Blues Artist of the Year (Male)
- Cedric Burnside
- Bobby Rush
- Lurrie Bell
- Buddy Guy
- John Primer
- Curtis Salgado
- Keb' Mo'
- Taj Mahal
- Toronzo Cannon
- Kenny Neal

Blues Artist of the Year (Female)
- Trudy Lynn
- Janiva Magness
- Ruthie Foster

Shemekia Copeland
Diunna Greenleaf
Rhiannon Giddens
Dorothy Moore
Valerie June
Sharon Lewis
Thornetta Davis

Most Outstanding Blues Singer
- William Bell
- Buddy Guy
- Diunna Greenleaf
- John Németh
- Shemekia Copeland
- Irma Thomas
- Wee Willie Walker

All ballots must be received by July 15, 2017. Vote only once in each category. In the categories for recordings, only albums with a 2016 release date are eligible. All ballots must include a valid e-mail address CLICK the VOTE BUTTON to go to the LIVING BLUES web site
Valerie June
Trudy Lynn
Johnny Rawls

Most Outstanding Musician (Guitar)
Lurrie Bell
Duke Robillard
Joe Louis Walker
Buddy Guy
Lil' Buck Sinegal
Jimmy Burns
Toronzo Cannon
Jerron "Blind Boy" Paxton
Billy Flynn
Ronnie Baker Brooks

Most Outstanding Musician (Harmonica)
Harmonica Hinds
Bob Corritore
Billy Branch
Charlie Musselwhite
Phil Wiggins
Charlie Sayles
Sugar Blue
Omar Coleman
Harmonica Shah
Pierre Lacocque

Most Outstanding Musician (Keyboard)
Kenny "Blues Boss" Wayne
Henry Gray
Eden Brent
Marcia Ball
Jim Pugh

Ironing Board Sam
David Maxwell
Barrelhouse Chuck
Victor Wainwright
Mitch Woods

Best Live Performer
Super Chikan
Taj Mahal
Bobby Rush
Lil' Ed and the Blues Imperials
Buddy Guy
Ruthie Foster
Toronzo Cannon
Victor Wainwright
The Cedric Burnside Project
Mr. Sipp

Best Blues Album of 2016 (New Recordings)
Toronzo Cannon - The Chicago Way - Alligator
Bobby Rush - Porcupine Meat - Rounder
Golden State Lone Star Blues Revue - Golden State Lone Star Blues Revue - Electro-Fi
Curtis Salgado - The Beautiful Lowdown - Alligator
Johnny Rawls - Tiger in a Cage - Catfood
Lil' Ed and the Blues Imperials - The Big Sound of Lil' Ed and the Blues Imperials - Alligator
Lurrie Bell - Can't Shake This Feeling - Delmark
William Bell - This Is Where I Live - Stax
Kenny Neal - Bloodline - Cleopatra Blues
Kenny "Blues Boss" Wayne - Jumpin' & Boppin' - Stony Plain
**Best Blues Album of 2016 (Reissue Recordings)**

B. B. King - The Complete RPM-Kent Recording Box: The Life, Times, and the Blues of B.B. in All His Glory - P-Vine Records

Magic Sam Blues Band - Black Magic - Delmark


B. B. King - Here's One You Didn't Know About - Ace Records

Ike & Tina Turner - The Complete Pompeii Recordings 1968-1969 - Goldenlane


Floyd Dixon - Hey Bartender! His Very Best 1949-1959 - Jasmine

**Best Blues DVD of 2016**

Sherman Robertson - Takin' You to Texas - JSP Records / Blues Archive

Jimmy Dawkins - West Side Chicago Blues - JSP Records / Blues Archive

David "Honeyboy" Edwards - I'm Gonna Tell You Somethin' That I Know - R.B.I. Media / Pro Sho Bidness

Phil Guy - My Blues, Baby - JSP Records / Blues Archive

**Best Blues Book of 2016**

Sam Phillips: The Man Who Invented Rock 'n' Roll - by Peter Guralnick - Little, Brown

Murray Talks Music: Albert Murray on Jazz and Blues - by Albert Murray, edited by Paul Devlin - The University of Minnesota Press

Waiting for Buddy Guy: Chicago Blues at the Crossroads - by Alan Harper - University of Illinois Press

Slim Harpo: Blues King Bee of Baton Rouge - by Martin Hawkins - Louisiana State University Press

Way Down in Louisiana: Clifton Chenier, Cajun, Zydeco, and Swamp Pop Music - by Todd Mouton - University of Louisiana at Lafayette Press
01 JULIAN PIPER @ WOODBURYSTOCK FESTIVAL, HTTP://WWW.BLUESBURY.CO.UK/BLUESBURSTOCK_2017.HTML
01 JUNKO SHAKERS @ THE PLATFORM TAVERN, SOTON,
03 JULIAN PIPER @ OLD SHIP AROUND, Minehead,
04 DEBBIE BOND @ WORTHING PIER, SOUTHERN PAVILION, BN11 3PX,
04 STAN'S BLUES JAM @ THE THOMAS TRIPP, 10 WICK LANE, CHRISTCHURCH BH23 1HX
06 GORDON HASKELL + HANNAH'S YARD (TIMELESS TOUR 2017) @ CAMBERLEY THEATRE, KNOLL ROAD, CAMBERLEY, SURREY, HTTPS://WWW.GORDONHASKELL.COM/SHOWS
07 GORDON HASKELL + HANNAH'S YARD (TIMELESS TOUR 2017) @ THE CINNAMON CLUB, THE FIRS, ALTRINCHAM, HTTPS://WWW.GORDONHASKELL.COM/SHOWS
07 TIM PAYNE'S PLATFORM POSSE @ THE PLATFORM TAVERN, SOTON,
07 ELMORE GOES ELECTRIC @ THE HAWTHORNES, GLASTONBURY
08 FREE'S COMPANY @ THE PLATFORM TAVERN, SOTON,
08 RIVERSIDE BLUES BAND @ THE BEGGARS FAIR- THE TIPSY PIG, 45 LATIMER ST, ROMSEY SO51 8DF - 12 NOON TO 12.45PM,
10 HILLFOLK NOIR @ BRIDGE INN, TOPSHAM,
10 BLUES AT THE BRIDGE @ THE BRIDGE INN, TOPSHAM, OPEN MIC: ACOUSTIC ONLY. START 8.15
11 STAN'S BLUES JAM @ THE DEAN PARK INN, 41 WIMBORNE ROAD, BOURNEMOUTH BH2 6NB - FREE ENTRY - 8.30PM - 11.00PM
13 FAMILY @ THE PLATFORM TAVERN, SOTON,
13 THE BRIXHAM BLUES SECOND THURSDAY (BBT2) @ MARITIME INN, KING STREET, BRIXHAM,
14 SUNFLOWER @ THE PLATFORM TAVERN, SOTON,
14 ACOUSTIC BLUES, OPEN MIC BRANKSOME RAILWAY HOTEL, 428 POOLE ROAD, POOLE BH12 1DQ
15 MJ WHIRLPOOL @ PLATFORM TAVERN, SOTON,
18 OYSTERCATCHERS BLUES NIGHT@ THE OYSTERCATCHERS CAFE, NORTHUMBERLAND PLACE, TEIGNMOUTH, OPEN MIC: ACOUSTIC ONLY. START 8.30 CLOSE 11:00. FREE ADMISSION. PARKING CLOSE BY.
20 JINDER @ PLATFORM TAVERN, SOTON,
21 TEED UP @ PLATFORM TAVERN, SOTON,
21 STOMPIN' DAVE'S BLUES3 @ FOREST ARTS, NEW MILTON
21 BLUESMAN MIKE FRANCIS - UPTON BLUES FESTIVAL, WORCS UK
22 STEAMER @ UPTON BLUES FESTIVAL, CAMPING FIELD STAGE, 7.00PM - 8.00PM UPTON UPON SEVERN, WORCS WR8 OPB (ENTRY WITH CAMPING WRISTBAND), HTTPS://WWW.REVERBNATION.COM/STEAMER234,,,1,THISTLE,,,,,
22 BACKWATER ROLL @ PLATFORM TAVERN, SOTON, 9PM
22 SHOWCASE @ PLATFORM TAVERN, SOTON, 15:00
23 STEAMER @ UPTON BLUES FESTIVAL, CAMPING FIELD STAGE, 1.00PM - 2.00PM UPTON UPON SEVERN, WORCS WR8 OPB (ENTRY WITH CAMPING WRISTBAND)
25 BLUES FOLK JAM AND OPEN MIC @ PLATFORM TAVERN, SOTON,, 26 8:30PM - 11:00PM STAN'S BLUES JAM 2 @ THE OWL'S NEST, 196 CHRISTCHURCH ROAD, WEST PARLEY, FERNDOWN, BOURNEMOUTH BH22 8SS FREE ENTRY
27 SARAH HARRISON BAND @ PLATFORM TAVERN, SOTON,
27 HAMILTON LOOMIS @ WORTHING PIER, SOUTHERN PAVILION, BN11 3PX,
29 PAPERTRAINS @ PLATFORM TAVERN, SOTON,
01/08/2017, STAN'S BLUES JAM @ THE THOMAS TRIPP, 10 WICK LANE, CHRISTCHURCH BH23 1HX
Obituary: Greg Allman

Gregg described his feelings about his life when he said in an interview: “Music is my life’s blood. I love music, I love to play good music, and I love to play music for people who appreciate it. And when it’s all said and done, I’ll go to my grave and my brother will greet me, saying, ‘Nice work, little brother—you did all right.’ I must have said this a million times, but if I died today, I have had me a blast.”

