

BLUES NEWS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE KENTUCKIANA BLUES SOCIETY
“...PRESERVING, PROMOTING AND PERPETUATING THE BLUES.”

Louisville, Kentucky

April/May 2005

Incorporated 1989



Photo by Keith S. Clements

Dan Stevens and Cole Prior Stevens, performing for KBS members at Bardstown Road Presbyterian Church this past February

IN THIS ISSUE

KBS News and Contacts.....	2	Stevens and Stevens Concert Review....	6
Letter From the Prez	3	New Music Reviews.....	7-9
From Minglewood to Cyberspace.....	4-5	Kentuckiana Blues Calendar.....	10
Clubs, Membership & Radio Info.....11			



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Blues News

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Kentuckiana Blues Society

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Attention Members! May Board Meeting and CONCERT!

The May board meeting will be held on the **SECOND** Wednesday of May, the 11th, so as not to conflict with Derby Festivities. It's going to be held at the Bardstown Road Presbyterian Church, 1722 Bardstown Road, and followed by another coffee and dessert concert. You don't want to miss this opportunity to see Nick Stump and Friends' debut performance as a group. The "friends" include Ricky Baldwin, (Nick and Ricky both formerly of the Metropolitan Blues All Stars), and Cole Prior Stevens, and there may be special guests as well. The short meeting will begin at 6:30 and the music will start around 7:30 (\$4.00 cover). Please make plans to attend. These events are intended to show appreciation for our local musicians; a good turnout is a must if we want to keep Louisville blues alive. It's perfect "school-night" entertainment and we'd love to see you there!

DON'T FORGET TO MAKE YOUR RESERVATIONS FOR THE BLUES CRUISE BEFORE MAY 7th! GO TO WWW.KBSBLUES.ORG TO RESERVE VIA PAYPAL, AND FOR DETAILS AS THEY BECOME AVAILABLE. OR, YOU CAN SEND YOUR CHECK AND NUMBER OF CRUISERS TO KBS, PO BOX 755, LOUISVILLE, KY 40201. BE THERE OR BE SQUARE!

We appreciate your support and welcome your input. If you have any comments, suggestions, ideas, etc., contact us at this address:

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As usual, please check your mailing label to see if your membership will expire soon. Our Single membership is a bargain at only \$15.00 US per year. Double membership (two members at the same address, two membership cards, one newsletter) is only \$20.00 US per year. If you see a notice on your mailing label, that means that it's time to renew!

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Debbie Wilson – vice-president/treasurer
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KBS MONTHLY MEETING

If you are interested in reviewing new blues releases, come on out to the KBS monthly meeting (held the first Wednesday of each month at **7:00 PM** in **The Germantown Café at 1053 Goss Ave.**) and take your pick! We receive promo releases from the major blues labels as well as regional and local bands. If you review a CD, it's yours to keep!

A LETTER FROM THE PREZ

Well, spring has finally sprung and none too soon for me. I was getting tired of winter and the dearth of music. Although I did catch some great shows this past month. Saw Tab Benoit and Tommy Castro at Stevie Ray's and Marcia Ball at Jim Porter's. Guess you can't complain about shows like that. But I'm ready for the outside stuff. But, before the outside stuff starts, the KBS has a few fun things planned. We are moving our May meeting up a week since the original date falls during Derby week. **The meeting will be on May 11th and once again we are having it at the Bardstown Road Presbyterian Church since we have a real treat planned.** Nick Stump, formally of the Metropolitan Blues All-Stars, has put together a new band featuring Rick Baldwin (also formally of the Metropolitan Blues All-Stars) on bass and Cole Prior Stevens on guitar. This will be a spectacular show and you really should make a point to make it out. This is the band's debut and with the caliber of talent involved it should be a really fun night. They may even have a few special guests show up, you never know. We do know it's a work night so we won't be that late. The show will start at 7:30. We will have a short business meeting prior to the show at 6:30. There will be \$4 cover at the door with a portion of that going to the church. Hope to see lots of you there. It's not often you get to see the North American debut of a wonderful new band so don't miss it!

And, as you all know, May is the month for our famous Blues Cruise. That's a treat not to be missed. All the important information was in last month's newsletter but you can call me (893-0173) if you have any questions. We need your reservations by May 7th so don't procrastinate. You don't want to miss the bus! Ask anyone who has attended before and you'll know you want to be on board.

Those of you that get Louisville magazine be on the watch for an article by one of our members, Vicki Dennis. She is a freelance writer who did an article on local blues festivals you won't want to miss. Speaking of local festivals, it's almost time for two great ones. The W.C. Handy Festival in Henderson is June 15th through the 18th and has some great talent this year. There will be two bands on Wednesday night, one is still to be announced but the other is Norma Jean Bruso. Thursday is Cajun night with great food sold to support the festival and The Crawdaddies and Terrance Simien entertaining. On Friday early, there will be some local acts that haven't been finalized yet, and then, starting at 4:00, we have Mike Holloway and Roguie Ray, the Chicago Rhythm and Blues Kings with Gene Barge, James Harman, and Larry McCray. At noon on Saturday, Dave Mackenzie starts the lineup followed by Delta Moon, Kenny Neal and Billy Branch, Sharrie Williams, The Holmes Brothers, and Little Milton. All in all, a spectacular lineup. I'll be there with bells on, hope you are too. On July 22nd and 23rd the Cave Run Blues and BBQ Festival kicks off. The gates open at 5:00 on Saturday with the first music by Da Mudcats at 6:00 followed by The Blues Cruisers, the DeBellefeuille Brothers Band, and the Georgia Satellites. On Saturday gates open at 12:00, music starts at 2:00 with Hot Rod & The Blues DeVilles, the DeBellefeuille Brothers Band, Tanita Gaines, The Nighthawks, Jimmy Thackery & The Drivers, Michael Burks, and closes with The Nighthawks with Jimmy Thackery and Michael Burks. That should be one hell of a show. And there's a barbecue competition to boot. Those are just the first two of some great local festivals. We'll talk about the others next time.

