

Toronto Blues Society MAPLEBLUES

TBS is a charitable organization dedicated to the promotion and preservation of the Blues



September 2020

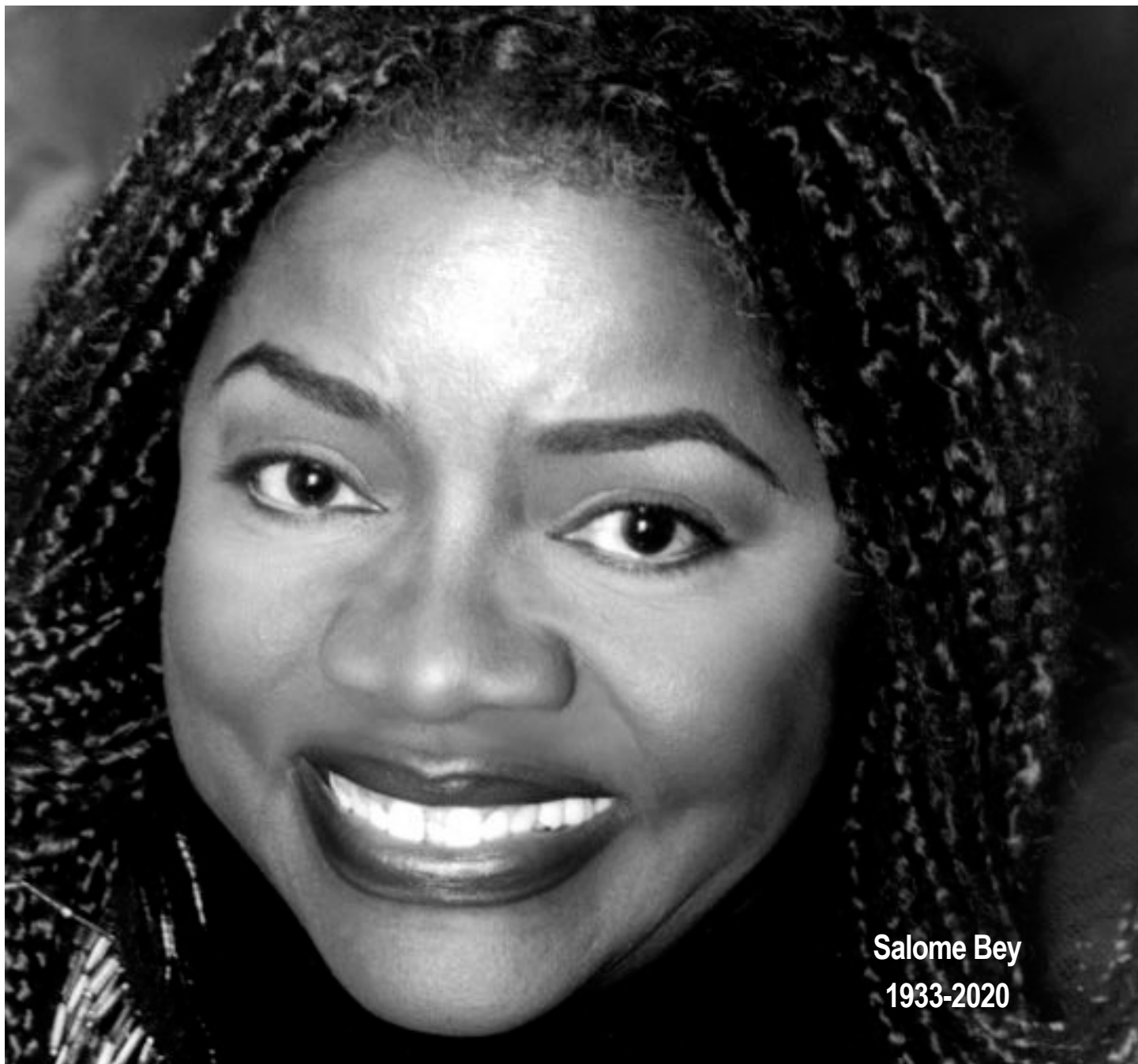
www.torontobluessociety.com

Published by the TORONTO BLUES SOCIETY

since 1985

info@torontobluessociety.com

Vol 36, No 9



Salome Bey
1933-2020

Keeping Live Alive
Remembering Salome
Loose Blues News

Blues Reviews
Top Blues
Blues Online

CANADIAN PUBLICATIONS MAIL AGREEMENT #40011871

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MapleBlues is published monthly by the Toronto Blues Society ISSN 0827-0597

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Charitable # 87487 7509 RR0001

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*Did you miss this year's awards show? Are you curious about the performances of the 23rd Maple Blues Awards guest musicians at Koerner Hall? All 6 performances will be available on TBS Youtube Channel and we kicked off this special video series with the recent JUNO Blues Album of the Year award winner Dawn Tyler Watson, and Matchedash Parish. This month, we continue with **Big Dave McLean** and his performance will be available on TBS Youtube channel on Wednesday, September 16th at 6pm. Plus, a special short message from the artists awaits at the beginning or ending of every video for the fans! Enjoy live music and short interviews coming up by Michael Jerome Brown, Miss Emily, Raha Javanfar and the Regent Park School of Music students!*

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MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Dione Taylor CD Premiere "Spirits in the Water"

September 7 | 8pm

Brian Blain CD Premiere "I'm Not Fifty Anymore"

September 9 | 8pm

Big Dave McLean MBA Performance from Koerner Hall on TBS Youtube channel

Wednesday, September 16 | 6pm

Dione Taylor at Queen West Art Crawl's Online Festival presented by Toronto Blues Society as part of its annual Blues in the Garden.

