

BLUES

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Multi-hall of fame Harry Williams with one of his three Gretchen drum kits.

The Illustrious Blues Career of Drummer Harry Williams

Story and Photo by Bill Martin

Tulsa legendary drummer **Harry Williams** has had a storied career and even though he turns 74 November 29th, he doesn't seem to be slowing down.

When the Kansas City native was only 13 or 14 years old, he didn't even realize one weekend he was playing drums for some guy named **Muddy Waters**.

His career has included touring Europe with Tulsa blues icon **Flash Terry**, and playing with the likes of **Hubert Sumlin**, **Nappy Brown**, **James Peterson**, **Albert Collins**, **Denise LaSalle** and **Taj Mahl**, as well **B.B. King**, **Albert King**, and **Freddie King**.

During Harry's 60-year career he spent a year touring with **Bo Diddley** and nearly three years touring with **Ike and Tina Turner**.

When growing up in Kansas City, he used to spend summers with his grandparents in Tulsa. However, it was on tour with Ike and Tina in Tampa, FL that he first met Flash Terry. That led to him moving to Tulsa and performing for 35 years with the **Flash Terry Band**. (Continued on page 2)

Vote Today! Blues Choice Awards Time

Deadline is Dec. 2nd

Voting is underway in the 13th 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 not a member, join today, and you are eligible. See membership form on page 8.

Deadline for casting ballots is Friday, December 2nd.

The "Best of 2016) ballot (see page 8) 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.

Vote by filling out and submitting the ballot on page 8 of this issue, postmarked no later than December 2nd, hand delivered to a BST officer or awards committee member, no later than 6 p.m. on November 27th. Your vote can also be submitted on a piece of paper, or just about anything. Blues Choice Awards are another way the Blues Society provides recognition, honors and supports area blues artists. Any questions, call Bill at: 918-288-7574.

INSIDE:

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**Website: www.bluessocietyoftulsa.com
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LOCAL BIRTHDAYS

November 4 Bobby Parker; 8 Hank Thompson (2007);
15 David Teegarden Sr. and Speedy West Jr. (2011); 17
Isaac Hanson and Larry Moss; 20 Bob Childers (2008); 21
John Hoff; 23 Maxx Campbell; 26 Bob Wallace; 28 Matt
Mason and Debbie Campbell (2004); 29 – Harry Williams;
December 1 Casey Van Beek; 2 Bill Davis; 5 J.J. Cale
(2013); 8 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.

Compiled by Chester Burnett

BST MONTHLY MEETINGS

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

Blues Society's Christmas Party!!! December 10th!

with

JOSHUA YARBROUGH & MEMPHIS BOUND
VFW Post 577 - Centennial Lounge - 9 p.m.

\$5 Cover

Bringing a snack or hors
d'oeuvres is requested.

Harry Williams.... (Continued from page 1)

As for Harry's drumming style, he says it is a basic back beat and "locking up" with the bass player. A true blues song doesn't have a drum solo.

"The main instrument in blues is the guitar, with the vocals. The main thing for the drummer is not being a time keeper. It's the bass player. The drummer brings the music and drops it back down when it's time. You also play the accents and the stops. It's called dynamics," he observes.

Today, Harry spends much of his time at Tulsa's Cimarron Bar. On Wednesdays, **Harry Williams & Friends** hosts a Ladies Night and jam. On Sundays he drums for the **Kevin Phariss Band**, which hosts the weekly jam. But he also does everything at the Cimarron from being the music coordinator to stage manager, soundman and even organizes benefits.

In fact the Sunday afternoon open jam is the longest running event of its kind in Tulsa – 11-plus years.

Why is it so popular? "You always listen to what the people want; be innovative; keep the best bands coming back; be open minded, and amicable to the customers and the jammers. Don't try to tell the jammer how to play; let them be themselves."

The jam also tends to be organized and runs smoothly, which may be tied to Harry's patriotism. He served two tours of duty in Vietnam. This included 2.5 years in the Army and 35 years in the Army Reserves.

Harry was inducted into the Greenwood Jazz Hall of Fame in 1994, *The Oklahoma Music Hall of Fame* in 2004 and the *Oklahoma Blues Hall of Fame* in 2005.

Among Harry's biggest musical influences are **Buddy Rich, Gene Krupa** and **Joe Dokes** of the **Southern Jazz Crusaders**.

What's his favorite drums? Gretchen. "I've been playing Gretchen since the '60s, because of its sound. It's made out of bird's eye Maple. It is good for the studio and playing live."

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CD REVIEWS



Shari Puorto: MY OBSESSION

(Little Lightning Productions)

After hearing Shari Puorto's fourth studio album *My Obsession*, I had to check her out on

U-tube. I was pleasantly surprised as she caught me off guard with her passionate and bold performance. Shari possesses a deeply expressive, soulful voice. She is such a dynamic live performer that her infectious enthusiasm pulls you in.

