

TORONTO BLUES SOCIETY MAPLEBLUES

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Harpdog Brown
1962-2022

Making The Most of the
Blues Summit
Remembering Harpdog

CD Reviews
Blues on the Radio
Loose Blues News

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President's Message

Happy New Year Fog. Coming out of 2021 we saw the collapse of live music venues, the return of caution and no more indoor dining, dancing or socialism. As the pause button came back, TBS scrambled to determine how we could serve our members in the short term and shift our major projects to secure time periods where we felt we could safely assemble. Most readers here will appreciate that moving **BS10** and the **Maple Blues Awards** was inevitable. We welcomed all the positive responses far and wide.

Virtual Blues. Some predict that covid culture will leave a permanent imprint on how we experience music. Certainly some presenters have invested in the technology that allows for streaming, serving those who won't venture into a space for their own health. The big benefit of the borderless

broadcasts is an expansion of audiences, but many feel it can not replace the "in person" passion of a being in the room. TBS will keep some virtual "irons in the fire", but we look forward to the physical experience. Watch this space for a new downtown series developing in a new well located central venue. **Pioneer Profiles, Talkin' Blues, Premieres** and wonderful rare digital work will also continue to offered on line.

AGM/BOD. Covid is also partially responsible for a delay in our annual year end review held in December, as our auditor **David Burkes** has been dealing with issues. This has delayed the staging of our committee reports and election of a **2022 Board of Directors** slate. At the time of this writing we are attempting to set a February date for a zoom session where Charter Members can vote in a new crew.

- Derek Andrews

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

NEW DATES: Blues Summit 10 - June 17-20, 2022 , Chelsea Hotel

NEW DATES: 25th Annual Maple Blues Awards, Koerner Hall (273 Bloor St. W. Toronto) | Monday, June 20, 2022

TBS Charter Members can purchase Pre-Sale tickets NOW. E-mail info@torontobluesociety.com for your promo code to take advantage of the pre-sale offer (25% discount). The promo code will entitle each charter member to a 25% discount off the base price of up to four (4) tickets. Pre-sale tickets are available on-line only through the Koerner Hall Box Office.

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Making The Most Out of the Blues Summit

Blues Summit is a conference that creates opportunities for members of the Blues community to connect with key leaders in the industry in many ways. There are seminars, meetings, and even artist showcases where artists can show industry reps what they do by example. In short, the “who’s who” of Canadian Blues will be there – including festival reps, artistic directors, radio hosts, blues society reps, performing artists, label reps, promoters, media, and more. The Blues Summit takes place every two years, and from June 17-20 the much-anticipated Blues Summit 10 will happen at The Chelsea in downtown Toronto, followed by the Maple Blues Awards gala on Monday, June 20th.

For many Blues artists in Canada who are looking to take their music careers to the “next level”, the Summit is certainly a conference to effectively work toward that goal. With so much access, it is important that registered parties have some info that will assist in making the most out of their attendance. In this article, readers will gain information on how to participate most effectively, and what they should consider in order to maximize the value of attending. The tips included here are based on discussions with people who have attended the Blues Summit, making this a valuable resource for those who attend.

The first thing to do is register. There is a broad range of artists and representatives within the Blues community that will gain instant access to the people who construct the Blues landscape in Canada – and beyond. At the very least, it is the most viable opportunity for personal introductions to key leaders within the Blues music industry. There are few opportunities to have so many key leaders in one place, so being there is important if you’d like to introduce yourself, make a connection, or learn about a specific facet

of the industry. For registration details, visit www.torontobluesociety.com. Another reason the Blues Summit is an opportunity worth embarking on is that it serves attendees who are at various points in their career. From emerging artists looking to make a first impression and learn about the function of the industry to the established artist looking to strengthen connections, or veteran artists who are looking to share their latest endeavors or brush up on current industry standards, there is merit in attending.

With so much happening at the Blues Summit, it is important to know how to make the most of a conference like this. Here are some tips which will provide people attending with some information to help maximize the opportunity and make the most out of Blues Summit 10:



Have an idea on what portions of the conference suit your goals. There is a lot going on at the Blues Summit, so having an idea of what resources you can tap into is essential to making the most of your time. For example: If you are an artist who has a new release, perhaps it makes sense to attend a seminar or meeting that focuses on radio. If you are an established act, it might make sense to focus on attending meetings that focus on festivals and bookings, or even introducing yourself to a label representative. Targeting the portions of a conference such as the Summit that align with your goals will certainly give you a sense of direction, information to help achieve your goals, or perhaps even achieve your goal in mind.

Know what you have to offer. Many portions of a blues conference provide access and opportunity to speak with and meet key leaders in the industry. Make the most of this opportunity by being able to let them know

what you do and what you have to offer (tip: if you plan on sharing your music, perhaps sharing a download card, or exchanging appropriate contact information to send a link, is better than handing over a bulky CD or vinyl for someone to try and carry around during the conference).

Examine the schedule of events. As mentioned, there is a lot happening at the Blues Summit, so knowing the schedule of events is key in making the most out of your time a conference. Missing a keynote speaker or a seminar is possible if you don’t have an idea of the schedule. This is the largest Blues conference in Canada, and missed opportunities are avoidable if you know the itinerary and plan accordingly. It is worth noting that this is a bi-annual event – even if you attend the next one (which is always recommended), your goals, the panel of industry reps, and the Blues landscape will be different the next time around.

