

Blues Society of Tulsa Celebrating 16 Years! 2002 - 2018

Volume 16, Number 7

www.bluessocietyoftulsa.com

November/December 2018

DEAD LETTER KINGS Capture Solo/Duo Blues Challenge

Story and Photo by Bill Martin

Jimmy Ray Taylor and **Bruce Hill** began writing songs together when they first learned to play guitar, dating back to 1983, and they performed like veterans winning the Blues Society's Annual Solo/Duo Blues Challenge at Soul City Gastro Pub and Music House, September 29th. Competing against six other acts on a perfect evening on the outside patio and deck, winning the regional competition puts Taylor and Hill, who performed under the name, **Dead Letter Kings**, on a path to Memphis in January, competing against acts from around the world in the International Blues Challenge. Taylor has made a name for himself locally with the Southern/blues/rock band **Dirtboxwailers**, sharing guitar licks with **Sam Matthews**, and **Josh Richards** on bass, **Damon Daniel** on drums, and **Chris Kyle** on keys.



Photo Caption: Dead Letter Kings, winners of the 2018 Tulsa Blues Challenge Solo/Duo Competition, Jimmy Ray Taylor (l) and Bruce Hill.

Hill says, "I've always been the unseen guy, but I've written a few songs with Jimmy for the Dirtboxwailers... I've always enjoyed playing acoustic guitar more than anything." Hill added, "Jimmy is such a good singer and a good harp player and I've always wanted to feature him. So I thought, give me a guitar and let him shine with his thing." This is when the two decided to enter the blues challenge,

which even if they didn't win the contest, it could lead to a side project separate from the band. "Even if we hadn't won it, the challenge was worth it because of all the people we met who are doing things like we are," Hill concluded.

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The winning 15-minute set of **Dead Letter Kings** started with Drunken Barrelhouse Blues (**Memphis Minnie**), I Got to Cross the River Jordan (**Blind Willie McTell**), the original, Better Part of Me, which the pair wrote together about 15 years ago, and they closed the set with Can't Be Satisfied (**Muddy Waters**). The other six acts (one duo act dropped out) in the challenge were: The Amy Schroer Band (Justin Cable and Mike Snow) who won the challenge in 2013, Dave Daniel who won the 2017 challenge, Gary Alexander, The Cake-Eaters (Clint Hardesty and Jimmy Cornelius, Five String Crossfire (Al Jennings) and Jim Tate.



BST'S ANNUAL
CHRISTMAS PARTY

Saturday, December 22nd
at Soul City Gastropub at 7pm-11pm.

Performing will be
Dead Letter Kings, our Duo Blues Challenge Winner,
& Pilgrim will start at 8pm.
\$10 COVER AT THE DOOR.



INSIDE:

Blues Choice Awards Voting, Student Grant Award, CD Reviews and more ...

Welcome Our New Members!

Steve Larsen, Julia Allen, Gary Alexander, Bruce Hill,
Jimmy Ray Taylor, Nathaniel Bowden, Isabel Orona

VOTE TODAY!

Blues Choice Awards Time

Deadline is Dec. 1st

Voting is underway in the 15th Annual Blues Choice Awards which recognizes some of the finest blues artists in Northeastern Oklahoma. You have to be a member of the Blues Society of Tulsa to vote.

If you're not a member, join today, and you are eligible. See the membership form on page 4. Deadline for casting ballots is Friday, December 1st.

The "Best of 2018 ballot features four categories: Best Vocals, Group, Rhythm (typically a bass guitar, drums, percussion, etc.) and Lead (any lead instrument, guitar, keyboards, harmonica etc.). An awards ceremony honoring the winners will be held in the first quarter of next year at a time and venue to be announced. The ceremony will be held in conjunction with the Blues Society's annual birthday party, with the winners invited to perform.

There are numerous ways to vote because we want to make it easy as pie. A BCA ballot is on page 4 of this issue. Ballots sent by snail mail must be postmarked no later than December 1st. You also can e-mail, private message, or even phone in your votes to a BST officer. You can also go to our website, www.bluessocietyoftulsa.com and complete & submit the online form.

The Blues Choice Awards are special because the BST voters love music, talent and the artists. It is another way the BST has of recognizing, honoring and supporting our Green Country blues artists. Any questions, contact **Christina at: 918.520-2453**.

