

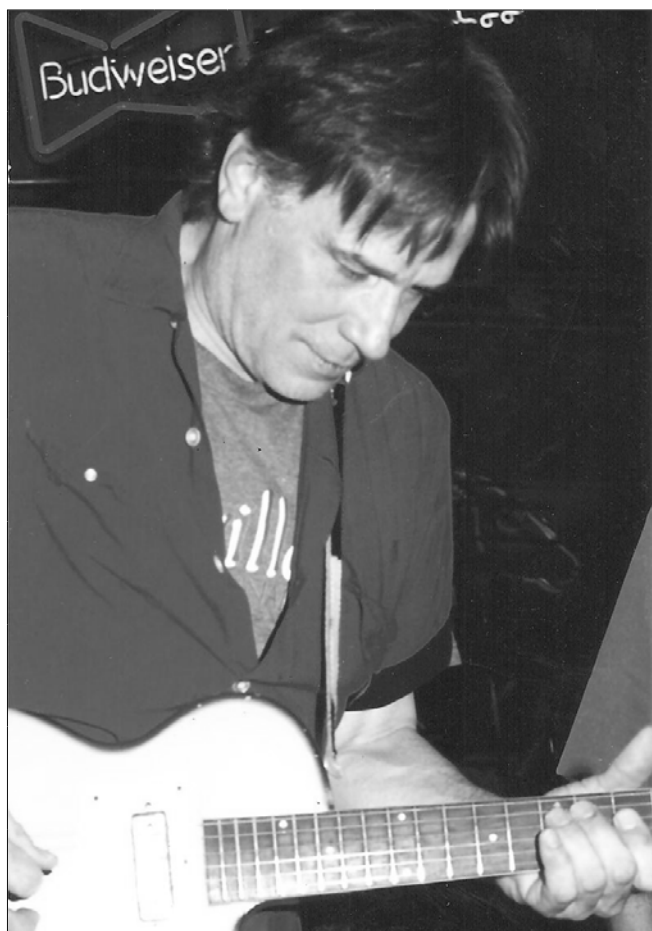
# BLUES NEWS

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

Louisville, Kentucky

February 2009

Incorporated 1989



Photos by Keith S. Clements

The KBS and Louisville's music community mourns the loss of Ricky Mason, who passed away unexpectedly on New Year's Day. Read more about Ricky's legacy inside this issue. Left: The Stray Cat Blues Band, c. 1977. Standing, left to right: Bruce Lively, Lamont Gillispie, Ricky Mason. Sitting, left to right: Dickie Durlauf, Steve Zarisson. Right: Ricky Mason at Churchill's Bar & Grill in February 2004.

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February 2009  
Volume 16 Number 62

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**Blues News**

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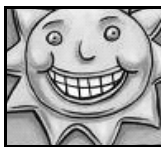
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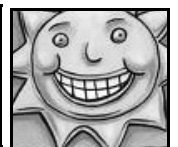
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**KBS MONTHLY MEETING**

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 at O'Shea's, 956 Baxter Avenue**) 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!

# Letter From the Prez



I have seen many fine guitarists over the years. A handful I would even classify as extraordinary. But I have been in the presence of genius only twice. Most everyone knows genius when they see it. The average music fan will stare with great fascination with their mouths open when they see a truly gifted performer with a guitar in hand. Other guitarists will take up the seats closest to the action trying to get a better look at a master at work and pick up a lick or two. And the entire attention of the house will be on them because for one brief moment we know that they have achieved perfection in a less than perfect world. I have only seen two blues guitarists who fit this category. The first is Chicago's Lurrie Bell. The other is Louisville's Ricky Mason.

Lamont Gillispie has told me some great stories about Ricky. Years ago Lamont played with Chicago guitarist Lefty Dizz, a pretty good axeman himself. Lamont invited Lefty down to Louisville to hang out and party with him and his friends. Lamont, Lefty and Ricky stayed out very late one night enjoying the nightlife and all that the city has to offer. Lamont told Lefty they had a show to do the next night and where to meet them when he got up. Before they left Ricky took it upon himself to tune Lefty Dizz's guitar. Lefty had a beat-up, old, black Stratocaster

guitar that he had used for years. Lamont told me that Ricky could tune a guitar like nobody else. He said Ricky could tune it from the headstock to the bridge so that it would be in tune throughout the entire length of the guitar. Lefty heard Ricky playing his guitar and got really mad. He started yelling at Ricky about "some white boy touchin' a black man's guitar" and Lamont said they almost got into a fight over it. Lamont finally pulled Ricky away and told Lefty to calm down. He told Lefty they were leaving for their gig and would see him later. At the show that night Lefty showed up with his guitar in hand. Lamont said that Lefty got up on stage with them and didn't get off for the rest of the night. Lamont said he never said anything to Ricky but he sure must have liked what Ricky did to his "strat".

One night while playing with the band Lamont noticed Ricky giving a guy at the edge of the stage dirty looks. Lamont asked what was wrong and Ricky replied "that guy's tryin' to steal my licks." Lamont told him "Maso, don't worry about it. The only time you need to worry is when they're not stealing your licks." Ricky doesn't have to worry about anyone trying to steal his licks anymore. He passed away on New Years Day at the age of 54. On Saturday, January 10, a memorial service was held for Ricky Mason at the Foreman Funeral Home in Jeffersontown. Lamont, John Gage and Jimmy Brown paid tribute to their friend and you couldn't swing a Fender guitar in that chapel without hitting many talented musicians who also came to pay their respects. Lamont and Jimmy are working on creating a yearly jam in Ricky's honor. The goal is to raise funds to purchase a guitar for a deserving young guitarist. As soon as the details are worked out we will have more information in a future issue of *Blues News*. If you would like to pay your respects to Ricky Mason, you can do so on-line in the obituary section of the Courier-Journal. The link is <http://www.legacy.com/louisville/Obituaries.asp?Page=LifeStory&PersonID=122327173>. Expression of sympathy can be made to the Musicians Emergency Resource Foundation (MERF) at <http://www.merfbenefit.org/>.