Greg Allman, born Gregory LeNoir Allman on December 8, 1947 was, with his brother Duane, a founding member of the influential Southern rock band The Allman Brothers. He passed away quietly at his home on May 27, 2017. The Allman Brothers have been shaped and drove rock and roll since 1969, and Gregg’s songwriting and music were pivotal to the band’s success. The Allman Brothers band pioneered the sounds that define Southern and jam rock, and without Gregg’s songwriting and influence the band and genre would never have become so popular.

Duane was killed in a motorcycle accident in 1971. Nevertheless, the band continued although dogged by another death in 1972 when the band’s bass player, Berry Oakley, was also killed in a motorcycle accident very close to the location of Duane’s accident.

Greg managed to maintain a solo as well as participating in various reformings of the Allman Brothers. He was married 7 times Allman’s wives were Shelley Kay Jefts, Janice Blair, Cher, Julie Bindas,[187] J. P. Galiana, and Stacey Fountain. In 2012, he announced his engagement to Shannon Williams on the Piers Morgan show. They married in February 2017.

Allman had five children:

- son Michael Sean Allman (born 1966), from a relationship with former waitress Mary Lynn Green;
- son Devon Allman (born 1972), lead singer of Honeytribe, from his marriage to Shelley Kay Jefts;
- son Elijah Blue Allman (born 1976), lead singer of Deadsy, from his marriage to Cher;
- daughter Delilah Island Allman, from his marriage to Julie Bindas; and
- daughter Layla Brooklyn Allman (born 1993), lead singer of Picture Me Broken, from a relationship with radio journalist Shelby Blackburn.

Greg Allman, who was diagnosed with Hepatitis C in 2008 developed liver cancer and had a liver transplant in 2010. Dogged by ill-health, Allman died of complications from liver cancer.
IM: I want to talk to you about this new album of yours, I’m very interested in it. It’s been some time since you did one. Why has it been, a couple of years I guess? Why has it been such a delay?

DW: I’m not sure, really. Well, the last one came out in 2015. We made this one in 2016 and then I wanted to licence it, to a record label preferably. Then VizzTone came on board and said that they were keen to put it out and they could do that this year so….yeah, I don’t feel that there has been a delay because I’ve been touring and writing and recording the whole time but it’s just taken that long.

IM: How much of this stuff is your own music?

DW: Um, most of it. I’m trying to think now. There’s maybe three covers, and the rest are originals so the majority is my material.

IM: And I gather that it was done in the studio but with a whole band. Is that right?

DW: Yeah, I wanted to capture something live and so it’s releasing on CD and DVD as a kind of special edition set. There’ll be a vinyl as well, later on. But I wanted to just capture a live recording basically.

IM: Tell me something about the band. Will, of course, your brother, is on harmonica. Who else have you got in the band?

DW: Victoria Smith on bass, who I tour with a lot, I love Vicky. Who else is there...I’ve got Alan Taylor on drums who I’ve known for a long time, he’s toured with a lot of people now, Ben Paul and so on. Gregory Coulson on organ and piano who...I love his playing, he’s really something else. He used to tour with The Selecter....

IM: Oh right, OK, yes.

DW: But now he does his own thing, he’s a great front man as well, so it was really good to have him on board. And I’ve got backing singers, there’s a cellist on there. Yeah, all sorts. Is that everyone? Percussion, Jack Bazzani, an Italian percussionist.

IM: Are most of these local Southern England people, if not Brighton?

DW: Um, OK, so Jack’s in Italy but there are quite a lot of Brightonians on there as well. I lecture at BIMM, which is Britain Ireland Modern Music Institute. I lecture at the Brighton one which means I’ve got to know a lot of great musicians from the tutors there.

IM: Excellent.

DW: So, they’re all on board with backing vocals. Yeah, Vicky has been in Brighton as long as I have. We met when we were both students when we were eighteen and we’re in our thirties now. So, a lot of Brighton musicians on it.
IM: Is the place where you do your lecturing, teaching, is that where you got your degree from? You’ve got a degree in vocal arts or something or other?

DW: Yeah, that’s where I got my degree from and then I teach music history and vocals there now when I’m not on tour. But it’s good because equally if I say to them “I’ve got a three month tour, I’m off” they say “It’s fine, off you go!” (laughs)

IM: That’s absolutely terrific, spread the word, that’s what I say!

DW: Yeah (chuckles)

IM: Now tell me something about how you go about writing a song. Do you have ideas in your head before you sit down or do you compose the music on your guitar or what?

DW: I tend to compose guitar and vocals at the same time and normally when I’m feeling emotional. Not necessarily upset emotional, maybe really happy or nostalgic, you know, some kind of strong emotion. I think my favourite song on the new record is about my grandad and it’s called My Old Man and it’s just kind of in his memory, really, and tells his story. It’s all from the heart and it’s all personal stories shared.

IM: OK, that’s absolutely fabulous. Did it take you a long time to record the album?

DW: No, we did...because it was all live and because it’s my live band plus a few extras, we captured it pretty much in two days. We did...the vinyl is kind of the two sides of Dani Wilde live at Brighton Road. So on one side you’ve got the acoustic session, which was the first session that we did and on the other side we’ve got the electric session. Really the only reason that completing it took so long is because then I took a while with the mixing. And then it was mastered by John Astley who...I love the way that he masters things, he takes things that sound....I mean, my records sound....I liked it before it was mastered but by the time he finished with it it sounded a million dollars, you know, and he’s worked with Norah Jones and Clapton and Led Zeppelin and Toto, all sorts.....Peter Gabriel, all sorts of people. You could really hear the impact that his mastering had on their recording as well.

IM: One of the two tracks you sent out, Glorious Day I think it’s called, I think it’s absolutely fabulous, but where did the gospel bit at the end come from? Was that planned or did you suddenly do it or what?

DW: Yeah, it was something that...because I’d been gigging the song for a while without doing the gospel bit at the end, but when I knew we were going to record it in the studio, I’d actually been listening to gospel music, I’d been teaching gospel music in fact at the college I teach at, and I was walking home and I think...you know when you’re walking and the rhythm of your feet starts to create a rhythm?

IM: Yeah, yeah

DW: And you get ideas musically in your head, that happened and I thought “Ooh, I can hear what will work perfectly at the end of that song. So the first time I’d ever played it that way was in the studio. Yeah, I’m pleased with that. And Faye Streak who was one of the backing singers on the recording, she’s actually a successful Christian gospel artist who’s had a Christmas number one in the Christian gospel charts.

IM: Oh really? I do think that addition at the end is absolutely fabulous. It suggests to me that maybe you ought to do a gospel album!
DW: Yeah, I love gospel music. I mean, I love artists like Patty Griffin who…she’s Americana but she’s kind of really gospel meets blues meets country, all pooled into one and I love artists who do that. Ray Charles, I guess, is the same.

IM: Now what about the song Deeper Than Black? That’s one of yours, I take it?

DW: Yep.

IM: Absolutely fabulous. With the most tremendous harmonica solo from Will.

DW: Yeah, I know, I was lucky.

IM: It makes my hair stand on end, it’s so good.

DW: Yeah, he’s phenomenal. I mean, my brother’s always been an amazing musician but he still just amazes me every year, he becomes more creative and, you know...not just on harmonica but he’s a brilliant vocalist, songwriter, guitar player as well and he wrote one of my album tracks for me as well for this record. So yeah, I just feel really lucky to have him there because, you know, we don’t tour together as much as we used to because he’s doing so well with his own band. So yeah, it was good.

IM: Now, you’re probably aware that there is no British Blues Awards this year. How do you feel about that?

DW: You know what? I wasn’t aware! I don’t know. Whilst I am honoured to have won best vocal at the British Blues Awards I’ve always felt strange about it because I just don’t feel that music is really a competition, I don’t feel it should be a competition. What I love about music is that my favourite artist might be your favourite artist but actually your favourite artist might be somebody else and I might get that or I might not. That doesn’t mean one of us is wrong or the other’s right, it just means there’s something for everybody. And whilst I have a lot of respect for many of the artists who have won awards and been nominated in the Blues Awards, there’s also a lot of blues singers who have never been in any of the categories who I think should’ve been and for some reason aren’t so...I don’t know. I don’t think we need awards, I think we just need music. I don’t think we need to be in competition! (both laugh)

IM: That’s a wonderful thought. It’s not running, incidentally, because the people that run it can’t make it secure at the moment. They’re having problems with people gaining access and fiddling the voting.

DW: Oh wow. OK. Yeah.

IM: So it’s not going to take place this year. Let’s hope it will be back again next year. I do tend to feel a little bit like you do about awards but on the other hand, for people like me and my colleagues that do radio shows, it’s very handy to have some nominees in order to play music on air!

DW: And I like it from the community’s perspective, it’s nice that we have a tight-knit blues community in England and internationally and I do think that the British Blues Awards are all part of that supportive community and that side of it I like.

IM: Yeah, yeah. Now you quite clearly love living in Brighton and working in Brighton. You’ve recorded this in Brighton, your label is called Bri-Tone.

DW: Yeah, Bri-Tone records, yeah.

