



# BLUES

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# NEWS

THE BLUES SOCIETY OF TULSA

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[www.bluessocietyoftulsa.com](http://www.bluessocietyoftulsa.com)

July/August 2016



## Steve Pryor RIP: The Day Tulsa Music Died



*“Really, everybody take a deep breath (from) all this anger and sadness.” – Damon Daniel*



**THE STEVE PRYOR BAND: Stan Reed, Steve Pryor and Damon Daniel (Photo by Gretchen Mullen)**

**By Billy Austin**

The unexpected loss of **Steve Pryor**, 60, to Tulsa was akin to the blues world losing the three kings at once - Albert, B.B. and Freddie.

Dying in a motorcycle crash at approximately 5:30 p.m. on May 6<sup>th</sup>, it was nearly 24 hours later before word began to rapidly spread. For many Blues Society of Tulsa members, this happened around 3:30 p.m. Saturday May 7<sup>th</sup> at the Bixby BBQ and Blues Festival.

The **Dirtboxwailers** had finished an excellent set and the **James Groves Blues Machine** was about follow. Now it seemed the air had been suddenly sucked right out of an otherwise beautiful day. By 7 p.m. when the **Dustin Pittsley Band** took the stage, the reality of it all was starting to sink in as the SP admirer sometimes struggled to choose the next song in his set.

The loss of Steve is reminiscent of to 2013 when Oklahoma lost legendary native son **J.J. Cale**. But in a sense Pryor's loss hit even closer to home. Cale had left Oklahoma years ago for the West Coast. And not to diminish the love and respect for him here, Cale kept more to himself, rarely coming home. While Pryor also had left Tulsa for California, and other places, he always returned to his roots. Tulsa was always home.

He played regularly in Tulsa and the region. Steve might show up at a Cimarron Bar Sunday jam, or make an impromptu appearance for a set with another band. He was a mentor to up and coming artists. **(Continued on page 7)**

### July 20th is Challenge Band Deadline; Solo/Duo Deadline is August 23rd

For the first time in its 13-year run, artists will have the chance to enter both blues challenges, sponsored by the Blues Society of Tulsa. This is because the deadline for entries for the solo/duo competition is three days after the band competition is held. The band challenge winner will not be eligible to enter the solo/duo competition.

The band competition will be held at historic Cain's Ballroom, 423 S. Main, while the solo/duo event will take place at the Centennial Lounge, VFW Post 577, 1109 E. 6<sup>th</sup> St. The time to start each event will be determined by the number of entries.

**BAND COMPETITION:** Deadline for entries is July 20<sup>th</sup>. The competition will be August 20<sup>th</sup>. Entry fee: \$50

**SOLO/DUO COMPETITION:** Deadline for entries is August 23<sup>rd</sup>. The competition will be held September 10<sup>th</sup>. Entry fee: \$25. The winners will represent Tulsa and Northeastern Oklahoma at the International Blues Challenge in January 2017, in Memphis. Entry forms are available at [www.bluessocietyoftulsa.com](http://www.bluessocietyoftulsa.com) or at 918-288-7574.

### INSIDE:

Harmonica Summit Photographs, Bixby BBQ & Blues Festival Pictorial, John Mayhall, Blind Lemon Pledge, Debbie Bond, Jeff Plankenhorn, Duke Robillard, Beau Brumley Award, and more!

## Welcome Our New Members!

Jeremiah Davis, Dan S. Layman, Marty Thomas, all from Tulsa; Billy and Debra Hoppock, Bartlesville.

**Website:** [www.bluessocietyoftulsa.com](http://www.bluessocietyoftulsa.com)

**e-mail:** [bluessociety@peoplepc.com](mailto:bluessociety@peoplepc.com)

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## LOCAL BIRTHDAYS

**May 5** – Heather Buckley; July 2–Pat Moss; 4 – Big Al Downing (2005); 5 – Official J.J. Cale Day in Oklahoma; 9 – Bob Hendrix; 15 Kenny Cheek (2011), Mike Winebrenner, Frank McPeters (2009); 16 – Little Joe McLerran; 17 – Jimmy LaFave, Joe Lee Wilson (2011); 18 – David Teegarden Jr.; 25 – Jim Downing, Mike Weinbrenner, Wally Wallingford, Steve Parkhurst; 26 – Rocky Frisco (2015), JJ Cale (2013); 29 – Scott Mariner; Dave McKnight (2011); **August 9** – Ricky Preston, David McKnight; 10 – Rockin’ John Henry (2004) and Michael MD Johnson; 12–Pete Huckabee, Dick Gagle; 15 – Robert Wilson, (2010); 19–Chuck Blackwell; 20 -- Mike Bruce (2005); 22 – Jim Karstein; 23 – Matt Kohl; 26 Ernie Fields (1997), Jimmy Rushing (1972)

## BST MONTHLY MEETINGS

held the second Monday of the month at 7 p.m. Both the July 11th meeting and the August 8th meeting will be held at the Cimarron Bar, 26th and South Memorial. Non-members are welcome!