Looks like a great summer of music shaping up. Hope you guys can get out and enjoy some of it. Don't forget, unless we tell you otherwise, our monthly meetings are held at the Germantown Café on Goss Avenue at 7:00 the first Wednesday of every month. If you can't make one of those at least try to make the ones that have great entertainment. See you in May!

Brenda

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"I've Got a Mind to Ramble"
in the
Louisville Music News

From Minglewood to Cyberspace **March 2005**

Much, dear reader, has happened since last we put pen to paper, or finger to keypad, or whatever. However, having been dubbed the "primo curmudgeon," it seems that it is obligatory for me to justify that title. Or, as Carl Martin used to say, "now, by special request and popular demand." Of course being the PC does not mean that I will be PC – politically correct, that is.

So, how to begin? Perhaps the best way to start is with the worst news of this past year: the death of Frank "Son" Seals. My relationship with Son goes back to his pre-Alligator days, when he had just been "discovered" by Wes Race and Bruce Iglauer. At that time, we – an intense group of Blues junkies in South Bend – would bring Son into a hellhole of a hall called the "Army-Navy Hall" on the West Side of South Bend, right where the Polish neighborhoods gave way to the African American one. It was loud, long and narrow with worthless acoustics, no air – winter or summer, and the smell of smoke and Drewry's beer – made locally and cheap. At that time Son did not sing! He left that task to a rotund character called "Mr. Leo." Even after Son began to take on the role of lead singer he would still call Leo up on stage for a song or two. I asked him once about that and he said it was worth it to keep somebody with him who could tear out the transmission of their van and repair it in the median of the interstate!

Son was a mainstay at the Midwest Blues Festival, closing the show once with Albert King, who commented that, "Jr. was all grown up." Albert could have probably cut Son to pieces but he allowed a jam to go on that tore the place up, giving Son plenty of room – and he took it. At another time we paired him with BB King at the Morris Civic in South Bend. After the show, BB's "valet," Bebop, confronted me and with his finger in my face told me to never book Son in front of BB again. BB was expecting a short set dominated by a pseudo-Blues disco warm up by his band. Instead, he cut them short, strode out on stage and played for over an hour. He was worn out and got more than he bargained for from Son, who had finished the opening set to a standing ovation.

I have too many Son stories to relate them all here. Let's just leave it by saying that he was one of the true Bluesmen of his or any generation. He will be missed and will not be replaced.

Then, there's the Dead Man Walking status of the Chicago Blues Festival.

In a classic scene from a Pepsi commercial that was one of the best commercials to use/exploit the Blues, a woman leans out of a tenement window to declaim over the ending strains of a John Lee Hooker song, "This may be the end of the Blues as we know it."

Those words and that scene aptly describe the best and the worst of my feelings about this year's Chicago Blues Festival. The festival has become a scene, in the most 60's sense of that word: the place to be, to be seen, to be extreme, and to party. The Blues has moved from the Main Stage to the Front Porch to the Back Porch to the woodshed or maybe, judging from some of the acts, the out-house. In a gross parody of the 60's Blues Revival, when Son House or Skip James would be paraded in front of audiences as the "real thing" but actually were but faded images of their primordial creativity with little of their primal power and intensity (both must have been truly awesome in their prime), the surviving members of the *ancien Blues regime* were placed on display in a living tableau of what used to be. One guy standing near me in the crowd actually said, "This guy is supposed to be really good 'cause he's really old!" The emcee who introduced Pinetop Perkins echoed this by not being sure how old Pinetop was but he was sure he was over 90!

The festival had been coopted by petitioners for pot and Nader, pollsters for Kerry, and the overage, overweight, over-tattooed, and underdressed. Some even spent the entire day cycling through the line at the beer tents, finishing one in time to get another. Spilling and staggering became an art form.

The Blues Fest also suffered a terrific cultural hit when they evicted Bob in favor of Best Buy several years back. The sight of him holding court on his stepstool chair with Blues musicians and ex-employees wandering in and out of the tent was an iconic moment at the festival.

Even the city got into the act. Street performers had assigned spots on the sidewalks, and the food and drink tickets were sold at the rate of \$5.50 worth for \$7.00 – a service charge being levied for "festival amenities."

