

bluesnotes

Preserving and Promoting the Blues in the Pacific NW

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



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Beale Street or Bust!

Sleeper Wave Youth Band Heading to Memphis

The Next Generation of Blues is Memphis Bound

Beale Street or Bust!

From Portland's rising stars to seasoned pros, it's a multi-generational Journey to Memphis!

The lights dimmed at **HÖKŪ Events on Madison**, and a hush fell over the room. For the young musicians preparing to perform, the anticipation — tinged with equal parts confidence and nerves — was electric. It was time for the **Cascade Blues Association's Youth Journey to Memphis Showcase**, a local celebration of talent, mentorship, and the blues tradition. Three acts took the stage, their ages ranging from 14-19 — **New Shoes**, **Sleeper Wave**, and **Jaxon Decker and Low Maintenance** — each bringing their own energy, style, and love for making music.

At the end of the night, one act would carry the Pacific Northwest banner



Sleeper Wave from Portland Area

to **Beale Street in Memphis** for the **International Blues Challenge Youth Showcase** in January.

For these young musicians, the selection is about more than just performing in Memphis. It's an invitation to join a wider community of blues artists, gain real-world experience, and feel the thrill of sharing their music on some of the world's most iconic stages.

The People Behind the Music

Pulling off an event like this takes more than just

talent — it takes a community. Behind the scenes, mentors, judges, sponsors, and venue hosts all contributed to making this night unforgettable.

Performer, composer and producer **Dave Fleschner**, a past Journey to Memphis winner and CBA Youth Journey to Memphis Chair, hosted monthly youth jams leading up to the showcase. He invited professional musicians to coach and encourage young artists, giving them insight into both performance and the larger blues community.

"As the audience for blues gets older, I've recognized the need for younger people to get involved with this art form," Fleschner said. "Any study of American music needs to be rooted in the blues, and I feel a responsibility to pass my love for this music on. It's wonderful to see parents, classmates, and neighbors come out to cheer these young musicians on."

Rae Gordon, CBA Vice President and herself an IBC finalist, worked alongside Fleschner to guide and support the youth. **CBA President Timmer Blakely**, a professional bass player, also hosted workshops, helping young performers refine their technique and stage presence.

The judges, **Amanda Gresham**, GRAMMY Nominated photographer, producer and music director of United by Music America, **Karen Maria Capo**, Jazz, Soul & Blues Singer, and

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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By Evelyn Silverman

Kivett Bednar, Musician, Amp Maker and Artist, were blown away by the performances.

"I remember what it was like to be a young musician," Bednar reflected. "It's so important that the CBA help the youth here in Portland connect with one another and give them the opportunity to express themselves and be acknowledged for their efforts. The cohesion of the acts was impressive, they played so well together as a team. The potential for exposure and support can give these young musicians an enormous boost in their future careers."

John Lamb, backline sponsor and the owner of **Backbeat Music Academy**, emphasized the value of real-world performance opportunities:

"Music isn't about getting the notes right, it's about people. One of the big reasons I founded Backbeat was to provide opportunities to connect, jam, and make music together. These experiences give young players validation for their hard work and motivation to continue. And having a blues competition is especially valuable because blues is one of the well-springs of American music. It helps

kids understand the roots of what they're playing while shaping their own musical identity."

Memphis Bound

Although it wasn't an easy decision for the judges, ultimately they chose **Sleeper Wave** to make the Journey to Memphis. In the months ahead, these youth will continue to receive mentorship and coaching, preparing for the Youth Showcase on Beale Street, Friday, January 16, 2026. The CBA will support the band's fundraising efforts.

"Being part of the Youth Showcase is about more than just playing a set," Fleschner said. "It's about building confidence, connecting with other musicians, and realizing you're part of something much bigger. Memphis has a way of making music feel alive in a way that sticks with you forever."

The experience in Memphis will give these young artists a chance to perform in front of a larger audience, network with peers and industry professionals, and attend workshops designed to help them grow as musicians. While the Youth Showcase is not judged, the opportunity to be seen, heard, and inspired is invaluable.

From the energy at HÖKŪ to the mentorship of seasoned professionals, to the cheers of friends, family, and fans — the Youth Journey to Memphis is a living reminder that the blues isn't just a music of the past. It's alive, it's evolving, and it's in the hands of an extraordinary next generation.

The Cascade Blues Association invites the community to support these young musicians as they prepare for their Memphis journey. Travel, lodging, and meals are all costs the artists must cover, and your support can make a real difference.

