



BLUES

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NEWS

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September/October 2015

Darell Christopher Captures Band Challenge

Joshua Yarbrough Headed to IBC in Memphis for 3rd Time in 4 Years; This Time as a Solo Act



Darell Christopher and the Ingredients: Edward "Spike" Gore, drums; Byron Crenshaw, bass; Darell Christopher, vocals; Aaron Henderson, keyboards; and Mark Furnas, guitar.

Veteran Band Leader is Seizing Opportunity

Stories and photos by Bill Martin

Veteran band leader and lead vocalist **Darell Christopher** says he learned from competing in the Tulsa Blues Challenge a year ago. At that time his five piece band had practiced or performed very little together, yet they made a big impression capturing second place in the nine band field.

In the 12th Annual Blues Challenge, again held at historic Cain's Ballroom, Darell and his band, The Ingredients, won the competition, again in a 9 band field, with relative ease. The band was much tighter this time around. They used old school traditional blues, R&B and Soul, combined with originality, excellent blues content, Darell's magnetic stage presence, with a veteran band putting its talent on display.

Held on Labor Day weekend, September 5th, the repertoire included the blues classics *Ice Man*, plus *Me and My Guitar*. Their 20-minute set was rounded out with two of Darell's original songs, *Slow Down Baby* and *Jealous Man*.

"You don't see good front men with band's like you used to see that 'pulls' an audience up on the stage with you," Darell says. Few will argue that point as Darell is known for his engaging smile, personality and dance moves around the stage. In fact, at the *Summertime Blues Showcase* last June he put on a 90-minute exhibition in stage professionalism without slowing down, or taking a break.

Darell lived in Europe seven years performing with a German band and later with a French band. "I was spoiled with the gigs over there. In the states it is hard to make a living as a musician. We're just going (to the International Blues Challenge) to do the best we can and have fun. We're very appreciative of the Blues Society an all it does."

Yarbrough Just Finds a Way to Win

Tulsa blues artist Joshua Yarbrough, who will represent Tulsa at the International Blues Challenge next January in Memphis, keeps finding a way to win. Nearly four years ago he placed second in the band competition at the Blues Challenge in Tulsa. He immediately drove down the Turner Turnpike to the Oklahoma City blues challenge with his band the **\$5 Sugar**, and won a trip to the IBC. After sitting out a year, he won the Tulsa band competition with **The Boogie**. That band has disbanded, so this year he entered and won Tulsa's solo/duo competition, held at VFW Post 577's Centennial Lounge – and again is headed to Memphis.



Joshua Yarbrough 7/25 at the Solo/Duo Blues Challenge.

Joshua kicked off his winning 30-minute set with *It Don't Even Matter No More* by Tulsa's **Garrett Heck**. But his set was comprised mostly of originals such as *Maddie Rae*, written for and named after his daughter. Other originals included *Hazardous to Yer Health*, *First Train*, *Goin' Home*, *Hurtin' Lonesome* and *Pretty Mama*. Other songs in his set were *Sitting on Top of the World* (**The Memphis Sheiks**), *The Devil Blues* (**Robert Johnson**) and *Can't be Satisfied* (**Willie Dixon**).

"I am humbled and grateful for the opportunity to represent Tulsa at the IBC again. This will be my first time competing in the IBC as a solo act. When I started playing these competitions I never imagined I'd win one, let alone three. I look forward to experiencing it from the solo standpoint. It should be interesting," says Joshua. "Also, I'll be dropping a solo album in January as to have merchandise for the IBC, and, well I haven't done anything solo since 2010!"

INSIDE:

Oklahoma Blues Hall of Fame Inductees, The Vox Squadron, Buddy Guy, Breezy Rodio, Delta Moon, Jon Spear Band, Say No to the Devil, Deb Ryder, Ian Siegal, Best Self Produced CD Deadline, True Blues: Behind Bars, The Patti Taylor Band, and more!

Welcome Our New Members!

Kurt Nielson, Sand Springs; Erica Swaim, Nate Miller, Dacia Tosh, Keith and Melissa Weldon, all of Tulsa.

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BST MONTHLY MEETINGS

are held the second Monday of the month at 7 p.m. The September 14th meeting and the October 12th meeting are at the Cimarron Bar, 26th Street and South Memorial. Non-members are always welcome!

