

Preserving and Promoting the Blues in the Pacific NW

A bi-monthly publication of the Cascade Blues Association | cascadebluesassociation.org

bluesnotes



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Blues Creates Community



Photo by Debra Penk

Become Part of Something Special
Join the Cascade Blues Association

Celebrating Blues Music & the Community it Creates

Become part of something special

By Evelyn Silverman

Blues societies all over the world share a common mission - to preserve and promote the blues. The musical form created by African Americans in the late 19th century is one of the most important influences on the development of popular music—namely, jazz, rhythm and blues, rock, and country music—throughout the United States and now around the world.

For over 20 years, the Cascade Blues Association (CBA) has been on the local scene to do just that - preserve and promote this important historic genre. It has been the heart and soul of the blues community in the Pacific Northwest. As a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving and promoting blues, Americana, and roots music, the CBA is more than just a group—it's a celebration of the people, the music, and the culture that make the blues so special.



At its core, the Cascade Blues Association is a vibrant community made up of volunteers, musicians, fans, and supporters who share a love for the music that has shaped generations. Together, we create something truly unique—a place where the blues live, breathe, and inspire us all. We're more than just an organization; we're a community. Some of the ways we have supported blues in our area last year.

Monthly Showcase: Having a Blues Blast

Our monthly showcases are the perfect way to connect with fellow blues lovers, enjoy live music, and have a blast. Held on the first Wednesday of every month (except in December, when we host our legendary Holiday Party), these showcases

feature performances from local solo artists, duos, and full bands. Whether you're a longtime blues fan or new to the scene, our showcases offer a warm, welcoming atmosphere where everyone can feel at home.

Holiday Party: Music and Mingling

In 2023, we brought back the Holiday Party after a hiatus due to the pandemic, and it was nothing short of magical.

Muddy Award: Best in the Northwest

In January 2024, we also reintroduced the Muddy Awards, where we gather to honor the best and the brightest in the local blues scene. It was held at the Alberta Abbey and the night was all about celebrating

the artists who make the blues come alive in our community. It will be held at Alberta Abbey again in January 2025.

Summer Picnic: Food and Friendships

Our Summer Picnic returned in 2024, too, offering a laid-back, fun-filled day where members and fans can enjoy great food, live music, and each other's company. And looking ahead, we're excited to bring back our annual Valentine's Day Party this February. The special event at the Blue Diamond promises a night of dancing, music, and celebration.

Journey to Memphis: Where Local Talent Meets the World

Every year, the Journey to Memphis Competition is

Blues Notes is a publication of the Cascade Blues Association

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

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one of the highlights of our calendar. It's a celebration of the incredible talent that calls the Pacific Northwest home. We partner with the Waterfront Blues Festival to hold the finals every year on the 4th of July. Solo acts, duos, and bands compete for the chance to represent our region at the International Blues Challenge in Memphis—an event that draws blues players and blues lovers from around the world.

The competition is more than just a contest; it's an opportunity for artists to gain recognition, build their careers, and connect with the global blues community. And when they reach Memphis, we're right there with them, offering support every step of the way. Whether it's raising funds to help them get there or cheering them on from the sidelines. We take pride in seeing our local talent shine on an international stage.

The Waterfront Blues Festival is the perfect backdrop for the semi-finals of this competition, where we staff a booth and work with

volunteers to help keep the blues spirit alive on one of the festival's main stages. It's a weekend full of music, passion, and community—a true celebration of the blues in all its glory.

Blues in the Schools: Inspiring the Next Generation

We've been working hard to build up our Blues in the Schools program, bringing the power of music and history to classrooms across Portland. This initiative will give students the opportunity to explore music, math, language arts, history, and more, all through the lens of the blues. By using this genre to foster creativity and cultural understanding, we aim to break down barriers and open dialogue about diversity. We are actively applying for grants to help bring this program to life, and we look forward to it growing in the coming year.

The Power of Community: Your Support Makes a Difference

What makes the Cascade Blues Association so

special is the sense of community we've built over the years. But none of this would be possible without the support of our members, donors, volunteers, and sponsors. The funds we raise throughout the year go directly to supporting Blues in the Schools, the Journey to Memphis Competition, the Musicians Fund, and all of our incredible events. Every dollar makes a difference—and helps keep the blues alive and thriving in our region.

We are always looking for sponsors who align with our mission to help us take our programs and events to the next level. If you're a business, organization, or individual who believes in the power of music, we'd love to partner with you. Together, we can create more opportunities for artists, musicians, and fans to connect, grow, and celebrate the blues.

Join the Celebration: Become a Member of the Cascade Blues Association!

Becoming a member of the Cascade Blues Association isn't just about supporting an organization—it's about being part of a community that loves the blues as much as you do.