Sunday, September 20 | Time TBA

Michael Schatte CD Premiere "Conundrum"

Wednesday, September 23 | 8pm

Rez Blues 25th Anniversary live stream with Murray Porter on Facebook Live

Friday, September 25

TBS Pioneer Profile Series: Jackie Washington. Ken Whiteley will be interviewed by Graham Rockingham Wednesday, September 30 8pm (EDT)

Rez Blues 25th Anniversary live stream with Digging Roots on Facebook Live

Friday, October 2

Rez Blues 25th Anniversary live stream with Crystal Shawanda on Facebook Live

Friday, October 9

TBS Pioneer Profile Series: Eugene Smith interviewed by Bill Munson from the Duncan Garage, Tuesday, October 13 | 8pm (EDT)

Miss Emily MBA Performance from Koerner Hall on TBS Youtube channel

Wednesday, October 14 | 6pm

Rez Blues 25th Anniversary live stream with Pura Fe on Facebook Live

Friday, October 16

Michael Jerome Brown MBA Performance from Koerner Hall on TBS Youtube channel

Wednesday, November 11 | 6pm

Maple Blues Awards voting open

Monday, November 2nd - Tuesday, December 1st

Raha Javanfar & Regent Park School of Music Students MBA Performance from Koerner Hall on TBS Youtube channel

Wednesday, December 9 | 6pm

Maple Blues Band MBA Performance on TBS YouTube channel

Wednesday, January 13 | 6pm

Also, watch for upcoming new events from TBS including:

Celebrating Rez Blues 25th Anniversary with a live stream from Vancouver, Saskatchewan, Six Nations and Toronto every Friday (8pm ET) in September and October! With the support of Canada Council for the Arts in partnership between Elaine Bomberry, Toronto Blues Society, Indigenous Performing Arts Association and CKRZ - The Voice of the Grand!

Friday, Sept 25: Murray Porter

Friday, October 2: Digging Roots

Friday, October 9: Crystal Shawanda

Friday, October 16: Pura Fe

More TBA.

TBS Pioneer Profile Series: Watch this space for upcoming new interviews Jay Douglas and others in September & October!

Talent Search finals virtual performance concert, date time TBA.

More Coming Up in October!

Virtual Blues: Rare video performances and workshops including never-seen-before video Jodie Drake!

Video series from the archives of Mako Funasaka specially curated by the TBS.

TBS Mental Health Workshop

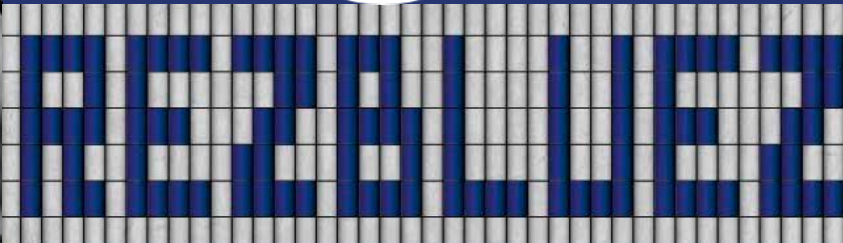
An online conversation on Adam Gussow's upcoming book "Whose Blues?" with the participation of the author and Sugar Brown.

Farther in the Future:

Virtual 24th Maple Blues Awards in 2021 going live from 4 different cities! A bundle of awards will be announced next to some exciting performances from Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, and Vancouver each Monday of February! We are launching with a livestream from Toronto on Monday, Feb 1st. Mark your calendar now for Mon, Feb 8, 15, and 22 as well.

Attention TBS Members!

Due to COVID-19 pandemic, TBS is unable to deliver a physical copy of the MapleBlues. While we are working from home like every other organization, we are hoping to catch up with expiring, new & renewing members in September. Please e-mail info@torontobluesociety.com if you have any questions and be sure to follow TBS accounts on social media for immediate updates.



FRI SEPT 25
MURRAY PORTER

FRI OCT 2
DIGGING ROOTS

FRI OCT 9
CRYSTAL SHAWANDA

FRI OCT 16, 23, 30
ARTISTS TBA

8PM EST • FREE

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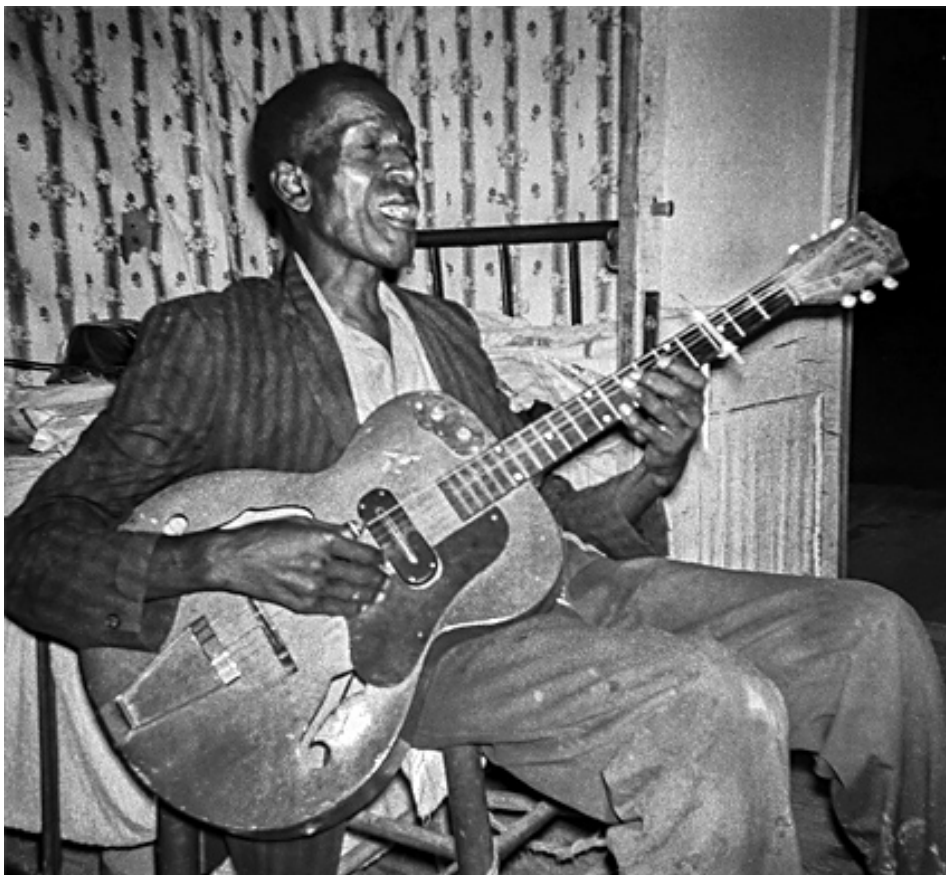