But what about the music, you ask. Well, let me put it this way, in my mind, the best performance of the weekend was by Fruteland Jackson and Fernando Jones at Bob Koester's Jazz Record Mart on Saturday morning. They were preceded by an interesting set of Blues, Japanese style. Jackson plays traditional Blues tunes but adds his own, contemporary lyrics. Both Jackson and Jones are highly invested in "Blues in the Schools" projects, and I would certainly suggest that a great way to further the mission of the KBS would be to assist in engaging either one or the both of them in the Jefferson County School System.

Bob Koester of Delmark and Jazz Record Mart renown – the Penultimate Curmudgeon, by the way – suffered a slight stroke this past year that barely seemed to slow him down.

So, I guess it is true, you can't go home again.

On to other things.

Bruce Iglauer continues to fight the good fight, but even the Gator is suffering, I think.

We have seen the release of some delightful and distressing materials over the past few years. On the delightful side are the two calendars (2004 & 2005) by the Blues Images folks. Their story of how they rescued the fabulous artwork for the old Paramount 12/13000 Series is fantastic – as is the artwork. Previously the art was available in a long out of print book, and as poor, often unreadable illustrations for other Blues works.

The "cream of the crop" to date is the 2004 Calendar which features a cover photo never seen before of Charley Patton. The photo raises more questions than it answers with Charley posing sitting down, fretting over the top of the guitar neck. His appearance is much more suave than the sound of his vocals conveys to us. (By the way the same photo is available on a T-shirt – one of which graced the

torso of his curmudgeonliness at the last Chicago Blues Festival.) But wait! There's more! With the calendar comes a cd that is a primo selection of prewar blues. The gems of this cd are Blind Blake's "He's in the Jailhouse Now," previously unreleased sides by Tommy Johnson – a strange non-Blues effort, and King Solomon Hill. Also included is a rare Blind Joe Reynolds cut, "Cold Woman Blues." Great art and great music for \$14.95. Bad news is that they wised up and raised the price to \$19.95 for the 2005 calendar and disc, but still a deal! The 2005 disc includes 4 newly discovered sides. The artwork for the months of the year is that for the titles on the disc. Cool!

Moving along in our manic-depressive rant (I warned you this wouldn't be PC!) we come to the distressing book by Elijah Wald, Escaping the Delta. Wald and some other authors were having a discussion group at the Chicago Blues Fest and I had a brief chance to confront him on this book, challenging his view of Blues as the creation of some white marketing exec. Basically, Wald discounts most commonly held tenets about Blues and its origins, and claims that the categorization of Blues as a musical form was "created" largely in the 60's by folkies and defined by the Rolling Stones and Eric Clapton, who put Robert Johnson at the center of a Blues pantheon, pushing the real talent, Peetie Wheatstraw and the female Blues singers to the fringe. Anyone who has listened to Robert Johnson recognizes his indebtedness to Wheatstraw, Kokomo Arnold, Skip James, and a host of others. Johnson was a synthesizer, not an originator. But to disclaim that is to misread, perhaps deliberately, the Delta Blues phenomenon. Using an idiographic approach Wald mistakenly tries to flesh out a vision that is of his own making, not emerging from the facts, but imposed upon them.

Wald is wrong in a number of ways, not the least of which being that neither the Stones nor Clapton are "Bluesmen." By the way, for those of you who don't know me, Stevie Ray wasn't, either. (Curmudgeonly enough, Keith?)

The book is interesting and demonstrates how you can twist reality to fit an agenda. Much better it is (my Yoda side speaking) to report the facts like the Howlin' Wolf bio, Moanin' At Midnight. That is a good book.

Speaking of EC.... One other thought I'd like to pass on. Okay, for all of you who have been swooning over EC's Robert Johnson homage (*Me and Mr. Johnson*), try this experiment: listen to Robert Johnson! Simple enough, but, once again, we are faced with the ultimate Blues wannabee (pace, Stevie Ray) doing the ultimate homage. And, it's not bad. However, (you knew that was coming, right?) it's not clear who Clapton is paying homage to. While all the titles are RJ tunes, the arrangements are strangely similar to the recent efforts by the rediscovered Peter Green and the Splinter Group, particularly, *Hot Foot Powder*, and, *The Robert Johnson Songbook*. Both of these are much better efforts, by the way. And, when he's not doing Peter Green, Clapton sounds like he's trying to do a *Cream Unplugged* album. The surprise, then, is how much Clapton was influenced by Peter Green and the Blues incarnation of Fleetwood Mac! And, of course, both pale in contrast to the original. (On the other hand, Johnson's efforts at cover songs generally equal or surpass the original effort.)

In looking at the dynamics of the relationships between Clapton's disc, Peter Green's, and Robert Johnson (most of the other intermediaries are ignored in Clapton and Green's efforts to emulate Johnson) we see a very carefully pruned Blues Family Tree. And, certainly Clapton's brief liner notes are a true statement of his feeling for Johnson's music – it is the True North of his musical compass. But, Johnson, much like Clapton and Green, was also not an originator – just, in his time, the young upstart who could play it better, play more styles, and had the charisma and stuff of legend around him (although I don't think you would have found "Johnson is God," written on the outhouse walls). All three are stunning in their prowess and fascinating in their personal tragedy.