IM: Why do you like Brighton so much?
DW: It’s just a really vibey, arty, wonderful place to be and I think, having toured in lots of different places, it makes me appreciate Brighton even more. For example, I’m very lucky to have toured in Russia and to have gigged in Moscow and played on radio stations over there, but you also realise that you don’t have the same kind of freedom of speech or freedom to express yourself in many countries as you do here, and Brighton is the gay capital, we’ve got a massive transgender community and hand-in-hand with that goes the arty community and the music community and the music scene. In fact, all of my favourite cities tend to be gay capitals, not because they are gay capitals but because that always seems to go hand in hand with fantastic art and music and expression. So probably Brighton, San Francisco, Amsterdam, Toronto, they’re all my favourite cities, yeah.

IM: Yeah, yeah. This is the first album that you’ve actually produced yourself, is that right?

DW: Yeah.

IM: How did you find the experience?

DW: I really enjoyed it. I felt it was time because I’ve worked with a lot of producers who I’ve really learned a lot from. Mostly Stuart Dixon and Mike Vernon really taught me how to kind of get my production hat on, so to speak. And this time was the first time I felt I had a strong enough vision for what I wanted and knew how to communicate that, whereas before I felt that I should let somebody who has the experience already do that for me.

IM: I presume that you’ll be going out promoting this album before very long?

DW: Yeah.

IM: Have you got plans for that?

DW: Yep, definitely. In the UK, we’re not doing quite so much at the moment but we really will push it in the UK next year. This year is all about Europe, really. A lot in Germany. But yeah, it’s keeping busy and there are some UK dates on the website and there will be more, but yeah, Germany is the big upcoming tour.

IM: What about going back to the States again?

DW: Yeah, well that’s on the cards as well, especially now I’ve signed to an American label so we’re just sorting out the booking agencies and so on now, so that will have to be next year because they book that far ahead. But that’s partly why I really wanted to be on an American label, for a few reasons. One, because Vizz-Tone, I love so many of their artists and it’s Muddy Waters’ guitar player Bob Margolin’s label, which is super cool. But yeah, I would like to get back out to America.

IM: We’ve talked already about Glorious Day, which I do think is an absolutely fabulous tune, but I take it that the introductory acoustic guitar work is yourself, is that right?

DW: Yeah, yeah.

IM: Dani, it is absolutely beautiful, I love it. I really think it’s absolutely terrific.

DW: Thank you very much.

IM: Where do you expect to be, shall we say, in five years time? I don’t mean physically, I mean as an artist.

DW: Hmm. Who knows, really. I mean, so far...this album is definitely my best album to date, it’s the one I’m most proud of. But I never seem to know what I’m going to do next because you just do what you feel and that depends on what life throws at you, the kind of songs you end up writing. So I’m gonna continue to write and record and tour and travel but in regards to the music, you know, I’d imagine that blues with that gospel country soul influence. I don’t want to ever pick between acoustic and electric, I love playing both so
that’s what this album kind of makes a statement about really, it’s half electric half acoustic. So the same thing I guess but hopefully improving all the time.

IM: Incidentally, I did notice some excellent bass playing on the Deeper Than Black album. Who is that?

DW: Victoria Smith.

IM: Really?

DW: She tours with The Ramonas and she was part of our Girls with Guitars group after Cassie Taylor left.

IM: You’re reminding me now. I think that she was with you when you did a gig in Topsham when you were with Joanne Shaw-Taylor.

DW: Maybe. I’m not sure, actually.

IM: It doesn’t matter, I’m pretty sure that I seem to vaguely remember. Anyway, doesn’t matter.

DW: (chuckles) I think that might have been before but...no, I think that was probably before I would’ve started working with her but maybe...I can’t think, too many gigs! (both laugh)

IM: Have you got any big festivals or anything coming up in the near future?

DW: Umm, well we’re doing an album launch at a festival where myself and my brother are the headlining band and it’s another one out in Germany coming up.

IM: OK

DW: We’ve got Edinburgh Blues Festival coming up in July so that’ll be a lovely one, and that one we’re doing acoustic, actually. Myself and my brother are touring as an acoustic act called The Wildes which is really good fun because we share all of the lead vocals and I play guitar and my brother’s harmonica and stomp box as well so it’s a mixture of some ballads but also up-tempo foot-stomping.

IM: Mm-hm. Tell me something about the instruments that you use. The acoustic guitar sounds beautiful. What is it?
**IM:** Well they do make a lovely sound. Beautiful guitars, absolutely wonderful. What about the electric guitar, is it a Strat?

**DW:** I play a Telecaster mostly but then I bought a Godin guitar as well, a 5th Avenue Godin Hollow Body. I’m really pleased with that guitar because for ages I’ve had my Tele and whenever I’ve bought other electric guitars I always end up playing them a few times and then I’m done, back to my Telecaster, but the Godin’s lovely, it’s really surprised me actually.

**IM:** Do you have a big collection of guitars that you don’t play? (laughs)

**DW:** Kind of. I need to sell some, really (both laugh). Yes is the answer to that! Sometimes I give them to my brother! (laughs) I’m spoiled that I’ve been given a few guitars and I’ve had a Fender endorsement for a good few years and they gave me guitars as well which was lovely. But really, there’s no point in me having this many guitars. I do need to get rid of some because I only play the Godin, the Telecaster and the Martin and the rest of them really are just sat around looking pretty, if I’m honest (laughs).

**IM:** Do you play any other instruments besides guitar?

**DW:** No, and the reason why is because I started out on drums and then my brother picked up drums and did it a lot better than me and then I started playing harmonica and then my brother picked up the harmonica and started playing it a hell of a lot better than me (IM laughs) but actually my brother played guitar before me and he taught me what he knew on guitar when I was about ten years old and he was about seven and I really stuck with the guitar. And luckily Will didn’t incredible at guitar until he was in his twenties (IM laughs) so by then I was already making a living (laughs) and playing it and I’m not going to stop!

**IM:** I’m not sure what the age relationship is between you and Will is. Is he older than you?

**DW:** He’s younger, he’s my little brother, three years younger.

**IM:** Oh, is he? OK. And whilst he’s still working with you in the band, is he still doing solo stuff as well?

**DW:** Yeah, he basically tours with his own band, he’s signed to Rock the Earth Records in Germany and tours with his own band a lot. The only time I really get to gig with Will is with our acoustic duo, The Wildes. But electric, we rarely do anything together because otherwise we find that then when you try and book us together, they want us both in one band. We’re two very different bands, electric-wise. He’s heavy blues rock whereas I’m more blues country gospel soul, it’s lighter, it’s a bit more Chicago. Will’s band are really heavy! (laughs). So it doesn’t work trying to put us both in the same group normally but it’s great to have him session on my recordings.

**IM:** And tell me something about the life that you lead in Brighton. I don’t mean personally. Do you go to gigs and that sort of thing?

**DW:** Umm, yes and no. I go through phases of going to gigs. Yeah, I haven’t been as much recently, I don’t really know why (chuckles). But yeah, I mean, the Brighton music scene is brilliant, I should go out more than I do, basically.

**IM:** Do you have a family or a partner?

**DW:** I have a partner, yeah. I have a partner. Part of the reason that I decided to...basically a few years back, because I was gigging, literally two hundred, two hundred and fifty gigs a year, non stop, and there was a point where I thought “I’m never going to meet anybody and settle down and have a family”. At that point I started lecturing at the university and gigging a little bit less. I still gig a lot (laughs) but not two hundred and fifty gigs a year. I don’t want to, I prefer to pick and choose and do the gigs and the festivals that I really love and have a bit more time with my friends and my family so life’s more relaxed now than it used to be, I enjoy roller skating along the seafront and having barbecues on the beach with my friends and I
didn’t used to have time for that when I was in my early twenties, it was just consistent touring. So I guess I’ve got a bit lazier but I’m happier with the balance now! (IM laughs).

IM: Both myself and my daughter have been teachers in university. Do you have to do assignments? Because that’s a real bore.

DW: (laughs) It is, isn’t it!

IM: You have to mark things and all the rest of it as well, do you?

DW: I do have to do a bit of that, yeah.

IM: Oh, dear dear dear!

DW: But you know what? Sometimes it’s really interesting. For example, when I started teaching there, blues was barely in the syllabus. They had the British Blues Boom, that was in the syllabus, you know, but 1920s blues and Bessie Smith and Ma Rainey, 1930s blues, that wasn’t there and so I added that in (chuckles). I took it all right back to the beginning of popular music.

IM: Good for you.

DW: And slavery and talking about it as the really important historical context of the blues. So when I get to read the work that my students have done, I feel really proud of them but I also feel like the work I do is really meaningful when they choose the blues as their topic and they’re writing these fantastic essays about Bessie Smith and I think yeah, I’m really glad this is what I’m doing with my time when I’m not on tour (chuckles).

IM: That’s absolutely excellent. I really appreciate you doing that, I think that’s wonderful, congratulations.

DW: Thank you.

IM: Thank you very much indeed, Dani.

DW: All the best then!

IM: Have a good evening.

DW: Bye!

“Live at Brighton Road” was recorded live at Brighton Road Studios in England. Produced by Wilde, It’s a collection of heartfelt Acoustic and Electric live performances that will tug on your heartstrings and get your feet stomping. The CD release features a bonus DVD of the ‘live in the studio performance’. The album will also be available on 180g-heavyweight vinyl.