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Sleepy John Estes

You Don't Know What You Got Till It's Gone

Paul Reddick refers to his new gigs as “Cirque de Saran,” a sardonic nod to bandstands outfitted in plastic in order to keep musicians and singers from spreading moist airborne disease onto their paying customers. The “Cirque,” of course, is French for super-acrobatic clown shows. Who knew parlour-room blues would be such an exercise in derring-do?

Reddick is a singer-songwriter and harmonica player who does bluesy things to his dream-poem lyrics. With him at Toronto's Sauce on Danforth for a couple of sets last month was pianist Michael Theodore, bassist Anna Ruddick and guitarist Steve Marriner. No drummer, which was fine – the small space didn't need the kick.

From a caged-in corner, Reddick mentioned the COVID-19 circumstances we're living in currently. “Maybe we can find some beauty in it,” he said.

I'm struggling to locate it these days – that beauty. What I'm finding more of is humility.

At the cozy Southern gothic bar, the band stepped into a grooving ode to Sleepy John Estes. “Rollin' a stone long overdue,” Reddick sang, his voice gravelled and a full of tremolo, “calling a song sweet and blue.” For fans of live music, it's been months since the last shows. Small gigs that abide by public health

restrictions are now allowed, but the carefree days of drinks, melody and rhythms are not truly back. Masks are part of the drill, as is socializing at a distance. And dancing? Not allowed. We can't jitter for the bug.

Many of us took our lifestyle for granted, pre-pandemic. We griped. Petty concerns were made gigantic. Patrons dropped two-dollar coins into hats passed at pay-what-you-can shows and thought themselves patrons of the arts for doing it. Now people don't talk so loud. We walk around timid, slouched and smaller. The cost to see Reddick present his songs at Sauce on Danforth was \$35. Nobody complained about the price. William Bell sang “You don't miss your water until your well runs dry.” Reddick sings this:

Who'd a known and who could tell
That livin' so hard was livin' so well?
Long gone down, gone to stay
Night by night, baby, day by day

A virus has humbled us. What we thought was meagre pre-pandemic was actually grand. Perhaps when this is all over we'll better understand what we had and have. And, who knows, maybe people will appreciate live music more than ever.

- Brad Wheeler

Keeping Live Alive

Last month, the City of Toronto announced \$1.7 million in property tax relief for 45 eligible venues needing critical support due to ongoing pressures intensified by COVID-19. The list includes blues friendly venues like the **Cameron House, The Horseshoe Tavern, Painted Lady, and Relish Bar & Grill**. The measure is intended to remain in place beyond this year to support the long-term viability of Toronto's live music sector, the city said. Live music has an economic impact of \$850 million a year or “the equivalent of 10,500 full-time jobs,” Tory said. Read more here.

With more venues coming back with either live shows or more live streams from their place, we are hoping that this new measure will help more to help keep Toronto's live music scene thriving as it used to be. It's reassuring to note that one new venue has appeared on the blues landscape and it is a nice size club all set up for live music, though for the time being they've been doing most of the shows on their large patio. **Bar Twelve16** is located at 1603 The Queensway, and has been presenting **Chuck Jackson and the C-Notes** on Sundays from 4-8. The Downchild Blues Band has had their 2020 tour dates rescheduled to the spring of 2021. While waiting for theatres and festivals to reopen three band members, Chuck Jackson, vocals/harmonica, Mike Fitzpatrick, drums and Gary Kendall, bass/vocals have teamed up with ex-Fathead guitarist/vocalist, Teddy Leonard and moved into a weekly residency. Instead of presenting limited capacity indoor events the club has chosen to launch themselves into the live music scene by using their large patio. The stage is set up outside the patio fence to allow for the required distance between musicians and audience. It's been obvious that the demand for live music has not been stifled by the pandemic lock down. The Sunday afternoon blues sessions have been filled to capacity since Aug. 13th. Tables are placed far enough apart to meet social distancing requirements and there's no dance floor. On Sun. Sept. 13th Monkey Junk's Steve Marriner will fill in for Chuck Jackson while he oversees the virtual Tim Horton's Southside Shuffle Festival. Chuck has been the festival's artistic director for its 22-year run. He will be at Twelve 16 for all other Sunday presentations.

cont'd on page 7



*Renown First Nations artist and activist **Pura Fe** has been confirmed to take part in the Rez Blues 25th Anniversary live stream on Friday, October 16. Photo by Jack Storm*



***Jackie Washington** will be the subject of September's TBS Pioneer Profile Series. Longtime collaborator and friend Ken Whiteley will be interviewed by former Hamilton Spectator journalist Graham Rockingham on Wednesday, September 30 8pm (EDT) on the TBS Facebook Page*



Maple Blues Awards Going Virtual in 2021

The 24th Annual Maple Blues Awards is going virtual on its next edition which will take place in February, 2021. The Board of directors of TBS has been faced with the difficult decision considering the ongoing global pandemic. The Maple Blues Awards nominees will be announced in October, with public voting in eligible categories still taking place during the month of November 2020 and the winners will be announced during the online awards show.