Finally, after my extended absence, I think it's time you guys got some religion. And, there is no better way to do it that with the boxed set, "Goodbye, Babylon." It is a powerful set in a beautiful package of gospel work that crosses the boundaries of economics, ethnicity, and faiths. From sermons to shape note singing, it is a delight.

I will end on that note. And, remember, if you don't like any of this, it's Keith's fault. But, what's not to like, it's all too true. The Blues roll on.

Perry W. Aberli

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STEVENS AND STEVENS
Coffee and Dessert Concert
February 2, 2005

About 25 diehard blues fans braved the snow to attend the Stevens and Stevens Concert at the Bardstown Presbyterian Church on Wednesday, February 2nd, 2005. It may have been cold and snowy outside but inside it was toasty warm and full of joy. Coffee and deserts were served and the laid back atmosphere perfectly complimented the acoustic blues.

Cole Prior Stevens is from Bakersville, Cal. and moved to Louisville about a year ago. He is currently practicing with some blues musicians and plans to debut a new blues band shortly.

He and Nick Stump met at a gig in Bardstown and they have added a drummer and bass player, so be on the lookout for them in the area.

Cole has a CD out and writes many of his own songs such as BACK DOOR MAN, I LIKE WHAT I AM FEELING (a tribute to his wife), MEET ME AT SON'S HOUSE and one that rocked the house called PUT YOUR PISTOL DOWN (MENOPAUSAL BLUES). He also played several covers, one of which was Robert Johnson's MALTED MILK.

Cole is funny as well as talented and kept us entertained between songs with a running dialogue of stories and life lessons.

Dan Stevens (no relation) was born and raised in Pennsylvania and remains in that area today. He won his areas blues contest and was on his way to Memphis to compete in the International Blues Contest. He has two CD's out and is working on a third to be released shortly titled ROAD TO MEMPHIS.

He also played a lot of originals such as BROKE DOWN AND HUNGRY (also the title of his second CD), GOING DOWN TO THE RIVER, DRIVING FOOL, I'M IN THE DOG HOUSE BABY (written as an apology to his wife), I'M JUST RAMBLIN', and THAT WILL NEVER HAPPEN NO MORE. He also played several covers : Count Basie's JELLIE, Reverend Gary Davis's HESITATION BLUES, AINT NO BODY'S BUSINESS IF I DO, and Robert Johnson's DEPOT BLUES.

Both men used a leaded glass slide that really added to the fabulous sound and Dan had a Jumbo Gibson that was almost as big as he was. He had a 1953 Silvertone from the Sears Catalogue that was covered with sensation of the day-plastic.

They combined their talents for a grand finale that wailed. As Keith said, Stevens and Stevens served us some delicious blues.

Martha McNeal

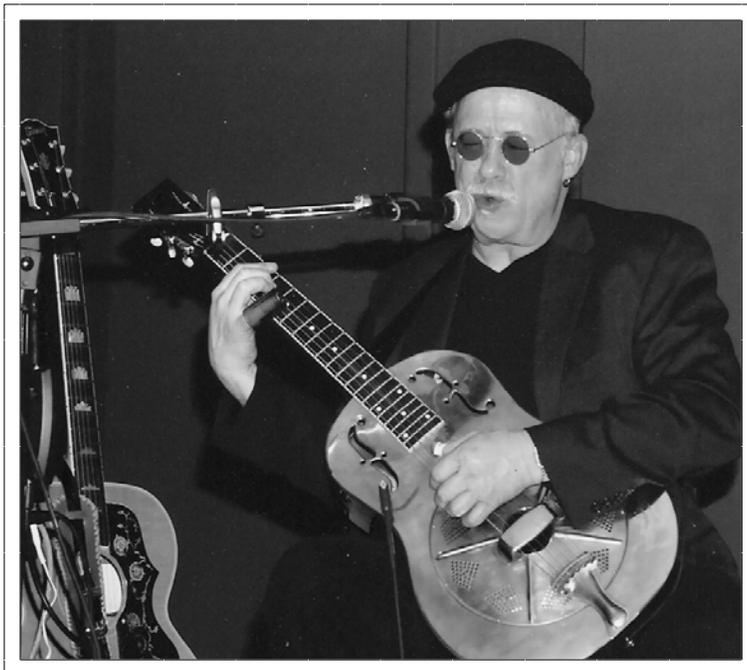


Photo by Keith S. Clements

Cole Prior Stevens entertains the KBS crowd at a coffee and dessert concert held February 2 at the Bardstown Road Presbyterian Church.



Photo by Keith S. Clements

An IBC competitor in the solo artist category, Dan Stevens was also featured at the Presbyterian Church concert. Watch your newsletter for details...there are more of these shows to come, and you *really* shouldn't miss them!



New Music Reviews



Out of the Blue Cole Prior Stevens

Cole Prior Steven's blues doesn't knock you out with a powerful punch, but subtly sinks in with repeated listening. These original songs are filled with lots of traditional blues images like the devil, walking shoes and going to the river. His lyrics tell life stories that are both sad and glad, but all have some truth about relationships and fears. In the song F.E.A.R., Cole's definition of that nemesis is "fake evidence appearing real."