If you'd like to help Sleeper Wave, visit CascadeBlues.org to find out more about their fundraising efforts and to donate and be part of this exciting adventure.

The Current Generation of Blues Musicians

While the Youth Journey to Memphis shines a spotlight on the next wave of talent, the Cascade Blues Association is also proud to support two acts, **Lilla (Solo)** and the **Nikki Jones Band**, who will go head-to-head against more than 200 blues acts from around the world. Judged

on their originality, technical skill, and command of the stage. It's an intense and exhilarating experience that places them squarely in the international spotlight.

CBA members know how much heart, sweat, and rehearsal goes into preparing for this challenge. That's why the organization is rallying behind Lilla and The Nikki Jones Band with fundraising support, mentorship, and community encouragement every step of the way.

Their Journey to Memphis represents more than just a competition — it's a chance to show the world the incredible depth of blues talent here in the Pacific Northwest.

The community will have several opportunities to hear these artists perform locally at upcoming **Journey to Memphis Concert fundraising events**. Every dollar raised and every cheer from the audience helps get them closer to Memphis and fuels their chance to shine on the world stage. ■

Follow the Journey to Memphis all the way at CascadeBlues.org/follow-journey-to-memphis

Blues Review: Fallen Angel

Ben Rice & The PDX Hustle



Ben Rice & The PDX Hustle have recorded and released a remarkable new record with a diverse selection of songs that will keep the listener interested and engaged. The songs are all written or co-written by Ben Rice who is the not only the composer, but the singer, guitarist and band leader. Rice's exposure to many genres of music when he was younger is evident in this unique selection of songs.

The leadoff hitter in this musical lineup, "Good Lord Bad Lord", starts like the sun is coming up, with high energy horns and wah-wah guitar. It ends with feedback that slowly disappears like cigarette smoke drifting into the air. Moving on to the second track, "Get Down", is a wild rock n' roll expose' of life on



the road with frenzied slide guitar, unrestrained keys and sax, and woos reminiscent of Little Richard. The mood slows down and changes on "Even On A Good Day", an emotionally charged song about losing someone close to you and missed opportunities to tell them how you feel about them.

Another highlight on the record is "Storm". The protagonist has done something wrong and is in deep trouble. Just as Johnny Cash's main character did in his song, "Cocaine Blues", he begs the judge for mercy. We don't know what the man did, but it's not going to end well. Another change of pace comes with "Crushing On The Bartender", a humorous and light-hearted look at the bar scene after one too many drinks. Check out the

video and you might see some familiar faces.

"Retreat" features Rice's best and most heartfelt vocals on the recording, as well as not one, but two searing guitar solos. Another favorite is "Lonesome", the upbeat and final song on the record, which describes a man who is protecting himself from being hurt and let down. But, if he's really being honest with himself, and it's true what the lyrics say, every King has a castle, and every castle has a moat, then every moat has a drawbridge and sooner or later it will come down.

The PDX Hustle is impressive, well-rehearsed, and ready to bring the extra juice to make these songs sparkle. The horn arrangements are first rate, with Pete Petersen on sax and John Dover

Photo by Debra Penk
Review by Mike Penk

on trumpet and flugel-horn really bringing them to life. Patrick McDougall on keys is always stellar and is a fine composer and singer in his own right. The rhythm section of John Wolcott on bass and Adam Carlson on drums hold it all together and keep everyone in the groove.

Chandler Bowerman also contributed drum tracks on several songs.

Inside the CD cover is the following:

This album is dedicated to Chandler Bowerman

Our drummer, our friend,

And a true part of our musical soul.

Working on these songs together was a great honor.

His love for music and his friendship

Meant the world to us.

Though he's no longer with us,

His spirit lives on in our music.

You'll always be part of this band, and part of us.

Learn more about this great band, see the video "Crushing on the Bartender" and catch a show near you at BenRiceHustle.com

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**DESSERT
POTLUCK**

In Loving Memory: Franco Paletta

By JT Thomas

Gone but not forgotten

The Pacific Northwest music scene lost a treasured member of our blues family: harmonica player, Franco Paletta. I had the privilege to play in his band, The Stingers, for a few years and got to know very personally Franco and his amazing wife Jeri Davis-Paletta.

Franco and Jeri were always a very loving and supportive couple, and I remember a lot of laughter and fun together. I was just one among many Portland blues musicians who played with Franco



Paletta and The Stingers. They released two albums: "Can't kick love", and "I like it just like that".