A passionate advocate for the charity ‘Moving Mountains’ Dani Wilde is also recognised for her humanitarian work fighting to prevent child poverty in Kenya.
THE CORAL | THE DAMNED | THE RIFLES | milburn | REVEREND AND THE MAKERS


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CHARLES CRAWFORD ?

Friend and fellow collector / discographer, the late Bill Rowe, introduced me to this singer. Bill and I would exchange cassette tapes on quite a regular basis, tapes containing new songs by artists we both enjoyed or maybe a 'new' find. Obviously most of the material would be blues, but we had no restriction as to the style of music, as long as it was good. We were both very aware that the sound of the emerging blues artists from the south was changing.... many would call it soul music.

Bill titled one tape

"THEGREATESTRECORDINTHEHISTORYOFTHEWORLD".

Among the artists included were Percy Mayfield, Huey Lewis, K.C.Douglas, Hootie & The Blowfish, Johnnie Taylor.... see what I meant about no restrictions on style!

Side one was very entertaining, plenty of variety and all excellent tracks, the same on the reverse side of the tape. Then, as if out of nowhere, the plaintive sound of a lone piano which, compared to the other selections, had me taking more notice. There was something about this intro that 'stopped me in my tracks' as they say. This was a disc by Charles Crawford singing "Sad Sad Song". It's been said that sometimes an artist will bare their innermost self during a performance, that's truly gotta be the case here. Superb.

Nothing is known about him other than that he recorded only once and this was it. "Sad Sad Song" was released in 1973 on Hy Sign Records (2114) from Shreveport, Louisiana (backed with "Fat & Funky"). Copies of this 45rpm disc, should you want one, are currently changing hands for about £25 to £30. Amazing!

Favourite track - duhh!!
Davis Coen
These Things Shall Pass
Soundview SP1008

It has been a long term aim of Davis to record an album that solely references and features a mixture of gospel and spiritual numbers and here with this, his tenth album he has fulfilled this ambition, Which (I must say) is not only very pleasing but is also spiritually uplifting. The Oxford, Mississippi born singer draws fully upon his life experiences, the strong religious influences of the South that existed in his youth still continue to thrive today, the faith and ethos it carried with it, is unchanged and resonates as strongly as ever it was. Davis is one of those musicians that has been around for years but, apparently only a select number of people seem to have known about him but fortunately, one of those people was Martin Scorsese and the quality of his playing saw Davis being featured in the soundtrack of his PBS documentary ‘The Blues’. The ten numbers here are a mixture of traditional and contemporary, fusing seamlessly together. The seriously laid back emotional combination of Southern soul infused guitar work with swaying and almost drifting organ, gently oozes numbers like “Working For Jesus”, out of the speakers, the gentle urging vocals of Davis easily coaxes you into lustily singing the chorus after only a few hearings. “Saint Christopher”, is an immediately infectious, jaunty, piano led, rolling honky-tonk that invites you and the patron sain of travellers to take a journey across the Delta. Joining Davis is a fine collection of Mississippi based musicians including Kell Kellum on pedal steel guitarist and mandolin player Jonny Ciaramitar. Two rather splendid traditional Country Spirituals are “The Old Rugged Cross”, which is highly impressive and causes one to pause for thought, and “These Things Shall Pass”, features the hypnotic combination of a sweetly ringing steel guitar with a tightly crisp, mandolin. “Lord, Let Me Do It Right”, confidently grabs you by the ears with its stirring echoes of vintage Rhythm and Blues.

The solitary Southern piano beginning on the splendid ballad “The Lesser Man”, exemplifies the struggling emotions within the life and church of the common man, as the number expands with thumping percussion, a strident guitar soars and falls and as it does a warming organ and piano gently brings back our humility and faith.

Greatly Endorsed!

Brian Harman.

Bobby Messano
Bad Movie
The Prince Frog Record Company BM1 41517

Teaneck, New Jersey born Bobby Messano began his career back in nineteen seventy-six when he became part of the band Stanky Brown who during the seventies toured with high profile bands Boston, The Allman Brothers and The Outlaws. Over the years he has become recognised as a contemporary blues artist but, he has also widened his horizons by acting as the musical director for artists such as; Steve Winwood, Lou Gram and Country artists Jimmy Wayne Rodney Atkins and Steve Holly, during these tenures he has found time to record and release seven solo albums of his own. Now, with this new release, he has put together fifteen numbers mostly written by Bobby and Jon Tiven which certainly are worth more than a second hearing. There definitely are many influences and echoes here, for instance, the splendidly soaring Hendrix infused ballad “Why Water A Dead Rose”, the crisp, solitary solid ringing guitar work and accompanying distinctive thumping percussion solidly backs a gentle and heartfelt vocal. The title number “Bad Movie”, is a blasting Texas blues stomper with a loud, proud, trembling, wailing guitar that certainly takes no prisoners.

There is some excellently enticing Mississippi Hill Country acoustic guitar work to be found on the seriously foot-tapping “Road To Oblivion”, “Too Good To Be True”, is a very fine Memphis influenced funker that struts its stuff in true seventies style, cool laid back vocals confidently backed with thumping drum work, while a sinewy and crisply entwining ringing guitar demands to be heard. The ever enticing, thumping and
grinding Bo Diddley beat is blisteringly unleashed upon a twenty-first century audience with “If The Phone Ain’t Ringing, It’s Me Not Callin’”. “Water Under The Bridge”, is one of the two duets with Muscle Shoals based Alecia Elliot, which is indeed a lovely, gentle country ballad that focuses upon the current American political situation. “The Girl That Got Away”, is a sombre reflective late night smoke filled tramping moody slow burner, the guitar is in very fine T Bone Walker mode. The optimistic blue collar “American Spring”, is a present day rallying cry to the masses, the lyrics, ringing guitars and punching percussion will, I feel ensure crowd approval.

Greatly Endorsed!

Brian Harman.

Vintage#18  
Grit  
Self Produced 1-91061-44676-7

This is the debut album from Robbin Kapsalis; Lead vocals, Bill Holter; guitars, Alex Kulddell; drums and percussion and Mark Chandler; bass, keyboards and slide. They have been performing together since two thousand and thirteen, the band started in the clubs near their home in Northern Virginia. Residencies in Washington, D.C., Maryland and Virginia have more than ensured that the band has a healthy following.; Now after a kick-starter funding campaign they have put together nine compelling original numbers and two fine covers. They also, appear to have successfully avoided the all too obvious trap of pigeon-holing their style into one genre and subsequently seamlessly slide to wherever they want to go. They evidently, from the numbers here, have a musical soft spot for the Blues, Soul and Funk infused sixties and seventies, they also liberally mix-in a laid back Jazz feel to their sound. Robbin possesses a strongly commanding but yet, soft and sensuous vocal range that is not dissimilar to one Joan Armatrading. Within the band there is a solid and captivating rhythm section, unhurried but purposeful while the authoritative and laid back guitar work has the air of carefree picking. “Diamonds Are Optional”, starts us off with a crisp, funk groove that simply oozes from the speakers. The warm seductive voice of Robbin fires up on the footapping and steadily striding “Is This Too Good To Be True”, the richly deep thick Jazzy bassline and driving rocking percussion inescapably draws you hopelessly into its’ sweetly enticing web. Dylan’s “Million Miles”, is re-configured into a sombre, smouldering slow burning Blues that has a captivatingly plodding bassline that introduces a blistering and building, soul searching emotion filled fiery slide that is completely and utterly absorbing. The immensely enjoyable “Circles”, possesses a bouncing and captivating Sun Studios Rockabilly feel that has you dancing around the room. ZZ Top’s “Just Got Back From Baby’s”, has been wonderfully re-worked as a low down and dirty guitar burning slow burner with irresistibly flowing Jazz inflections that creates a splendidly spiraling feel. “Circles Down Home”. is rightly dominated by the combination of raw low level burning slide and the equally raw and emotional vocals of Robbin who together describe an unpleasant life that is definitely going nowhere.

Greatly Endorsed!

Brian Harman.

Music From The American Epic Sessions (Deluxe)  
Columbia  
ASIN: B0725538L1

This 2xCD set ties in with the ‘American Epic’ documentary TV series which tells the story of record companies going out and conducting field recording sessions of blues, country and other roots music in the 1920s and also includes vinyl reissues of old recordings by artists featured in the series. The CDs feature contemporary artists performing old songs from this era recorded on reconstructed vintage recording equipment, as seen in the series. I’m a sucker for this type of project, although I’m the first to admit that these things often look good on paper but don’t always live up to the hype.
From the opening track, the Alabama Shakes’ storming version of Memphis Minnie’s “Killer Diller Blues” this sounds like a winner and the second track, the unlikely combination of rapper Nas and the Memphis Jug Band’s “On the Road Again”, is even better as it perfectly demonstrates a continuing thread running through black music from the earliest times until the present day. I was a bit uncertain about the combination of blues and country material that forms the bulk of the tracks here but actually it makes for a pleasing variety of music, with several of the artists - Rhiannon Giddens, Pokey Lafarge, Frank Fairfield – already bridging the two genres in their own work.

Everyone will have their own favourites here – for me one of the real highlights was Betty Lavette, her wrecked shell of a voice has been heard to great effect in recent years on beautifully produced soulful versions of modern pop classics but here she sings the blues very movingly over an acoustic backing. Elton John also steps up to the plate together with Jack White with “Two Fingers of Whiskey” – the best thing I’ve heard him do for years - Willie Nelson and Merle Haggard do what they do, albeit with a slightly more old-timey vibe, ditto Steve Martin and Edie Brickell. And Blind Boy Paxton with his very authentic rendition of Mississippi John Hurt’s “Candy Man” takes you right back to the 1920’s as if the last 90 years had never happened.