Ask questions, introduce yourself, and listen. These are focused topics, front-lined by keynote speakers, as well as other scheduled events that are specific in nature. Providing you have chosen the appropriate portion of the conference for you, make it worthwhile by asking questions, if you have them, and taking the chance to introduce yourself. For many artists, the key leaders at the Blues Summit can sometimes otherwise only be identified as an email address or a voice on the radio – this is a great opportunity to introduce yourself (maybe even bump elbows or fists) and make a personal connection through a one-on-one introduction.

After considerable consultation with artists – and even industry reps – who have attended the Blues Summit, there is a conclusion shared by all: Blues Summit is a fantastic opportunity to learn, network and help reach your goal of enhancing what you do in the Blues Collective. Blues Summit is also seen as a viable vehicle to get to know the Blues community better, and strengthen established connections, making it a worthy addition to someone’s Blues experience as a whole.

As a footnote, it is also worth mentioning that in a covid-19 reality, there is, perhaps, even more advantage to attending Blues Summit 10 – the music scene has reached some uncharted territory in covid-19’s wake, so attending the largest Blues conference in Canada is certain to be a great way to reconnect, relearn and re-establish.

- Erin McCallum



Talkin' Blues: Mako Funasaka has posted the 300th episode of the Talkin' Blues Podcast (<http://www.talkinblues.com/>) featuring an interview with American guitarist, composer, singer, songwriter and producer Steve Vai (solo artist, Frank Zappa, David Lee Roth Band & Whitesnake.). Mako writes, "A number of years ago, I almost had the chance to interview Steve Vai when he was in Toronto for a week. When it looked like it might happen, I thought it would be cool to create a podcast around an interview with him. So, I arranged to interview Andrew Galloway and Shakura S'Aida to see how it would feel to do a podcast series around interviewing people in the music industry. My interview with Steve Vai didn't happen then but it inspired my podcast series and I'm thrilled to finally interview Steve for the 300th episode." You can find the "Talkin' Blues" podcast on Spotify, Google Play, iTunes and other podcast outlets including: <https://talkinblues.podbean.com/>

You can also check out the TBS YouTube channel to view our curated (by Gary Kendall and Dan McKinnon) selections from the Talkin' Blues archives. This month's episode features a talk with, and performance of "Home" by **Ruthie Foster**, **Harrison Kennedy** performing "Chain Gang Holler" from his "Soulscapes" album, and an interview with the legendary **Odetta**.

Toronto Blues Doc: If you weren't witnessing the live Blues scene 30 years ago, check out a little gem of a documentary called *Toronto Blues* on YouTube. It showcases an era when Paul Reddick's Sidemen were blowing up the Toronto scene, and Donnie Walsh and Downchild were a staple at Grossman's Tavern. Shot on 16mm by Ted Procyshyn in 1993, the short doc also features Mike McDonald, Gene Taylor, radio host Eddy B, Jerome Godboo and Morgan Davis as well as two Toronto blues pioneers, Rose Clay and Andy Earl. <https://youtu.be/FvgFVSAFSEw>

A new Home for Hugh's Room? Toronto's premiere showcase room for roots & blues music has been looking for a new home since they lost their west-end venue in early 2020. Their search was stymied by the Covid crisis but throughout they have been keeping their eye out for the ideal venue (ie 150+ capacity). They think they found one in the east end, an old church on Broadview and they will be looking for support from the city and pulling out all the stops to make this happen. The blues was always a big part of Hugh's Room and here's hoping they can pull it off.

Ken Whiteley's Song of the Month: TBS board member and Canadian blues & roots patriarch, Ken Whiteley has just recorded a new album, *Long Time Travelling*, and for a limited time he's giving a free download of one song a month beginning with the title track, *Long Time Travelling*.

Ken writes, "Last winter I was thinking about old folk songs that I loved and wanted to put my own spin on. The project grew as I dug into songs I'd known for over fifty years and began recording them. Some songs wanted new words. Some had a myriad of versions and it was like piecing together a puzzle." Download the recording of *Long Time Travelling* for free at www.kenwhiteley.com.

Anna Ruddick joins The Unison Fund: Popular bassist Anna Ruddick has joined the Unison Fund team as Music Industry & Client Services Manager. This is a newly created position designed to support the diverse range of artists, crew and music workers accessing Unison's financial relief and mental health & wellbeing services, while shaping industry relations across the breadth of the charity's programs and initiatives. <https://unisonfund.ca>

Allen Toussaint Honoured with a street: New Orleans' Robert E. Lee Boulevard will be renamed for Allen Toussaint. The street, which stretches for four and a half miles through Lakeview and Gentilly, will officially

go by its new name starting on Feb. 1, 2022. The campaign to honor Toussaint started after his death in 2015 at the age of 77 and aligned with the push to rename several city parks and streets in New Orleans that honor white supremacists and confederates. The call to action from the City Council was amplified by the Black Lives Matter movement and the death of George Floyd. "This process was very thoughtful and in-depth," Council member Kristin Gisleson Palmer said, according to Nola.com. The street was originally named Hibernia Avenue to honor the thousands of Irish workers who died digging the New Basin Canal but was renamed to Robert E. Lee Boulevard in 1960 amid the civil rights, in an obvious act and message of white resistance.

