

# bluesnotes

November/December 2022

Volume 36 | Issue 11 (FREE)

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***"Preserving and Promoting the Blues in Portland, OR"***

A monthly publication of the Cascade Blues Association | [cascadebluesassociation.org](http://cascadebluesassociation.org)



**Happy 77th Birthday to Norman Sylvester**

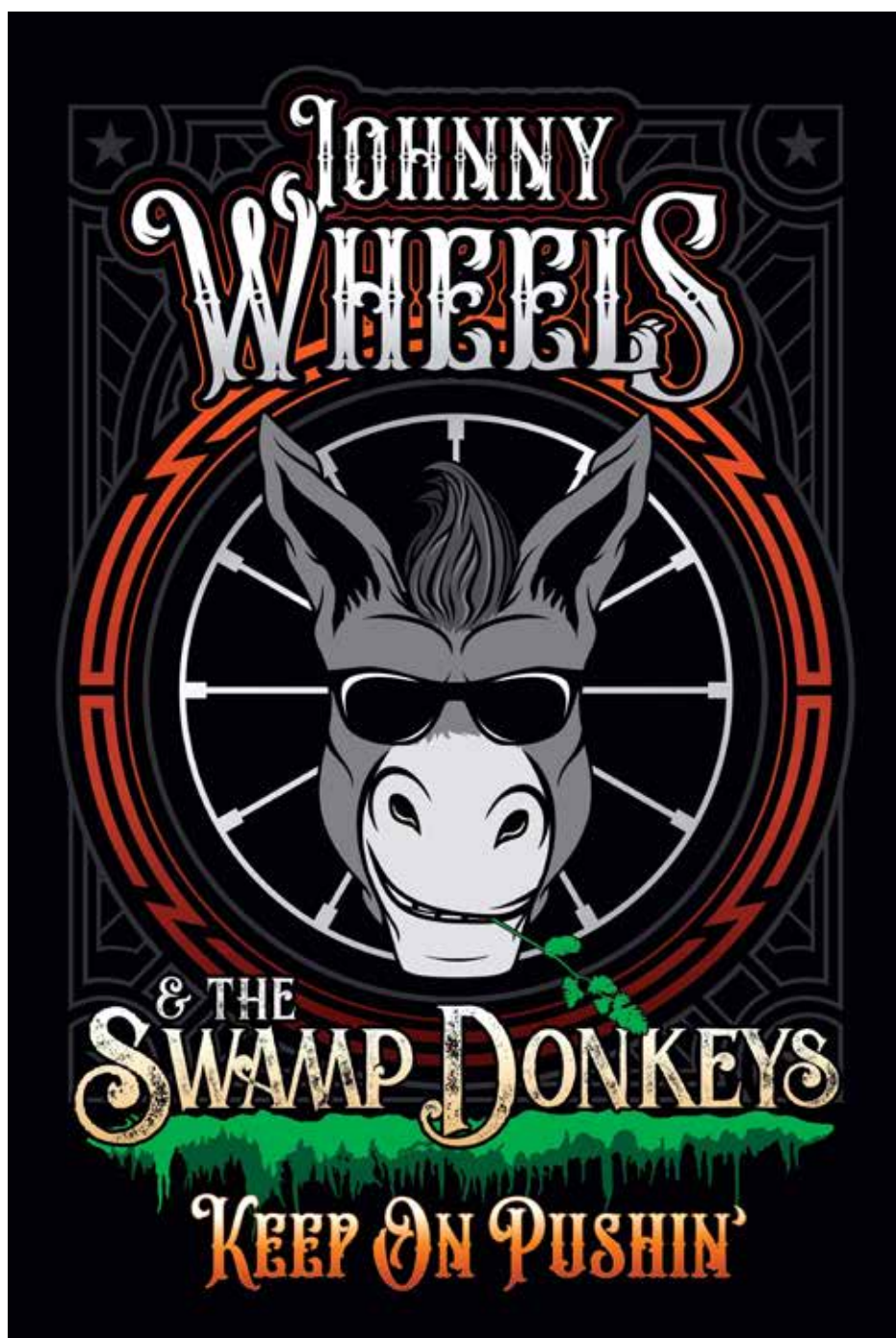
(see cover story, page 7)