Derek Andrews, president of Toronto Blues Society said, "The uncertainty of live music events has forced us to err on the side of caution by celebrating the best in Canada's blues virtually, with no boundaries worldwide!"

In addition, the tenth biennial Blues Summit conference and showcase was to be held January 29th – February 1st, 2021 but the decision has been made to move the event to 2022. Details to follow.

Musicians! Promote Your New Albums! Please make sure to mail and promote your new albums to the MBA Nominating Panel before the end of September. While the Panel is consisted of 62 members who are required to be familiar with Canadian blues artist activity and CD releases, artists are encouraged to service new releases to increase their national profile. The list of the Panel members can be found on TBS website with a link to their organizations. Please note, albums should be released during the eligibility period: September 1, 2019 to September 30, 2020.

The **Mighty Duck Blues Band** has announced the return of their Saturday Matinee at **Jo Blo's Rock & Wok** in St. Catharines. As Ontario begins to reopen, live music is returning. The Ducks are looking forward to being able to get back on stage with their fabulous special guests and to see their legions of supporters once again. Guests coming up are Joel Johnson (Sep 19), Chuck Jackson and Pat Carey (Sep 26), Jenie Thai (Oct 3), Paul Reddick (Oct 10), Dan McKinnon (Oct 17) and Jake Chisholm (Oct 24) and Carlos del Junco (Oct 31). The Mighty Duck Blues Band is Dave Curry guitar/vocals, Canada Dave Torosian keyboards, Jim Casson drums and Gary Kendall bass/vocals

Now Magazine reports that the legendary **El Mocambo**, closed for renovations since 2014, has scheduled its first official concert: Big Wreck on September 10.

Expect lots of streaming events since the El Mo was ahead of curve when it came to the city's heritage venues getting into the streaming business. It was already wired for high-quality recording, live-mixing and livestreaming from anywhere in the space, which was going to be part of the plan before COVID-19 forced everyone to pivot.

"During these unprecedented times we need to unite together to support everyone in our communities," says owner Michael Wekerle in a release. "Music is a thread that unites us all and we are working closely with artists and their team members to bring new and meaningful experiences to music lovers, in new ways – safely.

"I am hopeful that with continued collaboration we can all work to sustain a healthy and thriving entertainment sector, and to ultimately keep live alive."

Farther afield, we are happy to report that **Blues on the Rideau** has put together a fall programme (live-in-person but including a streaming option).

They had to cancel the last 3 shows of the 2019/20 Season due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Fall Series is a 3 Engagement – 2 Shows per Engagement – Series running once a month in September, October & November. Depending on how these shows go they will consider continuing with a Winter (January, February, March) and Spring (April, May, June) Series.

The Series will feature Duos & Trios playing great "sit-and-listen" Blues. Full COVID safety protocol will be TOP PRIORITY at all times. 50 person capacity (half the normal) with 6' distancing between tables. 12' distancing between the artists and the nearest audience member. All staff will be wearing masks. Everyone entering The Cove will be required to wear masks and when circulating



Harrison Kennedy plays a socially-distanced outdoor event, at a private residence, approximately 30 minutes from Hamilton on Saturday, September 12th, 6:00-8:00 (Rain Date: Sunday, September 13th). This is a BYOB event organized by Hamilton's Mississippi Queen herself. Seats are sold 'by the table', in groups of 4 and larger. These are picnic tables, set up 6' feet apart from others, on each side. Tickets are \$80 per person (Price includes food, music, gratuity on food service, and HST). \$480 if you are buying a table of 6, or \$320 if you are buying a table of 4. For tickets or more info call 416-516-9522 or email connie@mississippiqueenfoods.com. You may also leave a voice message at 905-526-0909. Photo by Jeff Fasano.

in the room (but they can be removed at the tables). Hand sanitizer will be everywhere and all will be encouraged to use it regularly throughout the night, not just on entering and leaving the building. Use of bathrooms will be restricted to one person at a time. Plated meals will be brought to the tables by Cove staff instead of a buffet. All surfaces will be sanitized regularly.

James Doran reports, "Of course everything depends on the COVID-19 situation. If it worsens and indoor gatherings are banned again then the Series will be postponed. On the other hand if things improve and full capacity gatherings with no social distancing required are allowed again we may return to full band shows. However, given the current situation, we don't see than happening anytime soon."

Performances will include a full course meal, the show and Door Prizes with proceeds going to support different local charities – all for only \$70 pp (plus HST).

Note: To date the BOTR @ The Cove Series has raised over \$74K for local Westport charities.

The series kicks off September 18 with **Rick Fines and Suzie Vinnick**, two of Canada's finest Roots/Blues singer-songwriter/guitarists. Both have been nominated for Juno Awards and won multiple Maple Blues Awards and International

Songwriting Awards. This is their 6th visit to BOTR and they've Sold Out every time.

October 23/24 it will be **Samantha Martin Trio**. Great Blues, Soul and R&B. A 2019 Juno Award and multiple Maple Blues Award nominee. Samantha has played BOTR twice over the past two years with her dynamite band Delta Sugar and Sold Out both times. For this show it will be her on vocals & acoustic guitar backed by her great guitarist and keyboardist from DS.

On November 13 & 14 - it's the **HOROJO Trio**, Ottawa's best Soul, Rockin' Rhythm & Blues Trio - Jamie Holmes (HO) on drums, Jeff Rogers (RO) on keyboards & vocals and JW-Jones (JO) on guitar & vocals - spells HOROJO! They just won the 2020 International Blues Challenge in Memphis last January beating out over 250 bands from around the world and JW won for Best Guitarist - an incredible double honour!

