

BLUES

THE BI-MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF

NEWS

THE BLUES SOCIETY OF TULSA

Volume 13, Number 4

www.bluessocietyoftulsa.com

May/June 2015

Call for Entries:

2015 Blues Challenges

SOLO/DUO COMPETITION: July 25th in the Centennial Lounge at VFW Post 577, 1109 E. 6th St., Tulsa. **Entry Deadline:** June 25th. Entry fee: \$25.

Three years ago we packed the place out and everyone loved the intimate atmosphere. Winner goes to the IBC in Memphis.

BAND COMPETITION: September 5th at Cain's Ballroom, 423 N. Main, Tulsa. **Entry Deadline:** August 5th. Entry Fee: \$50.

Here's your chance to play on the same stage that has been graced by everyone from **Muddy Waters** to **Sid Vicious!** Winner goes to the IBC in Memphis.

Entry forms are available at www.bluessocietyoftulsa.com or at 918.288.7574. Our rules are very similar to those of the Blues Foundation and you can read those rules at: www.blues.org.

Bixby BBQ and Blues Festival:

Montoya, Pryor to Headline

One knows spring has arrived when it's time for the Bixby BBQ and Blues Festival, set for May 1-2 at Washington Irving Park. The Blues Society will once again have a booth, with a great selection of t-shirts and other merchandise.

Blues legend **Coco Montoya** is headlining Saturday's line-up. For years Montoya was a member of the **Albert Collins Band**, then was lead guitarist for **John Mayhall and the Bluesbreakers**. In the mid '90s he went out on his own and has since released seven albums. Headlining the Friday night show will be Oklahoma Blues Hall of Famer **Steve Pryor**.

MUSIC SCHEDULE

Friday May 1st - 6 p.m. – Jason Bowling; **7:30 p.m.** – James Groves Blues Machine; **9:00 p.m.** – Steve Pryor.

Saturday May 2nd - 1 p.m. Dylan Whitney; **2:30 p.m.** – Out Cold; **4 p.m.** – The Zigs; **5:30 p.m.** – The Boogie; **7 p.m.** – Dustin Pittsley Band; **8:30 p.m.** – Coco Montoya.

Cost: \$10 per vehicle. More info: www.bixbyrotarybbq.com



Darell Christopher



Seth Park: The Loaded Dice.

Summertime Blues Showcase

The 4th Annual Summertime Blues Showcase presented by the Blues Society of Tulsa will be hosted once again by the Cimarron Bar, 2619 S. Memorial in beautiful East Tulsa.

Headlining the June 20th event is the 2014 Blues Challenge runner up band, **Darell Christopher and the Ingredients** (pictured). Opening the show at 8 p.m. will be the duo of **Little Joe McLerran** and **Eric Walker**. At 9:15 p.m. Claremore-based blues rockers **The Loaded Dice** will start rocking the house. The headliners will hit the stage at 10:30 p.m. Three great acts, and no cover. Doesn't get any better than this!

15th Chautauqua Blues Festival

The Chautauqua Hills Blues Festival, held every Memorial weekend is the premier music event in Southeast Kansas, May 23-24. This 2-day festival featuring the hottest acts in Blues, Americana and Bluegrass. The Saturday night show is an all-acoustic event on the Gregg Theater stage in downtown Sedan, Kansas features **Split Lip Rayfield** and the **Ben Miller Band**.

The Sunday show is held on 100+ acres 1-mile north of Sedan on a 20 x 44-foot stage with free camping. The show starts at 2 p.m. featuring Tulsa Blues Challenge winner **The Boogie**, Wichita Blues Challenge winner **Kalo**, **Nick Schnebelen**, **Moreland & Arbuckle**, **Katie G** and the **Girls with Victor Wainwright**, **Damon Fowler** and **JP Soars** performing as **Southern Hospitality**. All session passes are \$35 and Sunday only is \$20 in advance. Visit cbluesfest.com for more information.

INSIDE:

Eldon Shamblin's Famous Gold Stratocaster, Billy's Blues, The Duo Sonics, Marcia Ball, Smokin' Joe Kubeck & Bonis King, Kenny Butterill, Eight O' Five Jive, Coco Montoya and more!