When one door closes, another opens: The Blues Foundation's Blues Hall of Fame is closed until late April in order to conduct facility maintenance, fill open staff positions, and gear up to bring back the International Blues Challenge, Blues Music Awards, Blues Hall of Fame inductions, Keeping the Blues Alive Award ceremony and all the other experiences you love in grand fashion. The new President and CEO, Judith Black wrote, "The building may be closed but the great blues experience is still happening online. Our social media and website are the places where you can find the latest news. As we are taking this brief "pause for the cause", please

cont'd on p5



This month's recommended listing by Brant Zwicker, host/ executive producer of At the Crossroads syndicated blues radio. Website: atcblues.ca

- Scott Ellison** *There's Something About the Night* Liberation Hall
- ***Colin James** *Open Road* Stony Plain Records
- Hanna PK** *Blues All Over My Shoes* VizzTone
- ***Willie MacCalder** *Resolution* independent
- Ben Levin** *Still Here* VizzTone
- ***Mike Nagoda** *Outside the Box* independent
- ***Night Bluemers** *Welcome Aboard the Midnight Train* independent
- Adia Victoria** *A Southern Gothic* Atlantic Records
- Ricci/Krown** *City Country City* Gulf Coast Records
- Dave Specter** *Six String Soul* Delmark Records
- ***The Lowdown Dirty Mojos** *Stone Cold Groovers* Hand Made Recordings
- Carolyn Wonderland** *Tempting Fate* Alligator Records
- The Sugar Roots** *Savage's Life* Lightning in a Bottle Records
- Tinsley Ellis** *Devil May Care* Alligator Records
- ***Zoom w/ Shawn Kellerman** *Chocolate Cake* Mouhaha Music
- ***Wylie Harold** *It Is What It Is* independent
- Sugar Queen & the Straight Blues Band** *Better Days* Sugar Queen Blues
- Chickenbone Slim** *Serve It to Me* Hot VizzTone
- Corey Harris** *The Insurrection* Blues M.C. Records
- GA-20** *Try It... You Might Like It: GA-20 Does Hound Dog* Taylor Alligator Records

* = Canadian

stay safe and well because this spring we look forward to reopening our doors and welcoming you back home."

Meanwhile, up the road in Calgary, Studio Bell in the National Music Centre has just re-opened and is offering free admission to Studio Bell until the end of February. If you're in that neck of the woods, check out the evolving story of music in Canada across five floors and 22 exhibition stages. They also feature afternoon musical performances.

The National Music Centre has also just announced OHSOTO'KINO, a new Indigenous programming initiative that will launch at Studio Bell in 2022 and focus on three elements: creation of new music in NMC's recording studios, artist development through a music incubator program, and exhibitions via the annually updated Speak Up! gallery. OHSOTO'KINO is a Blackfoot phrase, which means 'to recognize a voice of.' This title acknowledges the Blackfoot people and the territory on which National Music Centre resides. A call for applications is now open for the OHSOTO'KINO Recording Bursary and Indigenous musicians from across Canada are encouraged to apply at www.studiobell.ca/ohsotokino by February 23, 2022 at 11:59 pm MT. Two submissions (one for contemporary music, the other for traditional) will be selected by NMC's National Indigenous Programming Advisory Committee and awarded a one-week recording session at Studio Bell to produce a commercial release.

- Janet Alilovic, Derek Andrews, Brian Blain



Sue Foley will close out the 20th edition of Winterfolk, regrettably shifted at the last minute to a streaming event due to you-know-what. She will be streaming at 9:30 on Sunday, February 20th. The festival will feature performances from a few more blues favourites, Jack de Keyser, Suzie Vinnick, Jerome Tucker, Julian Taylor and Rob Lutes. They will be streaming from 7-10 on Friday February 18th to Sunday February 20th at www.winterfolk.com. Of course there's no substitute for seeing Sue in-person, and that will happen at the Paradise on April 13 and at the Maple Blues Awards gala at Koerner Hall on June 20. Photo by Todd Wolfson.

Remembering Harpdog

Harpdog Brown, beloved and award-winning Canadian blues singer, songwriter, and harmonicist died peacefully in his sleep on January 7th, 2022. He was 59. Brown is being remembered around the world for his class, kindness, and larger-than-life personality.

Born in Edmonton, Alberta on January 28, 1962, he was adopted into a family with a musical mother who played slide guitar. He began playing guitar around age 15 in a local garage band. After several other projects, he put together his own traveling blues band in the early 80s. He described being in a traveling band much like being in a circus, clocking tens of thousands of miles to play gigs big and small.

His first independent release was *Beware of Dog* in 1992. Two years later he released *Home is Where the Harp Is*, which won him the Muddy Award for Best North West Blues Release, from the Cascade Blues Association in Portland. He is still the only Canadian to win it. Other awards include four Maple Blues Awards for Harmonica Player of the Year; a Fraser Valley Music Award for Blues Artist of the Year; a Hamilton Blues Society Lifetime Award and a Juno nomination.