Cole takes you from the Mississippi Delta with the rollin' and tumblin' shuffle of "Went Down to the River" and then over to the Piedmont region with "It Ain't My Fault." He does this playing a variety of guitar techniques, mixing his slippery slide with light finger picking. Cole is a keen observer of the realities of life, sharing his "tell it like it is" attitude in "Put Your Pistol Down," where he believes his gal has got the menopausal blues. On "Meet Me Down At Son's House" his guitar is just a looping rhythmic background and his happy go lucky words are front and center "gettin' high when the sun goes down." Then Cole revs up his guitar and voice like Omar Dykes on "The Gypsy House" telling of his encounter with a fortune teller. His repetitive beat, slide and voice synchronize nicely together on "Rose Colored Glasses." The final cut "Gimme Back My Steering Wheel (cause you ain't gonna drive)" is my favorite. It's like dropping the arm of a turntable down on an old '78 record from the 30's listening to someone trying to find a way out of a bad relationship.

Cole recorded this self-produced CD seven years ago when he was living in California. Now that he is a permanent Louisvillian, there are plans in the works of forming a new band of seasoned musicians and we should be hearing more of Cole's blues talents in an ensemble setting soon.

Keith S. Clements

Michael Powers Onyx Root Baryon Records 2004

Those of you who subscribe to Blues Revue have gotten a taste of Michael Powers music. The December/January 2005 sampler's first song is called "Successful Son" and is not only a sample of his music, but a short autobiography. Powers has been playing for over 20 years but was only recently "discovered overnight" by, as it happens, the owner of Baryon Records. It's amazing this New York artist hasn't been recorded before.

Powers has been nominated for two Handy Awards- Best New Artist Debut, and Contemporary Blues Album of the Year.

I was fortunate enough to get a CD of a live performance of his songs from Onyx Root, performed at the Living Room in New York City, recorded on September 21, 2004. I have a predilection for live music because I can hear the talent, energy, and heart that goes into the music as opposed to not knowing what the computer or studio engineer did to enhance (read "sell") the

music.

There are eleven songs on the CD including covers by Muddy Waters, Willie Dixon, Howling Wolf, Jimi Hendrix and Doug Sahm. The cover of Doug Sahm took me back to my teen years with the song "She's About A Mover" (Remember the Sir Douglas Quintet?). Powers has transformed this song by his guitar work and his Stevie Ray Vaughn like voice.

Powers plays guitar and handles all of the vocals, Neil Jason plays bass and Steve Jordan plays drums. The music has a bluesy rock- out of the 70's feel. Powers is a great guitarist and singer. The song "Bottle Up and Go" is a rollicking song that **makes you** want to move with the beat. His music is a cross between Stevie Ray Vaughn and Jimi Hendrix and he mixes fast songs with slow blues such as Hendrix' Little Wing.

I usually listen to the review CD's several times so that I have a good feel for the music before I try to write about it. In this case, I listened to it over and over because I couldn't stop. I highly recommend this music and if you get a chance to see Mr. Powers perform, don't miss it.

Bob Brown



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New Music Reviews



Sisters & Brothers

Eric Bibb, Rory Block and Maria Muldaur
Telarc CD3588



"Sisters & Brothers" is a collection of songs by three musicians who have similar if not identical musical backgrounds. Maria Muldaur, Eric Bibb, and Rory Block are featured on this collection produced under the Telarc Blues label. All three are from New York City and were greatly influenced by the folk and blues scene in Greenwich Village in the 1960s.

As the elder sister of the group, Maria Muldaur has a wide-ranging musical background. Born in Greenwich Village, her earliest musical influence was county and western but she also developed a love for the early rhythm and blues music of artists such as Fats Domino, Little Richard and Elvis Presley. Turning to the influences in her own backyard, Muldaur began to sit in on local jam sessions in the coffeehouses in Greenwich Village. She became involved with a group called "The Friends of Old Timey Music" who traveled to the south to find blues artist like Skip James and Mississippi John Hurt and bring them back to New York City to play for new audiences. These experiences, as well as a musical relationship with Victoria Spivey of Spivey Records, helped Muldaur cultivate a love for blues and folk music.

Eric Bibb is also from New York City and comes from a strong musical family. His father Leon Bibb was a singer in musical theatre and was part of the 1960s Greenwich Village folk scene. His uncle John Lewis was a jazz pianist and composer with the Modern Jazz Quartet. Bibb studied classical guitar and piano in high school and later was a part of the Negro Ensemble Company at Saint Mark's Place. He eventually moved to Stockholm, Sweden, where he developed an interest in the folk and pre-war blues of his youth. He lived in Stockholm, on and off, since the mid-1990s and most of the music he produced was blues.

Rory Block is another native New Yorker who acquired her musical education around Washington Square Park and the environs of Greenwich Village. Block is a rarity among blues performers because she is a female blues guitarist. She is also a two-time winner of the W.C. Handy Award for Traditional Blues Female Artist of the Year. Her early blues influences were the Reverend Gary Davis and Son House.

While all three musicians have a strong folk and blues background, most of the songs in this collection have gospel and spiritual roots. The best of the selections includes Bibb's composition "Don't Ever Let Nobody Drag Your Spirit Down" and Bob Dylan's "Gotta Serve Somebody," both sung by Eric Bibb. For the first selection, Bibb sings a spirit-lifting duet with Muldaur. For the second, Bibb reaches for a little bit more and masters a version of the Dylan classic that easily rivals the original – and may best it.

