appreciate within the region known as Delmarva, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia included. This recording isn't Rosenthal's first, but it's his most ambitious. And he brings several of his longtime Delmarva musician friends along for the tour, including Jimmy Jacobs (keyboards), Leah Weiss (fiddle), Larry Melton (upright bass), and Andy Hamburger (drums).

Rosenthal is appreciated for his sense of humor and that's how he starts off, with a bluesy song called "Baltimore Marilyn" a bit of name play on the best-known city in the state of Maryland. This gal, he sings, "Puts the 'Oh' in 'Oh say can you see?" There's a nice tribute to a prominent local DJ named Damian Einstein, "Zoot A Lors," which captures both the feel and spirit of Damian's theme song, "Two Step de Platin," by Ambrose Thibodeaux (a triangle-punctuated two-step). There's a fine instrumental that resonates with a Bo Diddley beat, "Do I Smell Like Weed," a rockin' piano bass beat introduces Dean's "Play Me Like A Fiddle" in which he wails on his harmonica – he's a multi-talented musician, playing every kind of guitar made plus that wicked harp. This one lopes along with (I believe) guest artist Dave Chappel, Master of the Telecaster, leading the pack. Regionalism is abundant in Rosenthal's oeuvre and "Nary a Light" is an example: "Nary a light at the South River bridge tonight" is a warning to boaters and motorists at this familiar crossing, putting another pin in Rosenthal's area map. He's always admired Bob Dylan, and so it's fitting that he finishes with a couple of the Great One's songs, "Girl From The North Country" and "Masterpiece," at the end of this 11-track CD. The former plays out at around six-minutes in a novel tempo that freshens this old chestnut in a way that, I feel, Bob himself would embrace.

The nine originals steer Dean to the Dylanesque road end on this frolicsome recording. Should you ever get the opportunity to catch Dean Rosenthal in the act, do it. Buy and listen to this fluent recording 'til then.

- M.E. Travaglini



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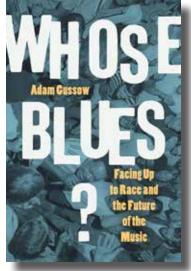


For more than 12 years this recording was mentioned obscurely in interviews as a super-group, old-school jam session by those few witnesses who knew this was a once-in-a-lifetime moment.

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.

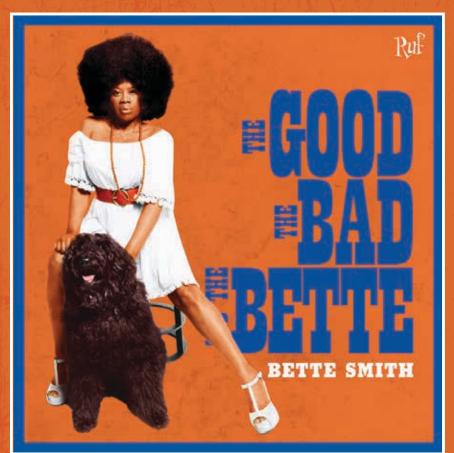
Most jarring to me were the extensive quotes from Harlem Renaissance artists, particularly Zora Neale Huston, explicitly detailing the openly sexual promiscuity of chitlin circuit performers in the age of Bessie Smith and Ma Rainey, how their behavior often led to violence, and their lyrics, while shocking 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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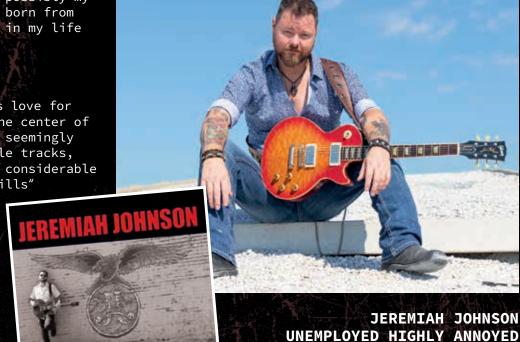
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BOOK REVIEW

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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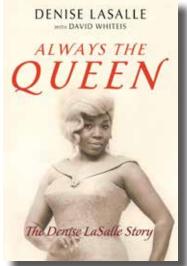
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BOOK REVIEW

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."

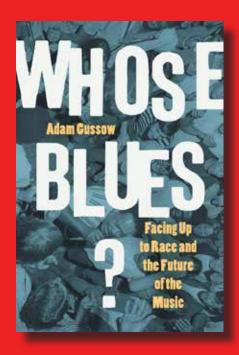
I enjoyed her tales of fellow performers like Bobby Rush and the eye-arching account of one of Millie Jackson's bawdiest stage antics. As an artist Denise LaSalle was a prolific songwriter, prolific recording artist, and an exceptional live performer who combined swagger and glamor like few others. She 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.).

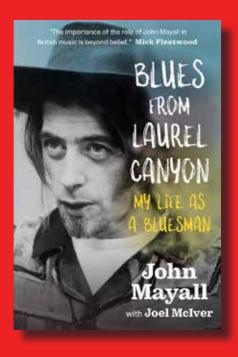
She achieved much through her talent, determination, and resilience. Most impressive was her humanity and her kindness towards others as she "adopted" several children from troubled homes. Denise LaSalle was a very special artist, but most importantly a very special person.