## 2022 Best Self-Produced CD Contest Winner

by Anni Piper

### Presented by Cascade Blues Association

Congratulations to the winner of the CBA Best Self-Produced CD Contest, Johnny Wheels and the Swamp Donkeys with their new album *Keep On Pushin'*. Johnny will be the Cascade Blues Association nominee for the 2023 Blues Foundation Best Self-Produced CD Award. These awards were established in 2005 to recognize excellence in independent blues music recordings. The overall winner will be announced at the International Blues Challenge in January. Johnny Wheels and the Swamp Donkeys always put on a great live show, and they are deserving winners for this excellent studio recording. Released by Lightning In A Bottle Records, *Keep On Pushin'* is available now for purchase or download.



## Blues Notes is a publication of the Cascade Blues Association

Help us promote and preserve the lyrical emotion and sultry sounds of blues music in Portland, become a member! Visit <http://cascadebluesassociation.org> today!

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**bluesnotes**

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#### Contact:

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[president@cascadeblues.org](mailto:president@cascadeblues.org)

#### Board Members:

- President: Anni Piper
- Vice-President: Robert Umali Evans
- Membership Secretary: Mike Todd
- Treasurer: Mike Day
- At-Large: Ben Rice, Betsy and Clay Clayton, James Ortega

**Board Meetings:** 3rd Thursday after membership meeting. All are welcome!

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## Greetings Blues Lovers!

### Ramblings on my mind

It's a pleasure to announce the winner of the Cascade Blues Association Best Self-Produced CD contest for 2022, Johnny Wheels & The Swamp Donkeys. Read all about what comes next for our winners, and a CD review by William 'Froggy' Hyland in this edition.

We are seeking members to serve on the board of the Cascade Blues Association for 2023. Your intent to run is due by November 10. More



**TJ Wong Trio**

information can be found in this edition. Whilst it has been a pleasure to

serve our members as President, I will not be running for a position

by Anni Piper

on the board next year. Best of luck to all our nominees.

The next member meeting is November 2 and will take place at Catfish Lou's, the new home for the CBA. Our performers will be the Lisa Mann Trio and the TJ Wong Trio. We have had a long association with this venue at their previous location and hope to make it a successful venture for all of us.

**Anni Piper**

CBA President

[president@cascadeblues.org](mailto:president@cascadeblues.org)

## CBA Member Meeting, November 2, 6pm

### Don't miss our Annual Holiday Party on Dec. 4, 2-6pm

The Cascade Blues Association monthly member meeting has a new home! The first Wednesday of every month it's time to head west to Catfish Lou's in Beaverton. Music starts at 6pm in the back room with free admission for CBA members and \$5 entry for non-members. Once the meeting concludes, it's time for a jam



**Marty and the Murder Hornets**

in the front bar hosted by Marty and the Murder Hornets.

Our November 2nd entertainment will be the

Lisa Mann Trio and our 2023 International Blues Challenge competitors the TJ Wong trio.

There will be no

by Anni Piper

member meeting in December as we are holding our annual Holiday Party! The Holiday Party takes place on Sunday December 4 from 2-6pm. The venue is the Moose Lodge, 16411 NE Halsey st Portland. Featuring live blues, silent auction and raffle prizes. Please bring a festive dessert to share. Bar snacks and drinks will be available for purchase, cash preferred. This is the big CBA fundraiser for the year so please come along and support us.