LOCAL BIRTHDAYS

September 2 – Jacque Garoutte; 5 – Jamie Oldaker; 11 – Leo Kottke; 14 – Steve White, Steve Gaines (1977); 21 – Jesse Ed Davis (1988); 25 – Mike Peace; 26 – Larry Bell, Peter Delesdernier; **October 8** – John Heatley; 12 Jim Strader (2009); 17 – Barney Kessel (2004) 18 – Roger Tillison; (2013) 20 – Danny Baker; Alan Ransom; 21 – Elvin Bishop; 22 – Zac Hanson; 23 – Matthew Teegarden; 25 – Roger Roden, Scott Russell; 24 -- Pat Murray (2012)

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Blues Hall of Fame Inductees

In our July/August Blues News we only reported four of the eight Oklahoma Blues Hall of Fame inductees. The other four are:

Harry and Debbie Blackwell – Based in Northern California, they have opened for countless national acts and are regulars at the Dusk til Dawn Blues Festival every year.

Roger Hurricane Wilson – Has taught guitar lessons for 40 years and performed with dozens of national acts.

John “Wolfman Black” Wooten – Is a loyal grounds keeper for the Dusk til Dawn Blues Festival. From Bartlesville, he is vocalist and drummer with **Dues Paid**.



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CD REVIEWS



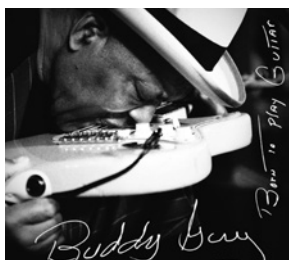
The Vox Squadron: CRASHING DOWN

The B-52 bomber releasing a horde of bombs ought to be the first clue of this CD declaring war on something – maybe mediocre music? But if the album cover doesn't do it, the title cut *Crashing Down*, with an authentic

WWII air raid siren certainly does as it

bleeds into an electric guitar solo by **Jack Meyer**. And this is just the beginning of 10 original gems.

The Vox Squadron from Tahlequah may be little known, but that will be changing. Meyer also handles vocals and most of the songwriting. He's backed by veterans **Richard Wood**, bass; **Jeremy Scott**, drums; and **Aaron Lee**, keyboards. This is blues rock at its best, until they head into the instrumental territory of *G Minor Cowgirl in ¾ Time* and you travel into a southern jam - *Jessica* (**Allman Brothers**), or even *Gypsy* (**Dustin Pittsley**). Meyer's fine vocals and several of the songs bring **Ian Moore** to mind. I haven't heard a better blues/rock album this year. This quartet has a big sound; they are original and unique. I expect big things from them. – **Bill Martin**



Buddy Guy: BORN TO PLAY GUITAR (RCA Records)

Once again, 79-year-old bluesman **Buddy Guy** released his new blues record at number one on the Billboard blues charts, and it's no wonder because, like his previous 2013 two-

disc set, this collection is also quite amazing!

He's joined, this time, by **Billy Gibbons**, **Kim Wilson**, **Joss Stone** and **Van Morrison** on five tracks, and almost all of the tracks are standouts. I especially enjoyed listening to, and playing along with, *Back Up Mama*; *Whiskey, Beer & Wine*; *Crazy World*; and *Come Back Muddy*. Ohhh... Yeahhhh..., here's another Buddy Guy masterpiece for blues lovers and blues guitarists everywhere. -

Curt Fillmore (CurtsList.Com)



Breezy Rodio: SO CLOSE TO IT (Windchill Records)

Chicago blues stalwart **Breezy Rodio** in his sophomore album once again brings in some of the Windy City's best artists such as **Billy Branch** and **Lurrie Bell**. Then you throw in contributions

from **Carl Weathersby**, among others and you can't go wrong with this recording of 15 cuts.

Breezy mixes traditional blues with a 50s rock n' roll sound, backed by one tight band. He has half a dozen originals such as *I Win Some More* featuring Bell on vocals and second guitar, to classics such as **Jackie Wilson's** *Please Accept My Love*. This is a very enjoyable album. – **Bill Martin**



Delta Moon: LOW DOWN

(**Jumping Jack Records**)

Delta Moon front man Tom Gray has been blessed with one of those gravely blues voices that truly accentuates his fine songwriting and melodies. Add to this his talent on guitar, lap steel,

keyboards and harmonica and he is such a well-rounded artist.