His band is the first that I traveled with to the International Blues Challenge in Memphis and then, in a big Ford F350 van, from Montana, to San Francisco,

and to the steam blues train in Durango Colorado (thanks for always fixing the van musicians Kenny Goldstein!).

Franco had a big box of random blues mix tapes that we listened to over and over in the van. It was a great music

education. I was with two versions of The Stingers and both were the kind of band that you really want to play with... a freight train rolling down the tracks at full force.

Franco was a man with deeply held beliefs that he was not shy to share. He loved Jesus, his family, his country, and the blues. His integrity to those beliefs was consistently reflected in his words and actions. He also had a huge heart, and a lot of love that I wish people who knew him, or didn't, will remember him by.

We're gonna miss you buddy! We'll see you on the gig someday. ■

International Blues Challenge Competitors Fundraising Concerts

- Sunday, October 19, 1-5 pm**
Mekong Bistro 8200 NE Siskiyou St, PDX
- Sunday, November 9, 1-5 pm**
Billy Blues 115 NE Hazel Dell Ave, Vancouver
- Sunday, January 11, 12-4 pm** SEND-OFF PARTY
Blue Diamond - 2016 NE Sandy Blvd, PDX

\$10 Suggested Donation At The Door



Lilla



The Nikki Jones Band

Youth Showcase Fundraising Events



Sleeper Wave

Sunday, Nov 2, 6 pm
HŌKŪ Events on Madison

Thursday, Nov 6, 6-8 pm
Willamette Falls Studios

For more events visit
CascadeBlues.org/calendar/

Support the Journey to Memphis,
get updates, artist blos,
behind-the-scenes stories & more

CascadeBlues.org





PORTLAND, OREGON
JOURNEY TO MEMPHIS
MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE

Treat Yourself to a Local Gig

CBA Blues Calendar

For a more complete list of blues shows (including weekly shows and jams), please refer directly to music venues and acts or visit our website at CascadeBlues.org/calendar

November

- 2 - 1st Sunday Gospel with Rae Gordon and Timothy James (TJ) Wong at Trails End Saloon, Oregon City
- 2 - Myrtle Brown & Executive Groove at Canary, Portland
- 2 - First Sundays with Suburban Slim at Slim's, Portland
- 4 - Chance Hayden's Desert Room All Stars at McMenamins Al's Den
- 4 - CBA Monthly Showcase & Meeting at Mekong Bistro
- 7 - First Fridays with Lloyd Jones at Artichoke Music, Portland
- 7 - Joel Astley Band at Pines Hotel 1852, Hood River
- 8 - Lloyd Jones & Friends at Spirits Pub
- 8 - Joel Astley Band at Beach Hut Deli, Tigard
- 9 - Journey to Memphis Fundraiser at Billy Blues Bar & Grill, Vancouver, WA

Weekly Shows

Mondays

- Lloyd Jones at Muddy Rudder, Portland
- Tevis Hodge Jr with Bayou Boyz Band at Mekong Bistro, Portland

Tuesdays

- Ed Neumann & Friends at Conway's House of Jazz, Clackamas
- Tuesday Blues at Hoku Events, Portland
- Sarah Lodge Band at Trails End Saloon, Oregon City

Wednesdays

- Grace London at Trails End Saloon, Oregon City

Thursdays

- Ed Newman & Friends at CI Bar, Tualatin
- Fenix Rising Band at Blue Diamond, Portland

Sundays

- Bayou Boyz with Ben Rice at Spirits Pub, Portland
- 13 - Dave Fleschner Trio with guest Curtis Salgado at Hoku
- 15 - PDX Preachers at the Ale & Cider House, West Linn
- 15 - Kevin Selfe Trio at Ilani Casino/Line & Lure, Ridgefield, WA
- 16 - Sarah Lodge Band at Trails End Saloon, Oregon City

- 23 - Samantha Fish at the Aladdin Theater
- 23 - Beacon Street Titans at Hoku, Portland
- 26 - Soul Cookin' at Blue Diamond, PDX
- 30 - Chance Hayden's Desert Room All Stars at McMenamin's Al's Den, Portland