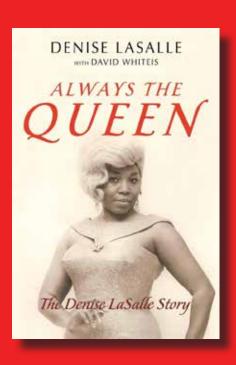
- Thomas J. Cullen III

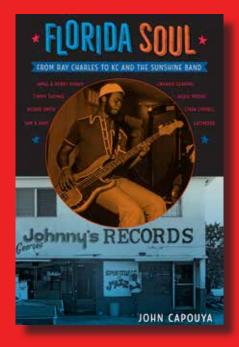


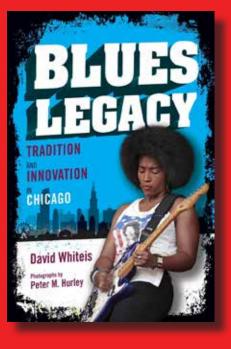
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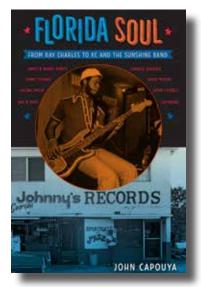




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BOOK REVIEW

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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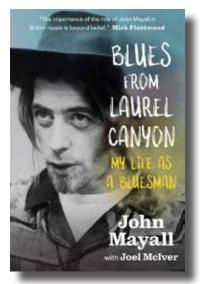




BOOK REVIEW

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*.

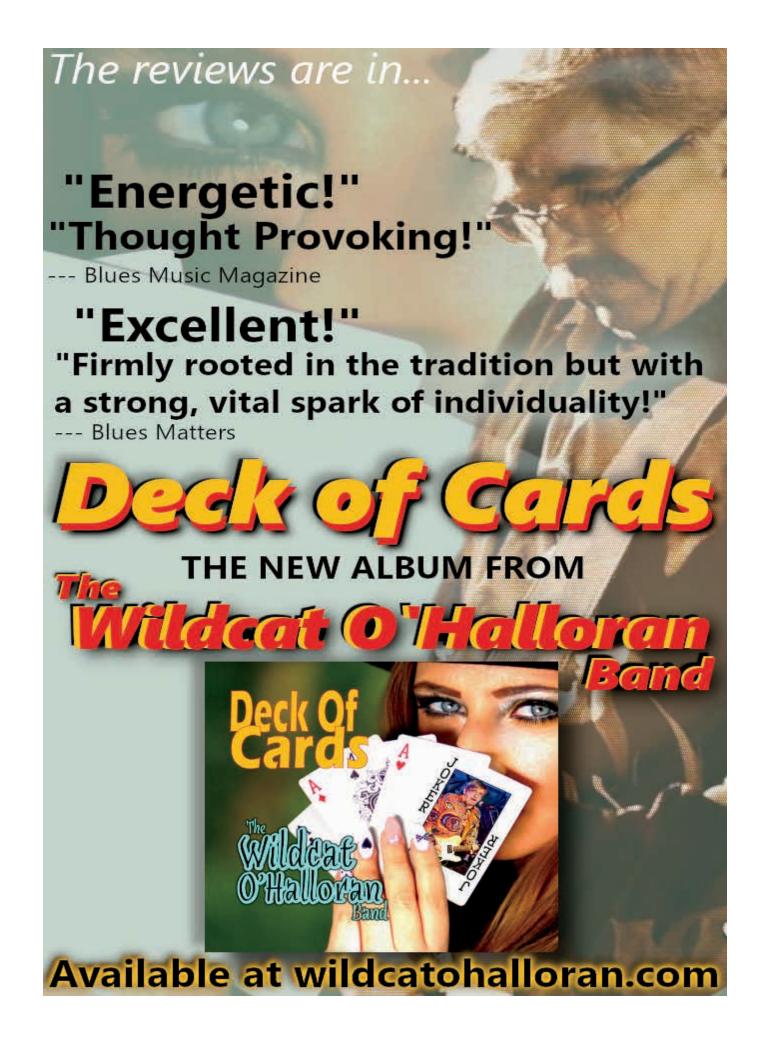
Mayall has always seen his bands as continual musically changing outfits as he wants and demands of himself to have a fresh sound and energy. He has been a stickler for that change, going through what seems like hundreds of players over the years, encompassing many, many unique combinations of instruments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

Dave Gross • Tinsley Ellis Mud Morganfield & His Allstar Chicago Band • Roomful of Blues • Coco Montoya Anson Funderburgh & the Rockets

Darrell Nulisch & the Texas Horns • Tommy Castro & the Painkillers Ronnie Baker Brooks Band • Deanna Bogart Band • Southern Avenue • Toronzo Cannon Joanne Shaw Taylor • John Németh & the Blue Dreamers • Mr. Sipp • Albert Castiglia Keeshea Pratt Band • HOROJO Trio

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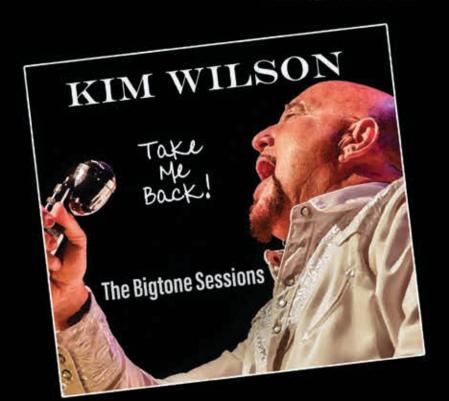
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