This is an interesting project that for me is mainly successful, I’m afraid that I thought that some of the tracks didn’t quite come off but in general there is a nice variety here from the blues to gospel, from country to Cajun, as well as Hawaiian and Mexican music. The CDs come with a booklet giving fairly sparse acknowledgements, details of the players and pictures of some of the artists involved.

Graham Harrison

American Epic: The Best Of Lead Belly
Third Man Records ASIN: B071KZVM5J

Here’s another fine album from the ‘American Epic’ TV series, this time featuring Huddie “Lead Belly” Ledbetter. Lead Belly was discovered by Alan Lomax and was widely recorded in the 1930s and the 1940s. When I was a teenage blues fan in the 1960s an older blues collector asked me what blues I liked, I was going to answer “Everything from Lead Belly to John Mayall” but after I said ‘Lead Belly’ he interrupted me and said that Lead Belly wasn’t a blues singer but was in fact a ‘songster’. If I’d have had this record I could have used it to show him that he was indeed also very much a blues singer as nearly every song here is a blues.

I don’t have fancy hi-fi equipment so I can’t comment on the sonic quality of this re-mastered vinyl release but the original recordings have been cleaned up so that both the power of his voice and the intricacy of his guitar playing is clearly evident. However, I’m afraid that I miss his more ‘songster’ songs, the popular and folk songs that he also sang - “Goodnight Irene”, “Pick a Bale of Cotton”, “Take This Hammer” etc. I think that this would have been a better collection if some of these more popular and melodic songs had been interspersed with the blues but Lead Belly is still a hugely significant artist – both as a very charismatic performer and also as a wonderful song-writer and he is always worth hearing.

Graham Harrison

American Epic: The Best Of Memphis Jug Band
Third Man Records ASIN: B072L7FHN8

This vinyl record ties in with the ‘American Epic’ TV series which tells the story of record companies going out and recording blues, country and jazz on location in the 1920s and is part of the series' associated album reissues as well as new releases. I’ve always been a fan of the jug bands and while some see them as a lesser, inferior form of blues I’ve always found them to be right up there with the best of blues, ensemble blues if you will – one of the first ‘blues bands’. For me the jug bands were much more versatile than most blues singers featuring music to dance to (“Memphis Shakedown”) songs with topical lyrics (“Lindberg Hop”) and lots of humour (“He’s in the Jailhouse Now”) as well as straight blues (“Newport News Blues”). And make no mistake about it the Memphis Jug Band were the best jug band, featuring as they did excellent musicians like Will Shade and Charlie Burse and a string of wonderful, original songs such as the
very catchy “Stealin', Stealin'” and “Cocaine Habit Blues” (Take a Whiff on Me). I don’t have fancy hi-fi equipment so I can’t comment on the sonic quality of this re-mastered vinyl release but in the past my enjoyment of jug band recordings has been slightly diminished because of the bad quality of the original recordings but here the songs are beautifully cleaned up. If I was being picky I could question the selection and the absence of some of my personal favourites “Kansas City Blues” (which is featured in the film(!)) and “Jug Band Waltz” but for me any release by the Memphis Jug Band always warrants at least five stars.

Graham Harrison

TajMo (Taj Mahal and Keb’ Mo’)

Decca (UMO)

ASIN: B06XDV48MZ

I'm more of a Taj Mahal fan than a Keb' Mo' fan and I feel that on this record Keb's is the dominant influence, which leads to a general 'politeness' and blandness, although everything is very well-played and well-produced. My favourite song was probably the re-working of the old Sleepy John Estes' song "Diving Duck Blues" which Taj has covered before, this version with both men sharing the vocals has a nice relaxed vibe with nice slide guitar. I also liked "That's Who I Am" which seemed like a good 50/50 split of both men's styles and the old Who song "Squeeze Box" was an unlikely choice and just about works - albeit that it is a bit gimmicky.

I'm afraid that I thought that both Bonnie Raitt (On "Waiting for the World to Change") and Lizz Wright (on "Om Sweet Om") were a bit wasted, although Joe Walsh does add some nice guitar flourishes to "Shake Me in Your Arms". Also, since his first album I've been a big fan of Taj's harmonica playing and I was disappointed that he doesn't play harp here - although Billy Branch and Lee Oscar do sub for him. I did also like the relaxed bluesy version of Piano Red's "She Knows How to Rock Me" with Taj being the dominant voice and I thought that this should have been the template for the album, rather than Keb's more commercial songs with their more poppy arrangements - although I can see that these songs will boost sales figures rather than a more blues-based recording. Taj does fit in well with Keb's songs and the combination of the two men's styles does produce a record with a nice variety, with a mix of sparse acoustic songs and those with more complex arrangements complete with brass, back-up singers etc.

Graham Harrison

Harrison Kennedy

Who U Tellin’

Electro-Fi ASIN: B06XJT2GHG

This is Harrison's seventh solo album and one of his most raw and bluesy, the former member of the soul group Chairman of the Board plays banjo, harmonica, spoons, acoustic guitar and tambourine and sings every track with a voice that is very strong and characterful. Also contributing are Jimmy Bowskill on fiddle & mandolin, Jack de Keyser on electric, acoustic and slide guitar, Julian Fauth on piano and Alec Fraser on cigar box bass.

Many tracks on the album reminded me of the trance blues Otis Taylor on tracks like "Keep Your Coat On" and in truth I could have done with a bit less banjo which makes the album sound a bit samey. When they leave the banjo/harmonica sound for the country sound of "Mountain Storm" it was a nice change and "Long Pants" reminded me of Taj Mahal, with Harrison singing the blues over Julian Fauth's boogie piano. "Heavy Load" and "Doctors in Hard Hats" both go for a more electric sound which is also a nice contrast to the other country blues. Harrison's harmonica playing isn't the best but it fits with the general down-home vibe of the album, ditto his guitar and banjo playing. Harrison also delivers the song "Patches" - a hit for Clarence Carter but originally recorded by Chairman of the Board - as a spoken sermon and surprisingly, he gets away with it.

Graham Harrison
Vintage #18
Grit (Own label 1-91061-44676-7)

This is the first time I have come across Washington DC four-piece outfit Vintage #18, but I am pretty sure it won’t be the last. Fronted by the versatile and excellent Chicago-born and Atlanta-raised blues singer Robbin Kapsalis – a real blues singer, not a rock or soul singer masquerading as one – the band lay down a stripped back programme of mostly original blues plus covers from ZZ Top (the slow grooving ‘Just Got Back From Baby’s) and Bob Dyla, ‘Million Miles’ – also a lovely slow groove). Although this outfit is undoubtedly a blues band, they have a distinctively individual sound, based around Bill Holter’s original guitar work – he can riff slowly and simply, or soar with a busy, supercharged solo as necessary. The rhythm section sets the tempo and let the music develop: kudos to Alex Kuldell on drums – listen to the way he plays marching drums on the close of ‘Million Miles’ - and bassist/ keyboards player/ slide guitarist Mark Chandler, who has worked with Charley Sayles. To sum up, this is a fine set, a little different from most blues releases, and given the amount of material issued these days, that is no bad thing at all.
Norman Darwen (www.vintage18.net)

Micki Free
Tattoo Burn
Redux (Mysterium Blues MBR 1001)

The purist in me was pretty sure I wasn’t going to like this. The cover sticker talks about the opening duet with Howard Hewett of Shalamar – not a blues group, as I recall – and Micki himself was discovered and managed by Gene Simmons of Kiss. Some might be impressed, but not this reviewer, definitely not…

But then I actually got round to playing the CD, and all was forgiven. This is actually a strong contemporary blues set, and with some pretty traditional elements too. The set opens with a very bluesy modern gospel anthem ‘God Is On The Phone’ and closes out with a gentler side of Micki than tends to be shown by everything that comes in between. He references Jimi Hendrix on ‘Hey Baby (The New Rising Sun) (Remix)’ – note to self: don’t always ignore anything that has the word “Remix” in the title – whilst ‘Tattoo Burn’ has a strong blues-rock arrangement, though drawing heavily on the traditional blues itself, as also evidenced on ‘Greens & Barbeque’ and particularly the slow ‘Six Feet Down In The Blues’. ‘Mojo Black Coffee’ is a stop-time blues in best Muddy Waters mode (nice harp by Randy Singer too), ‘Co-Co Gin’ is a little more sophisticated, the five and a half minutes long ‘There’s A Hole In The Heart Of The Blues’ is back in heavy mode, and the distorted guitar intro to ‘Angels In The Room’ gives way to a more considered number, before ‘Five Minutes To Christmas’ is a fine, almost straightforward blues shuffle. Backing musicians include bassist Bill Wyman, Carlos Santana’s wife Cindy Blackman-Santana on drums and numerous others. Hell, yes, I enjoyed it!
Norman Darwen (www.mickifree.com)

Blues man Mike Francis recently tweeted to his followers an kind endorsement of the work done in producing BiTS.

Catch Mike at the Upton Blues Festival centred on Upton-on-Severn in Worcestershire.