For those who have never attended a BOTR show at The Cove – the venue offers a friendly and intimate setting in a beautiful 140 year-old country Inn in one of the most scenic small towns in Ontario. Located on the world famous UNESCO World Heritage Rideau Canal Waterway. Only a 1.5 hour drive from Ottawa, 1 hour from Kingston, 3.5 hours from Toronto and 3 from Montreal. Located at 2 Bedford St downtown overlooking the lake.

The TBS Remembers Salome

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September 2005 www.torontobluesociety.com Published by the TORONTO BLUES SOCIETY since 1985 info@torontobluesociety.com Vol 21, Number 8/9

20 Years T.B.S.

Salome



The TBS Women's Blues Revue is always a fantastic opportunity to see established and new vocalists interpreting the Blues. Whether performing standards or originals, the artists chosen for this unique annual event never disappoint the audience, and 2005 will be no exception. This year's featured Blues Divas will include **Roxanne Potvin**, **Shakura S'Aida**, **Lee Aaron**, and **Salome Bey**.

Salome Bey is the first African Canadian to make an impact on me during my childhood in Goderich, Ontario. I remember seeing her perform powerful excerpts on CBC-TV from the Dora Mavor Moore Award winning play *Indigo*. I remember her as an emotive, sincere singer. Many years later, I met Bey after a phenomenal Toronto performance of her fantastic play *Madame Gertrude*. One of the things that struck me then was her commitment to young people. Today Bey continues her commitment to youth by involving them in her work. She continues to share the wonderful gifts of her creativity with Canadians and audiences worldwide.

Her recordings include *Salome Bey* (1970), *Songs from Dude* (1972), *Jazz Canada Europe '79* (made during her tour of the Bracknell, Northsea and Montreux jazz festivals), *Christmas Blue* (1994), and *I like Your Company* (1997). Often performing with her gifted daughters **Tuku** and **Saidah**, Bey has also recorded with other artists including her brother **Andy Bey**, **Orin Isaacs**, **Washington Savage**, jazz pianist **Horace Silver**, the **Montreal Jubilation Choir**, among others.

A consummate performer, Bey has consistently transcended narrow descriptions of her creativity

continued on page 4



Salome Bey pictured at the 1990 Women's Blues Revue. More recently she's been the subject of a CBC-TV documentary and a special tribute evening at Hugh's Room. She'll be making a long-overdue return appearance at this year's WBR and will be joined by her daughter **Shakura S'Aida** as well as **Roxanne Potvin**, **Lee Aaron** with more performers to be announced. The concert will take place at Massey Hall on **Saturday, November 26th**. Tickets are on sale now. Photo by Barry Thomson

CANADIAN PUBLICATIONS MAIL AGREEMENT #40011871

SALOME *cont'd from page 1*

in music, theatre, television, or literature. Yet she continues today as a reigning monarch of the Blues in the fine tradition of **Ma Rainey, Jodie Drake, Alberta Hunter** and many more. "There's so many people that are the first lady of the Blues. I don't think I'm old enough yet. But even if I was 80 there are still so many ladies of the Blues that just to be included in that group is nice."

Bey demonstrated her gift for performance early by winning a talent contest at the Apollo, which she entered without her parents consent at age 14. Her father however wasn't as excited about her success as the young Bey prodigy and didn't allow her to receive her prize, a week of performance at the famous Apollo Theatre. Born and raised in Newark, New Jersey, Bey gave up law school several years later to dedicate her life to performance and writing. She performed in local clubs with **Andy and the Bey Sisters**, the vocal group she formed with her brother Andy and sister **Geraldine**. They were popular, touring North America and Europe, even drawing attention from the legendary **Sam Cooke**.

Upon arriving in Toronto in 1964, Bey quickly became a bright light in the local jazz circuit, making her theatre debut at the Global Village in *Blue S.A. and Justine*. In the early 70's Bey won the prestigious OBIE Award as Best Actress for her Earth Mother role in the New York version of *Justine* which was called *Love Me, Love My Children*. A favourite at Jazz festivals worldwide Bey continues to dazzle audiences on stage and screen. She has made numerous recordings and has been a frequent guest for many TV specials, countless concerts and festivals around the world. A Grammy Award nominee, Bey has won many awards over the years including the 1991 Toronto Arts Awards, but she continues to be motivated by the simplest inspirations. She is an artist inspired by the beauty, trials, and the struggles of life.

Bey is long overdue for a renaissance of interest in her music and her theatrical productions. Whether performing originals or standards in Jazz, Gospel, R&B, Pop or Blues music, Bey enriches our lives with the special interpretation that is her own.

- Marva Jackson Lord

Marva Jackson Lord lives in Wales, UK where she produces an annual Black Cultural event including music, storytelling, workshops and film and runs a nonprofit cooperative called Griots Productions creating links between urban and rural artists and communities (<http://www.griots.net>). She also works with a network of booking agents, web workers, writers and promoters establishing an artist admin service for UK/Europe (<http://www.griotsarts.com>)


Salome Trust

The family of Canada's First Lady of the Blues Salome Bey, who died August 8 at age 86, chose The Freedom School Toronto which provides liberatory education for Black children, for anyone wishing to make a donation in her honour. "We feel that BLMTO Freedom School is most aligned with Salome's values that balance art and activism and best suited to receive the gems of her legacy," Tuku told Samaritanmag in an email. "Salome's artistic practice contained key components that were integral to the body of work she created throughout the duration of her professional tenure". Read more here. E-transfers in Bey's name can be sent directly to the trustee: karen@childrenspeacetheatre.com

There have been numerous tributes to Salome online (check out Martin Morrow's piece in the Globe and Mail if you're a subscriber). Here's a couple of good ones:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/04/arts/salome-bey-dead.html>

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/entertainment/salome-bey-obit-1.5680432>



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10. IF MY BABY LEFT ME
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Illustration by Nathaniel Mesner

Guest Reviewer: **Brad Wheeler**,
music writer for the *Globe and Mail*



Dione Taylor *Spirits in the Water*
Matay Records

On an album of shimmering gospel and swampy Americana sounds, the chanteuse Dione Taylor has got those restless dropped-G blues.