LOCAL BIRTHDAYS

November: 4 – Bobby Parker; 8 – Hank Thompson (2007); 15 – David Teegarden Sr., Speedy West Jr. (2011); 17 – Issac Hanson, Larry Moss; 20 – Bob Childers (2008); 21 – John Hoff; 23 – Maxx Campbell; 26 – Bob Wallace; 27 – Rudy Scott; 28 – Matt Mason; 29 – Harry Williams. **December:** 1 – Casey Van Beek; 2 – Bill Davis; 4 – Darrel Smith; 5 – JJ Cale (2013); 7 – Jay McShannon (2006); Sam Kinison (1992); 11 – David Gates; 23 – Rick Huskey, Chet Baker (1988); 24 – David Tanner; 25 – Jeff Martinson; 27 – Steve Pryor (2016); 30 – Charles Tuberville

BST MONTHLY MEETINGS

Tuesday, November 20th – Soul City, 1621 E. 11th, Tulsa.
It's Tuesday Bluesday at Soul City. Live music after the meeting.

Please note: Monthly meetings have been moved to the 3rd Tuesday of the month and will be held at Soul City (Tuesday Bluesday) beginning in October.

ATTENTION MEMBERS:

We don't want to miss "What's Happening." Send us pics and notes regarding events and performances.

Website: www.bluessocietyoftulsa.com

e-mail: info@bluessocietyoftulsa.com

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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.

PAST BST MONTHLY MEETINGS



October 16th meeting of the BST
Wink Burcham & Dustin Pittsley at Soul City.

Dustin Pittsley & Wink Burcham.
Photo by Christina Rybacki

September 10th meeting of the BST

The Hydramatics performed at The Centennial Lounge.

Left to right: Steve "The Actor" Kilman (guitar, whose played with William Clarke and Rod Piazza), drummer Larry Cohen from Florida, David Berntson (vocals, harmonica) and Bobby "Green Shoes" Parker (who switched from guitar to bass for the evening)..

Photo by Christina Rybacki.



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Deadline Approaching for the Blues Society of Tulsa 1st Annual Student Grant Award

The Blues Society will be offering a \$500 Grant to promote the musical development of young Blues musicians in the Tulsa metropolitan area. The grant will be awarded to a student who is pursuing further education and musical development and has a genuine interest in the Blues genre.

The Blues Society Student Grant Application includes various questions about the student's current musical interests, capabilities and goals. It will also include an essay portion asking the student to describe their interest in Blues music and what inspires their interest in Blues music. Applications will be reviewed, and the top five applicants will be required to attend a personal interview and complete a performance challenge. A committee will determine the recipient of a \$500 grant to be used by the student to further his/her musical career in Blues music, education, and advancement.

The student grant award is offered to any student in grades 10, 11 or 12, for the 2018-2019 school year and who is enrolled in a bona fide school setting under Oklahoma state law. (Ex: public school, home school, academy or other approved educational setting)

Applications will be available on the Blues Society of Tulsa's website at www.bluessocietyoftulsa.com. Applications will also be made available to High School Music Directors and schools in the Tulsa area to distribute to interested students. Application deadline is November 17, 2018.

The top five applicants will be chosen and notified in January 2019. A write up on each of the five finalists will be included in the March/April issue of the Blues News. Personal interviews and performances will be scheduled in March 2019. The winning recipient of the grant will be notified in April and invited to the April Monthly Blues Society meeting to be awarded and receive the \$500 grant. A feature article about the recipient will be included in the May/June 2019 issue of the Blues News.

15th ANNUAL BLUES CHOICE AWARDS - VOTE!

Voting is now underway in the Blues Society's Blues Choice Awards, which is open to BST members. The Blues Choice Awards are special because the winners are chosen by BST members, who have an exceptional appreciation and love for blues artists in Northeastern Oklahoma and their music, which brings so much joy to our lives.

The rules allow one vote per member in each of the 4 categories. **Deadline for voting is December 1st.** E-mail or send by U.S. mail your ballot to the address(es) found in the membership application box on this page. The winners will be announced in the next issue.

Best Group _____
(Band)

Best Vocalist _____

Best Lead _____
(any lead instrument, guitar, harmonica, keyboards, etc.)

Best Rhythm _____
(drums, bass, rhythm guitar, etc.)

Voting Member's Name _____

Phone#, or e-mail address _____

Blues Society of Tulsa

Annual Membership Application

Includes subscription to the bi-Monthly "Blues News"

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____

Singe \$20 _____ Corporate \$125 _____

Family \$30 _____ (for 2) Additional Family Members \$15 Each

Lifetime Membership \$175 _____

____ New Member ____ Renewal; Your MBRShip# _____

Any Questions? Email:

bluessociety@peoplepc.com or snail mail:

BST, P.O. Box 2836, Tulsa, OK 74101.

If you want on the BST "what's happening" mailing list, please include your e-mail address:

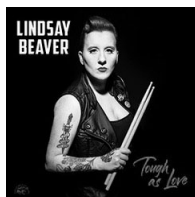
If you live outside the USA please add \$10 to the single and family memberships listed above.