Mike appears on Friday July 21 at 1.45pm to 3.00pm www.uptonbluesfestival.com/

Mike also has a new EP available launched recently at the Acoustic Festival of Great Britain, Go Here for a video trailer. THANKS AGAIN MIKE
Love Will Lead You Home (Own label)

Los Angeles based singer/guitarist/songwriter/contributor to Guitar Player magazine describes this six track EP as “a soul-rock and gospel album” and it has also been referred to as a combination of Chrissie Hynde, Mavis Staples and Al Green (and John Lennon and Otis Redding have also been pressed into service in the past). Both of these specifications capture the spirit of Nikki’s music rather neatly. It is raw and rootsy, Americana rather than blues maybe but certainly with a huge soul influence, with a conscience and a positive message, and some neat hooks. ‘In The Waking Moments Of The Day’ has a slight jazz tinge whilst the guitar work on ‘Love Will Lead You Home’ definitely has a strong influence from Curtis Mayfield. ‘I Will Cross Over’ has a lovely soul feel on a bouncy rhythm, with the backing vocals adding a classic gospel feel to a memorable and catchy number, with Nikki’s exuberant vocal subtly taking her higher.

I enjoyed this release a lot – let’s hope we hear more from this talented lady soon (please).

Norman Darwen
(www.nikkioneill.com)

Let’s Just Be Real (811 Gold Records)

And that’s just what Dallas, Texas based singer Laura is here, tackling real music – soul and blues mostly, either strutting coquettishly as on ‘I’ll Find Someone Who Will’ or getting nicely mellow as on the melodic ‘If That Ain’t Love’. ‘Hitting on Nothing’ comes from Irma Thomas and certainly keeps a New Orleans flavour. For examples of her blues approach, try ‘Still Got The Blues’, and the lovely slow blues, ‘I Need A Man’ or for a more jumping sound, try ‘Big Top Hat’. For something a little different, there is Laura’s supper club styled version of Thin Lizzy’s ‘Boys Are Back In Town – honest! - ‘whilst the closer, ‘Wildest Dreams’ moves into Cyndi Lauper pop territory – definitely quite a change and totally unexpected, judging from what has gone before! Laura has some of today’s top musicians backing her here: Teresa James on backing vocals, Tony Braunagel on drums, and Lee Thornberg supplying brass, among others, and the result is a top quality release. Recommended indeed.

Norman Darwen
(www.musicbylauratate.com)

Sanctified (Rezonate32017)

This CD opens with a prime piece of Americana, an excellent cover of John Prine’s ‘Angel From Montgomery’, beautifully sung by Mandy Lemons from Houston, Texas. It closes with the deep soul of ‘I’d Rather Go Blind’, again a top-notch vocal performance, drawing on both Etta James and Janis Joplin on aural evidence, with guitarist Sturgis Nikides also supplying some excellent, very controlled guitar work. The mid-point of the album is marked by ‘Nina’, a tribute to Nina Simone, though the acoustic based track does not really draw on her musically. In between these are a couple of Mississippi hill country styled numbers – ‘Raccoon Song’ is a real stomper with shades of John Lee Hooker – and the acoustic number ‘New York City Boy’, the fine slow, slinky blues of ‘The Freeze’ and the infectious Louisiana sounds (both New Orleans and zydeco – the band’s keyboards player Rick Steff supplies the rocking accordion playing) of ‘Here Comes The Flood’. Recorded both in Belgium and American Recording Studio, Memphis, this is, in short, a really enjoyable and varied album.

Norman Darwen
(wwwscreamblues.com)
If acoustic blues is your thing, please note that a revision of the schedule at the great blues radio station KCOR means that the show first airs each week at 3pm Central, 9pm UK time EVERY WEDNESDAY.

www.kconlineradio.com

Acoustic music - the way the blues began
BiTS INTERVIEW: Marcus Malone

BiTS is nothing is not responsive! In May 2017 we had a message of praise for BiTS from Tim Lynch who comes from Southampton. In passing he asked if we would run a piece on Marcus Malone. Here it is

BiTS - I really want to talk to you about your new record, but I want to start, if I may, by asking you how you got into music in the first place, back in Detroit all those years ago?

Marcus - Oh, god, I’d say my mother first implemented that. [laughs] She was a church goer. And I started singing when I was about six years old. And I was the leader of the choir at church. So she started me off with them and I had my first solo when I was six - Listen to the voice of the saviour. I was a nervous wreck, of course, doing it. But I was more afraid of her than singing so…[laughs] And I stood there, about to wet myself, singing and shaking [makes singing noise] Anyway, after that little experience and after seeing, I think, people enjoying it so much. Even at that early age. Once you get over the nerves at that age then you’re kind of in there. And people going ‘Amen’ and ‘Hallelujah’ and you think, ‘Oh, that’s nice. That’s a good reaction.’

So I got into it from there. And then obviously because I listed to Motown growing up, buying every 45 that came out every week. Well, one 45 per week, that’s all I could afford. But that’s pretty much all they put out really, maybe one or two a week at the time. And, yeah, I used to go to the store and buy those 45s and, yeah, that’s how I got into music as far as listening. And singing as well. And as I grew older I started singing…I had my own little Temptations band [laughs] So that was my first little group, you know, we used to pick the Temptations to mimic. And we used to practice shows and we used to do talent shows. And once I passed that stage, the talent show stage, some older musicians asked me would I sing with them. And a local venue…actually, the 20 grand ball room.

I used to live near there. Where B.B. King and Bobby Blue Bland and all these people used to sing…used to perform when they came to Detroit. So I had my first professional experience there. My mother had to come along, of course, because I was too young. [laughs] And that worked out rather great. And I did…I think, yeah, I did a few James Brown songs and some Motown stuff and I really enjoyed it. And I stayed in the dressing room pretty much. And Bobby Blue Bland was singing next door to me, if you can imagine that.

BiTS - Oh, right. That’s terrific.

Marcus - So I’d go ‘Wow! That’s Bobby Blue Bland’. Well, I knew it was him because there was a sign outside. And, wow, what a sound. His voice is so amazing. But that’s the beginning of it.

BiTS - At what stage did you start to play the guitar then?

Marcus- Playing the guitar? I never really began playing the guitar until later after the Marcus album. Like very, very late. I played a bit during that time, after we’d been signed. I’d been playing, but not playing on stage. I was the lead singer of the Marcus band. The metal band that got signed via Ike Turner to United Artists Records. So I was the singer and the front-man. I did play a bit then. And then after that band broke up, I sort of started seriously playing guitar, really. So I was in my early twenties, mid twenties. Very late.

That was a heavy metal…when we came out of Detroit, that was our first signing. That was a metal band. The Marcus band. We never shifted. I started off that way. [laughs] I started off with Motown but then in my teens and stuff, I switched over to…I started following like Iggy Pop and MC5 and…I grew up during that whole era of…what do you call it? I call it pre punk, punk, I guess. [laughs]
Marcus - Before punk came out, you know, like Detroit punk, I guess. The Washington scene, you know. You had Nirvana and all that. And in Detroit, you had what? The MC5 and The Stooges and Bob Seger…he wasn’t punk but he was still in that whole era of music. Ted Nugent with his Indian outfits. But yeah, I was involved in that and I was probably the youngest of that lot. I started hanging out with the MC5 and Iggy. They all had houses in Ann Arbor. Ann Arbor Michigan. And I used to go up there and hang out a lot. I got into that kind of music. And the drummer lived…had a house…that I first started playing with, was in one of those bands called The Up. They didn’t make it like the MC5 and all those people because they broke up. But he was trying to start a band and I started singing with him. And they were interested in that same sort of music. Iggy Pop A lot of noise but that’s what we did [laughs]

BiTS - Let’s move on a bit. I’ve read a lot about your life in preparation for this interview but what is not clear to me is why you decided to move to the UK.

Marcus - Well, you know, I needed a change. I’d been in LA for 10, 15 years. I also married a girl whose parents…her mother was from the UK. And we came over here to have another celebration of marriage for her grandparents who were too old to travel really. And her grandparents and all her mother’s friends, etc, etc who weren’t at the wedding in California. And we came over to do that. And I said, well, you know, I might as well go over there. And I knew some people here. I knew Jef Hanlon. I’d met him in California. And he said, ‘If you’re ever over here, look me up and we’ll see if we can do something.’

So, yeah, I showed up on his doorstep. [laughs] And he started…yeah, he kind of took me on at the time and I ended up staying here. I mean, the marriage fell apart but I ended up staying here. You know, it’s a gateway, if you think about it, to Europe and the rest of the world. And it’s English-speaking so, yeah, I decided to stay here rather than go back because I wasn’t really doing a lot there. I mean, I had management deals and this and that for several years and most of them, they spend a lot of money and nothing…usually they tax things that managers over there spend money on. And I decided to come over here and see what it was.

And I came over here and I met a lot of fabulous musicians and Jeff took me on and he put me in the studio and I did a couple of…a demo, basically. And started shopping that. And, well, yeah, just fresh blood, fresh start, fresh everything. And few people knew me over here but it didn’t matter. And I just started a new band and I started…what was that? Oh, Redhouse was the first band I had over here. With Adam Salkeld and yeah, I started doing that.

BiTS - Red House after Jimi Hendrix, or what?

Marcus - Well, yeah, we did a lot of blues. We did blues stroke rock songs. We did some Hendrix covers and we did ZZ Top covers and we did those with…we were writing together and we cumulated…we did an EP, I guess, to start with. And eventually I got out of…I decided I wanted to go back to just being Marcus. [laughs] And I stopped doing covers, you know, I don’t really do covers. And just writing my own material. But I wrote…with Adam we wrote a host of tunes, so many songs. On the latest album, A Better Man, there are still two of the songs I wrote with him back then. On the new album even. So we had a great writing experience together.