**Hope to see you there!**

# Cascade Blues Association Board Elections 2023

## It's time to vote

By Anni Piper

Voting for the Cascade Blues Association Board of Directors 2023 will be conducted December 1-15, 2022 via an email ballot sent to current members of the CBA. The winners will be announced on December 21. Voting is open to all CBA members whose membership is valid as of November 15. Please ensure your membership is current and your contact details are up to date. Band memberships, family memberships etc, will receive one ballot only. *Best of luck to all our candidates!*

Submissions are now open for those interested in a position on the board and the available positions are President, Vice President, Treasurer,



# VOTE

The CBA needs YOU!

General Secretary, and Membership Director. Intent to run must be submitted by email to [boardnominations@cascadeblues.org](mailto:boardnominations@cascadeblues.org)

### How to become a candidate

- Your statement of intent to run must be received by November 10, 2022 at midnight.
- You must be a current member of Cascade Blues Association in order to serve on the

board. Please include your name, member number, and the officer position you are submitting for in your email.

- The board will contact you to confirm receipt of your statement and share what we'll need from you as a follow-up.
- Once you have submitted your intent to run you may also post to the CBA Facebook Group regarding this.

- Please keep social media communications positive and professional.

Following is a brief description of the roles of each officer as detailed in our by-laws.

### President

- The President shall supervise and direct the business of the

corporation. In addition, the President shall preside at meetings of the Members and of the Board of Directors.

- The President has the right to make Executive decisions only in situations where the board is deadlocked on a decision. Such decisions will be communicated to the Board via email in a timely manner.

### Vice President

- In the absence of the President or as occasionally designated by the President or Board of Directors, the Vice President shall perform the duties of the President.
- The Vice President will act as counsel to the President when Executive decisions are deemed necessary.

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## General Secretary

- The General Secretary shall keep minutes of all meetings of the Membership and Board of Directors, see that all notices are given in accordance with these Bylaws as required by law, and be custodian of the corporate records.
- The General Secretary shall maintain a list of all generally authorized CBA activities.
- The General Secretary will distribute the monthly meeting minutes to the Board of Directors within 1 week after the monthly meeting. The minutes will also be stored in a shared location so that backup copies are securely maintained.
- The General Secretary will also be responsible for creating and distributing the agenda for each monthly meeting at least 24 hours before the date of said meeting.

## Membership Director

- The Membership Director shall keep the Membership roster current and accurate. This includes sending out membership cards to all new and renewed members, sending notices to members when membership is about to

expire, providing the membership mailing list to the Editor of the Blues Notes so that members receive their newsletter.

- The Membership Director (or their designee) is encouraged to be at the monthly meetings to enroll new members, provide membership cards and update the roster. This membership roster should be up to date and accurate and include all contact information – address, email, and phone as well as any volunteer interests.
- The Membership Director will be responsible for managing the member database and providing current membership lists to be used at key member meetings and any other events that will require checking membership status. The Corporation will provide the Membership Director with a laptop and other tools in order for them to do their job effectively. Since electronic payment is a vehicle that will be used to join the Corporation, the Membership Director will be required to monitor electronic submissions and enroll new members promptly upon

## Join the CBA Board and help shape the Blues in Portland



application submission. New members and renewing members should receive their authorized Membership cards no later than 1 month after their submission to join or renew.

- The Membership Director is also responsible for backing up and safely securing all membership data.

## Treasurer

- The Treasurer shall have charge of, custody of and control of all funds of the corporation, shall give and receive monies payable and due to the Corporation from any sources and deposit such money in the name of the Corporation in such banks as may be selected in accordance with these Bylaws.
- The Treasurer shall maintain a list of generally authorized monetary expenditures

approved by the Board.

- The Treasurer shall be custodian of all financial records, invoices and receipts of the Corporation.
- The Treasurer shall provide a financial status report to the Board each month which includes all financial transactions of the Corporation. After each meeting of the membership the Treasurer will count and record monies to be deposited. This report shall also be stored electronically in a shared location.



*Questions? Contact Anni Piper, CBA President. Email [president@cascadeblues.org](mailto:president@cascadeblues.org)*

## CBA Blues Bandstand

Always something happening with blues, americana and roots music at Cafe Artichoke!

by Shelley Garrett

**caféartichoke**

Building community through music, one heart at a time, since 1973.