The Blues  
Foundation  
AFFILIATE

Blues Society of Tulsa, P.O. Box 2836, Tulsa, OK 74101, is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization with the purpose of preserving and promoting the blues in Tulsa and Northeastern Oklahoma. *Blues News* is published bi-monthly and encourages your support through personalized membership card and the *Blues News* newsletter. BST members are encouraged to submit articles, photos and other materials for publication. Deadline for both editorial items and advertising is the 1st of the month (30 days) prior to publication.

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# Tulsa Harmonica Summit Sizzles!

*Photography by Curt Abbott*



Junior Markham, and Tulsa Mayor Dewey Bartlett “cookin’” at the March 19<sup>th</sup> show.



R.J. Mischo, Oxnard, CA.



Billy Gibson, Memphis



Sugar Blue, Chicago.



John Long, St. Louis



Deak Harp, Clarksdale, MS and and Ron McRorey, Tulsa.



**CIMARRON  
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<p><b>HAPPY HOUR</b> \$1.50 Longnecks Monday - Saturday until 8pm <b>OPEN JAM</b> With The Kevin Phariss Band SUNDAY AT 4</p>	<p><b>WEDNESDAYS</b> Ladies Night &amp; Jam with Harry Williams &amp; Friends <b>LIVE MUSIC</b> WEDNESDAY - SUNDAY</p>
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July 1 – Creeler  
 July 7 – Mojo Risen  
 July 16 – The Revolt  
 July 21 – Viagra Kings  
 July 29 – Judge Parker  
 August 4 – Off Beat Road  
 August 5 – Julie & the RetrospeX  
 August 12 – Levee Town  
 August 20 – Red Sawyer  
 August 25 – Bill Snow

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# 2016 Bixby BBQ and Blues Festival!

*Photography by \* Jim Robinson and \*\*Bill Martin*



**\*Great food, BBQ competition, and of course, great Blues – all sponsored by the Bixby Rotary Club, May 6-7.**



**\*\*The Vox Squadron**



**\*Dylan Whitney**



**\*Tullie Brae**



**\*The Dirtboxwailers**



**\*\*Darell Christopher**



**\*\*Patti Taylor**



**\*James Groves**



**\*Kalo**



**\*Dustin Pittsley with loner guitar from The Guitar House, after his two Stratocasters were stolen. Both have since been recovered.**





# CD REVIEWS



## **John Mayall's Bluesbreakers: LIVE IN 1967 - VOLUME TWO**

(Forty Below Records)

This is the second album of previously unavailable

blues recordings of a super group that only lasted 3 months, but made an indelible mark on music. The band was comprised of John Mayall (harmonica), Peter Green (guitar), John McVie (bass) and Mick Fleetwood (drums); with Green, McVie and Fleetwood leaving right after, to form Fleetwood Mac. All 13 tracks are pretty spectacular with standouts: *Stormy Monday* featuring vocalist Ronnie Jones and Green instrumental *Greeny*, featuring incredible guitar and some great B3 organ. Outstanding! It's hard to believe these songs were recorded this way back in 1967 because you can hear many of the same songs, played pretty close to the same way, in many Tulsa venues, every weekend. -- Curt Fillmore (CurtsList.Com)



## **Debbie Bond: ENJOY THE RIDE THE SHOALS SESSIONS**

(Blues Roots Productions)

For over 30 years backwoods

Alabama singer, songwriter and guitar player Debbie Bond has been backing Alabama blues musicians like Eddie Kirkland and Willie King as well as founding the award winning Alabama Blues Project. Now here's her own third album of sweet blues which can be described as a little Maria Muldaur crossed with the soulful sounds and guitar playing of Bonnie Raitt. The music on this album is clean and pretty, with some very good slide guitar work. I have to say that I love the music on this album. but don't care much for Debbie's vocals. - Curt Fillmore (CurtsList.Com)



## **Blind Lemon Pledge: PLEDGE DRIVE**

(Ofeh Records)

This album is a little weird sounding, but it might grow on ya, if you're a Tom Waits and Bob Dylan fan. It's a

little like an entire album of soundtrack music with a full New Orleans band treatment on some songs, subtle keys and melodies on others, and then a little sax rock on others. Blind Lemon even sounds like Bowie on *5 Weeks of Heaven*. Just like my review of Debbie Bond; the music is ok but Blind Lemon's vocals need work, although, *Rolling Stone* magazine will probably love this one.