For just \$25 a year, you'll get access to a variety of exclusive benefits, including but not limited to:

- Membership e-newsletters filled with the latest blues news and updates
- Discounts on concert tickets and member-only ticket giveaways
- Free blues entertainment at our monthly Member Showcase meetings, where you can discover new artists and enjoy live music
- A chance to celebrate at our CBA Holiday Party and other special events throughout the year
- The opportunity to support our Journey to Memphis Competition and cheer on local talent as they compete at the International Blues Challenge
- Voting for artists, venues, and recordings in the annual Muddy Awards
- A voice in the future of the CBA by voting for Board Officer candidates

And of course, the good feeling that comes from knowing you're helping to support local musicians and preserve the blues for future generations.

Join us today and be a part of something special. Together, we'll keep the blues alive, vibrant, and thriving—for years to come. ■

Sign up to be a member at CascadeBluesAssociation.org.
Photos by Rae Gordon



By Evelyn Silverman



By Rae Gordon



By Rae Gordon



By Evelyn Silverman



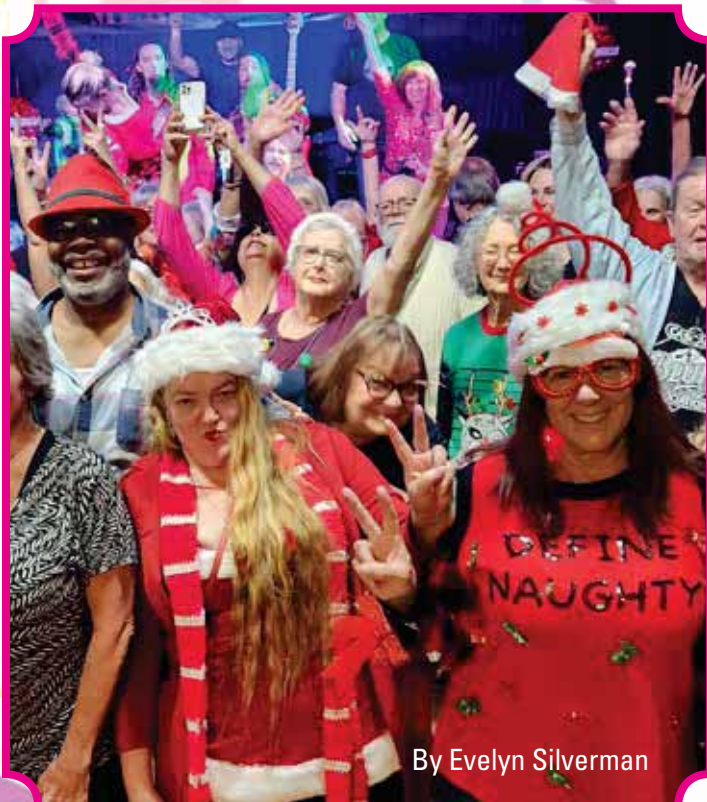
By Rae Gordon



By Evelyn Silverman



By Rae Gordon



By Evelyn Silverman



By Rae Gordon

What's your resolution for the new year?

Blues by You!

What's your resolution for the new year? Go out and listen to more live music? Us too!

2024 was a great year for music all over the world and the Portland/Vancouver metro area was no exception. The Cascade Blues Association was able to send three local acts to the International Blues Challenge in Memphis, Tennessee where they garnered new fans from all over the world and represented us all back here at home.

Our solo/duo act Dave Fleschner, band act Beacon Street Titans and youth act Oregon Bluesberries made memories and connections that will last a lifetime.

Speaking of memories and connections, I finished up serving the CBA as president and have stepped down to be able to concentrate more on special projects for our organization, tour more with my own band and continue to support our incredible



w/Michael Husser



w/Glenda Macomber & Sonny Hess

board. It was an honor to serve our blues music community and I look forward to continue to serve in my new role!

If you are interested in being a part of our mission to promote and preserve the blues, please let us know!

Your Partner in the Blues,

Rae Gordon
(CBA President)

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Where: Aurora Borealis, (16708 Aurora Ave. N. Shoreline)

The Blues Bash II

No Cover: 21+

When: 4th Tues, 7:00 - 9:30pm

Where: CCR Sport & Entertainment, (215 Cypress Ave. Snohomish)



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Music Review: Sandy Atkinson

Sandy Atkinson & The True Loves

Have A Good Time Tonight (Gator Blues Publishing)

Because the southwest coast of Florida, from Naples to Tampa and beyond, is such a hotbed of top-notch blues artists, it doesn't surprise me that prior to hearing *Have A Good Time Tonight*, the second release by Sandy Atkinson & The True Loves (and seventh overall for Sandy), I had not ever heard of this band. But now that I've listened, they will certainly be on my radar during my future trips across Alligator Alley.