If you can only pick one weekend this month to check out the blues scene I would suggest the third weekend of February. On Friday, February 20, the Filson Historical Society will host its annual "Blues Night at the Filson" with music by the 10th Street Blues Band. The music starts at 7:00 pm and the society is located at 1310 South Third Street. On Saturday, February 21, the newly-formed Louisville Music Charities, Inc. (LMC) will host its first event at the Fraternal Order of Eagles in Jeffersontown. The LMC was created to oversee the Jeffersontown-Crusade Blues Festival held each May in J-Town. Admission is \$5.00 with all proceeds from the door and a raffle held that evening going to the Crusade for Children. Music will be provided by The Fabulous Gators from 8:00 until 11:00 pm. The Eagles Club is located at 3501 College Drive. On Sunday, February 22, Stevie Ray's will host its second annual Hall of Fame Benefit for the Animal Care Society, Louisville's only no kill shelter. This years inductees were voted on by the patrons of Stevie Ray's and the winners are Mike Lynch of da Mudcats and Jimmy Gardner of Hellfish. Music will be provided by Hellfish, da Mudcats, the Travelin' Mojos, the King Bees and Sue O'Neil and Blue Seville. Also during the month of February, B.B. King and Buddy Guy will appear at the Louisville Palace on Sunday, February 15. The KBS will have a table set up at this show so stop by and say hello.

Gary

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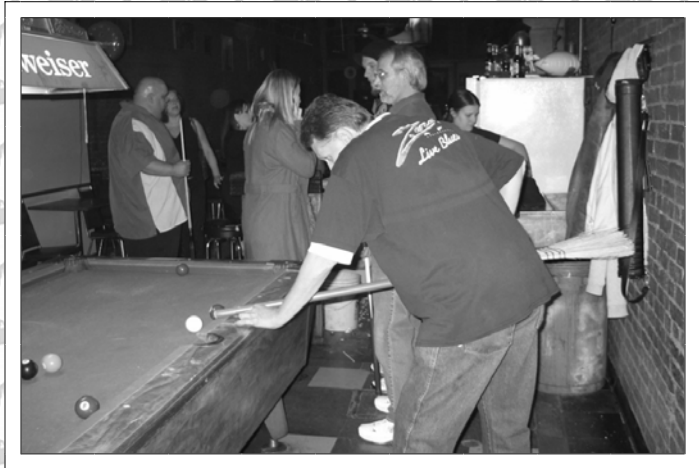
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"I've Got a Mind to Ramble" in the  
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# Zena's Last Blast

Zena's Cafe closed its doors for the last time in the early morning hours of Sunday, November 30. Originally opened in 1929 by Mary Jean Zena's father-in-law, the bar moved four times before ending up at the Second and Main Street location and coming under the care of Mary Jean's son Randy. Randy took over the day-to-day operations of the bar after his mother passed in 2000. On the last night, I spent almost the entire evening at the back of the room near the pool table. This was the spot I felt most comfortable in at Zena's. I could easily hear the bands play and watch the action on stage while waiting my turn on the table. I would spend the time with good friends or make new ones each time I was there. During a game of 8-ball with Julie Schweitzer, she told me she had been coming to Zena's for a long time. Julie said that, when she was younger, all her friends were into rock music but she preferred the blues. She used to hang around the bar until Mary Jean finally let her come in and listen to the music for the first time when Julie was thirteen years old. "She put me on a stool by the back door and said 'You don't drink anything, you don't talk to no man and if anything happens, you get the hell out.'" I'm sure there were quite a few similar stories shared that evening along with the fine music provided by the Pure Gravel Band, Lamont Gillispie & 100 Proof Blues and the Clay Street Blues All Stars. Several more musicians stopped in to take a turn on stage, including Tanita Gaines, Tim Krekel and Denny Thornbury, among others. It's sad to think of the bar closing, but local restaurant owners Scott and Sharon Risinger plan to open another blues cafe in its location. It's good to know that the blues will still be spilling out of its doors on a warm summer's night. Who knows? Maybe the moose head will still be there. Stay tuned.

**Gary Sampson**



**Photo by Gary Sampson**  
In an effort to give his opponent an even chance, owner Randy Zena uses a broom stick on the pool table



**Photo by Mike Trobaugh**  
Several patrons took to the street to show their support including Woody Chancy (of WFPK's Woodrow on the Radio), Jeanne Doak and Lynn Smith (left to right). Ever vigilant Larry Sharpe works the front door.



**Photo by Gary Sampson**

The Clay Street Blues All Stars play the final night at Zena's. Pictured are band members Kris Pickhardt, Doug Ehringer, Fuzzy Roth and Matt Swenson (left to right).



**Photo by Gary Sampson**

Harp player Denny Thornbury (far right) joins the Pure Gravel Band on stage. Also pictured are Rob Billharz, Joe DeBow, Jody Wright (behind drums) and Mary Wright (left to right).



**Photo by Jeanne Doak**

It was standing room only for the last night.



# New Music Reviews!



## **I've Been Waiting** **David Ralston** **DRI Records**

David Ralston. Name ring a bell? Probably not? However, hear this: This is a young man destined for musical greatness.

Ralston's CD "I've Been Waiting" will make you say something like "I've been waiting for this..." And this isn't just a reviewer's hype. Press and publicity materials quote none other than legendary musician/producers Delaney Bramlett and Duke Robillard, both of whom sing Ralston's praises and both of whom have produced the man's work. Robillard, guitarist extraordinaire, actually produced this one.