☐ **ATTENTION:** A check mark in this box indicates that your annual membership payment is due. Thank You!





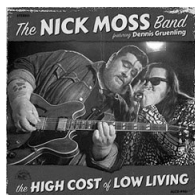
CD REVIEWS



Lindsay Beaver: **TOUGH AS LOVE**

(Alligator Records)

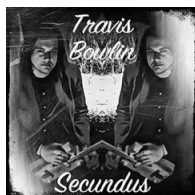
Lindsay Beaver is a jazz-trained drummer, and classically trained singer/songwriter from Halifax, Canada, has previously been linked to five self released albums with her band **The 24th Street Wailers** and wrote seven of the twelve tracks on this, her first solo album; **Tough As Love**. The songs on this album might take the listener back to the 50's and 60's having an old school sound and vibe with a lot of harmonica, horns, piano, back-up singers, and killer straight line guitar work throughout. Standout tracks include You're Evil, Too Cold To Cry, Dangerous, Lost Cause, and Mean To Me. Definitely a blast from the past but a fine album in all respects. - **Curt Fillmore (CurtsList.Com)**



Nick Moss Band: **THE HIGH COST OF LOW LIVING**

(Alligator Records)

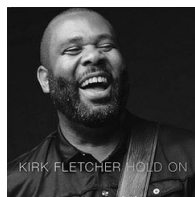
This is the 13th album from Chicago bluesman Nick Moss and the first with Alligator. Blues Guitar slinger, singer and songwriter; Nick is a 30 year veteran of the Chicago blues scene. He's joined on this album by harmonica master **Dennis Gruenling** and an excellent band and horn section. This album also has an old school sound with straight line guitar and plenty of shuffles. Standout tracks include Crazy Mixed Up Baby, No Sense, The Title Track, Count On Me, and Lesson To Learn. Another fine blues record in every respect. - **Curt Fillmore (CurtsList.Com)**



Travis Bowlin: **SECUNDUS**

(Moonbeam Records)

Travis Bowlin is an Indiana born blues guitar slinger, singer, and songwriter also known for the cigar box guitars, pick-ups and microphones he builds and even used during the recording of this album. Travis has an excellent blues voice and this entire album rocks. After releasing a few blues chart topping singles over the years this may be Travis' first all original, full length album and I wouldn't be surprised if this album wins some major awards and takes Travis to a whole new level. The supporting band on this album is also quite excellent with standout tracks including Strange Vibes, Dancin' With The Devil, Casuarina Sand, Record Store and Slow Cooker Man. This album is a bonafide winner!! - **Curt Fillmore (CurtsList.Com)**



Kirk Fletcher: **HOLD ON**

(Kirk Fletcher)

Kirk Fletcher is a multi award winning blues guitarist/singer from California, lead guitarist for the **Fabulous Thunderbirds** for three years and often regarded as one of the very best blues guitarist around. This is the fourth studio album from Kirk containing 8 tracks of all original contemporary blues music. Kirk sounds very much like **Doyle Bramhall II** and his guitar work is excellent containing elements of R&B, Rock and Jazz. His session players compliment his playing styles quite well with some excellent Hammond organ and drums standing out on several songs. Standout tracks include You Need Me, The Answer, Dupree, and Hold On. Doyle Bramhall fans will love this album. Kirk has created an outstanding album of new blues music guaranteed to win a few new awards. - **Curt Fillmore (CurtsList.Com)**



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Billy F Gibbons: **THE BIG BAD BLUES**

(Concord Records)

Billy F Gibbons has been the lead singer/guitarist for **ZZ Top** since 1969 and is offering up a second solo effort as a follow-up to his 2015 release of the heavy cuban drum beats contained in **Perfectamundo**. This new one contains the same sound and flavor including the distinct drums but more keeping with Billy blues sound with guitar and harmonica and his always unique vocals. You'll find originals and covers alike on this new record with standout tracks including Missin' Yo Kissin', My Baby She Rocks, Let The Left Hand Know, Hollywood 151, and Rollin' and Tumblin'. ZZ Top fans will definitely enjoy this one. Excellent!! - **Curt Fillmore (CurtsList.Com)**



Seth Lee Jones:
LIVE AT THE COLONY
(Horton Records)

Tulsa **Seth Lee Jones** is known as a master luthier and slide guitarist, but his newly released CD *Live at the Colony* firmly establishes him as one of our city's most talented blues artists. This **three-piece band is the real deal**

with Bo Halford (Paul Benjamin Band and The Panda Resistance) on bass and **Matt Teegarden** (youngest son of Grammy-award winning **David Teegarden Sr.**) on drums.