He was based out of Vancouver, BC, Canada but traveled over 40,000 miles a year, mostly across Canada but also in the US and overseas. His face was craggy as the Coast Mountains and his goatee had the silver glint of snow. His voice was gruff but powerful and he could ease notes from the harp-like coaxing a bashful lover. All signs of a well-aged artist.

Harpdog got his stage name at a gig in Kitsilano Beach during the fall of 1989 at a place called Momma Gold's. According to Harpdog, at the end of the show, two audience members began shouting "Harp Dog! Harp Dog!" He liked the name and went on to use it as his stage name. He eventually made it his legal name using one word, Harpdog. That's dedication.

Harpdog Brown left this world and the people in it wanting - wanting more of his music, more of his stories, more of his truth. However, he also left behind seven albums and a million memories. We'll take what we can get and dry our tears with his blues.

Harpdog Brown was the real deal. A true bluesman to the core who carried the torch for all those classic bluesmen that inspired him. A Friend, Music Legend, and Gentleman.

Harpdog is survived by his loving adoptive father Arthur Byers, his son McKinley Lafontaine, partner Cynthia Iona Loria, his musical partner Charlie Jacobson, numerous extended family members as well as countless friends and fans. He was predeceased by his birth mother Mary McLean and by his loving adoptive mother Pearl Byers.

A video tribute is being assembled and friends and fans are invited to contribute a short clip (deadline February 28). Details at www.harpdogbrown.com/submit

The Toronto Blues Society is a Registered Charity

Make a donation beyond membership and merchandise, and get your charitable tax receipt in time for this year! (Charitable # 87487 7509 RR0001). You will be helping to support events like the annual Women's Blues Revue, The Blues in the Schools program, numerous workshops and career development activities for the musician community as well as the Maple Blues Awards and the Blues Summit conference, the most important blues industry gathering in Canada that occurs every other year. Networking events within this conference allow for industry discussion alongside artist discovery through the showcase program.

ALBUM REVIEWS



AV (Ann Vriend) – *Everybody Matters*

AV (Ann Vriend) is not a conventional blues artist. Over the course of a career discography now totalling seven albums, the Edmonton-based singer/songwriter has incorporated soul, folk and blues stylings in her work. It has been pleasing to see her accepted into the Canadian blues community though, as evidenced by her two Cobalt Music Prize wins at the Maple Blues Awards, acknowledging her songwriting talent.

Vriend has earned a reputation as an artist and songwriter unafraid to think and work outside the box, and *Everybody Matters* confirms her adventurous approach. Wanting to create a stripped-down sound, she has only used three other musicians on the record, with instrumentation confined to keyboards, vocals and drums.

She plays piano, Wurlitzer, and Rhodes on the album, while the fittingly-named Doug Organ contributes on the Hammond. The sparse setting allows Vriend's powerful voice and eloquent songwriting to shine, and the result is a richly satisfying collection of songs.

Vriend is ably abetted by her co-producer/engineer Chris Birkett, a man with a rich track record. He has worked extensively with Sinead O'Connor and Buffy Sainte-Marie (including on her Polaris Prize-winning *Power In The Blood*), and this studio experience recording great female voices pays dividends here.

Vriend's vocals are both powerful and passionately soulful, occasionally reaching Aretha-level heights when needed. She travels up and down octaves with ease, never sounding strained or guilty of vocal gymnastics. She really lets loose on soulful ballad "Promises Promises" and on one of the album's highlight tracks, "If You were Here," a riveting duet with Jory Kinjo. The

pair trade lines and harmonise on the song, one co-written with Matt Epp at a Folk Alliance conference in Memphis, and dedicated to the late great Jeff Buckley.

The title track and first single, "Everybody Matters," is equally compelling. It is a gospel-inflected blues tune driven by an organ groove and featuring some pointed lyrics – "Everybody Matters; some a little more." A similar cool keyboards groove fuels "Who's Fooling Who," a tale of two cheating lovers – "I've got somebody for myself tonight..I think the joke's on you."

As the title suggests, "Holy Roller Blues" is one of the more straight-ahead blues cuts here, with diverse keyboards complementing Vriend's soaring vocals. "Mine, All Mine," the second single from the album, showcases her social conscience, offering a critique of capitalism embedded in an upbeat tune featuring Motown-style backing vocals (all done by Vriend).

Other tunes dispense words of wisdom, such as "seize the day or you will blow it," on "Don't Wait." Fittingly, the album closer, "Gonna Be Fine," leaves us on a gently optimistic note – "we're gonna be fine, let's get away." An escape into this superb record is highly recommended. (*Kerry Doole*)



Shakey Trill

Shakey Trill strips down the blues to its glorious essence. This eponymous debut album is the product of a duo from Saugeen Shores, Ontario — guitarist Mike "Shakey" MacDonald and harmonica player Tyler Pantlin, who was influenced by the trill of Muddy Waters' harp blowers. As Pantlin says of this acoustic release, "There are no bells and whistles; [it's] completely naked and unfiltered." Their aim was to create an album that stayed true to the core of the genre, with no excess or over-production.

MacDonald wrote all but two songs on this CD and is the predominant vocalist. It's the culmination of their preparation for the 35th International Blues Challenge in Memphis in 2019, where they were chosen

as finalists in their category. The multi-talented Alec Fraser produced the album and contributed his dexterous musicianship on a couple of tracks.