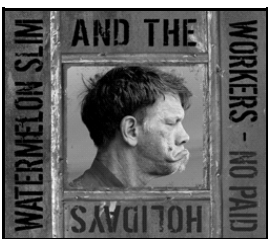
There are 13 tunes on the song list, every one a keeper, and about half of them Ralston's. His vocals, while not world-class, convey plenty of emotion; yet his words are easily understood. He sometimes strains under the feeling, but never, ever breaks. At times, Ralston takes it down to a loud raspy near-whisper. You'll find yourself wondering who he sounds like and you might come up with another obscure name: Michael Glabicki (Rusted Root).

Bruce Bears is heavily featured on piano and organ and the R & R combination (Ralston and Robillard) on guitar make this a textbook of slide and straight-up blues, although it is not indicated who is playing where or what solo or is being featured.

This CD is made up of tunes that are more melodic than most blues recordings, with many high-energy and upbeat songs. There's even a hint of funk, r&b, southern gospel and rock to make this a really enjoyable listening experience. It would also be difficult to choose tunes which really stand out because there's not a weak one among them. Suffice to say anywhere the swoopy, wicked electric slide guitar makes its presence known or where the piano ramps up to boogie speed, those tunes will of course garner the most attention.

Perhaps Ralston's former producer Bramlett sums it up best: "David is going to be a force to be reckoned with if he keeps it up...the world's going to hear a lot from him."

**Les Reynolds**



## **No Paid Holidays** **Watermelon Slim & The Workers** **Northern Blues Music NBM0047**

For fans of the relatively newer blues artists making names for themselves and of Watermelon Slim in particular, it's perhaps well known that William Homans' well-lived time on this planet included such occupations as truck driver (hauling hazardous waste), fork-lift operator, anti-war activist, sawmill operator (where he lost part of a finger), collection agent and even a stint or two as small-time criminal.

Now, established as a watermelon farmer in his relatively new home base of Oklahoma, it appears as if music has finally and firmly rooted itself as his primary career. "No Paid Holidays" is his fourth release in five years, his third with his current Workers band lineup and he has been the recipient of several blues music awards of late with no less than a dozen nominations in only the past two years.

His latest CD, on the Toronto-based Northern Blues label, mixes the raw emotion of old-time country with traditional blues and brings it into a bit more of an eclectic 21st century sound. Slim sounds his best when his throaty upper-range baritone cries out and his greasy lap slide guitar glides through a song like a revved-up motorcycle speeding along the highway. His unmistakable vocal style evidences his upbringing in both Boston and North Carolina—the southern drawl juxtaposed with the well-enunciated, educated word choice that has become his trademark.

Not only a journeyman jack-of-all-trades, Slim is a Vietnam War veteran and a member of Mensa. So his blues lyrics will not be the standard "Waal, mah woman left me," or "woke up dis mornin'" kind of stuff. This guy is a writer. He delves into the emotion of absentee parenthood with the poignant "Dad in the Distance" and turns to actually using words such as "Archetypal" in the song title for track number two. He is also clever. While producer Chris Wick likely gets and deserves much credit for the final product, Slim's "I've Got a Toothache" (no reading between the lines necessary—that's what it's about) features his slow-burn greasy slide and the thumping rhythm section of drummer Michael Newberry and bassist Cliff Belcher to simulate the heart beat that can be felt up in the aching jaw. Then there's what sounds like an autobiographical account of a pleasant childhood memory in the song "Max the Baseball Clown" to illustrate Slim's storytelling skill.

With Ronnie McMullen on electric and acoustic guitars, Slim adding some wailing blues harp, and special guests David Maxwell on keyboard and electric slide country artist Lee Roy Parnell rounding out the rest of the musical sound, there's not a weak note or song on the entire 14-tune list. And just to show the Oklahoma trucker-turned-melon-farmer can still bring it on home (and rock out some, too), there's the lightly-screaming electric blues of the opener "Blues for Howard," "Bubba's Blues," and his bluesy harp and plain-singing rendition of Laura Nyro's "And When I Die". Also, just to prove beyond all doubt that Slim is a bluesman for sure, there's the spooky acoustic slide of the closing tune "Everybody's Down on Me." In that one, Slim not only sings the blues, he IS the blues.

**Les Reynolds**





# New Music Reviews!



## **Live from Bluesville** **Fiona Boyes, Mookie Brill, Rich Del Grosso** **VizzTone Records CD-BE205**

This recording made at XM Radio Studios in July 2007, was an attempt at recapturing the energy that the three experienced at the IBC in 2007. They did no formal rehearsals, but met and recorded the entire CD live with no re-takes or dubs, in four hours. The entire CD is acoustic with only those three musicians. Fiona plays the guitar, Mookie Brill plays upright bass, and Rich Del Grosso plays mandolin. All three contribute to the vocals on the CD. I am not a big fan of mandolin in the blues although I have heard some music that I really liked. I had some reservations about this CD since a mandolin and blues don't mix for me (kind of like a Xylophone and blues) although I know some people who would disagree with me. I was pleasantly surprised on some of the songs and not surprised on others. A couple of the songs are noteworthy- Smokestack Lightning was a good cut done in an unusual manner but still retaining the essence of the song by Howlin' Wolf. Another good one is "Shotgun Blues", a Lightnin' Hopkins tune. The last tune, called "Two Legged Dog" is getting a lot of airplay on XM radio.

My favorite on the CD was "Mississippi Road", a J.B. Lenoir tune that features Fiona and her guitar and transports you to a dusty Mississippi road.