- Curt Fillmore (CurtsList.Com)



## **Jeff Plankenhorn: SOULSLIDE**

(Lounge Side Records)

As the title suggests there is a lot of excellent slide guitar contained within this album but it also contains

some real good songs and excellent energy as well; especially on songs like *Dirty Floor* and the very danceable *Born to Win*. All songs here are written by Austin based guitarist, singer and songwriter Plank as everyone who knows Jeff Plankenhorn calls him, with guest stars Ruthie Foster, Malford Milligan and an incredible backing band. This is a very good album of very good original music. I'll have to buy this one! -- Curt Fillmore (CurtsList.Com)



## **Duke Robillard: THE ACOUSTIC BLUES & ROOTS OF DUKE ROBILLARD**

(Stony Plain)

The founder of Roomful of Blues has released nearly 30 albums. This latest release has four original tunes with emphasis on the additional 14 songs covering his heroes, mostly music pioneers from the 1920s to 1940s. Robillard, who played Tulsa's Unit D in May, enjoys a musical smorgasbord of songs covering everything from blues, to ragtime, jazz and many other genres. An excellent guitarist, Robillard is backed by dynamite musicians including Jerry Portnoy on harmonica. - Bill Martin

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**Steve Pryor, RIP...**(continued from page 1).  
Even on an off night Steve was better than most. When he was on, nobody could touch him.

Whether it was fans or fellow musicians, you knew how special Steve and his music was. Blues Society members Dave Hannis and his late wife Debbie were devoted as fans could be and unabashedly believed he was the greatest guitar player in the world.

Tulsa saxophonist Michael Staub wrote, "I remember talking with someone about Pryor one time and they asked if he was as good as Eric Clapton. Without thinking I replied, 'If I saw Eric Clapton on stage with Steve Pryor I'd just feel sorry for Clapton.'"

Oklahoman Jamie Oldaker, who recorded and played with Clapton countless times, ranks Steve up there with Clapton, Peter Frampton and others.

Steve never seemed to take the loss of someone he loved very well. That was the case in the loss of his Mother. More recently, he knew his decade's long friend, classmate and bass player Stan Reed, 61, was dying of cancer, and he was struggling with it. But it was still a shock when Steve died 15 days before Stan's passing on May 21st.

On June 5th hundreds were at Cain's Ballroom as dozens of musicians honored Steve's legacy with his music.

Thankfully we still have drummer Damon Daniel, a kind soul, who began playing with Steve and Stan his sophomore year at Nathan Hale High School.

In a June 1st Facebook post Damon wrote: "There's a lot

of people talking about what SP would've wanted lately... After 45 years I'm pretty sure I don't know what Steve really wanted from life much less death...Probably NONE of this... In spite of his twisted sense of humor... Really, everybody take a deep breath (from) all this anger and sadness. (It) does not befit you or Steve...and please, if you feel you need to reach out to me make it an actual conversation... no messaging, etc...I'm trying to hold on to the smoldering remains of what little inner monologue I have left."

The night before the tribute to Steve at Cain's, Paul Benjamin preluded his set at The Colony. He was joined by Jesse Aycock, Paddy Ryan and Aaron Baylor.

Knowing his playing at the Cain's tribute would be one of the most difficult gigs he's ever played, Paul chuckled and said, "It's kind of comforting that with Steve not here, there is still all this chaos coming from the grave."

The last gig played by the Steve Pryor Band was April 22<sup>nd</sup> at *George's Majestic Lounge* in Fayetteville, AR

"At Georges' that night, it was the happiest I'd seen Steve in a long time with the way the band sounded," Damon recalls.

The day of Steve's passing the band's gear was all set up for a show in the Brady District at the *Hunt Club Pub & Grub*. Steve left the venue about 5 p.m. and never returned.

A piece of the heart of Tulsa music was ripped out with Steve's passing. It was the day Tulsa music died.

# STONE RIVER 2016 MUSIC FESTIVAL

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Congratulations to Blues Society member Beau Brumley. His song SECRETS IN THE NIGHT was recently named best blues song of the month by L.A. - based Akademia. The on line site is dedicated to recognizing excellence in music. You can hear Beau's award winning song at: [www.reverbnation.com](http://www.reverbnation.com) (Photo by Bill Martin)

# Blues Society of Tulsa

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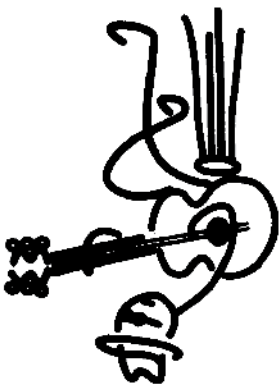
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