Sandy Atkinson & The True Loves are band leader and songwriter Sandy Atkinson on vocals, acoustic guitar and washboard; Cannon Quinn on guitar; Jeff Stick Davis on bass; Dennis McCarthy on drums; Dean Germain on keyboards; Thor Stevens on saxophone; and special guest Sarasota Slim on guitar and harmonica. Of the disc's twelve tracks, nine are originals from Sandy.

If you're a fan of "The Voice", then you've seen those blind auditions where within seconds, all four judges immediately - and almost simultaneously - press their buttons. It doesn't happen too often, but when it does it's always because of a unique voice. "Have A Good Time Tonight", the disc's title track, is one of those songs, and Sandy - with a brilliant blend of sass and sultry - is



that voice. Musically, with everyone being individually highlighted, it's a great introduction to The True Loves. This dance floor filler features a rockin' rhythm that gets taken up several levels by the fiery piano and sax leads; scorching guitar leads; and party style vocals all designed for you to have a good time tonight.

Although a man is most likely to be the caller in this kind of a situation, I'm sure some ladies are also guilty of dialing the digits from time to time. I'm talking about the post breakup bootie-call. In Sandy's case she simply tells her sex seeking ex that he "Got the Wrong Number", but he dialed it right. Gotta love it! Great rhythm driven track with strong drum work and deep bass lines from Dennis and Jeff, respectively; and rockin' piano leads from Dean.

Anyone who's ever been there certainly knows that "Memphis Gets Crazy". That said, this track - which Sandy assured me is fictional - is about some of that craziness....like waking up in the morning and finding someone in your bed. His explanation: "It's okay baby, Memphis gets crazy sometime". See, nothing to worry about. This is another rhythm smoker highlighted by serious sax blowin' by Thor; scorching slide guitar by Cannon; and more killer piano runs by Dean.

You don't often hear the word sultry in the description of a singer's style when you're about to mention a melancholic song, but with Sandy, it just comes naturally. On a slow and low-down dirty blues song titled "Way Deep Down In The Blues", Sandy, with an emotional, soulful, and sultry style, puts on one

By Peter "Blewzzman" Lauro

of her best performances. Musically, led by fabulous slow blues guitar licks from Sarasota Slim, the guys are in the perfect slow blues rhythm groove.

The name of this track is "Ain't No Sin", and thank God for that. It's what's keeping the whole band from going to hell. You see, the full line goes like this... it ain't no sin to rock 'n' roll - and that's exactly what they're all doin'.

Every time I hear this song, I can't help but wonder that when John Hiatt sat down to write "Feels Like Rain" he said to himself "I am going to write such a beautiful song that so many others will want to cover and it will sound just as beautiful when they do"? The song has that kind of effect. However, I'm sure he didn't think that and I'm equally sure not everyone doing it will make it sound beautiful. That said, Sandy Atkinson not only nailed her rendition, but she gave one of the better performances of the song that I've ever heard. Kudos to the band for keeping it soft, slow and flawless behind her.

Remember my unique voice comment up at the top of this review? Well, it won't be any more evident than on a cover of Chester Burnett's "Cause Of It All". From the opening line of "My baby caught a train, left me all alone..." , I was mesmerized. As a matter of fact, it's also one of the best musical efforts of the lot as well. From the songs intro, and throughout, the keyboard

and guitar work from Dean and Cannon are nothing short of masterful; and the rhythm and percussion Jeff and Dennis are laying down have that more 'powerful than a locomotive' sound.

"Not Gonna Miss You" is the kind of song that a Kelsea Ballerine or a Lainey Wilson would take straight to the top of the country charts. As a matter of fact, I can already hear the thousands of fans at the show singing along with the "Not gonna miss you, I'm not gonna miss you, not gonna miss you when you're gone" chorus line. That said, Sandy and the guys have quite the country vibe of their own going on with this one. Interestingly, as I was listening to the songs lyrics, I thought to myself that this was one of those "don't let the door hit you in the ass on the way out" kinda songs,

and sure enough, at the very end of the song, and after the music stops, Sandy coyly says "Don't let the door... you know". Fun track for sure.

Other tracks on this excellent release by Sandy Atkinson & The True Loves are: "Mamma Bear"; "Junkies And Hookers"; "Web Top Checker" (David York, aka Rock Bottom); and "No More Me And You.