Unfortunately (remember I am not a mandolin blues fan) the rest of the songs did nothing for me. Overall this is a fair but not exceptional CD. It sounds like what it is-a few friends getting together to jam.

### **Bob Brown**



## **Gaye Without Shame** **Gaye Adegbalola** **VizzTone Records CD-HTM2120**

As a founding member of Saffire: The Uppity Blues Women, Gaye Adegbalola for a quarter century delivered an eclectic base of music which built a worldwide following of socially-conscious music lovers of all political and gender persuasions.

Regardless of your particular persuasion, blues fans will find much to enjoy in her latest release, "Gaye without Shame"--a not-too-subtle play on words which leaves no doubt as to her sexuality and which this time around focuses more narrowly on a deeper shade of blue(s).

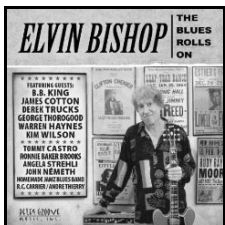
With her clever wit and lyrics and big, honey-sweet alto voice, Adegbalola chooses a mix of covers (with her own twists) and original tunes to share her life story in a CD produced by none other than slide guitarist extraordinaire Bob Margolin--who shares his own guitar skills on a number of tunes.

And speaking of slide guitar, Adegbalola's own slide is showcased for the first time in a recording and also features her first electric blues band recordings. And although it's not always specifically indicated whether it's her or Margolin you're hearing, her slide playing is pretty good.

There are no real standouts on the 18-song list (they're all good); however a few bear mentioning: Her rendition of "Honest I Do" is really nice; cut 5 (won't give away the title here) is a stylistic tribute to Elmore James' Chicago blues slide guitar; "Let It Be Me" is gorgeous and "I Ain't Ashamed" (accompanied by the Fredericksburg Freedom Singers)--the second of two bonus tracks and the album closer--is a rousing anthem to bring it all home.

The song titles alone would tip off the listener that this is a "statement" CD, although the liner notes from Adegbalola might say it a little sweeter. To paraphrase, the artist desires for her blues community to see her as she really is and to gain an understanding of her struggle to be accepted, while simultaneously showing her GLBTQ community the "universal healing power of the blues."

### **Les Reynolds**



## **The Blues Rolls On** **Elvin Bishop** **Delta Groove Music Inc. DGPCD126**

This September 2008 release by Bishop, falls on the heels of his latest successful CD, "Booty Bumpin'" On this CD, Elvin tries to lead the listener back to his roots in music and show how the Blues Rolls On from one generation to the next. He is accompanied by several big name guests on the CD including Kim Wilson, Warren Haynes, John Nemeth, Angela Strehli, Ronnie Baker Brooks, Tommy Castro, Derek Trucks, B.B. King, James Cotton, George Thorogood, Kid Anderson, and the Homemade Jamz Band.

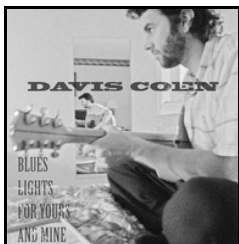
This is a far cry from his most famous hit, "Fooled Around and Fell in Love". The songs are diverse, with each of the major artists sitting in, lending a distinguishable sound. The songs were recorded at various locations between Jacksonville FL, to Clarksdale MS, to a cruise ship off the Mexican coast. There are 12 songs on the CD with various covers from Paul Butterfield (Bishop played in the Butterfield Blues Band), Clifton Chenier, Junior Wells, Jimmy Reed, to Smoky Robinson and Barry Gordy.

One original Bishop song is performed by Elvin only ("just me and my foot") and is called "Oklahoma". This song is unmistakably Elvin with his slide guitar style. Bishop is from Tulsa, and the autobiographical song tells about his coming all the way from Oklahoma to Chicago and hearing and learning from all of the great blues artists.

This CD is a good, well performed recording. If you are looking for a compilation of blues songs by the legends performing here, it is a one of a kind effort to get all of these people on one CD. This should not be considered to be an Elvin Bishop CD. It is only brought together by Bishop, although he is the only artist that performs on all of the songs. This is the blues that made Bishop, not the blues that Bishop made.

I would say that if you like any or all of the artists on this CD, you should pick it up—you won't be disappointed.

## Bob Brown



### **Blues Lights for Yours and Mine** **Davis Coen** **C&P Soundview Productions**

Blues Lights for Yours and Mine, Davis Coen's fifth release (Soundview) might not sound very familiar to even the most diehard blues aficionados. It might appear the title and the low-budget monochromatic blue artwork could even suggest a "blue-light special." Not the case here. While Coen might not be flying above too many people's radar, the eclectic bluesman proves he's got the guitar chops, songwriting skills and interpretation wisdom of more well-known artists.

While it's not quite evident just where Coen got it, the Carolina-born and-based musician has infused his latest work with a healthy dose of New Orleans-style rhythms in his spicy mix of seven covers and four original tunes. It is noted in press release materials that as a youngster Coen took trumpet lessons from an uncle and encountered the music of Louis Armstrong--so that may have had an indelible influence on his later efforts.

Vocally, Coen's slightly gritty voice is almost as "eclectic"--one might say it's Randy Newman meets Dave Matthews meets Tom Waits.

Instrumentally, the CD is well produced and Coen's guitar is prominently featured. Most of the tunes could be considered good for the car or working around the house, since many of the beat patterns are up tempo, or mid-tempo at least. Toe-tappers. Bouncy, perhaps.

A few tunes of note (aah, pun....) are the cover of "Jack of Diamonds" which features Coen's wicked, greasy electric slide guitar work, his own "Accelerated Woman," which conjures up notions of the North Mississippi All-Stars (with less ferocity and intensity), the piano-driven, toe-tapping "New Shoe Blues" (a Coen creation) and "C.C. Rider" (another cover). The latter tune might be a bit of a surprise if you're more familiar with Rory Block's fiercely percussive stomp. Coen's is much more folksy.