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LOCAL BIRTHDAYS

May 1 – Bill Raffensperger (2010), 2 – Susan Herndon 4 – Jim Strader (2009), 6 – Steve Munson (1990), Barney Kessel (2004), D.C. Minner (2009), 11 – Ernie Fields (1997), 13 – Perry Thomas, 15 – Pete Marriott, 16 -- James Groves, 22 – Doug Wehmeyer, 24 Frank McPeters (2009), 29 – John Mabry, 30 -- Dustin Pittsley, Carl Radle (1980); June 1 – Ronnie Dunn, 2 – Donnie Wood, 6 – Dwight Twilley, Dale Shipman, 8 – Scott Musick 9 – Glenn Sears, 13 – Scott Ellison, 17 – Annie Walsler, Glenn R. Townsend, Alan Thompson, Flash Terry (2004), 18 – Carl Radle (1980), Buddy Jones (2011) 28 – Kent Swepston, Earl Clark (2010) 29 – Gary Busey, 22 Jesse Ed Davis-1988 23 -- Kenny Cheek (2011)

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Billy's Blues

I pretty much retired at the first of the year after 40-plus years of being primarily self-employed. It involved everything from freelance writing to having my own radio program and doing sales and marketing. It required a lot of multi-tasking.

However, I was never good at multi- tasking when listening to music. So if this column ends up a bit...whatever...it is because I'm writing while listening to RadioIDL, Tulsa's own internet radio gem broadcasting 24/7/365, worldwide. But I can't shut it off!!! We got **Melissa** and **eLiz** playing everything from **Steve Pryor** to **Wanda Watson** and **Etta James**. Lordy help me.

RadioIDL points out it plays all 35 different kinds of Blues.

I'm convinced Blues would have died long ago if we were still relying on just **Robert Johnson**, or even **Muddy Waters**. Believe me, that is sacred stuff in the music world; always will be. But for most things to survive and thrive it takes evolution and change.

Among our Blues Society members and blues lovers in general, I find most of them like many other types of music, and Blues may not even be their favorite genre.

I recently wrote in part on Facebook, "Got to admit, sometimes the Blues can get BORING!!! Fire me, chide me, whatever... but it's true.....I find satisfaction in the Blues more often than not with the exceptional talent here in Tulsa.....who frequently I chose over many of the popular national actsMeanwhile, waiting for SOMETHING from **And There Stands Empires** - whom I consider possibly Tulsa's most innovative group - when they want to be. So in waiting I present excerpts from the diary of Mr. **Robert Fripp**. Now this gets me excited. New music from a 69-year-old genius and **King Crimson** brain child.

"Our first three days this week we were addressing additions to King Crimson performance repertoire for live work in 2015. Two repertoire pieces and new material...

**Radical Action To Unseat The Hold Of Monkey Mind;*

**Meltdown;*

**Suitable Grounds For The Blues.*

Radical Action is an instrumental 12/8 blues shuffle on C7, F7 and G7. It is about as far from sounding like a three-chord blues shuffle as, on this particular morning, I can conceive without investing.... involved. The KC Minefield is built in, to encourage the attention of anyone playing the piece and dissuade a slumberingness of wit. Little KC material repeats exactly, while often sounding as if it does. *Meltdown* and *Suitable Grounds For The Blues* both have vocals. SGFTB is a blues, but of the Crimson variety. That is, not in 4/4 and sometimes with blues changes."

Meanwhile, bassist **Mark Lockhart** of the late great **Sluggo Trask** band added this, of which I fully concur:

"I understand...That's why I enjoyed playing with Sluggo all those years. Doing the same 1, 4, 5, 12 bar blues gets old. Sluggo had a way of mixing things up to make them different. But the Blues is still the heart and foundation most music is derived from. I'll always love the Blues!" – **Bill Martin**



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CD REVIEWS



The Duo-Sonics:

N URTOWN

(Topsy Records)

The Duo-Sonics are **David Berntson** and **Bobby "Greenshoes" Parker**.

Anyone who samples a Duo-Sonics release is guaranteed two things:

excellent musicianship

and intelligent song selection. This set meets that promise, providing a somewhat subdued grouping of originals and blues classics. It's fun to hear two guys who don't have to hide behind amplification and echo because they're not afraid to let you hear what they're doing. *Purple Cat* and *Side Pocket* are acoustic workouts with nice soft chromatic harp by Berntson. More familiar are Fats' *I'm Walkin'* and *Money, Marbles and Chalk* first cut by **Jimmie Rogers** (ex-Muddy sideman and **Jimmy Lane's** daddy). **Jimmy Reed's** *Sun is Shining* is a delight, but the real shocker is a rendition of **Al Jolson's** 1928 *Back in Your Own Back Yard*.