Rory Block provides several strong cuts on this album. My favorites are "Rolling Log," written by Lottie Beaman, and her own composition "Travelin' Woman Blues." It is safe to say that she is, along with Bonnie Raitt, one of the premiere female blues guitarists on the scene today. Her style is very similar to Raitt's, a comparison that Block does not seem to mind. Although she makes a decent effort on Bill Withers' "Lean on Me," it still pales in comparison to his original.

Time has added a rougher edge to Maria Muldaur's voice since her melodic "Midnight at the Oasis" back in 1974 – which may be a plus for a blues singer. Her best in this collection is "Maggie Campbell" featuring Block on guitar. The two women make a good pair, and this may be the best track on the album. They also team up for a bouncy gospel tune called "Get Up and Get Ready." On "Good Stuff," Bibb and Muldaur create an easy and playful tune that also works very well, with Bibb again featured on lead guitar. Muldaur does a jazzy version of Bessie Smith's "Bessie's Advice," but the song seems out of place on this album, considering the nature of the rest of the songs. Even so, it's a good effort.

It's almost always satisfying to listen when an artist rediscovers their musical roots, and the fact that Eric Bibb is working almost wholly in the blues genre is a great pleasure. I especially like Bibb's sad and soulful version of Jimmy Reed's "Little Rain." On this song Bibb takes us a few notches lower than most any version of "Stormy Monday." On "Give a Little More," Bibb creates a cause song straight from the 1960s. This song may otherwise seem out of place in this collection, considering that most of the songs present a more upbeat attitude, but overall, it fits right in.

If you are looking for a blues and gospel mix that provides a more lyrical and positive version of life and the people who surround us, this album is for you. Muldaur, Bibb, and Block work very well together, and we can only hope this isn't the last of their collaborations.

Gary Sampson

Junior Brown

Down Home Chrome
Telarc CD-83612

There have been many guitar-steel guitar duos over the years. Santo and Johnny have probably been the most famous with their rendition of "Sleepwalk". Not as famous but very prolific were the combos of Speedy West and Jimmy Bryant, Speedy West and James Burton, Herby Wallace and Thumbs Carlisle, Buddy Emmons and Albert Lee, Buddy Emmons and Danny Gatton, Buddy Emmons and Kenny Burrell, for examples. Two guitar players, each excelling on their particular approach to a guitar.

For those who are confused by the difference in guitars (prepare to get more confused probably) – a steel guitar is fretted with a steel bar

held in the left hand, and sits in front of the player, either on its own legs, or stand, or is held on the players lap. If the steel guitar has pedals and knee levers on it, then many different note combinations are possible at each fret than if it doesn't have pedals and has only the same note possibilities at each fret. Not being able to change string tunings at each fret (like you can do on a Spanish guitar by moving a finger) may necessitate multiple necks with different tunings if the player needs to play something other than one kind of a chord all the time. Three neck guitars were regularly used – old Western Swing albums – Bob Wills and the Texas Playboys for example - will often have pictures of guitars like this being played.

A regular guitar, a Spanish Guitar, - the instrument most people think of when they hear the word Guitar - usually has 6 strings, is fretted with the finger tips of the left hand and is held in front of the player – either resting on ones knee while sitting, or held in place by a strap around the neck.