Low Down features nine original tunes starting off with *Wrong Side of Town* taking this album off to a blues rocking start. The rest of Delta Moon certainly does their part with **Mark Johnson**, guitar; **Franher Joseph**, bass and **Marion Patton**, drums and percussion. The band's version of Tom Waits' *Lowdown* is a perfect fit. This is a very good album. – **Billy Austin**

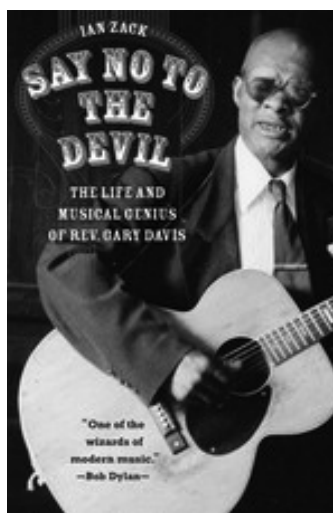


Jon Spear Band: OLD SOUL

(**Trio Music Co. Inc.**)

Jon Spear Band is an example of good things resulting from a blues society serving its purpose. The band members met through their active participation in the *Central Virginia Blues Society*.

This release has fine lyrics coming from the band's namesake, while **Dara James** plays a fine, clean, tone rich guitar. It is all cemented by **Andy Burdetsy**, bass and **John Stubblefield**, drums. My favorite cuts are *Old Soul*, featuring a fine saxophone, *Paid in Full*, plus the classic *Tin Pan Alley*. – **Bill Martin**



Book Review SAY NO TO THE DEVIL

Ian Zack, hardback, 323 pp.; Univ of Chicago Press; 2015; \$30

Subtitled: *The Life and Times of Reverend Gary Davis*, this is the first ever biography of the blues and gospel singing Harlem street preacher. After a brief record session in 1935, Davis moved to New York City in 1940 and trod the mean streets of Harlem for two decades as a street preacher until his recordings began to provide

him some financial stability.

During this time he also taught virtually every young folk guitarist in New York City from **Dave Van Ronk** to **Jorma Kaukonen**, later of **Starship** and **Hot Tuna**. Author Zack paints a vivid picture of this brilliant Piedmont guitarist, including stories of legendary jam sessions in Davis' New York apartment which included **Woody Guthrie**, **Leadbelly** **Josh White** and **Lightning Hopkins**. This is a most welcome addition to our blues literature. – **Kerry Kudlacek**



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CD REVIEWS



Deb Ryder:

LET IT RAIN

(BeJeb Music)

Deb Ryder has knocked it out of the park on her second CD, *Let It Rain*. Starting with 11 original songs from Deb, she brought in legendary blues producer **Tony Braunagel**, who

brought in guitarist **Johnny Lee Schkell**, **Albert Lee**, **Kim Wilson** on harmonica and **Lee Thornburg** and **Lon Price** on horns, and you got – wow!

Deb reminds one of a young **Etta James**. What more can you say. All tracks are great. The best new talent to hit the stage in a while – and the best CD I've heard this year. – **Freddie Morrow**



Ian Siegal:

THE PICNIC SESSIONS

(Nugene Records)

Warm, funny and sweet is the best way to describe Ian Siegal's new CD, *The Picnic Sessions*. Starting with the award winning **Mississippi Mudbloods**, **Cody Dickinson**, **Luther**

Dickinson, **Alvin Youngblood Hart** and **Jimbo Matus**; add to it analog tape, ribbon mic's, and you have irresistible warmth.

Cody Dickinson produced this CD as well as Ian's two previous top CDs, *The Skinny* and *Candy Store Kid*. Songs of note are: *How Come You're Still Here?*, *Heavenly Houseboat Blues*, and *Wasted Freedom*. Ian has captured the essence of the Delta in this CD, in the tradition of the late **R.L. Burnside** *Back Porch Sessions*. – **Freddie Morrow**

September 25 is Deadline For Best Self-Produced CD

Since 2005, The Blues Foundation has held a *Best Self-Produced CD* competition to honor artists that have achieved excellence in the studio. Acts can be bands, solo or duo acts, trios, full choirs or any other combination. The purpose of this award is to assist blues musicians in the pursuit of their professional goals.