Lloyd Jones "First Fridays" continues with guests Steve Kerin 11/4, and Lisa Mann on 12/2...yes there will be some Holiday songs! Sunday 11/6, Mark Spangler, Denny Bixby and Mark Shark; Arthur Moore's Harmonica Party meets on 11/17 and 12/15; Friday 11/18 we welcome Lauren Sheehan back! You may want to get tickets early, she sold out last time! On Saturday afternoon 11/19, the public is invited to attend the taping of "River City Folk," a nationally syndicated radio show hosted by Tom May- this month's guests are Adam and Kris (Adam East and Kris Deelane) Friday 11/25 and Saturday 11/26 "Two Nights with Curtis Salgado and Alan Hager" (Probably sold out by the time this goes to print) to get in on future advance show announcements, sign up for the Artichoke newsletter on our website, or text ARTICHOKE to 22828 to get started.

A new Tuesday night series we are very excited to bring to Cafe Artichoke features Chuk Barber (WAR, The California Honeydrops--Current local groups: Swirls of Jupiter, The Denominators, Rhythm Dogs, Big Bad Beat) The program is built to serve BIPOC Middle and High Schoolers by introducing them to Samba Drumming with immersion in Brazilian Culture with an emphasis on Music history, team building, positive self image and confidence and self improvement! While the emphasis is on reaching BIPOC youth, all are welcome. We are looking for sponsors for this important outreach.

Volunteers are always needed, check out the job descriptions and application on our website. We offer sound and video training for volunteers by our Production Manager Gary Furlow (8 Emmy Awards) and the winner of the 2020 Muddy Award for Livestream Production.

*Be sure to check out our ad on the back page for more shows, classes and workshops!*

We have live events, classes, workshops and a music store! Visit us at 2007 SE Powell Blvd, Portland or go online to | [www.artichokemusic.org/](http://www.artichokemusic.org/)

## Local Blues Jams

Where to go in Portland



Patrick Stilwell

### Tuesday

- Host Patrick Stilwell, The Garages, 730pm-1030
- Host Ben Rice - Me-kong Bistro, 630-930p



Toby Worthington

### Wednesday

- Host Toby Worthington, Jack's Taproom, 7pm-10
- Host Marty Henninger, Catfish Lou's, 7pm-10
- Bub's Pub, Centralia, 7pm-10

### Thursday

- Host Dennis Monroe,



Ben Rice



Kevin Selfe

Old World Deli, first and third Thursdays, 7pm-10

- Host Chad Rupp, The Lair, 8pm-midnight
- Host Kerry Stickler, Celebrities, 7pm-10



Chad Rupp

### Sunday

- Host Froggy, Calapooia Brewing, 4pm-6
- Host Kevin Selfe, The Blue Diamond, 5pm-8
- Host Scott Steele / Kirk Bryant, Montavilla Station, 8pm-midnight
- New host Jason JT Thomas, Trails End Saloon, 7-10pm



Jason JT Thomas



## Happy 77th Birthday To Norman Sylvester

Portland's very own Boogie Cat Norman Sylvester recently celebrated his 77th birthday at the Spare Room. Attended by a who's who of local blues talent and a selection of our charismatic dancers, they rocked the house like only Norman can. Catch the Norman Sylvester band at a venue near you!