Shakey Trill instantly captivates the listener with spirited fingerpicking and harmonica in the buoyant opener, "I Love That Woman." "Lighthouse" is a plea to redeem the derelict structure as Mike slides on through on his resonator guitar while the harp shivers in response. Tyler's melancholy harp adds to the introspective mood of "Time to Breathe," a sumptuous song with gorgeous lyrics.

Then Pantlin takes over the vocals as MacDonald glides in with Muddy Waters's iconic "Can't Be Satisfied," a track that sparkles with peppy resophonic guitar, articulated by Alec Fraser's snappy backing on his combo standup-bass-and-drums instrument. "Summer Grove" is an atmospheric gem accentuated with splendid fingerpicking and shimmering harmonica. The duo dig deep in the Delta dirt in "Lonely," featuring rousing harp with a profusion of trill, echoing Pantlin's original inspiration. There's a pleasing interplay between MacDonald's vocals and the harmonica in "Can't Let This Ride," underlaid with a bedrock of slide guitar and Fraser's rhythm.

In the upbeat "Hold on to It," the harp recalls a train, puffing and wailing down the track, propelled by lively guitar. Emotions are laid bare in "Build an Institution," with exquisite fingerpicking perfectly complemented by Pantlin's languorous vocals. The musicians sing together in "Dark Road," written by Tyler's idols Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee, as Pantlin stretches out on some superb harp work.

The poignancy of MacDonald's lyrics, as he profiles a homeless Torontonian in "The Mission Man," is elevated through his heartrending vocals and elegant fingerpicking, accompanied by a mournful harmonica. Then Mike's songwriting turns joyful, and along with Tyler's playful harp, the duo bring the album to an optimistic close with "Sailing."

Shakey Trill is an impressive debut, resplendent with excellent musicianship and originality. Let's hope there's more to come. (*Sandra B. Tooze*)

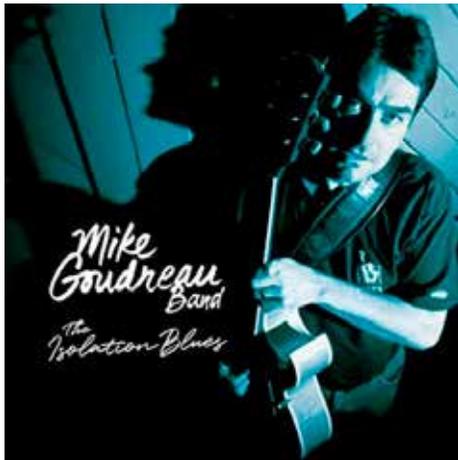
Mike Goudreau *Isolation Blues*

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit and the world locked down, our working musicians lost their main source of income when the venues shut down and all the tours were cancelled. Some tried 'busking' on facebook, some sequestered themselves home to write in anticipation of new projects

to come, while others just shut down completely to wait out the storm.

But a select few cases, the artists took to cyber-space to connect with other players and create new music remotely. A brilliant use of technology, fueled by the desire to create and made possible by the home studio. Mike Goudreau's "Isolation Blues" is a perfect example of this, but also a celebration of music and friends, even if they couldn't get together in the same studio.

The nature of this album, the rich and lush sound (particularly the horns), the undeniable energy in every track, is a measure of the love and joy of music. It is Mike Goudreau telling COVID which way 'off' it can go, celebrating life in the face of a Global Pandemic.



It opens with "Let's Go Down to the River", a lively little slice of sonic happiness. An ideal opener, it gets the toes tapping and the heart pumping, but also shares an optimism that has been in short supply of late. The second cut is the smooth and jazzy "Speak to Me Softly". The opening line asks "Speak to me softly, tell me things will be alright". One of the greatest dangers of this pandemic, and the lockdown was cabin fever. This cut reaches out and connects with the listeners heart, asking for the one thing we all need most in stressful times... Connection.

Up next is the title track, which steps away from the horns in favor of the wonderful harmonica of Pascal "Per" Veillette. This song pulls no punches, there are no clever metaphors, it speaks directly to the effects of isolation due to the virus. It goes straight to the heart of the matter and into the heart of the listener. The fourth track is a fast and fun little ditty, "The Mooch". Something that would be quite at home in a Montreal bar on a Saturday night with that one buddy that never seems to have a ride, money for drinks or even a light for the cigarette he bums from you.

Up next the horns are back for "Tonight's The Night for Big Fun". This up-tempo toe tapper is a promise that some day this virus will be over and we can once again get out and celebrate life, love and music with those closest to us. The sixth cut is a lovely little harmonica-driven shuffle called "Take a Chance on Me". I think what distinguishes this cut is the wonderful interplay between Mike's smooth guitar and Pascal's gritty harp.

The next cut is one of those cool grooves we sometimes find unexpectedly. We all have that one friend we can connect with. The one who eases our mind, calms our fears and walks with us through life, even in a Pandemic. That's the friend behind "Count on Me". The eighth cut is "Sea Breeze Blues", a song I definitely relate to, living on the coast. This instrumental is like a cooling sea breeze on an intolerably hot day, fueled by Dany Roy's brilliant horn arrangement. It is also a breath of fresh sea air in the stuffy confines of our forced isolation.