All-in-all, a pretty good effort.

## Les Reynolds



### **Red Top** **Liz Mandeville** **Earwig Music CD 4954**

An enticing and appealing mix of blues, soul and swing characterizes Chicago blues-belter Liz Mandeville's fourth Earwig CD. The 15-track release sports all original tunes laced with plenty of sass and pizzazz from the red-headed singer-songwriter who also shows she can also handle a decent lead and rhythm guitar.

Receiving high billing on the long list of guests is tenor saxophonist Eddie Shaw on two tracks and a host of other Chicago sessions musicians and her touring band. And just to liven things up a little, some of the musicians' names are even entertaining: Johnny Showtime plays trombone on five songs, Twist Turner pounds the drums on five and soprano Precious Jewel is one half the support vocals within the Black Roses Gospel Choir.

The music is what you'd expect from a Chicago-based group of such size and instrumentation distribution, and it lives up to its press release description. Fans of "Red Top" (her autobiographical CD title track) will certainly be pleased with the selection and flow of toe-tapping, finger-snapping, big-beat songs alongside the more seductive and slower bluesy offerings and certainly by her clear, strong voice and excellent production quality.

With the exception of the too-silly "Spanky Butt" (almost too silly to fit the set list), all the tunes are good ones. "Corner Bar Blues" is a nice 1,4,5 blues progression which has her sounding a little like Texas blueswoman Angela Strehli. The very next tune "Dog No More" is a sexy, slow snarl which takes Mandeville's voice down to her lowest ranges. "So Smart Baby" conjures up audible comparisons to Joanna Connor, another Chicago blueswoman of some note, and "Guilty of Rockin' All Night" is just what it sounds like—a party rocker featuring Shaw's wicked saxophone and Mandeville pushing her vocals to a growl.

Publicity material notes Mandeville (formerly Greeson) has been around a while—a couple of decades, actually—and has begun garnering critical acclaim in Europe as well. If this CD is any indication, "Red Top" will keep going for quite some time.

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## Les Reynolds



## So Long, Maso

By Keith S. Clements for Louisville Music News  
(reprinted with permission)

Writing a story about someone who is alive and well is a lot easier than after they are gone where you have to sadly put together the pieces from several sources. So it was with Ricky Mason, one of Louisville's best blues guitarists. All the original obituary in the Courier Journal said was "Richard Nelson Mason, passed away Thursday, January 1, 2009. Cremation was chosen" There was no clue of who he was. Six days later the details came out with a more extensive obit and picture, thanks to his stepmother, Dru Kemp. The word spread quickly throughout the brotherhood of musicians. There were over forty messages of tribute to Ricky in the Courier Journal Guest Book from musicians and friends. When I arrived at Foreman's Funeral Home in J-Town the parking was filled and the lobby and chapel were packed for the memorial service on January 10.

Lamont Gillispie and Jimmy Brown planned the service with Ricky's oldest brother, Greg. They were careful to keep it from becoming a three ring circus with so many musicians in the house. They selected folk meister, John Gage, who is a reverend, to be the minister of ceremonies. John kept the service on a spiritual track. He opened by saying, "Thanks to the music makers who bring melody and rhythm to heal the world." Alex Thomas read an impressive list of musicians Ricky had played with or opened for. Lamont and Jimmy eulogized about Ricky. Lamont told how Ricky, who had a dog named Wing Nut, loved animals. He would often bring a can of Alpo over for Lamont's dog, Maximus, and take him with Lamont's two sons, Josh and Jimmy, on walks which made an impression on his boys. Lamont has recently acquired another Pyrenees and named him Maso. Ricky and Lamont grew up together along with Bruce Lively, Dickie Durlauf, and Greg Martin which later became the heart and soul of The Stray Cats Band. Ricky's most recent job was working at Louisville Art Glass through his step brother, Ken Von Roenn, Jr., where he showed creativity in art as well as music. Lamont closed by saying "Ricky had simplicity in his music, art and life."

Jimmy talked about Ricky's strong personality and how he could push other people's buttons. "When Ricky was there, you don't know what, but something was about to happen," according to Jimmy. Ricky had a spiritual side for often the two of them would pray together before going on the bandstand. They were "spiritual beings having a human experience." Jimmy summed up Ricky's style when he said, "keep it simple and play from your heart." At the end of the service Lamont looked around at all the musicians present and said, "You could put a band together that would melt these walls." I don't think Ricky's father, Harry, and all his brothers and sisters realized what an impact he had on Louisville's musicians until that afternoon.

There was a music meltdown in honor of Ricky later that evening. Tim Krekel played at Air Devil's Inn and the Stella Vees and Hellfish performed at Stevie Ray's. The Stella Vees have rapidly matured into one of the best bands in the region since their recent personnel change. Jason Lockwood and Mark Hoekstra are fronting on guitar and harp with the backup rhythm provided by Steve Parrish and Tim Dennison on drums and bass. Soon other musicians like Mark Stein, Denny Thornberry, Mike Lynch and David Schmidt were rotating onto the stage. It was nice to see the contrasting guitar licks of Mark's percussive style mix with Jason's more melodic cords. When Hellfish took the stage Jimmy Gardner said, "With this many musicians in the audience, it looks like a pawn shop." More musicians came by to pay tribute including Lamont, Greg Martin and John Hawkins. Late in the evening when both Greg and John were performing, Jeff McCallister suggested playing "Carol," the great Chuck Berry guitar song. Jimmy Brown said "This was a moment that was meant to be for that was the first song that Ricky had taught John to play." Lamont recalled it was his band, The Homewreckers, which included Ricky, that opened Stevie Ray's in 1994.