BiTS - Oh, that’s wonderful. I’ll come back to the writing in just a moment, if I may. First of all I want to ask you though, when you came to this country, did you find there were differences in the audiences?

Marcus - In the audiences? Well I thought they were pretty…what was my first gig here? I’m trying to think. Burnley festival? Blues festival. Yeah, I thought that was great. I thought they were very accepting. And really…yeah, I thought the audiences in America were more general as far as…you had a lot more young…but I guess there’s a lot more people. But there were a lot more younger people there as well as middle aged…the audience was more rounded, I suppose.
Whereas here I think most of the blues gigs we do tend to be…well, now anyway, or even then, tend to be more…not that many young people come out to them. I think that’s changing a lot. But back then and even up until now, yeah, that’s the only difference. But as far as audiences appreciating what you do, I think they appreciate it over here as much as they do there. So it depends on the venue and it depends on a lot of things. It depends on you I think. I think it depends on the artist really, it’s not…I always say it’s my fault [laughs] if there’s a problem.

BiTS - Let’s talk for a minute about song writing. How do you go about writing a song? Do you sit down with a guitar or keyboards and make it up as you go along or do you have ideas in your head before you start?

Marcus - Well, I sort of keep an open mind every time, as it were. Every day. I think it’s important to write a bit every day. If you do a little…you know, write something or some type of idea every day. Because out of every five, six ideas you come up with per week, you end up with maybe one or two that you carry on with the following week to continue and finish off. But I come up with ideas maybe from just walking around, observations. Like sometimes I’ll be coming home from the gym and I’ll go, wow, that’s a good idea. Or I’ll see something like…what was that song I wrote? My wife doesn’t like it but I wrote a song called Double D [laughs] I was walking home and I thought, ‘Oh. Double D.’ [laughs]

I mean just a lot of silly songs like that but the ones that take a bit more thought are usually…I sit down with a guitar sometimes and a drum loop. I collaborate with a lot of people. There are so many ways you can write. I used to walk around with a little…what do you call it? A little tape recorder. Now you just have your phone. But even when I’m driving or whatever, you know, I would sing a melody into it and come home later and see if there’s anything to do. There’s just….or I hear something or see something that inspires you to write something. Or I have several guitar players I work with. Right now I work mostly with Shaun Nolan. But he came over…they come over sometimes and we’ll have little sessions together where, you know, we’ll just jot down some chord ideas. We’ll say this will make a good song or that will make a good song. And I take those ideas and…you know, if it suits me. Like, you know, on the album now, A Better Man, there’s a song on there called The Only One that Shaun actually put down, gosh, at least two years ago.

BiTS - Really?

Marcus - Yeah. And I just happened to be fumbling through my files, I was looking for something to do that day. As I say, I try to do something every day. Sometimes I just go through stuff that maybe somebody had put down for me whenever or that I had started on maybe three, four years ago. Who knows? Because I keep all that stuff. And I heard The Only One, it’s called. At that time it was just a riff. And I thought ‘Wow, that sounds great. I can make a song out of that.’ You know, divine inspiration struck all at once, I guess. And so that became The Only One. And there’s, well, obviously Adam and I wrote all those songs that I still have in my machine. Then…who else did I write with? Bill Burke. He’s new on the scene with me. He wrote…he actually came up with…he’s kind of like a Paul Kossoff type guy, you know? And his riffs. And as you know, I love Paul Rogers [laughs] So I was like, oh, okay. So that became very easy. So he wrote the title…we wrote the title song. He wrote the riff, rather, the music for A Better Man. And he also wrote the riff for Stand or Fall, which is the album before it. And he’s got two songs on this album. Feeling Bad Blues is also on this album, which he came up with. I mean, yeah, they come up with little riffs or something and I play guitar as well so I can take it and finish if off and put a [middle eight?] on it and do the bits and pieces and refine it. And then, you know, until it sounds like a song and then we go in and record it and see what we get.
When you went into the studio to do *A Better Man*, was everything...was it all in your mind already or did you actually add stuff when you were in the studio?

The basic tracks were there, yeah. We had a rehearsal when we went in to do the initial recording. We recorded maybe eight songs, I guess. Now, *A Better Man*, actually, there’s an extension of *Stand or Fall* because some of the songs on there were originally recorded on the *Stand or Fall* sessions. And I didn’t use all those songs. I always over record. Like at least by...if I need...at least by five songs. I’ll have five extras and then in that way, I can pick and choose rather than just stuck with something. I like...I guess a lot of people don’t believe in that now, I guess because they’re new generation. But, me as an older generation I like for an album to flow from song to song. And I’m really proud of this album because it’s on vinyl and I’m really proud of the fact that it goes from song to song and, you know, it would be nice...I’m sure some people still do, sit down with the vinyl and listen to the whole side and go, ‘Oh, let’s flip it over’. And they want to listen to the whole album.

I have to tell you that the reason why I’m talking to you, at least basically, is because a young man by the name of Tim Lynch who comes from Southampton...

Contacted me and asked me if I would do an interview with you for *Blues in the South*. And he is a vinyl enthusiast.

Marcus - Yes, he is.

He’s trying to persuade me to run a piece about vinyl. Why do you think it’s so great? Why do you choose to use vinyl?

To me it’s a different sound. I like the whole packaging thing, the whole ceremony of it. [laughs] I mean, when you listen to a vinyl, you usually invite some friends over. Well, not all the time. But in the old days you would have people come over, they would check out your vinyl, see what you’re about. You’d check out their vinyl, see what they’re about. And you usually sit down and you listen to an entire album, an entire side. And also the sound of it is just warm compared to CD. The CD sound, even on my CDs, it isn’t as big as a vinyl. The vinyl sound is bigger. It’s massive. It’s like, wow, the band’s in the room. You know. Comparatively, yeah, it is a big sound sometimes on CD. But then when you play the
vinyl it’s massive. It’s just warmer, it’s bigger. The bass is in your chest and the drummer is in your head. [laughs] I mean, to me, it’s just a great sound.

BiTS - Do you have a favourite track on the album?

Marcus - Do I? Oh, favourite track. Well, I love Better Man. Hmm. Well, yeah, that’s one of my favourites. And, yeah, I also love The Only One, I think. The weird song. I call it weird because, well, it is. It’s not your average…well, it’s not a blues song really. A lot of people say it reminds them of Crosby, Stills and Nash or West Coast. West Coast music you call it, back in the day, in the sixties. And with the harmonies and the guitar style, for the guitar solo it’s a backward guitar solo. Have you heard it?

BiTS - I have, yes.

Marcus - Oh, okay. So, yeah, it’s a sixties kind of free love, flower power song. And I gotta admit I love…I’m a sucker for… I’m a sucker for the free love, that vibe, you know. Psychedelic vibe, you could call it. I’m a sucker for the psychedelic vibe. [laughs]

BiTS - That’s always nice to know.

BiTS - You’ve got lots of gigs coming up in the next few weeks, a couple of festivals and that kind of thing. Do you enjoy doing festivals?

Marcus - I love doing festivals. We need more of them. But, you know, the cards fall where they fall. When the album came out there were a couple of festivals who said they were going to do something and, I don’t know, it didn’t pan out. But hopefully we have some management…not management, but a new agent. Rock artist management. Peter Barton. Hopefully he’s going to sort us out next year for more festivals. And also for this album I’m doing…we’re trying to do a DVD of live recordings now. That’s what we’re trying to do now. I’ve recorded twice now. But we’ve been recording and performing, well the last two times, with what I thought was a festival type band because we’ve performed with mostly all the musicians that were on the album. So it’s a big band. There’s eight of us. Chantelle Dante was doing some singing as well on the live…the last two shows we had Chantelle, we had Bill, William Burgh, on on guitar and then Shaun Nolan on the other guitar. And we had Chris Nugent on the drums, Winston Blisset on the bass, and we had Alan Glen on harmonica, and we had Stevie Watts on the keyboard. So basically we had the band that recorded the album playing live.

BiTS - That’s fabulous.

Marcus - Yeah, it was, it was amazing. I thought it was great. And so it was like…it did sound like the album, the recording and everything. So, yeah I’m working on that angle. And also I want people…obviously it’s people that are doing this so they need to see that. So I need to get that to them and I’m sure that will help.
Ealing Blues Festival 2017
22nd-23rd July

The Blockheads
Mungo Jerry

Amy Mayes Band  Andy Twyman  Bourbon Street Revival
Dan Sowerby & Hugh Budden  Du Bellows  Geoff Garbow Band
Georgie Chapple Band  Grég Coulson  John Crampton
King Buster Blues Band  Laura Holland Band  Little Steam  Mack
Marky Dawson  Mumbo Jumbo  Northsyde
Robert Hokum’s Blues Festival All Stars  Sam Kelly’s Station House
Steve Morrison & Blues Abuse  Tim Aves & Wolfpack
Tom Walker Band  Uncle Buck  Winnie & The Rockettes

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his is the third BiTS competition giving away three pairs of tickets for your choice of one of the days of the Colne Great British Rhythm And Blues Festival. To make it clear - a pair of tickets for your choice of ONE of the days.