Take, for example, the existential questioning of *Where I Belong*, in which the Regina-born, church-raised singer is runnin' and searchin' and has to "keep on movin'."

On the acoustic-slide-driven *Down the Bloodline*, the song's protagonist is "runnin' and runnin' down the line."

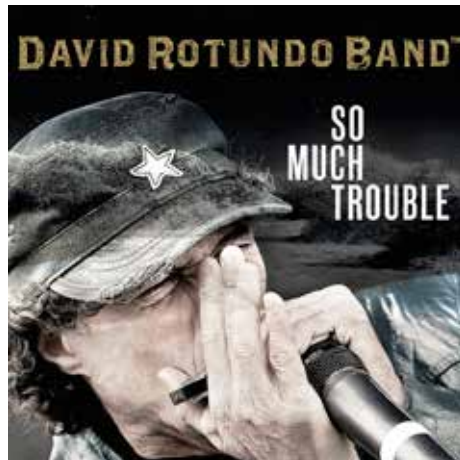
There's a chugging, clapping Slim Harpo groove to *Workin'*. Taylor sings about cookin', cleanin' and "always dancin' for the man."

And on the defiant anti-racism of *Ain't Gonna Let Nobody Turn Me Around*, Taylor is fightin', walkin', marchin', pushin', prayin', believin' and resistin'.

So, there's much of a muchness to *Spirits in the Water*, an album inspired by a Yuchi Indian legend of a singing river and motivated by a road trip to Tennessee. "Legendary stories and family history travel through us, flow into the waters and down the bloodline," Taylor says in the album's press release.

If Taylor is a repetitive lyricist, she's a believable, pitch-perfect singer on these songs of perseverance. Her main collaborator is Joel Schwartz, who produced and co-wrote most of the album while pitching in on guitar and

banjo. For fans of slick, cinematic river-bank blues, *Spirits in the Water* is your ticket. And, one might say, essential listenin'.



David Rotundo Band *So Much Trouble*
Dreams We Share

The harp-blowing Canadian singer David Rotundo is associated with a happy kind of blues. His music jumps and jives, shakes and rattles, and almost always rolls. Maybe his smiled mood has something to do with wintering in Mexico, which is something he does.

There's a cloud over his new album, though. Sure, opening track *She's Dynamite* is a hip-shaking affair. Rotundo even laughs at the end of the track. But more often on the mostly original material produced by the acclaimed harmonica player Lee Oskar the vibe is downcast. The CD is called *So Much Trouble*, the title being our first clue that not everything is sunny and major-keyed in the land of Rotundo.

On *Funky Side of Town*, he sings that there "ain't no saints, only sinners / ain't no winners, only losers / ain't no ups, only downs." So defeatist. So binary!

Elsewhere, Rotundo is Drinking Overtime, he forecasts Hard Times Coming, he's Too Blue. On *I Must Be Crazy* he makes like Jay Hawkins (but without the screaming). Somewhere Skip James is telling Rotundo to lighten up, man.

Rotundo is a serviceable singer and his harmonica chops obviously pass the Oskar test. The record sounds great. I might criticize the uninventive lyrics, but then he comes up with a line like this: "Five dollars for some water; nine dollars for a beer / With prices like these, I'm gonna have to sell my own tears."

Yes, hard times are coming. In fact they're already here. And yet Rotundo manages to make us smile in the gloom.



Brian Blain *I'm Not Fifty Anymore*
Independent

Brian Blain was born Sept. 11, 1946. I'll let the mathematics enthusiasts figure out his age, but Blain is old enough to know that there's no sense putting out an album if one doesn't have something worthwhile to say.

With *I'm Not Fifty Anymore*, Blain offers topical and occasionally personal middle-of-the-road blues in accessible, avuncular ways.

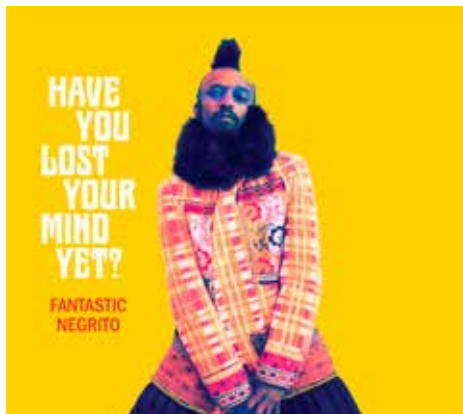
The album-opening title track boogies to a rocking-chair rhythm, with wry observations on growing old. Young (ish) Steve Marriner plays a blazing harmonica in accompaniment. He'll fully understand the song in 20 years or so.

If Blain's humour and lumbago are acting up on the opening track, he's more limber and serious on *Water Song*, a stylish statement on a world-wide crisis of thirst. Sadio Sissokho (kora) and Harry Manx (mohan veena) add an exotic flair; wailing backing vocals from Ruth Mathiang convey sorrow in a vaguely Middle Eastern manner.

The Not-Worried Blues (An American Dream) is a full-band effort sung from the blithe, oblivious point of view of a suckered blue-collar rube. The piano solo comes from Julian Fauth. Downchild's Gary Kendall, Mike Fitzpatrick and Pat Carey are also on board.