December

- 2 - Chance Hayden's Desert Room All Stars at McMenamin's Al's Den, Portland
- 3 - CBA Monthly Showcase & Member Meeting at Mekong
- 5 - First Fridays with Lloyd Jones at Artichoke Music, Portland
- 7 - CBA Holiday Party & Fun(d)raiser at Mekong, Portland
- 7 - 1st Sunday Gospel w/Rae Gordon & Sonny Hess at Trails End Saloon, Oregon City
- 11 - Dave Fleschner at Hoku, Portland
- 13 - Kevin Selfe Trio at Ilani Casino/Line & Lure, Ridgefield, WA
- 13 - Eddie Martinez & Friends at the Headliners Club, Lake Oswego
- 19 - Kevin Selfe & the Tornados at Tigardville Station, Tigard
- 28 - Chance Hayden's Desert Room All Stars

at McMenamin's Al's Den, Portland

- 31 - Lloyd Jones Struggle at Hoku, PDX
- 31 - NYE with the Aretha and Etta songbook Rae Gordon at Blue Diamond, Portland

To get your show included in the next printing of BluesNotes, email your information to us at BluesNotes@cascadeblues.org

Blues Jams

Mondays

- Chad Rupp Jam at McMenamins White Eagle,
- Kathryn Grimm Jam at Mekong Bistro, Portland

Tuesdays

- Vic Sorisio at Billy Blues, Vancouver, WA

Wednesdays

- Toby Worthington & The Fabulous Bad Cats Jam at Dublin Pub, Beaverton

Thursdays

- Josh Makosky Jam at Lair Bar, Milwaukie
- Dan Hess & Friends at Beach Hut Deli, Tigard

Sundays

- Kevin Selfe Jam at Blue Diamond, Portland
- Scott Steele Jam at Montavilla Station, Portland
- Jerry Jacques Family Jam at 99 Saloon, Vancouver
- Eric Savage, Bobby Ferrante, Eric Rabe, Ben Jones at M&M Lounge, Gresham

Reflecting On The Positive Changes In 2025

Right Here,
Right Now

President's Message

As 2025 comes to a close, I want to take a moment to reflect on the many changes, improvements, and milestones we've accomplished together this year at the Cascade Blues Association. From the board, to our volunteers, musicians, and members, every step forward has been a shared effort—and it shows.

Early in the year, we sharpened our organizational goals: bringing more youth into the blues community, strengthening our connection with local musicians, and continuing to uphold our core mission of preserving and promoting the blues. Thanks to local musician Dave Fleschner, there's now a monthly youth-friendly blues jam at Hoku in Portland, and our International Blues Challenge youth program is moving forward. CBA member and volunteer Mercedes Cruz brought new life to our Blues in the Schools program, working to ensure students across the region get to experience the magic of the blues firsthand.



Behind the scenes, our online presence has gotten a serious upgrade. With Evelyn Silverman leading the redesign, our website is more modern and useful—featuring musician and band listings, venue guides, and even a resource page for musicians in need. On social media, Sandy Gilman has been working daily to keep the community connected, volunteer and CBA member Nolan Johnson has made sure our showcases can be watched live and replayed online, and our Facebook following grew by more than 20%. Vice President Rae Gordon worked diligently to build a committee

of volunteers to support this publication, the BluesNotes, a well-loved community resource and a public face of the CBA. Even our YouTube channel is officially rolling, ready for new subscribers.

This year also brought important updates to the Muddy Awards and Hall of Fame, honoring our pioneers while creating more space to recognize rising talent. These changes will also provide opportunities for us to replenish our Musician Relief Fund—another way we're taking care of our community.

A major highlight was the launch of the

Anthony Roberts CBA CD Fund, offering up to \$10,000 each year to help a local blues artist release their very first album. And who could forget our first-ever Journey to Memphis All-Star Blues Cruise at the Waterfront Blues Festival, which sold out completely? Along with four Portland/Vancouver fundraisers and a brand-new Salem event, we've extended our reach and connected with more people in the community.

Membership is also on the rise—up nearly 20% this year! I am excited to watch the fruits of these labors in the coming year, and I look forward to even more advancements in 2026.

Thank you to the board, our new and long-time volunteers, and every member who makes this community what it is. I feel blessed to be a part of it, and I can't wait to see what we'll build together in 2026. ■

Timmer

(CBA President)

To join and be a part of what we do in 2026, go to CascadeBlues.org/membership



Two great acts and you're invited!

The Cascade Blues Association's November Showcase

Sutton-Pitman is a Pacific Northwest born and bred blues duo that is taking the Seattle area by storm. Kevin Sutton is a long-time Seattle area musician, who as a band-leader and front man, won the International



Blues Challenge in Memphis in 2012 with The WIRED! Band. Jonathan Pitman, from Spokane Washington, is impressing audiences with his signature harmonica stylings and crowd antics. They will represent the Washington Blues Society in the 2026 International Blues Challenge in January 2026.