No question this time around.. All you have to do is write a few words saying why you should be the winner of the competition. No need for a massive essay. JUST get writing! EMAIL THE TEXT SAYING WHY YOU SHOULD BE THE WINNER to competition@bluesinthepsouth.com DON’T FORGET TO SPECIFY THE DAY TOO

The prize is the pair of tickets alone, no transportation or accommodation costs are included.

To help with choosing which day you want to go for, go to www.bluesfestival.co.uk/line-ups/ or click the banner above.

The information about the timings and bands is accurate at the time of going to press but the organisers reserve the right to change any timing or band without prior notice.

DEADLINE MIDNIGHT JULY 10 2017
Radio Two Favourite Comes To Southampton

Gordon Haskell with Hannah’s Yard

Singer-songwriter and Radio Two favourite Gordon Haskell has returned home to the UK following eight years enjoying the Greek sunshine! He is set to play

**The Brook, Southampton on Sunday 16th July.**

Celebrating his 70th year, the writer of 400,000-selling 'How Wonderful You Are' - BBC Radio Two's most requested song – is to perform a headline second set in concert, featuring songs from his jazz/blues/soul-influenced songbook and including hits from his platinum-selling album Harry’s Bar. This will be very special show for us - Gordon helped to start the Sunday-night shows at The Brook nearly 25 years ago. It will be a unique evening for the Timeless Tour with cabaret style seating/candles – unlike all other theatre shows on the tour.

Opening the night will be musical collective Hannah’s Yard featuring the beautifully understated voice of 20 year old vocalist Hannah Layton Turner. Since being spotted by BBC Introducing, Hannah’s Yard has received considerable BBC regional radio airplay for each of their four ‘acoustic pop’ single releases – think ‘Norah Jones meets Fairground Attraction’. DJs Alex Lester and Janice Long each supported the collective’s singles on their BBC Radio Two shows. Expect to hear original songs from their forthcoming debut album ‘Beginnings’ along with an eclectic mix of covers - hits from Sam Smith to James Taylor, Jack Johnson to Carole King...all given the unique Hannah's Yard twist.

Sari Schorr & The Engine Room have been announced as support for Walter Trout on his UK autumn tour, on the dates below:

**On Tour with Walter Trout - October 2017:**

- 09/10 The Brook Southampton UK
- 10/10 Under The Bridge London UK
- 11/10 Under The Bridge London UK
- 13/10 Central Station Wrexham UK
- 14/10 Warehouse 23 Wakefield UK
- 15/10 GuildHall Preston UK
- 17/10 Robin 2 Bilston UK
- 18/10 Public Hall Harpenden UK
- 20/10 Bierkeller Bristol UK
- 21/10 Muni Arts Centre UK
- 22/10 Sin City Swansea UK
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BiTS BOOK REVIEW

by Ian McKenzie

What an absolute delight this book is! However before I continue I must declare that I have known Julian Piper since the 1970s and consider him a friend. That aside I am determined to be as objective as possible about this book, which has been a long time in the making.

Julian Piper is Mr Blues in the Exeter, Devon UK area. He is founder and key figure in Blues South West, organising gigs, booking a wide range of international artists and fronting his own blues band (Junkyard Angels) since the 1970s. Julian is an accomplished Strat player and an outstanding slide player, both with electric and acoustic guitars. He writes record reviews and does interviews for various blues publications and has an elegant and masterful writing style. What is very clear is that Julian’s head is deep in the blues and this book emphatically demonstrates that his heart is in Louisiana.

In 1988 while following a course at Exeter University, Julian went to Baton Rouge, LA under the auspices of Louisiana State University and played blues, primarily at the Blues Box in Baton Rouge. Before long he was a member of the house band, under the watchful eye and tutelage of Tabby Thomas and his son Chris Thomas King, he met many of the living local musicians with whom he conducted interviews, collecting stories of blues luminaries including Silas Hogan, Robert Pete Williams, Huddie “Leadbelly” Ledbetter, Lonesome Sundown, Chris Thomas King, Lightening Slim, and many more.

The book, which easily could have become pretentious, is compelling and often enthralling and often ‘page turning’ in its content. As well as sections on all those listed above, Julian provides some insight on the lives of Louisiana Blues men like Lightnin; Slim (featured on the cover), Slim Harpo, Bruce ‘Neckbone’ Lamb, Rafaул Neal, Kenny Ray Neal, Lazy Lester, and many more. One almost unique element is the examination of he work of the influential record producer J. D. Miller who was responsible for recording and supporting the talents of many blues men, in a exhilarating chapter called ‘The Record Man and Poor Lightnin’, including a delightful story of making an early version of an echo chamber. You’ll have to read it.

This one is, as our record reviewer Brian Harman habitually says “Greatly Endorsed”. Julian Piper has produced a book that is both well written and academically sound, but which also reveals (as all good books do) something about the author. Julian loves the blues. Not just the music but the aura, the soul, the id and ego of a music that even when it is sad is uplifting and when it is happy still manages to soothe your soul and ease your worried mind.
NEW BOARD MEMBERS

UKBlues is delighted to welcome two new leading lights from the blues world to the Board of the UK Blues Federation.

ROSY GREER

Rosy was first introduced to the blues was while at art college in Stourbridge in the mid 60's listening to John Mayall and the guitar work of the young Eric Clapton. She had time hanging out with Robert Plant and John Bonham and going to gigs with The Band of Joy, as her boyfriend was in the band, and this cemented her interest in electric blues, moving into the realms of progressive rock.

On moving to London she was involved in the Students Union social scene at NELP which included booking and promoting bands for the main college gigs into the mid 70's with her now husband. These included Captain Beefheart, ELP, Airforce, Love, Pink Floyd and many more. From the late 70's, music was put on a back burner because of family commitments and a move to Lancashire.

Her interest in blues based music was rekindled when she became involved with a local blues club in 2007. She was co-opted into the British Blues Archive as a local rep and began to write reviews which were published on Blues in the North West website and her work is now published in Blues in Britain monthly magazine and on her Lancashire Blues Archive web page with news, reviews and gig information. Her festival reviews also appear on the Early Blues website along with various gig reviews.
FRANCESCO ACCURSO

Francesco grew up in a small Italian town called Modena, a relatively beautiful and welcoming place where people meet, work, raise families and enjoy those comforts which seems to make everybody's life bearable.

'Like every other kid in town, I loved listening to music and going to concerts, but I was raised believing in dreams and pretty soon I picked up an instrument and started wondering at the world outside my door step.

My pragmatism led me to study engineering at University, but a performance by Clarence Gatemouth Brown offered me a glimpse of a different life, certainly much harder than the one I knew, but rich in raw sounds and beautiful, soulful melodies; little did I know that that performance would have change my life.

A few years later I was completing my musical education at the Musician's Institute in California with great teachers such as Scott Henderson and Carl Schroeder (Jimmy Reed, J.L.Hooker, Sarah Vaughan). I never looked back, I always kept following the call, moving from country to country in search of a sound while writing, playing and producing music and finally, I made London my home.

When in 2011 I met Kathleen Pearson, an Afro American blues singer whose family traditions go back to the cotton fields of rural Tennessee, I saw once again a glimpse of those same roots I was sold many years before by Clarence Brown. Kat asked me to create a new sound, something urban and contemporary which could make the Blues once again relevant in the 21st Century, and this is what my work is all about with Kat&Co being now an internationally recognised act.

I since shared stage with great artists such as Joe Louis Walker, Deitra Farr, Lurrie Bell but also Mud Morganfield, Lil Jimmy Reed and our very own Paul Lamb, Chad Strentz and Bob Hall.

It seems like the Blues has always shown me the way and it was an honour to be asked to join the UKBlues Federation board.'
We are sorry to have to advise that Peter Harvie, the founder of the British Blues Archive, has decided that, for health reasons, he must step down from his board role with UKBlues as he feels unable to commit to the extent he would wish. He will continue working on the British Blues Archive and we are delighted that he has also agreed to continue as an 'emeritus' member of the board so that we will still be able to call upon Peter's experience, knowledge and insight when the need arises.

The Board of UKBlues thanks Peter for all he has done already in creating the British Blues Archive, amalgamating it with UKBlues to create an unrivalled source of historical information regarding blues in the UK and contributing to UKBlues' activities.

Darren Weale, one of the founder Board members, has also advised that he must step down from the Board to allow him to commit more fully to his work and the British Blues Exhibition. We hope that UKBlues/the British Blues Archive will be able to continue to work with the British Blues Exhibition where appropriate.

We thank Darren for his input and support from the founding of UKBlues.

Reduced Membership for Students

UK Blues is pleased to announce that bona-fide students can now take out a supporter membership of UKBlues for half-price, just £10.00 per annum. To do this they will be required to provide a copy of a current NUS/Student Union membership card and full details will appear on the Membership page of the website soon.

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Below is the IBBA air-play chart for MAY 2017 produced by Dave Raven.

### IBBA Picks of the Month for July 2017:

**NONE**

**SELECTED**

### Wednesdays

- **9pm UK time**
- **3pm Central**

The way the blues began.

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<td>JFK BLUES</td>
<td>ROUGH ROUND THE EDGES</td>
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Debbie Bond, "Winds of Change" - official release video

Tedeschi Trucks Band - Key To The Highway

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WILLE AND THE BANDITS
OCTOBER 28, 2017

Buddy and Hopkins
By Jason Nocera (www.buddyandhopkins.com)