The next cut is a swampy road song that carries a distinctive CCR feel in it. Any hardworking travelling musician will tell you that longest part of any journey is that last "Half a Day From Home". The tenth cut is "My Only Lady", a lament to lost love and unfulfilled desire, which folds perfectly into the next cut, a happy hand clapper called "I Got A Good Feeling". This cut is pure optimism in the form of music.

"She Got The Power" is a groovy homage to the undeniable power the right woman can have on you. She can be a force of nature, an unstoppable and unavoidable influence that can 'cast a spell on you'. The next cut is "Since My Baby Left Me", a laid back groove that sounds like a heart lamenting the lost love at 3 am, in the middle of a sleepless night. The final track is "I'm Still Cryin'", which is a deceptive title. This cut has the same upbeat energy that carries throughout this entire album.

When you listen to the tight sound on this album, it is hard to believe that it was recorded remotely. As we finally start to emerge from this Pandemic is it important that we launch into the new reality with positive energy. *Isolation Blues* exudes positivity that is a monument to the artists that created it. (Terry Parsons)

Davis Hall & The Green Lanterns

This is one of those albums that pushes the boundary of Blues in ways most people could never imagine. I am sure some blues purists would say that it is not blues, but if you listen closely you can hear blues undertones throughout every cut on this CD.

The product of "Dark Orchard"

mastermind and Downchild drummer, Jim Casson, Davis Hall and the Green Lanterns is not so much a collection of blues songs, as an exploration of the unexpected places that blues can go.

This album asks what happens if Dark Orchard took their uniquely ambient sound and applied it to tinge a blues idea. Add in Jim's experimental percussion, sampling and loops to create something completely different, and yes enticingly familiar.

One of the great pleasures of Music is Experimenting with new ideas, new sounds and sharing those with likeminded people. This project was pieced together through a series of other projects that bought guitar, bass and even tuba into play. Authored and created by a group of friends socially distanced but musically connected.

A Monument to musical creation through exploration, every song on this album draws its name from a place somewhere in the Niagara region. Even the band name does that. "Davis Hall" was a Community Centre near where Jim went to nursery school while the "Green Lantern" was a soda shop.



The album opens with "Temperanceville", lively with a cool New Orleans groove, it features brilliant interplay between tuba (Jay Burr) and guitar (Wayne DeAdder) with some sweet slide (Mike Branton). The second cut is the fun and funky "Marshville Station", this time with a new lineup including Russ Boswell (bass), Bernie LeBarge (guitar) and Brent Barkman (organ). The music brilliantly mimics the hustle and bustle of a downtown station as people scurry from home to work to home, heads down never noticing the people around them. Not necessarily constant motion, more the flow of humanity in closed circumstance.

Up next, "The Right Road To Boyle", another feisty New Orleans offering with tuba undertones and smooth guitar over the top. I am not sure what the geographical reference is here, but it has a frantic energy that is infectious.

cont'd on p8



CBC Radio (National)
Saturday Night Blues, w/ **Holger Petersen**

Saturday at 6:05pm + online at CBC Music
Listen on demand [HERE](#)



JAZZ-FM 91.1 (Toronto)

Bluz FM, w/ **Danny Marks**
Saturday 7:00 pm-midnight

Listen link at <https://jazzfm91.streamb.online/JAZZFM91-CJRT-FM-3681370880/stream-popup>



CIUT 89.5 FM - U of T (Toronto)

Calling All Blues, w/rotating hosts **Andrew Galloway, Sugar Brown, Brooke**

Blackburn, and **Julie Hill** (Saturday 12:00 Noon)
A to Z Blues, w/ **Screamin' Red** (Tuesday 8:00-9:00pm)
Listen link at <https://ciut.fm/>



CKWR 98.5 FM (Kitchener)

Old Chicago Blues, w/ **Willy A.**
Saturday 12:30pm - 2:00pm
Listen link www.ckwr.com



CJLX 91.3 FM - Loyalist College (Belleville)

Saturday Night Blues Review, w/ **George Vaughan**
Saturday 6-7pm
Listen at <https://91x.fm/>

WBFO 88.7FM (Buffalo)

The Blues on WBFO
Saturdays 7-11pm w/ **Pat Fedballe**
Sundays 7pm-Midnight w/ **Tommy 'Z'**
Listen at <https://www.wbfo.org/show/the-blues-on-wbfo>

CHLY101.7FM (Nanaimo)

Blues before Brunch, w/ **Grant Payne**
Sunday 10am-noon Pacific
Listen at <https://www.chly.ca/listen>

CKCU 93.1FM - Carleton University (Ottawa)

Black and Blues, w/ **John Tackaberry**
Sunday 9-11pm
Listen at <https://cod.ckcufm.com/programs/38/info.html>

CFRU 93.3 FM - University of Guelph

Blues Around The Block, w/ **Mac Dee**
Monday 7-9:00 pm
Listen at <https://www.cfru.ca>

CKAR Hunter's Bay 88.7 FM (Muskoka)

Big Beat Bar-B-Cue Radio Show, w/ **Matt Allen**
Tuesday Midnight - 2:00am
Sundays 10am to 12 Noon
Listen at <https://muskokaradio.com/show/bigbeatbar-b-cue>

INDI 1015 FM (formerly Mohawk College station, Hamilton)