Instead of trying to reconstruct Ricky's biography, I've chosen to gather comments and stories from various musicians who knew him. Jim Masterson gave Ricky his first and last paying gig. Jim, Steve Bradley, Chris Debiase and Kim Ritchie, were the core of the King Snakes in the mid 70s, playing at the Cherokee Pub where Bearno's is now on Bardstown Road. Both Lamont and Ricky would come by to listen and eventually joined the band. Ricky was still honing his guitar skills so Jim showed him blues turn arounds and playing more than one scale. While at a gig at Ebenezer's in New Albany gun shots were fired breaking glass and ricocheting off the walls like in a western movie. Jim hit the floor and got under the table while Ricky and the band played on. The members of the King Snakes would go off in different directions to form three bands, Red Beans and Rice, Jim Masterson Blues Band and The Stray Cats. Ricky and Lamont joined Bruce Lively, Dickie Durlauf and Jimmy Brown to become The Stray Cats. Ricky's last gig was at the Dugout when he played with Jim Masterson for a month of Saturday's a year ago.

Ricky had graduated from Atherton High School and was living in the Highlands on Speed Ave. when he first started coming around the Guitar Emporium when it opened in 1975. That's when Jimmy Brown met him and they became friends and bandmates with The Stray Cats in the late 70s. They would play at Woody's Tavern. When the band started to take off and tour, Jimmy dropped out to tend to the store which he had taken over from Bill Hawkins. The Stray Cats had played out when Lamont moved to New Orleans.

Soon Ricky, Dickie, Bruce, Steve Walls and Bill Dean started the Saints. About that time, harpman Doug Wright, wanted to get a band together for a gig. He got Ricky and Dickie and they eventually became the Bluebirds. Other musicians like Jim Rosen, Curtis Marlatt and John Burgard would come by to play. This was the first seed of the blues jams which eventually became formalized at the Rudyard Kipling with the Bluesday Tuesday Jams.

Jimmy said Ricky loved the Rolling Stones and idolized Keith Richards. Once they went to a Stones concert and Ricky got to see Richards' equipment but never met him. Jimmy has some raw tapes that were recorded at Woody's during a 1979 New Year's Eve party with Greg Martin and Ricky playing together that sound like what Mick Taylor and Keith Richards wanted to get to. Jimmy remembered there was a period when guitarists would come into the Emporium who wanted to play just like Ricky Mason, not a national musician but a local one. Jimmy said, "His fire, passion and what he emoted from this guitar affected you when you heard it. He had the personality to go with it. He was the Paul Newman of rock."

When Jimmy was celebrating the Guitar Emporium's 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2005 he arranged for Duke Robillard to come to Louisville to play. Ricky completely tore it up that night. A few days later Duke sent Jimmy an e-mail that said in big bold letters, "Jimmy, please tell Ricky Mason no matter what the does KEEP PLAYING HIS GUITAR."

Steve Walls first met Ricky when they were both nineteen and hired to back up a guy who did an Elvis Presley tribute show. They became friends, stayed in touch and six years later formed the Saints with Dickie Durlauf. Steve wrote in Ricky's obituary guest book that, "We experienced many magical nights together when the rhythm section was driving and Rick was playing incredible solos over the top of the



rhythm section, pushing the crowd into frenzy of movement on the dance floor. At those times I would look over at Rick and he would look back at me with his classic Rick grin and I knew life and music would never get better than being in that moment. It was truly magical and inspiring."


Mark Hoekstra first heard Ricky at the Cherokee Pub in 1989 when Ricky was with the Homewreckers. Mark thought "why would Ronnie Earl be playing in a place like this." After Mark left West Side Heat and touring briefly with the Legendary Blues Band, he snuck out of Chicago and returned to Louisville in 1993 determined to start a band with Ricky. The Little Dippers was born at a New Year's Party in 1993 with Mike Williams and Gary Grizzle providing the rhythm. There were several special moments during their short life like playing at Shenanigan's during the 1994 Derby where the band and the crowd became one. Mark said Ricky was smokin' at the 1995 Strasensfest on Main St. Mark would acknowledge Ricky to the crowd after his blazing solos which made Ricky mad saying, "don't call my name on stage." That was Ricky, who felt the music is bigger than one individual on stage. When Ricky was recuperating from a bad bicycle accident at the Lava House three years ago, Mark would have long talks with him. Ricky showed Mark stuff on the guitar he never knew and he came to realize that Ricky was so much more than just a musician.

The two Ricky's, Feathers and Mason, first met at the Guitar Emporium on Baxter Avenue when Mason was playing with the Saints. Feathers could only play two cords and offered to pay Mason to show him some Rolling Stones licks. Mason said "don't pay me anything just introduce me to one your punk rock girl friends." Mason didn't have a lot of patience for lessons so he stood behind Feathers holding his guitar in front of him and moved his fingers plunkity plunk. Mason would join Feathers' band, Bodeco, in the mid 90s. The two guitarists supported each other to establish a strong, simple melody line and rhythm. They would work together to develop original material for new songs. "Life Without Parole" became a symbol of their friendship. Mason once said, "Your body is like a cage, you're never free." This phrase became a condition they were both in. "Life Without Parole" and "Wrong Wrong Wrong" are the only two cuts that they ever recorded together on Bodeco's most recent CD, "Crazy Wild." Feathers felt Mason had a natural ability to tinker with mechanical things and that transferred into his guitar. Feathers eloquently summed up Mason's tragic passing saying, "Ricky loved life so much that he loved the life out of living."