The Mother I Never Knew burns in a sensitive minor key. It was inspired by the recent discovery of Blain's birth mother: "A kind-hearted woman, a person of very deep faith / only thinking of others, some might even call her a saint."

The last track is an acoustic journey and meditation. Recorded with Michael Jerome Browne for Blain's 2006 album *Overqualified for the Blues*, the 10-minute *Tai Chi Ten* goes nowhere in particular – an excellent destination and peaceful exhale.



Fantastic Negrito *Have You Lost Your Mind Yet?* Cooking Vinyl/Warner

Though the title of the Oakland-bred bluesman Fantastic Negrito's third album ends in a question mark, it's more a reasonable suggestion than a question looking for an answer. Because if you're not out of your mind these days, you're probably not paying attention.

"All kind of things can happen in the world," chants the artist who was born Xavier Amin Dphrepaulezz, on the hand-clapped interlude *Shigamabu Blues*. Sure, all kinds of things can happen – we knew that. But all at the same time?

It's been five years since the former drug-dealing hustler won NPR's Tiny Desk Contest and became Bernie Sanders's favourite blues artist on the strength of what the musician called "black roots music for everyone." His sound is modern and electric, with elements of gospel, hip hop and R&B. Grammy voters have twice awarded Fantastic Negrito their famous award.

Sweaty, audacious and in your face, his new album is socially conscious lyrically and versatile musically. Lead track *Chocolate Samurai* is hotter than Stevie Wonder's July and just as funky. *I'm So Happy I Cry*, featuring vocals from slam-poet Tarriona "Tank" Ball of New Orleans' Tank and the Bangas, is a muscular revival tent dirge.

On his first two albums, Fantastic Negrito touched on hot-button topics including gun violence, the NRA, preying pharmaceutical companies, gentrification and homelessness. "On this album," he explains in a press release for *Have You Lost Your Mind Yet?*, "I wanted to write about people I knew, people I grew up with, people whose lives I could personally affect, and whose lives have impacted me."

Late-album cut *King Frustration* was inspired by a drug-addicted cousin. It stomps, it rides a wild seventies-style organ solo, it pleads "No more, no more, no more." On

the final song *Platypus Dipster* Fantastic Negrito asks, "What is this blues thing, man?" It's a legitimate question, one he answers with graceful aggression and mind-bending exploration.



Elvin Bishop and Charlie Musselwhite *100 Years of Blues* Alligator Records

Nobody should look to veteran guitarist Elvin Bishop and old-timer harmonica blower Charlie Musselwhite for political blues music, nor should they. What they present on *100 Years of Blues*, set to drop Sept. 25, is reliable entertainment of the front-porch, down-home, shoot-the-electric-breeze kind.

The exception is *What the Hell?*, a lumbering, well-meaning statement on the state of a divided nation. "How could a good thing go so wrong," Bishop wonders, in his scratchy, country-boy howl. The song is anti-Trump but simplistic. Bishop's "good thing" wasn't everybody's good thing. He lived through the Civil Rights movement, right?

Otherwise these two well-established fogies are on firm ground, switching vocals on and off on uncomplicated material that is born to give. The title track is a re-recording of a song originally heard on Bishop's *Big Fun Trio* album from 2017. It's autobiographical, welcoming and explanatory.

That's Bishop bemoaning modern times on the light-hearted *Old School*. Musselwhite misses things bygone on the slow-moving *Good Times*.

The old man's lament continues on the piano-at-sunset *Blues for Yesterday*: "Times were tough, but we had fun." With Bishop beside him, a laconic Musselwhite wistfully sings about having had "one good run." He should consider himself fortunate. Many weren't so lucky.

- Brad Wheeler



CBC Radio One (99.1)
Saturday Night Blues,
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Saturday 9:05pm-11:00pm
(on Radio 2 Saturday at 6:05pm),



JAZZ-FM (91.1)
Bluz FM w/ **Danny Marks**
Saturday 8:00 pm-midnight



CIUT-FM (89.5)
A to Z Blues w/ **Screamin' Red**
Tuesday 6-7pm
John Valenteyn's Blues
w/ **John Valenteyn**
Friday 1-2pm



At The Crossroads w/ **Brant Zwicker**
<http://atcblues.ca> and syndicated on
stations across the continent)

CKWR (98.5 FM)
Old Chicago Blues w/ **Willy A.**
Saturday 12:30pm - 2:00pm (Kitchener)
www.ckwr.com



CIOI FM (101.5 The HAWK)
Blues Blast, with **Ken Wallis**
Tuesdays, 4-6pm (Hamilton)



COUNTYFM (99.3)
Sideroads with **Blues Sister Peg** and
Brotha 'Z' Tuesday 8-10pm (Picton)



CIWS 102.9FM (WhiStle Radio)
Whistle Bait w/ **Gary Tate**
(aka Shakey-T) Wed, Thurs, Fri 11pm.
(Stouffville)



CFFF Trent Radio (92.7 FM)
Blues Themes, Delivered by...The Milkman.
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CJLX (91.3 FM)
Saturday Night Blues Review, with **George Vaughan**.
Saturday 6-7pm (Belleville)

CFMU (99.3 FM)
Breakfast of Champions, with **Paul Panchezak**. Thurs 10am
Swear to Tell the Truth: the Blues and Rhythm Show, with
C.M.Compton. Tuesday 1-2:30pm (Hamilton)

CFRU (93.3 FM)
The Thrill is Back with **Andy and Andrew** Mondays 1 to 3pm
The Blues Review, with **Roopen Majithia** Tues 9:00 pm (Guelph)

CANOE FM (100.9 FM) canoe.fm
Buckside Blues Cruise with Patrick Monaghan Tues. (7-9pm)
(Haliburton)