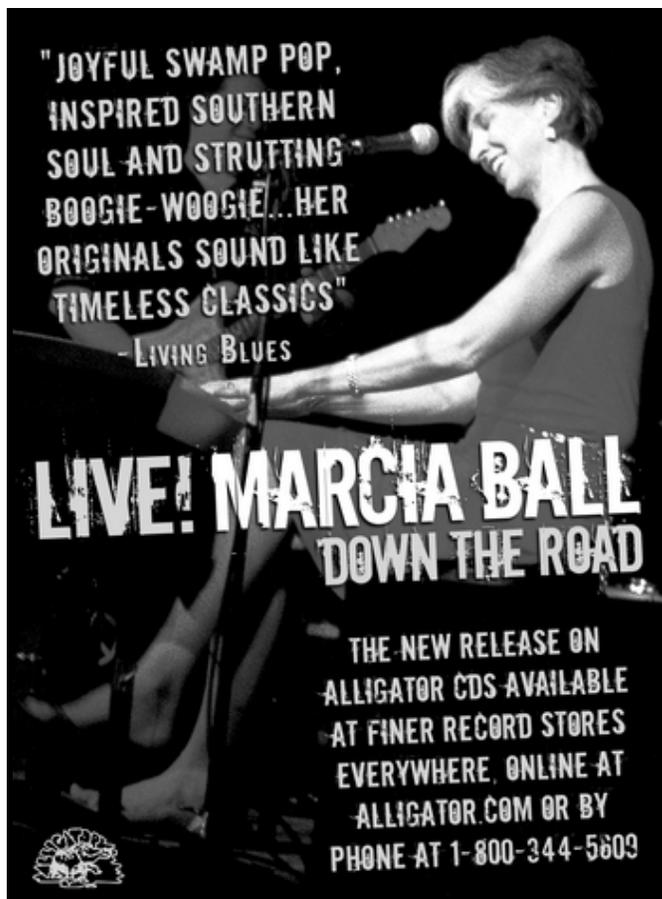
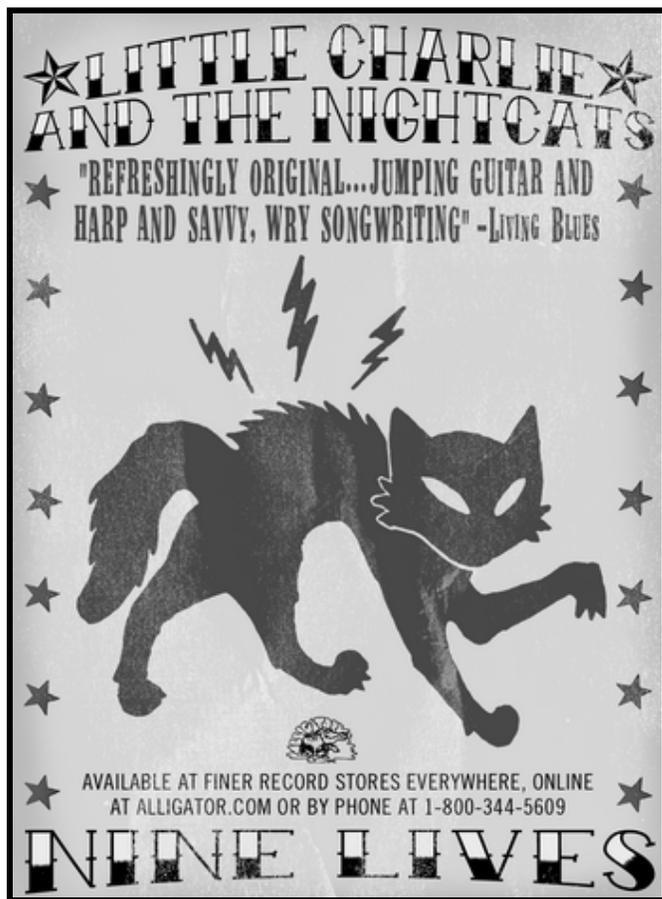
In Junior Brown we have for the first time a man playing both instruments during the same song. His “came to me in a dream” instruments are custom built for him, he calls it a “Guit-steel”, and they look like modified Telecaster bodies that are Elmer’s wood-glued to an eight string lap steel guitar. The thing must weigh a ton! And requires a stand to hold it.

Junior is a heavyweight in the world of what he does. On this album he plays out of a Tennessee Country room of the blues. You will be thinking back roads and hot rods; good ole boys, moonshine and gasoline; good ole girls with problem mamas. “Eclectic” describes Jr’s approach very well.

You can hear shades of the Beach Boys in the 1st cut, a rocker testament to a Riviera car. The 2nd cut is a pure country shuffle; steel guitar licks reminiscent of Jimmy Day. Cut 3 is a woman/lost money lament, while the 4th cut tells the story of a river between two lovers that can’t be crossed. Cut 5 adds horns to a strong swing beat - and Jr. gets to show off his 6 string licks – while singing about a fast car. If you ever listened to Country music when it was county music (what is called “old county” by the experts of today) – then this cut will remind you of Red Soveign and his soliloquies – “Giddy-up Go” comes to mind. Keep your handkerchief near-by. Cut 7 is a duet with Jr. and his wife Tanya – “Let’s all Go back to Where it Began” – and chases a theme done many times over – most notably by Waylon Jennings and Jesse Coulter . Cut 8 is the CD’s humor track, “Two Rons Don’t Make it Right” and Jr. gets to show off that froggy voice that works so well for him. Cut 9, “You Inspire Me” is pure jazz from its opening licks. The froggy voice may not serve quite as well here. Cut 10 takes us back to pure county with a catchy beat. Cut 11 is the familiar title “Foxy Lady”, yes the Jimi Hendrix tune, and listening to it makes you wonder if Jr. Brown isn’t really laughing at us with this whole album. Cut 12 is the one you may hear on Public radio stations or on SIRIUS. “Monkey Wrench Blues” runs over ten minutes and proves that, while the words may not match, the guitar licks are among some of the greatest ever played, showcasing Jr’s 6 string playing in a blues format replete with a horn section that drives a nice winding road. No steel on this cut.

This CD is great as far as roots music goes – however, if you are looking for a more traditional blues album – you might do well to give this a listen in the store first.