I called Greg Martin in Glasgow, KY as he was restringing his Fender Stratocaster and preparing to leave for the Delbert McClinton Blues Cruise to play in Jimmy Hall's band. Greg started jamming with The Stray Cats in 1977 after Jimmy Brown invited him to come and play with the band at Woody's. It was the first time Greg experienced interaction with the crowd and was influenced by Rick's Chuck Berry style. Rick was deeper into the blues than Greg at the time. Greg said, "Ricky was a dangerous musician with a barb wire guitar that could cut you. He could play the daylight out of Chicago blues." They last played together at Jimmy's 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration. Jimmy and Greg echoed similar thoughts when Greg said, "some musicians work hard to play well, then there is Ricky who was born with the God given talent to play the blues and give it back to all of us." When Ricky's guitar resonated with The Stray Cats, The Saints, The Bluebirds, The Little Dippers, The Homewreckers and Bodeco, he inspired a generation of local guitarists who aspired to sound like him. He was known as the "King of Bardstown Rd."

Ricky's legacy will be perpetuated. A Blues Jam Benefit Concert in his name is in the works. This annual event will raise money to be put in a trust fund to buy a new guitar for an aspiring young blues musician.

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	Stevie Ray's - Open Mic Night 9 PM Sol Aztecas - Big Poppa Stampley 630 TeeDee's Bluegrass Progressive Club - TD & the Scandalous Band 8PM	Lisa's Oak Street Lounge - The Muji Fuji 830 - 1230 \$2 Stevie Ray's - Blues Jam 9PM	O'Neill's Irish Pub (Lex)- Blues Jam 7 - 11 O'Shea's Irish Pub - KBS Board Meeting 7 PM The Lounge- Blues Jam 9PM Zeppelin Café - Tim Krekel (solo) 8 - 11	International Blues Chal- lenge - (Memphis TN) Semi-Finals Lisa's Oak Street Lounge - Open Mic 9 - 1 Longshot Tavern - Blues Jam 930 Stevie Ray's - The Boogie Men 9 PM \$5	Blue River Cafe (Milltown IN) - Hambone 7-10 Gerstle's - King Sonic 10 PM International Blues Challenge (Memphis TN) Semi Finals Jim Porter's - Bella Blue Band/Blue Meridian 930 \$5 KY BBQ Co - Tim Krekel & Friends 8-10 R Place Pub - Robbie Bartlett 10-2 Spectator's Sports Bar - Rusty & The Oil Cans 930 Stevie Ray's - King Bees 730 /BF Burt & The Instigators 1030 \$5 SVL's Lounge - Eric Taylor's All Stars The Lounge - The Lounge Band 930 Unity Church (Woodsongs Coffeehouse) - Big Poppa Stampley 7 PM	Brown Bag - Tony Deely 9 PM Brown Theatre - Blue Apple Players Benefit Lamont Gillespie & 100 Proof Blues 7 PM International Blues Challenge (Memphis TN) Finals Jim Porter's - Bella Blue Band/Blue Meridian 930 Rubbie's - Bluesdown 9 PM Seidentaden's - Honey Highway Country & Blues 10PM Spectator's Sports Bar - Rusty & The Oil Cans 930 Stevie Ray's - King Bees 730 /BF Burt & The Instigators 1030 \$5 The Dame (Lex) - JJ Grey & MOFRO 8 PM \$18 The Lounge - The Lounge Band 930 Third Base Tavern (Jeff) - Holt Bros Band 1030 \$5
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
	Stevie Ray's - Open Mic Night 9 PM Sol Aztecas - Big Poppa Stampley 630 TeeDee's Bluegrass Progressive Club - TD & the Scandalous Band 8PM	Lisa's Oak Street Lounge - The Muji Fuji 830 - 1230 \$2 Stevie Ray's - Blues Jam 9PM	O'Neill's Irish Pub (Lex)- Blues Jam 7 - 11 The Lounge- Blues Jam 9PM Zeppelin Café - Tim Krekel (solo) 8 - 11	Jim Porter's - Legendary Shaek Shakers 8 PM \$12/\$15 Lisa's Oak Street Lounge - Open Mic 9 - 1 Longshot Tavern - Blues Jam 930 Stevie Ray's - The Leisure Thieves 9 PM \$5	Horseshoe Casino (Elizabeth, IN) - Bella Blue Band 9 PM Jeff Ruby's - Robbie Bartlett 930 - 130 Jim Porter's - Clay Street Blues All Stars 930 \$5 KY BBQ Co - Tim Krekel & Friends 8-10 Natasha's (Lex)-Stella Vees 11 PM Rocky's (Jeff) - Jimmy Davis Band Stevie Ray's - Sue O'Neil & Blues Seville 730 / The Predators 1030 \$5 The Lounge - The Lounge Band 930 Wicks Pizza (Baxter) - Hambone 10 PM	Electric Lady (Madison IN) - Jimmy Davis Band Headliners - Tim Krekel & TKO 9 PM \$15 Horseshoe Casino (Elizabeth, IN) - Bella Blue Band 9 PM Jeff Ruby's - Robbie Bartlett 930 - 130 Jim Porter's - Clay Street Blues All Stars 930 \$5 Jimmy's on the River (Jeff) - Rusty & the Oil Cans 10-2 Stevie Ray's - Sue O'Neil & Blues Seville 730 / The Predators 1030 \$5 The Lounge - The Lounge Band 930
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Louisville Palace - BB King and Buddy Guy 730 \$60/\$80	Stevie Ray's - Open Mic Night 9 PM Sol Aztecas - Big Poppa Stampley 630 TeeDee's Bluegrass Progressive Club - TD & the Scandalous Band 8PM	Lisa's Oak Street Lounge - The Muji Fuji 830 - 1230 \$2 Stevie Ray's - Blues Jam 9PM	O'Neill's Irish Pub (Lex)- Blues Jam 7 - 11 The Lounge- Blues Jam 9PM	Lisa's Oak Street Lounge - Open Mic 9 - 1 Longshot Tavern - Blues Jam 930	Clifton's Pizza - Juggernaut Jug Band 830 Fraternal Order of Eagles (J'own KY) - The Fabulous Gators 8-11 Horseshoe Casino (Elizabeth, IN)- Jimmy Davis Band Jeff Ruby's - PC and the Final Verdict Jim Porter's - TBA Smvrna Inn - Holt Bros Band 930 Stevie Ray's - Velveeta Jones 730 / Voodoo Lounge Band 1030 \$5 SVL's Lounge - TBA The Lounge - The Lounge Band 930	Clifton's Pizza - Juggernaut Jug Band 830 Fraternal Order of Eagles (J'own KY) - The Fabulous Gators 8-11 Horseshoe Casino (Elizabeth, IN)- Jimmy Davis Band Jeff Ruby's - PC and the Final Verdict Jim Porter's - TBA Rubbie's - Rusty & The Oil Cans 930 - 130 Stevie Ray's - Roper Crust 730 / Voodoo Lounge Band 1030 \$5 The Lounge - The Lounge Band 930 Tink's Pub - Robbie Bartlett 1030 - 130
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
Stevie Ray's - HOF Induction with Hellfish, da Muddcats, Travelin' Mojo's, King Bees and Sue O'Neil and Blue Seville	Stevie Ray's - Open Mic Night 9 PM Sol Aztecas - Big Poppa Stampley 630 TeeDee's Bluegrass Progressive Club - TD & the Scandalous Band 8PM	Lisa's Oak Street Lounge - The Muji Fuji 830 - 1230 \$2 Stevie Ray's - Blues Jam 9PM	O'Neill's Irish Pub (Lex)- Blues Jam 7 - 11 The Lounge- Blues Jam 9PM	Lisa's Oak Street Lounge - Open Mic 9 - 1 Longshot Tavern - Blues Jam 930 Stevie Ray's - Lamont Gillespie & 100 Proof Blues 9 PM \$5	Blue River Cafe (Milltown IN) - Tyrone Cotton 7-10 Captains Qtrs- Rusty & The Oil Cans 7-11 Jim Porter's - TBA Stevie Ray's - Clay Street Blues All Stars 730 / V-Groove 10:30 PM \$5 SVL's Lounge - TBA The Lounge - The Lounge Band 930	Jeff Ruby's - Robbie Bartlett 930-100 Jim Porter's - TBA Pucker's - The Yard Dogs 930 Stevie Ray's - The Boogie Men 730 / V-Groove 1030 The Lounge - The Lounge Band 930