Based in Los Angeles, Shari has performed continuously all over California since the late 90s. Her musical interest began early with the sounds and soul of **Etta James**, the **Allman Brothers** and various R&B artists. For this project, she brought in a whole host of renowned LA musicians too numerous to name. Tracks of note are *It's a Damn Shame*, *Sugar Daddy*, *My Obsession*, *Better Left Unsaid* and check out *When a Man Loves a Woman*. If you love R&B you'll love this! – **Freddie Morrow**



Garrett Heck: Strange Emotions

Strange Emotions is a two-disc collection of 27 songs by versatile Oklahoma artist **Garrett Heck** recorded over about a two-month period

last spring in a small room of a friend's house in somewhere called Chalk Bluff, OK. It's a piece of work that ranges from unusual to demented, sick, humorous, crazy, unusual, religious, whacko – and yes, original and artistic.

Garrett's forte is his playing ability – being quite good on drums, guitars and vocals. I particularly like *Pray*, a roots blues tune right out of the '20s Mississippi Delta and *Better Home Waiting*, a Christian blues number – both giving me hope for his sanity. Garrett plays instruments ranging from a 70's Martin acoustic, Gretsch resonator to a seven string Schecter, plus some electric guitars.

On the second disk is a warning of graphic content as he sings about everything from wanting sex to cutting up a body into pieces, then describing himself as a "monster on the streets and geek under the sheets." The album ends up with some metal songs that lie somewhere between **Black Sabbath** and **Alice in Chains**. – **Bill Martin**



Johnny Nicholas: FRESH AIR

(Bona Dea Music)

Here's an upbeat, funky, sweet blues album, chock-full of excellent music that will get you

dancing right up until the end of the last song. Best known as a member of **Asleep At The Wheel**, multi-instrumentalist **Johnny Nicholas** has played with practically every blues great out there, which is quite evident here, on his ninth solo album. Standout tracks include *Moonlight Train*, *Blues Time*, *Backdoor Man*, and *Play Me Like You Play Your Guitar*. Great music, great songs, and great vocals! – **Curt Fillmore (CurtsList.Com)**



Vaneese Thomas: THE LONG JOURNEY HOME

(Segue Records)

Smokey, gritty voiced **Vaneese Thomas** has returned with her seventh album of blues music

that is sure to please her fans and make a host of new ones. Vaneese comes from a family of musicians and worked for years as a background vocalist for such artists as **Joe Cocker**, **Stevie Wonder**, **Michael Jackson**, **Eric Clapton**, and **Celine Dion**, among others. Known more as a rhythm and blues, and jazz singer, Vaneese has recorded an excellent album of winning songs and winning performances, including some very tasty performances from her session band. If you really like Tulsa's **Heather Buckley**, I believe you will really like Vaneese Thomas! Very Nice! – **Curt Fillmore (CurtsList.Com)**



Cary Morin: TOGETHER

Colorado based Cary Morin is a wonderful guitar picker and pedal steel guitar player with a knack for writing very thoughtful and insightful

songs. His lyrics often address relationships and appreciation for those closest to him. A favorite is Cary singing about how beauty can be hide, like a *River Under the Snow*. Another is the opening cut, *Together*, which beautifully illustrates his appreciation for relationships. Corey's music falls somewhere in between the great expanse of **James Taylor** and Tulsa's own **Jared Tyler**, which I consider a big compliment. He occasionally performs in Tulsa. Next time catch his show and buy this record. – **Billy Austin**

<p>HAPPY HOUR \$1.50 Longnecks Monday - Saturday until 8pm</p>	<p>WEDNESDAYS Ladies Night & Jam with Harry Williams & Friends</p>
<p>OPEN JAM With The Kevin Phariss Band SUNDAY AT 4</p>	<p>LIVE MUSIC WEDNESDAY - SUNDAY</p>

November 4 – The Addiction
November 5 – 7-Day Crash
November 12 – Infinity
November 19 – Evil Twin
November 26 – Hard Truth
December 2 – Red Sawyer
December 8 – Bill Snow
December 12 – Judge Parker
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CD REVIEWS



Joshua Yarbrough & Memphis Bound: LIVE AT SUN STUDIO

Joshua Yarbrough solidifies himself as one Oklahoma's most gifted all around blues artists with this recording at historic Sun Studio in Memphis. Recorded earlier this year as he represented the Blues Society as a solo act at the International Blues Challenge, he is backed by stellar Tulsa musicians.

Recorded over a four-hour session, this record puts Joshua's gritty vocals, guitar skills and song writing abilities right out there. Out front through much of this recording is **Chris Kyle (Dustin Pittsley Band, Ego Culture)** playing piano and Hammond organ giving the disc a lot of energy. Much of the recording has that '50s rock n' roll feel of those golden days of **Carl Perkins, Elvis, Jerry Lee** and others recording there. But make no mistake, this is a blues album first with Joshua penning 10 of the 12 songs.

They're Hanging Me Tonight and *I'll Stay Waiting* are excellent examples with the latter having **The Monkeyfist Horns**. The album includes four really nice tracks dedicated to either his baby daughter **Maddie Rae**, or his wife **Mequette**. One is the beautiful, reassuring song about Daddy always being there for her (*Fine Looking Woman*). Adding his share of depth to this effort is **Garrett Heck**, playing lead guitar on the less bluesy tracks, plus he does great vocals on Lieberman and Stroller's *Love Me*. And a band isn't a band without a killer rhythm section provided here by bassist **Kat Irons** and drummer **David Knight**.