Your entry must have been released between **November 1, 2014** and **October 31, 2015**. Judging is based on:

- (1) Blues Content
- (2) Musical Performance
- (2) Audio Quality of the Presentation
- (3) Cover Art and Design
- (4) Credits and Liner Information

The BST deadline for entries is September 25th. It must either be postmarked by this date, or hand delivered to a BST officer or awards committee member by 6 p.m. on 9/25. Five copies of your entry are required. Please mail entries to: Blues Society of Tulsa, P.O. Box 2836, Tulsa, OK 74101.

Blues Challenge 2015 Photos



Black Kat Benders: Bob Bledsoe, drums; Bruce Jones, guitar; Kara Cavey Conrad, vocals; and Blair Raguse, bass.



Bethany Grace of Bethany Grace & Gypsy Soul



Chris Garrett of the Chris Garrett Band



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True Blues: Behind Bars

By Kerry Kudlacek



Leadbelly

One of the oldest “true blues” is *Joe Turner Blues*: It is rarely recorded and rarely heard. The only version I have is on a long-out-of-print 3 LP set on Verve, cut by **Big Bill Broonzy** in 1957, one year before he died.

When **Pete Turney** was governor of Tennessee (1892 – 1896), he appointed his brother **Joe Turney** (which oral folk tradition evolved into Turner) to transport prisoners from Memphis to the state penitentiary in Nashville. Broonzy’s version of the song begins: *They say Joe Turner’s come and gone (2x), you know he had that long chain on.* Obviously the long chain man was not a welcome sight to convicts and other evil-doers.

In 1914 **W.C. Handy**, that great discoverer, arranger and copyrighter of blues, heard this folk blues and copyrighted it under his own name. Handy, himself, cut the song for a Library of Congress project in 1938, accompanying himself on guitar. Folklorist **John Lomax** captured two more versions in 1942 including one by **Muddy Waters**.

Another hated and feared “long chain man” was **Bud Russell**. Standing six foot two and weighing over 200 pounds, he terrorized convicts in the Texas prison system from the 1920s through the 1930s, transporting them to Sugarland Prison Farm south of Houston. **Leadbelly** mentions Russell in *Midnight Special* and **Lightning Hopkins** sings about him in *Penitentiary Blues*. Hopkins sings, *Bud Russell drove women like he did the men.* Hopkins did time on a Texas chain gang in the mid 30s and may have had personal contact with Russell.

Midnight Special is perhaps the most well-known true blues. Many people know that Leadbelly sang his way out of Angola Prison in Louisiana in 1934, but the 12-string player was also transported to Sugarland Prison Farm (by Bud Russell) in 1918 due to a conviction for attempted murder. When **Gov. Pat Neff** came to

Sugarland in 1924, Leadbelly composed a song for him and sang his way out of that prison also.

During his stay at Sugarland, Leadbelly learned that every night a train left Houston for San Antonio at eleven and passed by Sugarland at midnight. The train represented escape, freedom and fantasy, and the inmates called it the Midnight Special. As verses about the train began to circulate in the prison, Leadbelly added verses and put the song in the form we know today.

John Lomax collected Leadbelly’s version at Angola in 1933. He also collected versions in other Texas prisons in 1934, 1936 and 1937. In 1940 Leadbelly taught the song to **Pete Seeger**, who formed a massively influential folk group, the Weavers, in 1949. In 1950 the Weavers’ record of Leadbelly’s *Goodnight Irene* was number one on the hit parade, and in 1952 their version of *Midnight Special* reached #30 on the charts. **Josh White** had been singing the song since 1950, and when the **Kingston Trio** cut it, this true blues train song became familiar to most Americans. The song’s ascendancy to fame became complete in 1973 when NBC-TV began a 90-minute show called *Midnight Specials* announced by **Wolfman Jack** and featuring various rock and folk groups of the day. And in the Central Time Zone, the show aired at midnight.

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PATTI TAYLOR BAND – 2ND Place in the 2015 Blues Challenge: Front Row (right to left): Patti Taylor, Charley Taylor, Jim Loftin, Brady Hoover, and Bill Beall. Back Row: Steve Pounds, Victor Anderson, Rod Clark and Dave Johnson. (Photo by Bill Martin)

Blues Society of Tulsa

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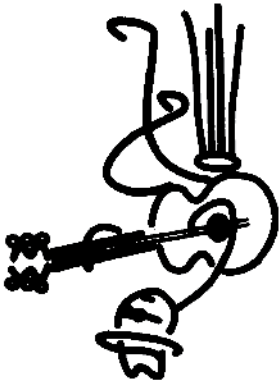
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