**Kentuckiana Blues Calendar  
February 2009**

**Kentuckiana Club Index—Show dates/times subject to change. It's a good idea to call and check before hitting the road!**

- 60 West Bistro & Martini Bar - 939 Shelbyville Rd - 719-9717  
 Air Devils Inn - 2802 Taylorsville Rd - 454-4443  
 Ais Bar - 143 Jefferson St - Lexington KY - 859-255-3354  
 American Legion - 1930 McDonald Ln New Albany - 945-1944  
 Applebee's-3030 Grant Line, New Albany-812-941-1600  
 Azur - 3070 Lakecrest Cir - Lexington KY - 859-296-1007  
 BBC - 3929 Shelbyville Rd - 899-7070  
 BBC - Theater Square - 660 S. 4th - 568-2224  
 Bearmo's - 299 Lafayette Sta - Floyds Knobs IN 812-923-4600  
 Bearmo's by the Bridge - 131 W Main - 584-7437  
 Bearmo's - 1318 Bardstow n Rd - 456-4556  
 Billiard Club of Louisville - 5404 Bardstow n Rd - 491-3810  
 Blue Mule - 10301 Taylorsville Rd - 240-0051  
 Blue River Café-128 W Main, Milltown IN-812-633-7510  
 Brendan's - 3921 Shelbyville Rd - 895-1212  
 Brown Bag Deli & Pub - 2100 S Preston St - 635-6747  
 Brown Theatre - 315 W Broadway - 584-7777  
 Cal's Place - 1001 E St Catherine St - 634-3917  
 Captains Quarters - 5700 Captains Quarters Rd - 228-1651  
 Chatters - 2735 S Hustibourne Pkwy - 499-6656  
 Cheapside B&G - 131 Cheapside - Lexington KY - 859-254-0046  
 Connor's Place - 207 E Main St - New Albany IN - 812-944-0207  
 Creekers Bar & Grill - 6330 Bardstow n Rd - 762-0370  
 Dutch's Tavern - 3922 Shelbyville Rd - 895-9004  
 Electric Lady - 202 Main Street - Madison, IN 812-265-3390  
 Eva Mae's Creekside Inn - 6313 River Rd - 228-2882  
 Filson Historical Society - 1310 S 3rd St - 635-5083  
 Flanagan's - 934 Baxter Ave - 585-3211  
 Fraternal Order of Eagles - 3501 College Dr - J'town - 267-9982  
 Galt House - 140 N Fourth St - 589-5200  
 G. Busy Blues Room - 1474 Anniston Dr - Lex KY - 859-299-7710  
 Gerstie's - 3801 Frankfort Ave - 899-3609  
 Headliners - 1386 Lexington Rd - 584-8088  
 Horseshoe Casino - Elizabeth, IN - 866-676-SHOE  
 Incredible Dave's - 9236 Westport Rd - 426-4790  
 Jeff Ruby's - 325 W Main St - 562-2789  
 Jimmy's on the River - 100 W Riverside Dr - Jeff IN - 812-282-2500  
 Jim Porter's - 2345 Lexington Rd - 452-9531

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