Taylor Newville is a Portland based-born guitarist and vocalist who has been chasing her passion for music



since the age of six. A finalist in the 2023 Journey to Memphis competition, she has since earned multiple CBA Muddy Award nominations. With her band The Riders, Taylor has lit up stages at the Waterfront Blues Festi-

val, Vancouver Wine & Jazz Festival. Her latest release, Find My Way (July 2025), showcases her originals and powerful guitar work.

- **Doors Open: 6pm**
(music: 6:30-8:00pm)
- **Free for members**
(\$5 for non-members)
- **Memberships:**
available at door
- **Free Raffle**
- **Mekong Bistro,**
8200 NE Siskiyou St,
Portland
- **All ages welcome!**

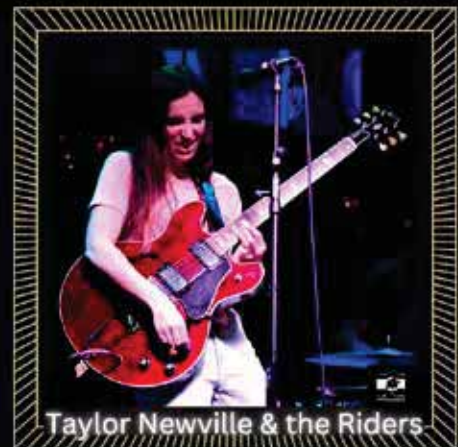


MONTHLY SHOWCASE

Wednesday, November 5 | 6:30-8:00pm



Kevin Sutton & Jonathan Pitman



Taylor Newville & the Riders

CASCADEBLUES.ORG • RAFFLES • DRAWINGS • ANNOUNCEMENTS

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New Recording Fund Established by CBA

By Evelyn Silverman

We are excited to see the results!

The Cascade Blues Association is honored to announce a new program that will leave a lasting impact on our region's blues community: the Anthony Roberts Cascade Blues Association CD Fund.

This fund, created through an endowment in memory of beloved blues community member Anthony Roberts, will award up to \$10,000 to help a Pacific Northwest blues artist record and release their first commercial blues CD. It's an opportunity to ensure that our region's blues talent reaches audiences far beyond our local stages.

Applications opened October 1st and will close November 12th, 2025. It is open to all CBA member musicians who live within the CBA's

geographic region and have not previously released a commercial CD. A review committee of experienced CBA members will carefully consider all submissions using a fair and confidential scoring system, selecting the artist who

shows the greatest potential to succeed — and who will most benefit from this pivotal step in their musical journey.

The ideal candidate will have already made an impression in our blues community — through performances,

participation in the Journey to Memphis competition, Muddy Award nominations or wins, and involvement with the CBA. The grant recipient will be announced at the CBA Holiday Party on December 7, 2025.

The grant winner will then have 18 months to complete their debut CD, with mentorship available from the CBA throughout the process. Once the album is ready, the CBA will help promote and help host the official CD release event.

We are excited to see the results of this process and we are honored to be given this opportunity to perpetuate the memory of Anthony Roberts. His name will live on with each album release. ■

To learn more or to apply, please visit CascadeBlues.org/cdfund





TO DO LIST
BOARD ELECTIONS
REMEMBER TO VOTE!

- *Wednesday, Nov 5, 6:30pm - CBA Showcase @ Mekong Bistro
- * Sunday, Nov 9, 1pm - J2M Fundraiser @ Billy Blues
- * SATURDAY NOVEMBER 15 - BOARD OFFICER NOMINATIONS CLOSE!**
- * Sunday, December 7, 1:00pm - J2M Holiday Party! at Mekong Bistro - Bring Dessert
- * DEC 1 - BOARD OFFICER BALLOT LINK SENT TO CURRENT CBA MEMBERS.**
- * DEC 15 - BALLOTS MUST BE COMPLETED!**



Send Board Nominations To
CBASTaff@CascadeBlues.org
Deadline November 15, 2025

BOARD OFFICERS

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- VICE-PRESIDENT**
- TREASURER**
- GENERAL SECRETARY**
- MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR**

*** SATURDAY NOVEMBER 15 - BOARD OFFICER NOMINATIONS CLOSE!**



NEW YEAR'S EVE

Dec. 31st
with
LLOYD JONES STRUGGLE

6pm - Door
7pm - Show
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Bruce Powell, Jane Roberts, Randy Murphy, Nelson Kerr, Gloria Geiser, Edward Reckford

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