The growling vocals of Jones brings fond memories of the late great **Steve Pryor**, plus I can hear influences of Pryor and **Sonny Landreth** in his excellent guitar licks. A favorite is the Jones original 110, as well as his version of Benjamin's *Shake Your Tree*. Jones adds another original, the seven-minute *dive bar, goin' out on the town beauty, Pay Day*. This tune is about everything from talking to all the pretty women...drinking high classed liquor... and smoking high classed reefer... plus hangin' out with all the rich folks. It's a hoot! There are excellent renditions of the classics, *Key to the Highway*, *Long Distance Call* and *Hard Times*. This is an excellent recording engineered by **Jared Tyler, Travis Fite** and **Ken Madewell** and mastered by **Chuck Zwicky**. – **Bill Martin**

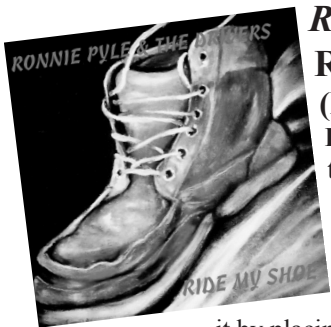


Ronnie Pyle and the Drivers:
RIDE MY SHOE
(Lucky Dog Prod)

Ronnie Pyle and the Drivers are one of those fun blues/rock bands that simply makes one happy you listened. There are excellent vocals and guitar by Pyle, backed by a band of veterans who know how to really play, and proved

it by placing second at the 2018 Tulsa Blues Band

Challenge. The record kicks off with *T-Bone Mudflap*, a neat song about this big bad dude that's "a roller coaster... smokin' big fat doobies." This is one of my favorite tunes on the disc, with some of that distinctive Tulsa sound. This song showcases every band member ranging from Pyle's searing slide guitar and vocals, to **randy Ess'** piano that shines throughout this album. The rhythm section is oh-so- tight with **Hank Charles** on bass and **Pat Wright** on skins. Recorded at Valcour Sound in Broken Arrow, all nine songs are originals and penned by Pyle, with some help on three tunes from Moore and Ess. One of the hardest driving songs is *It's All About You*, highlighting the frustrations of an obvious rocky relationship. Ess again is pounding the keys before Pyle releases some vengeance with a smoking guitar solo. *Evil* features a mighty fine organ solo by Charles and another rip roaring slide by Pyle. Perhaps my favorite is *The Way You Look Tonight*, a beautiful love ballad starting off with distinctive Ess piano cords that surely have Leon smiling from above. The album's title cut takes a cord or two from *Wild Thing*, the Troggs 1966 hit. That's okay, *Ride My Shoe* ultimately takes its own path. It is one of those fun songs that gets your foot tappin', if not stompin' and is a mighty fine ending to a mighty fine album. – **Bill Martin**



God Bless Talent Scouts, Master Mixers and Studio Geeks

by eLiz Hollis

Recording studios must be advanced to keep up with the ever changing technology demands of today's marketplace and social media chaos. Inside the booth or the control room sits the sound engineer, a technician and even the record producer, to operate the sophisticated recording equipment. For the highest level of recording technology, advanced recording studios use multi-tracking consoles and built-in echo chambers, to produce CDs. Some studios have as many as forty-eight (48) individual tracks. Today's Blues artists are quite familiar with the new recording studios.

They can be completely enclosed in a glass chamber or a square cubicle and feel comfortable in these surroundings. They can come in for a session and adjust themselves to the use of the sensitized microphones and the liquefied headphones. Musicians must combine their talent and training with expanded technical knowledge to record their best Blues sounds. Early Blues musicians did not have this edge or supportive recording team. Record producers noticed itinerant Blues artists could not adjust to the strange environment and were tense and uncomfortable in big city recording studios. They were not able to produce an acceptable session. The need to sing and play their blues in a relaxed atmosphere was the beginning of the field recordings.

Talent scouts, like 20 year old Ike Turner, were hired to load the back of their cars with a complete set of recording equipment and bring the "studio" (and bottles of booze) to surroundings that the artists could relate and feel comfortable ... juke joints, Blues-lights districts, back porches and church socials. When the results of the field recordings were sent back to the major studios, the record companies knew they have a product that could be produced for targeted and expanded listening markets.

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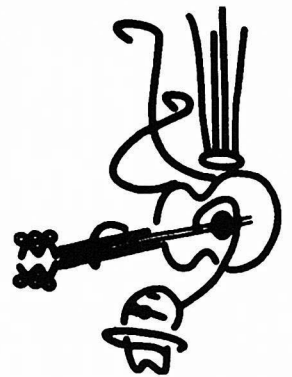
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