Blues Source Canada, w/ **Ken Wallis** (Tuesdays, 4-5pm)
Blues Source

International (Tuesdays, 5-6pm)

Listen link at <https://indi1015.ca/>

Both of these shows also repeated on bluesandrootsradio.com

☐ BSC re-airs Thursday at 8, Friday at 10pm, Saturday at 7.30pm, and Monday at 6am

☐ BSI airs Friday at 6pm/Saturday 2pm/ Monday 4am ET



CFMU 99.3 FM - McMaster Campus (Hamilton)

Swear to tell the truth, w/ **Chris M. Compton**
Tuesday 10am

Listen at <https://cfmu.ca/shows/31-swear-to-tell-the-truth>



CANOE FM 100.9 FM (Haliburton)

Buckslide Blues Cruise, w/ **Patrick Monaghan**
Tuesday 7-9pm

Listen at <https://canoefm.com/listen/ways-to-listen>

CFBU 103.7 FM - Brock University (St. Catharines)

Eclectic Blues, w/ **Deborah Cartmer**
Tuesday 7-9 pm

Listen at <https://www.cfbu.ca/>

COUNTYFM 99.3 (Picton)

Sideroads, w/ **Ben Parkin** and **Greg Hinde**
Tuesday 8-10pm

Listen at <https://993countyfm.ca/show/sideroads/>

Whistle FM 102.9 (Stouffville)

Whistle Bait w/ **Gary Tate**
aka **Shakey-T**

Wed, Thurs, Fri at 11pm

Listen at <http://whistlefm.ca/popup-player>



CFMU 99.3 FM - McMaster Campus (Hamilton)

Breakfast of Champions, w/ **Paul Panchezak**
Thursday 10am

Listen at <https://cfmu.ca/>

CFFF 92.7 FM (Peterborough)

Blues Themes, delivered by **"The Milkman" Blake Frazer**
Thursday 9-10:30pm

Listen at <http://www.trentradio.ca/>



Ici Musique 90.3 FM (National)

Le Blues du terrien, with **Pierre Therrien**
Friday 8pm (replay Thurs 10pm)

Listen at <https://ici.radio-canada.ca/ohdio/musique/emissions/6005/lebluesduterrien>

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CD REVIEWS *cont'd from p7*

The fourth cut is the spooky "Finding Tintern", which features the haunting harmonica of Steve Marriner. The echo-ish nature of the sound belies a large and expansive space, lending itself to the mystery of dark places. The fifth cut, "Gasline", is a quirky jam, rich with funky guitar and smooth rhythm. A jittery little jump that would be well at home in a smoky New Orleans club at 2 in the morning.

Up next is "Formerly Diffin's Corners", which brings the dobro of Stephen Miller into the fold, and adds a trombone to the tuba and the brilliant percussion one expects from an incredible player like Jim Casson. It has a dramatic feel straight out of a 70's cop movie feel. The seventh cut on the album is the low, slow and atmospheric "Crowland," a swampy little tune that would gum perfectly with fire flies on a hot and humid southern night.

Up next, "White Pigeon" launches you right back into the funky world of Jim's rhythmic percussion, counter-pointed by Wayne and Mike's guitar and slide, each playing off the other. The ninth cut is "Sulphur Springs", probably the most atmospheric cut on the album. The only way I can describe the sampling is that it seems to cycle through sounding like wind through wires, howling wolves and singing whales. Kind of creepy, but very cool!

The album closes with the tenth and final track, "The Dream Of Chantler" brings the brilliant harmonica of Al Lerman in for what is probably the bluesiest cut on the album, fueled by the rhythm of crickets. There's something about that sound that just speaks to the soul, and Lerman's harp works perfectly with it.

This album is an intriguing collection of original sounds and ideas that challenges the listener and defies the idea that blues is just one thing. It's Not! In this case, it is all things. (Terry Parsons)

Broke Fuse *Rocket Ride*

Like in all forms of music, there will always be the debate between modern and old school, just as there will always be those who strive to connect the two, and in doing so create new and compelling music that appeals to the educated ear. That is *Rocket Ride* in a nutshell.

Jay Moonah has been honing his craft as a harmonica player, singer and songwriter in the hard and fast blues scene of Toronto, Ontario for years. The hallmark of his music is his vibrant harmonica (although he is a multi-instrumentalist), his brilliant

songwriting and the sonic diversity he can create with such apparent ease.

Due to COVID-19 lockdown, this album, like its predecessor (*Why Should I Be Blue*) was recorded entirely remotely. Which also belies the talent of Jay Moonah as an organizer and producer.

The album opens with an old school stomp that is just over one minute of pure joy expressed by harmonica and tambourine. If you close your eyes, you can almost see the shadowy figure of a swamp girl dancing around a bon fire, hair tossing seductively, with wild abandon in time with



the music. This is followed by the title track, which is the perfect expression of the feel for this album. Featuring contributions from vocalist Debbie Fleming and guitarist Mike McKenna, the energy of this cut is matched only by the clean production value, which is nothing short of impressive, especially considering the whole album was recorded remotely.