Photos by  
Kathy Rankin



## New CD Reviews

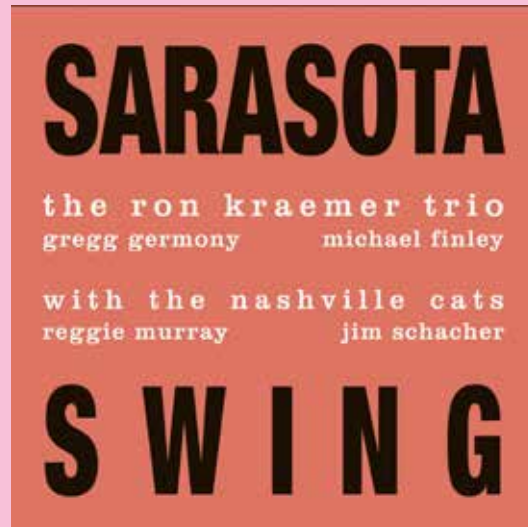
by Anni Piper

## Sarasota Swing

**The Ron Kraemer Trio  
with The Nashville  
Cats – Self Release**

The album title sums up very concisely what to expect – a healthy dose of Sarasota Swing! This release features eleven original tracks penned by bandleader Kraemer along with saxophonist and B-3 player Reggie Murray, bassist Gregg Gernony and drummer Michael Finley. The band has captured the essence of lazy Florida afternoons that are simultaneously hot and cool in a heavily jazz influenced blues record. Imagine sipping a Zombie at your favorite Tiki lounge, watching blue ocean lap against white sand, because this would be the ideal soundtrack.

Not everyone is a fan of instrumentals, and that's all you're going to find here, but the memorable melodies should be able to keep everyone's attention. The song titles are cute as a button, like 'Junior Steps' as opposed to the giant strides of Coltrane. 'Bo Knows' features the Bo Diddley beat, but rhythmically and harmonically the album leans toward swing as opposed to your typical



lumpy-lumpy blues shuffle. Kraemer has a luscious guitar tone and delightfully tasteful comping, whilst Murray shines with great phrasing and articulation on the saxophone. It doesn't have the aggressive edge of contemporary electric guitar-driven blues releases, but I think many of us could benefit from taking a musical chill pill.

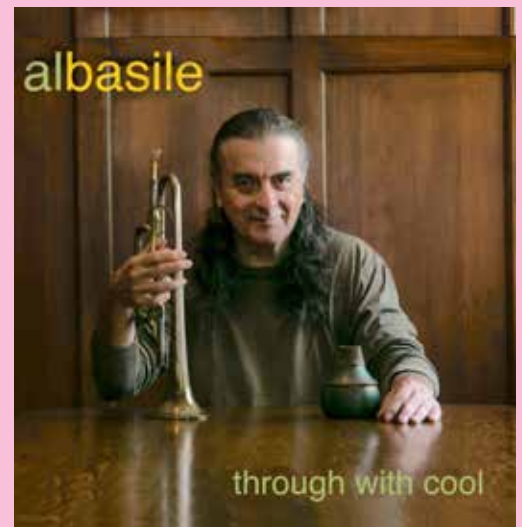
**Total time: 50 min.**

Junior Steps / Siesta  
Afternoon / The Craw /  
In Walked Wilbo / At The  
Blasé Café / Bo Knows /  
Reggie No. 2 / Fred's Bop  
/ Gone Gulping / Hampton  
Roads / Who's Knockin'?

## Al Basile

**Through with Cool –  
Sweetspot Records**

It's unusual to hear a cornet player as a blues bandleader and Basile



not only negotiates this role with skill and ease but also sings, composes, and produces. He's been nominated for a Blues Music Award eight times and was the original trumpeter in the supergroup Roomful of Blues. Basile has an impressive biography and this new release is just as impressive.

Through With Cool gives an obvious salute to Miles Davis in the title and Basile seems to be telling the listener that this recording is one where he has found his own sound. Featuring fourteen original tracks, Basile's lyrics hit the mark every time. His wordsmithing has earned him awards as a published poet. Kid Andersen throws down the signature guitar licks, along with Bruce Bears

on keyboards, Brad Hallen on bass, Mark Teixeira on drums, Doug James on tenor sax and Jeff 'Doc' Chanonhouse on trumpet.

Although there's a strong jazz influence, this album leans more toward contemporary blues as Basile explores rumba, slow blues, and soul feels. The cover art features Basile and his horn, giving the camera a smoldering look. He still seems pretty cool to me.