CFBU (103.7 FM) *Eclectic Blues* with **Deborah Cartmer**
Tuesday 7-9 pm (St. Catharines)

CKCU (93.1 FM) www.ckcufm.com *Black and Blues* w/ **John Tackaberry** Every Sunday 9-11 pm (Ottawa)

CKMS (100.3 FM)
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Richard Ludmerer - Making a Scene Magazine

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south of the Mason Dixon line that boogie..."
George W. Harris - Jazz Weekly

"...close the curtains and live large while
this blasts through the night. Hot stuff!"
The Midwest Record - Entertainment Reviews



Something in the Water? What do Dione Taylor, Brian Blain and Michael Schatte have in common? They're all releasing new CDs this month and all three of them have a strong focus on water. Dione Taylor's new album is called *Spirits in the Water*, Brian Blain's first single from his new album is "The Water Song" and "Water In the Kettle" is the opening cut from Michael Schatte's new album. All three releases will be premiered on TBS channels and socials this month (see "Mark Your Calendar" for details).

Downbeat Poll Blues Winners: Congratulations to the winners in the Blues categories of the 2020 DownBeat Critics' Poll: The Blues Artist or Group is Gary Clark Jr., the Blues Album of the Year is Robert Cray's *That's What I Heard* (Nozzle/Thirty Tigers) and the "Beyond Artist or Group" award goes to Dr. John

IBC Cancelled: The International Blues Challenge, one of the premiere events on the blues calendar, has been suspended for this year. Michael Freeman, Chairman of the Blues Foundation wrote, "I am writing to share with our blues community that our Board voted unanimously to cancel this years' IBC and

look ahead to the first quarter of 2022 when we can hopefully come together in person to celebrate the blues via this signature Blues Foundation event." The Board concurrently voted to suspend nominations and selection of Keeping the Blues Alive Award recipients until the fall of 2021, with plans to honor those selected during the 2022 IBC Week, where they can be celebrated in person with their family and friends surrounding them. They intend to use the time and resources normally directed towards the IBC to develop unique content and virtual activities for this winter. This is not intended to replace the IBC, but to give the blues world a way to remain connected as we all continue to heal through this pandemic that has uprooted so many of our plans and our lives. Save the dates for the 37th International Blues Challenge – February 1st through February 5th, 2022.

Changes in Bluesville: The Blues Foundation will be taking charge of programming B.B. King's Bluesville (channel 74 on Sirius). The channel will be powered by The Blues Foundation, which will directly expand the featured programming to include exclusive performances, artist interviews, and archival content that only The Blues Foundation can provide. To kick off this collaboration, B.B. King's Bluesville will exclusively air the 2020 Virtual Blues Music Awards (held earlier this year), featuring SiriusXM host Shemekia Copeland as the ceremony's host, beginning

Friday, September 4 at 3 p.m. ET, Friday 09/04/20 at 9 p.m. ET, Saturday 09/05/20 at 3 a.m. ET and 6 p.m. ET, Sunday 09/06/20 at 6 a.m. ET and 3 p.m. ET and Monday 09/07/20 at 12 p.m. ET

Blues Musician Emergency Relief Fund: The Blues Foundation has also been coming to the rescue of many in the community who have been seriously impacted by the COVID-19 crisis. If you are able to contribute, make a donation to either the COVID-19 Blues Musician Emergency Relief Fund or to the HART Fund. Both of these Blues Foundation initiatives are making a real difference in the lives of so many blues musicians who would otherwise find themselves out on the streets or without the healthcare they need and deserve. You can visit blues.org and click on the Donate button to choose the fund of your choice and help make a difference.

And if you need some help, The Blues Foundation's COVID-19 Blues Musician Emergency Relief Fund offers assistance to full-time professional blues musicians (apparently available to all blues musicians living in North America) who have lost all means of income for the foreseeable future due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This fund has been established for the sole purpose of providing EMERGENCY relief and will only cover those basic necessities required to live. To find out more, contact Elizabeth Montgomery Brown at elizabeth@blues.org.



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*This month's recommended
listening by Greg Torrington,
programmer of Stingray's
blues channels.*

- 1 **Wide Mouth Mason** *I Wanna Go With You* We Are Busy Bodies
- 2 **Lisa Mills** *The Triangle* Melody Place/BMG
- 3 **Durham County Poets** *Hand Me Down Blues* Borealis
- 4 **Tami Neilson** *Chickaboom!* Outside Music
- 5 **Big Dave McLean** *Pocket Full Of Nothin'* Black Hen
- 6 **The Paul DesLauriers Band** *Bounce* Disques Bros Records
- 7 **Dwane Dixon** *Betting on a Gambling Man* Independent
- 8 **Adam Karch** *Everything Can Change* Disques Bros
- 9 **Wayne Nicholson & John Campbelljohn** *Elmore's Blues* Independent
- 10 **Coco Love Alcorn** *Rebirth* Independent
- 11 **Casey Hensley** *Good As Gone* VizzTone
- 12 **Diana Braithwaite & Chris Whiteley** *Gold Cadillac* G-Three
- 13 **Darrell Scott** *Sings the Blues of Hank Williams* Soundly Music
- 14 **Sass Jordan** *Rebel Moon Blues* Stony Plain
- 15 **The Forrest McDonald Band** *Blues in a Bucket* WTR
- 16 **John Primer & Bob Corritore** *The Gypsy Woman Told Me* VizzTone
- 17 **Bywater Call** *Bywater Call* Gypsy Soul Records
- 18 **The Betty Fox Band** *Peace in Pieces* Foxycavanagh
- 19 **Whitney Shay** *Stand Up!* Ruf
- 20 **Tinsley Ellis** *Ice Cream in Hell* Alligator

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