If you've not yet received a copy of Have A Good Time Tonight for airplay, please email Sandy at - Sandy@SandyAtkinson.net - and to find out more about her and the band just go to www.sandyatkinson.net. Remember, when you do contact Sandy, please tell her the Blewzzman sent you. ■



Artichoke Bandstand

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- 1/8 Wednesday - the first monthly Hip Hop open mic (host Jason Yelton)
- 2/1 Saturday - Craig Carothers, his first public Portland show in years! I
- 2/2 Sunday - Blues Benefit for Artichoke Music - "Young Guns" Reunion!
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Samantha Fish Shake 'Em On Down Tour

Opening Night on
December 10, 2024

Samantha Fish brought back last year's Shake 'Em On Down Tour for another round and featured Grammy-nominated North Mississippi Hill Country master, Cedric Burnside and blues-rock legend, Jon Spencer. Perhaps taking a cue from Jon Spencer's opening set, Fish kicked it off with the garage rock classic from the MC5's, "Kick Out The Jams". The mood was set, and the Shake 'Em On Down tour wasn't just a suggestion.

"Better Be Lonely", off her excellent album, *Faster*, dug even deeper into the groove than the studio recording. "Chills and Fever" was



stripped down sans the horns on the recording, and featured another great groove, complete with two inventive guitar solos and audience participation. A favorite of the night was a cover of "Either Way I Lose", a Nina Simone song that featured her vocal ability to convey the message of the song. "Bullet Proof", a song about being in a one-sided relationship where no matter what she does, it will not make a



difference, was another standout. The cigar box slide solo was like a chainsaw on steel and all pain and frustration.

The down tempo song, "Dream Girl", showed another facet of Fish' song writing and performance style. She delivered it like a power ballad about trying to be someone that you are not.

After the encore, a friend who has seen Fish multiple times remarked "that

was different". Indeed, Samantha Fish refuses to become repetitive or complacent. Every time she is in the studio or live onstage, she brings her best for herself and her fans.



Concert Review by Mike Penk.
Photos by Debra Penk



Local venues that promote the Blues

And help to preserve the music we love

Southeast Portland

- Aladdin Theater
- Arrivederci Wine and Jazz Bar,
- Artichoke
- Best Western River-shore Hotel,
- Corkscrew Wine Bar
- Corner 14
- Falls View Tavern
- Lair Bar & Grill
- Montavilla Station
- Muddy Rudder
- Nebbiolo Restaurant
- Revolution Hall
- Rose City Coffee
- The Showdown
- Trails End Saloon

Southwest Portland

- Beach Hut Deli
- Catfish Lou's
- CI Bar and Grill
- Dublin Pub
- Hops on Tap
- Keller Auditorium
- Jack London Review
- McMenamins Al's Den
- Tigardville Station

North Portland

- Atlantis Lounge
- Slim's
- White Eagle Saloon
- Ponderosa Lounge

Northeast Portland

- Alberta Abbey
- Alberta Rose Theater
- Blue Diamond
- Clyde's Prime Rib
- Laurelthirst
- Mekong Bistro

- The Spare Room
- Spirits Pub
- Wonder Ballroom

Northwest Portland

- Wilfs Restaurant & Jazz Bar

Forest Grove

- McMenamins Grand Lodge

Fairview

- Celebrities Parkway Grill

Damascus

- Ruzzo's Retreat

Troutdale

- McMenamins Edgefield

Clackamas

- Conway's House of Jazz

Other

- Mac's Place
- McMenamins (all)



Lance Kinnaird

Vancouver

- Billy Blues Bar and Grill
- Cascade Tavern
- Georgies Garage & Grill
- Ilani Casino

Battleground

- Northwood Public House & Brewery

This list is subject to change and may not be a complete listing of all venues that highlight blues. If you know of a venue in the area that is hiring and showcasing blues based bands, please let us know at secretary@cascadeblues.org.

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Vancouver:

- Briz Guitar & Loan
- Compass Coffee
- Niche Wine Bar

SW Portland

- Goose Hollow Inn
- Jack's Tap Room

South Suburbs

- Arrivederci
- McQueens
- Portland Music Co
- The Lair Bar & Grill
- Trail's End Saloon

SE Portland

- Artichoke Music
- Bagdad Theater
- Barley Mill Pub

- Crossroads Music
- Horse Brass Pub
- Montavilla Station
- Portland Music Co
- Rose City Coffee Co
- The Record Pub

Westside Suburbs

- Beaverton City Library
- Murray Scholls Library
- Bounty Hunter Saloon
- Catfish Lou's
- CI Bar & Grill
- Cooper Mt. Ale Works
- Portland Music Co

- The Garages
- Tigardville Station

N/NE Portland

- Alberta Rose Theatre
- Blue Diamond
- Cafe Destino
- Gateway Breakfast House
- Mekong Bistro
- Music Millenium
- Slims
- Spare Room Restaurant
- 3 Tracks Music
- Alberta Abbey

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