**Total time: 66 min.**

Keep On Living / My Hero  
/ I'm Waiting / Say My  
Name / Two Legged Mule  
/ Take Your Time / Couldn't  
Live With It / Not Anyplace  
At All / We Belong Together  
/ Uh Huh / Turnabout  
Is Fair Play / You Better  
Change Your Tune / We Lie  
On Your Grave / Through  
With Cool

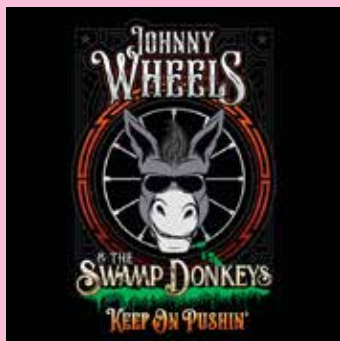


# Best Self-produced CD Winning Album

by William Hyland

## Johnny Wheels and the Swamp Donkeys

**Keep on Pushin' -  
Lightning In A Bottle  
Records**



Johnny Wheels and the Swamp Donkeys got a standing ovation at the finals of the 2020 International Blues Challenge, much to the delight of the documentary film crew that had been following them around all week, the band, and the old and new fans that they captivated in Memphis. They didn't win any dough, but did win new fans and some traction in the Portland club scene. Johnny's superpower is his ability to connect with his audience and invite them along for a musical ride with him and the Swamp Donkeys. The ride is never the same twice. They play a LOT of gigs for some pretty big crowds all over Oregon (and it works well for them), but they decided they needed to make a record.

Johnny, Brandon Logan and Taylor Frazier sat around the kitchen table outside Grande Ronde and, after a few bowls of...sure, let's call it cereal, they started throwing lyrics, bass lines and surprises into a hat full of Brandon's arrangements. When the hat looked full, they took it to Jimi Bott's studio in Portland. Jimi shook the hat, poured it out, and started moving the contents around. Guest Donkeys were added as needed, and the result is a Soul/Lyric Rock record that sounds like it originated from somewhere between Memphis and Atlanta, but nowhere near Willamina.

Nobody's in a hurry on the album. The instrumentation is lush but uncrowded, the arrangements surprisingly complex and tight, but not gratuitous (if you get lost, just refer to Taylor's Bass. It's always in the right place at the right time, and gives everyone a reference point). Johnny gives the pithy lyrics a toneful and emotional exposition. He's a fine salesman. The interplay, vocally and instrumentally, between Johnny and Brandon seems instinctual, borne of many, many gigs and countless reeferhearsals. The guitar work varies from tender and tasty to muscular and gymnastic, but never at the expense of the song. Piano, organ and the horn section make a huge background (as a supportive herd of Donkeys do) of just the needed sound, and La Rhonda Steele is a confectionista, sprinkling sweet brown sugar in just the right amounts in the perfect places. If something catches your ear and you think "Wow, that was beautiful and just right", that's her.

### OK, on to the songs... Soul songs first.

On the Run. Coulda been an Otis Redding tune. Ride the bass through the arrangement with muscular guitar and a perfect organ/horn balance. Who's that beautiful voice?

George Fisk. You figure out the title. Effortless call

and response with Johnny and Brandon.

This time. Muy Romantico...More shades of Otis. Very Stax sounding, with a lovely harmonica tone by Johnny and (and Jimi)

As long as you're there. Johnny and the Pioneer take you to church somewhere down South. Perfect piano solo sounds like it is actually being played on a piano and there is some nice harmonica/guitar swapping.

Light Me Up. Finally, a Reefer song! Big intro turns into a dance riff that you'd hear on Soul Train where Go Go dancers would surround the Organ player. Very thoughtful Harp solo.

The Fall. A Romantic Ballad that somehow makes me conjure up Country Joe and the Fish. Dig that guitar tone.

### Now, closer to Georgia.

Finding your way back home. Southern Fried Rock and Roll with Riffs a plenty and a strong support system. Almond style harp and guitar.