Up next, the third cut on the album "Strawberry Moon" creates a sonic landscape of the red moon rising in the starry night sky. A beautifully crafted statement of the chaotic change we endure under a sky that remains impassive and unchanged. The fourth cut is a rockin' little toe tapper called "One Shot" that gives off a 50's vibe, updated from the middle of the 20th century and dropped smack dab in the middle of the 21st.

Up next is the slinky groove of "Sting Ray Blues", with Jay's magical embellishment on

Organ (I did say he is a multi-instrumentalist). This is followed by the sixth cut, and probably the most experimental on the album. "Agitation (For The Common Good Part 1)" has an almost prog feel to it reminiscent of the YES classic "Close To The Edge". It certainly is a blues that wanders completely outside the box.

Up next, a beautifully retro sounding cut called "Hear The Rain", a light and breezy little ditty that give Jay a chance to break out the ukulele. Maybe I am crazy (No 'Maybe' about it) but I get a distinct flavor of "Rain Drops Keep Falling On My Head" buried deep down in this track. The eighth track on this album is "Miss You When I'm Gone", a rockin' little number that runs down the long roads that touring blues players often have to take. An expression of the frantic lifestyle and the effects it can have.

Up next is the smoky ballad "Stolen Time", a lost and lonely stroll through the sonic landscape of perilous relationships. It is followed by the wild and lively "I Don't Care", a brilliant counterpoint to the previous cut it, smashes and dashes in frantic fashion, a minute and 46 seconds of pure up tempo genius.

The next cut is the delightful instrumental, "Los Detalles Del Diablo". Short, sweet and to the point, the title is "The Devil is in the Details". For the album closer, "The Ballad of Sonny Shade", Jay remotely assembled a collective of players to share an open jam that is a perfect ending to this musical *Rocket Ride*.

As a follow up to "Why Should I Be Blue", this latest effort is an expansion of the sonic landscape of its predecessor and the next logical step in the growth and development of Jay Moonah as singer, song writer and a player. But more than that it is an expression of the growth he has shown as an artist in a very tough market.

I can't wait to see what he does next. (Terry Parsons)

Concerts of Note



Colin James | Massey Hall | Toronto | February 25
Buddy Guy | Massey Hall | Toronto | April 9
Sue Foley | Paradise Theatre | Toronto | April 13



Friday, February 25

Colin James 7:30 pm to 10:00 pm, Massey Hall, 178 Victoria Street, Toronto, 416-872-4255, Open Road Tour

Tuesday, February 1

Jesse Whiteley with Clayton Yates 8:00 pm, The Emmet Ray, 924 College St., Toronto, 416-792-4497, Reservations - info@theemmetray.com, \$10

Friday, February 4

James Anthony & Chuck Jackson 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm, Soulful Kafe, 81 Brant Ave, Brantford, 226-493-0730, \$15

Saturday, February 19

Mark Laforme 2:00 pm to 6:00 pm, Carrigan Arms, 2025 Upper Middle Rd, Burlington, 905-332-6131

Saturday, February 26

Aretha Franklin Tribute w/ Damien Sneed, Valerie Simpson (of Ashford & Simpson) 8:00 pm, RCM Koerner Hall, 273 Bloor St. W., Toronto, 416-408-0208, \$50

Tuesday, March 1

Paul Reddick & The Red Quartet 10:00 pm, Painted Lady, 218 Ossington, Toronto

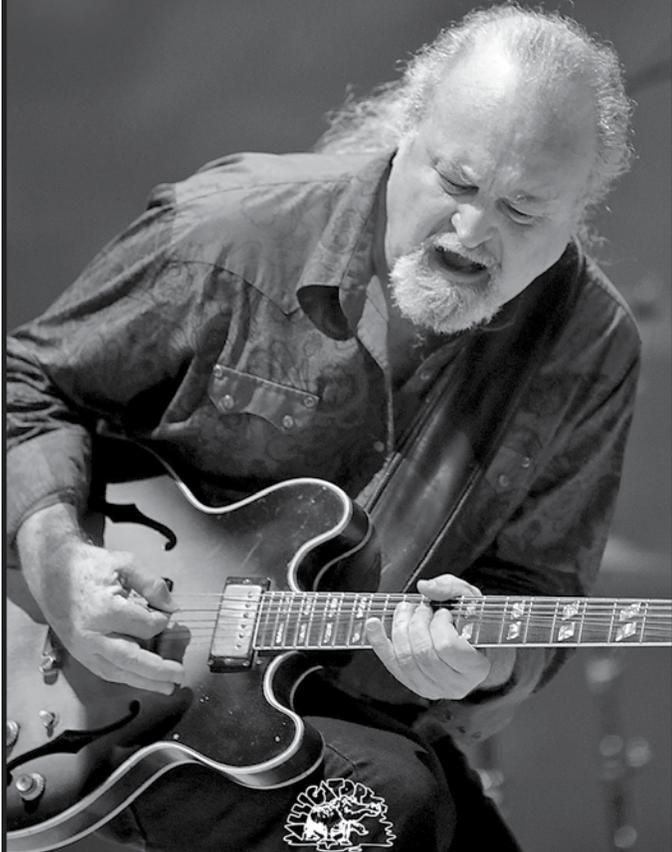
Thursday, March 3

Guitar Shorty 8:00 pm, Seneca Niagara Casino, 310 4th Street, Niagara Falls, NY, 877-873-6322, \$35

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