I love all the songs, but among my favorites is *They're Hanging Me Tonight*, which has a **Rick Nelson** feel. Two more favorites end the album, with the excellent funky, guitar picking on *Trifling* and the equally funky *Jamz*. Support our local artists and get this album – it's really worth it! – **Bill Martin**



Wink Burcham: CLEVELAND SUMMER NIGHTS

(Horton Records)

The beauty of Wink Burcham music is the way he so simply, and beautifully shares his life experiences through – call it what you want – prose, poetry, lyrics - of which his fans can relate. In his fifth album release, Wink is – well Wink – and that's all we want. Great lyrics with melodic songs, backed by great home grown talent. It is country. It is blues. It is rock n' roll found in a big ole stew pot.

Available in vinyl, CD and downloads, Wink nails it with 11 original tunes. Opening with *Case of the Blues*, I instantly recognized the upright bass of one of my favorite artists, **Chris Foster (Green Corn Rebellion)**. Next is the title cut, *Cleveland Summer Nights*, recollections by Wink spending youthful summers in Cleveland, OK. The city council should make this the town's official song!

Hallelujah (Gonna Rest My Soul) is about "leaving this world so we can't hurt me no more," featuring heavy bass, percussion and some finely placed horns.

For the One's We Leave Behind is another Wink classic, a song about finding peace without before finding it within yourself. *Lawn*

Mower Man's Blues is a neat little tune Wink actually wrote while traveling to compete in the International Blues Challenge in 2013 – and he included it in his IBC set.

Made to Laugh is a story from his childhood recalling more innocent times with the observation "we are all made to live before we die."

Wink closes the record singing, "I don't need no teacher, I don't need no preacher, to tell me what is right and what I've done wrong.It comes from *Cowboy Heroes and Old Folk Songs*." Pretty cool stuff. – **Billy Austin**



Lil Ed and the Blues Imperials: THE BIG SOUND OF LIL ED AND THE BLUES IMPERIALS (Alligator Records)

Lil Ed and his band have, once again, served up another 14 tracks of amazing, high energy, blues music. This band is revered as one of the very best bands to ever come out of Chicago, with Lil Ed equally respected for his songwriting, slide guitar playing, and blistering performances. I normally list standout tracks from the albums I review, but have to say this entire album is excellent from top to bottom. I believe Lil Ed will more than likely garner his third *Blues Music Award* with this; his 11th album of outstanding blues music. Get This One! - **Curt Fillmore (CurtsList.Com)**

BOOK REVIEW



Waiting For Buddy Guy - Chicago blues at the Crossroads; Alan Harper; Univ. of Illinois Press; 232 pp.; softcover; 2016; \$19.95.

British blues fan Alan Harper visited the United States in 1979 to check out the American blues scene and this is his account. Harper writes with great affection about the changing state of blues he witnessed. At this time all of the older bluesmen, many of whom had begun performing in the 1950s were retiring or had died. He makes the startling, but all too true, statement that one could go to a blues festival and not see a black face on stage or in the audience. The newer blues tended to feature white bluesmen who, like many of us, had worked their way backward to the blues via exposure to the Stones, the Beatles and the Animals. Also revealing is the quote from Amy O'Neal (wife of LIVING BLUES magazine founder Jim O'Neal) that "we are trying to open some ears here...most of white America's taste in blues is ten to fifteen years behind what is happening on the black scene." The author has captured many encounters with black bluesmen and club owners which give the reader a good sense of the ambience of the time. This book is a good primer on the modern evolution of blues in America. -- **Kerry Kudlacek**



2016 Blues Challenge Retrospect:

Another fun and exciting event held August 20th at famous Cain's Ballroom. A huge thanks to the fans, artists, judges, BST staff and Cain's staff for making it such a success! (Photos by Bill Martin)



1ST PLACE DUSTIN PITTSLEY BAND: Chris Kyle, David Teegarden Jr. and Dustin Pittsley (not pictured, Donnie Wood).



THE LAST CALL BAND: Robert Baker, Zack Robinson, Ben Griego, Dale Mason, Steve Shrum.



THE BOOGIE'S Lindsay Rae



THE BLUES CLUES BAND'S Ben Cloud.



CALVIN YOUNGBLOOD & COLD
FRONT: David Omen, L.D. Reynolds, Jeff Gudgel and (kneeling) Calvin Youngblood.



TANTRUM: Ronnie Varnell, Kim Pense, Ivan Walkup and Jim "Stretch" Moon.



THE VOX SQUADRON: Tyler Smith, Richard Wood, Jack Myers and Aaron Lee.



**13th 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 2nd.** 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

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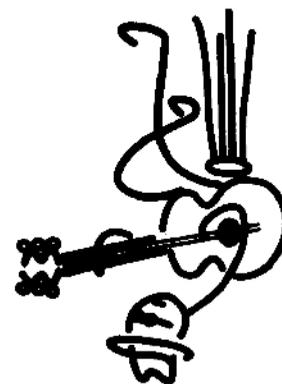
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