Mizz Karmann...Brandon carries this tune through some pretty stirring changes. Anthem of the Sun lurks not far away.

Time to Ball, Keep on Pushin'. As Bob Hite would say: "This is a song with a message.". Johnny rides the bass line through this romantic parable which builds to patriotic intensity. La Rhonda Steele's exhortations make me want to enlist in the Donkey army.

You're going to have to listen to the songs yourselves to find out more. Then listen to them a couple of more times so you get it all. Jimi Bott has been there and done that

with excellent company over the years and the experience shows with a unique recording environment. He has helped build an album that sounds beautiful. Great tone (starting off with all the Kroker tube powered machines the boys use). The instruments sound real and the vocals reflect the actual prowess of the vocalists. The mix is lush, but not crowded and there are LOTS of fine touches to catch your attention. There are not a lot of instruments, but the sound is BIG, with the fine keyboards and great horn work shouldering a big load. No big studio tricks here. You can hear the Johnny and the Donkeys play this stuff live. Did I mention the candy maker? I'm sure I did.

Johnny Wheels and the Swamp Donkeys are known for captivating audiences Far, wide and often. These guys gig a lot, and have managed to produce a well-crafted, sonically pleasing, disciplined album of original songs with compelling lyrics, good stories and cryptic messages. Go to a live show and BUY THIS RECORD. It'll make the sponsoring Ft Hill Public house happy, and you can find out more about the AWESOME guests who loaned their considerable talents to the project. Support Live Music and the people who make it happen!

### Total Time 46 Mins.

On The Run / George Fisk  
/ This Time / As Long As  
You're There / Light Me  
Up (Hold Me In) / The Fall  
/ Finding Your Way Back  
Home / Mizz Karman / Time  
To Ball (Keep On Pushin')

# Origin of the Blues

by J.F. Walsh

## It's a strange trip

A good way to start a fistfight in any meeting of bluesoholics is to state any opinion about the origin of the blues. Rather than risk assault, this series of articles avoids didactic conclusions about the origins of the blues in favor of assessing what we know and don't know about those origins . . . and adding caveats to the little we do know.

If you're looking for the origins of "the blues," you first have to know what counts as a "blues." What counted as "blues" in the early days of recording includes a lot that we wouldn't call "blues" today. Such recordings as Mamie Smith's "Crazy Blues" (1920), Papa Charlie Jackson's "Airy Man Blues" (1924), George "Bullet" Williams' "Middlin' Blues" (1928), and Mississippi John Hurt's "Candy Man Blues" (1927) are just a few examples. Does this mean that "blues" was once a musical term that included



**Mamie Smith's "Crazy Blues" (1920)**

much that we don't think of as blues today? Or does it mean that "blues" was used as a marketing term for a wide variety of musics, much as "rock & roll" was used in the 1950s?

Do you insist that "the blues" must stick to an AAB 12-bar format? People familiar with the blues know that many blues don't fit that format. Henry Thomas and others often sang a 12-bar AAA format (ex., most of Thomas's "Bull Doze Blues" (1928)), Big Boy Cleveland sang a blues with an AAAB 10-bar format ("Goin' to Leave You

Blues" (1927)), Jim Jackson's "Kansas City Blues, pts. 1-4" used the common 2-2-1-1-2 bar lyric format (where each single bar of lyric is followed by a full bar of instrumental music), . . . and Lord only knows what you want to do with Charlie Patton's nearly free-form lyrics in "Spoonful Blues" (1929) or Blind Willie McTell's "Travelin' Blues" (1929) free-form talking blues. And there are many more formats used in songs that most people today would call "blues" of one sort or another. Don't all these count as "blues," too?

If we're going to include everything that was labeled a "blues" in a search for origins, then it's easy to see that we're talking about many origins for many different kinds of blues. The search will take us not only to Africa; to African-American work songs, hollers, and folk songs; but also to Broadway musicals (which is where we'll find the first known appearance of the so-called "coon song," "Bully of the Town," which was inserted into Henry Thomas's "Bob McKinney" (1927)), to minstrelsy, and to the popular music of the 'teens of the early 20th century.