Nelson Grube





KENTUCKIANA BLUES CALENDAR
All Shows Subject to Change
Best to Call Before Hitting the Road



APR	4	Stevie Ray's	John Burgard & Reed Davis	9:30 PM	no cover
	5	Stevie Ray's Zena's Café	Blues jam	9-11:30 PM	no cover
	6	Stevie Ray's Zena's Café	Tanita Gaines		
	7	Stevie Ray's	Motor City Josh	9 PM	\$5
	8	Stevie Ray's Zena's Café	Black Cat Bone		
	8-9	Stevie Ray's O'Shea's Baxter Ave	Todd Wolf	9:30PM	\$6
	9	Stevie Ray's Jim Porter's Melody Bar	B B Taylor		
	10	The Alternative	Robbie Bartlett & Co	10:30 to 2:30	
	11	Air Devils Inn	7:30 Da Mudcats	10:30 V-Groove	
	12	Stevie Ray's	George Brackens Blues Band		
	13	Stevie Ray's Zena's Café	Kelly Richey Band		
	14	Stevie Ray's R Place Pub	Blues jam w/ John Burgard, Mike Lynch, & Denny Thornberry		
	15-16	Stevie Ray's Zena's Café	Jimmy Hall	8 PM	\$15
	16	Stevie Ray's Zena's Café	Blues jam	9-11:30 PM	no cover
	17	Stevie Ray's Zena's Café	Tanita Gaines		
	18	Stevie Ray's Zena's Café	Blue Swing Shooz	9 PM	\$5
	19	Stevie Ray's Zena's Café	Black Cat Bone		
	20	Stevie Ray's Zena's Café	Hellfish	9:30 PM	\$5
	21	Stevie Ray's Zena's Café	Robbie Bartlett & Co	10 to 2	
	22-23	Stevie Ray's Zena's Café	7:30 The Traveling Mojos	10:30 The Soulcasters	
	24	Stevie Ray's Zena's Café	Fri 15 th B B Taylor Blues Band	Sat 16 th Black Cat Bone	
	25	Stevie Ray's Zena's Café	Dr Don & the Love Dogs		
	26	Stevie Ray's Zena's Café	Robbie Bartlett & Co.	10:30 to 1:30	
	27	Stevie Ray's Zena's Café	Blues jam w/ John Burgard, Mike Lynch, & Denny Thornberry		
	28	Stevie Ray's Zena's Café	Lazy Eleven	9:30 PM	no cover
	29	Stevie Ray's Zena's Café	Blues jam	9-11:30 PM	no cover
	30	Stevie Ray's Zena's Café	Tanita Gaines		
	1	Stevie Ray's Zena's Café	Robbie Bartlett	9 PM	\$5
	2	Stevie Ray's Zena's Café	Black Cat Bone		
	3	Stevie Ray's Zena's Café	Phat Beat Revival	9:30 PM	\$5
	4	Stevie Ray's Zena's Café	Hellfish		
	5	Stevie Ray's Zena's Café	Black Cat Bone		
	6	Stevie Ray's Zena's Café	7:30 One Shot Johnny	10:30 The Predators	
	7	Stevie Ray's Zena's Café	Lamont Gillispie & 100 Proof Blues		
	8	Stevie Ray's Zena's Café	Sue O'Neil & Blues Seville		
	9	Stevie Ray's Zena's Café	Blues jam w/ John Burgard, Mike Lynch, & Denny Thornberry		
	10	Stevie Ray's Zena's Café	Chris Cain	8 PM	\$10
	11	Stevie Ray's Zena's Café	Tommy Castro	8 PM	\$15
	12	Stevie Ray's Zena's Café	Tanita Gaines		
	13	Stevie Ray's Zena's Café	The Marks	9 PM	\$5
	14	Stevie Ray's Zena's Café	Black Cat Bone		
	15	Stevie Ray's Zena's Café	Humor R&B with Bernie Lubbers and Robbie Bartlett		
	16	Stevie Ray's Zena's Café	Junkyard Jane	9:30 PM	\$5
	17	Stevie Ray's Zena's Café	Lazy Eleven		
	18	Stevie Ray's Zena's Café	Robbie Bartlett & Co	10 to 2	
	19	Stevie Ray's Zena's Café	7:30 Tom Truly & the Tom Cats	10:30 Roger 'Hurricane'Wilson	
	20	Stevie Ray's Zena's Café	Fri 29 th B B Taylor Blues Band	30 th Jimmy Davis Band	
	21	Stevie Ray's Zena's Café	Bogie Men		
	22	Stevie Ray's Zena's Café	Robbie Bartlett & Co	10:30 to 2:30	
	23	Stevie Ray's Zena's Café	Marcia Ball	8 PM	
	24	Stevie Ray's Zena's Café	Blues jam w/ John Burgard, Mike Lynch, & Denny Thornberry		
	25	Stevie Ray's Zena's Café	Robbie Bartlett & Co	10:30 to 2:30	
	26	Stevie Ray's Zena's Café	7:30 Lamont Gillispie & 100 Proof Blues	10:30 V-Groove	
	27	Stevie Ray's Zena's Café	George Brackens Blues Band		
APR					
MAY					
	1	Air Devils Inn			
	6	O'Shea's Baxter Ave			
	6-7	Stevie Ray's Jim Porter's Melody Bar			

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All Dates Subject To Change

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Air Devils Inn	2802 Taylorsville Rd.	454-4443	Phoenix Hill Tavern	644 Baxter Ave.	589-4957
Billy's Place	26th & Broadway	776-1327	Stevie Ray's Blues Bar	230 E. Main St.	582-9945
Jim Porter's	2345 Lexington Rd.	452-9531	Zena's Cafe	122 W. Main St.	584-3074

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Photo by Keith S. Clements

Butch Williams, singing with the Walnut Street Blues Band during the February 13 tribute to Mary Ann Fisher at Stevie Ray's Blues Bar.
A review of the show will appear in our next newsletter.



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