*It's strange trip.*



J.F. Walsh, Jr. is a music historian and ex-New York streetfighter. Questions? Email me at [VitoJW51@gmail.com](mailto:VitoJW51@gmail.com)

## Looking for a copy of the Blues Notes?

### Try one of these local places

Blues Notes magazine is a free publication created by the Cascade Blues Association. Pick up a copy at the venues below. Want to distribute Blues Notes in your business? Email:

[president@cascadeblues.org](mailto:president@cascadeblues.org)



- Artichoke Music, Portland
- Bounty Hunter Saloon, Tigard
- Catfish Lou's, Beaverton
- CI Bar & Grill, Tualatin
- Cooper Mountain Ale Works Public House, Tigard
- Jack's Tap Room, Portland
- Mekong Bistro, Portland
- Tigardville Station, Tigard
- Montavilla Station, Portland
- Music Millennium, Portland
- Rose City Coffee Co, Portland
- Slims, St Johns
- The Garages, Lake Oswego
- 3 Tracks Music, St Johns



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### **4 STAR MEMBERS**

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Mike Todd (with A+ Carpentry, 503-754-2857)

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Michael Lester

### **1 STAR MEMBERS:**

Rob & Carol Shoemaker (with The Norman Sylvester Band)  
Michael Allen & Anne J. Schagen, Richard LaCappelle,  
Mike Pollock & Linda Alvarez, Bruce Powell, P.C., Dale Query,  
Robert Kraft & Sandra Johnson

### **Become a Member!**

- **Online:** [cascadebluesassociation.org](http://cascadebluesassociation.org)
- **Email:** [membership@cascadeblues.org](mailto:membership@cascadeblues.org)
- **Mail** Cascade Blues Assoc., PO Box 6566, Portland, OR 97228

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More Blues shows on Page 6!

## Featured Shows

- 11/06 Mark Spangler/Denny Bixby/Mark Shark
- 11/13 Ye Vagabonds—Touring group from Ireland! (2pm-4pm)
- 11/13 Scott/Bailey/Ross 7pm
- 11/18 Lauren Sheehan
- 11/19 Tom May and Doug Smith
- 11/25 & 11/26 Curtis Salgado and Alan Hager
- 11/27 Ex Nashville Cats (John Bunzow/Denny Bixby) guest Gary Bennett (BR549)
- 12/4 Cal Scott and Richard Moore w/guest
- 12/09 Darryl Purpose
- 12/11 Ex Nashville Cats (John Bunzow/Denny Bixby) guest Joe Kerry New
- 12/17 John Silliman Dodge
- 12/22 Holiday Party (Benefit for Transition Projects)
- 12/30 Portlandia Brass Ensemble: Special show Friday before New Year's Eve



## Recurring Shows

*Shows start at 7pm, unless noted*

First Fridays—Lloyd Jones

First Saturdays—Portland Storytellers Guild

First Sundays—A Fine Mess, 3pm

2nd, 4th & 5th Sundays—Portland Bluegrass Jam, 1:30pm

3rd Sundays—Portland Guitar Society (open mic, all genres welcome)

Every Tuesday—Middle School/High School Samba drumming 6:30—Chuk Barber

Last Wednesdays—Open mic hosted by Rhythm



## Upcoming Workshops

11/05 Luke Bulla—Bluegrass Fiddle

11/16 Dar Williams "How to Write a Song That Matters"

12/3 Arietta Ward—Vocal Workshop

## ... and So Much More!

*New sober songwriter's circle! Plus:*

### Additional Monthly Shows

Check our website for specific show dates for Tablao Flamenco, Christopher Brown LIT Jazz Jam, Portland Radio Project Series, Harp Circles, Celtic Community Nights, Soldier, Songs & Voices, Thursday Night Coffee House, and River City Folk live tapings.



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Building community through music, one heart at a time, since 1973.