The reduced volume and relaxed pace of the set gives the listener a lot to hear and the percussion is noteworthy, using a varied set of

drum tones and tempos. The sound mix is excellent, letting us hear what everyone is playing at all times. The songs are quite rhythmic and showcase Parker's delta style guitar licks, while Berntson's playing never tries to dominate, but always enhances. With its delicate guitar and stylish harp licks, this release suggests what might happen if **Big Walter Horton** met **Robert Johnson**. Enjoy every note: you can hear them all. – **Kerry Kudlacek**

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CD REVIEWS



Marcia Ball: **THE TATTOOED LADY AND THE ALLIGATOR MAN**

(Alligator Records)

With the latest CD, *The Tattooed Lady and the Alligator Man* Marcia Ball once again is on the awards trail.

Starting with Alligator Records in 2001, her first CD with them, *Presumed Innocent*, took home the 2002 Blues Music Award for Album of the Year. Following that up was in 2004, *60 Rivers*; 2005's *Live! Down the Road*; 2008's, *Peace, Love and BBQ*; and 2010's, *Roadside Attractions*; all of which received Grammy Award nominations.

Marcia is the absolute queen of the Gulf Coast boogie woogie style of blues. I had her latest CD in my car stereo for a month, just like a good book you couldn't put down. The songs are like chapters in a book, and the title track is an unstoppable party.

The last dripping number, *Just Keep Holding On*, is a ballad that Marcia is famous for churning out. But in *The Squeeze is On*, she infuses zydeco in her gumbo, to keep the ball rolling. All the way through the album, the show keeps going. It's sad to put this "book" down. Always surrounding herself with a marvelous team, combine them with her story telling vocals, and two fist-ed keyboard pounding and Marcia Ball continues down the path to greatness. – **Freddie Morrow**



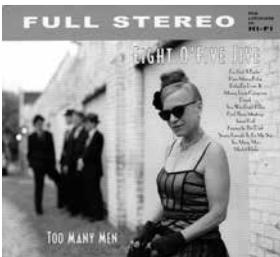
Smokin' Joe Kubeck & Bonis King: **FAT MAN'S SHINE PARLOR**

(Blind Pig Records)

Here's another great rockin' guitar driven album of Texas Blues from

Kobe & King. Guitar legend **Joe Kubeck** shines on, this, his 18th album, and back with Blind Pig Records, and the amazing guitar/vocals from **Bonis King**.

I especially like the track *Don't Want to Be Alone*. If you're already a Kubeck/King fan, this one definitely won't disappoint! – **Curt Fillmore (CurtsList.Com)**



Eight O' Five Jive: **TOO MANY MEN** (Red Rudy Too Tunes)

This award winning jump blues quintet is a hoot and a half! Fronted by vocalist **Lee Shropshire** and guitarist **Andy Scheinman**, this is a trip right back into the not-necessarily-so-innocent '40s and '50s. Lee is sassy,

savvy, humorous and sexy in the CD's journey through lost love and yes – redemptive romance. Add to the mix the talents of bassist **Bill Bois**, drummer **Duane Spencer** and saxophonist **Patrick**

Mosser and this is a high octane band. This is the next best thing to sitting in a smoky bar listening to jump blues greats such as **T-Bone Walker**, **Louis Jordan**, or **Bill Doggett**. The tunes are a fine mixture of vintage and originals. Check it out! -- **Bill Martin**

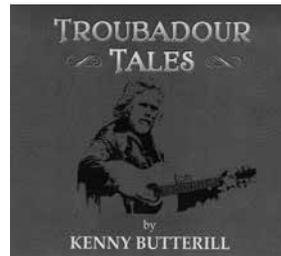


Magnus Berg: **CUT ME LOOSE**

(Screen Door Records)

18-year-old Norwegian **Magnus Berg** displays his guitar prowess on *Cut Me Loose* and has impressive vocals. The title cut is my favorite as he moans about money woes with his raging guitar and a wonderful, sympathetic

harmonica from **Daffy Larsen**. Another winner was co-written with blues diva **Kirsten Thein** with her magnificent vocals on *When It's Gone*. Magnus also tears it up with the **Freddy King** classic instrumental *San-Ho Zay*. His vocals and guitar work may be ahead of his songwriting, but this kid has a future! -- **Billy Austin**



Kenny Butterill: **TROUBADOUR TALES** (NoBullSongs.com)

Kenny Butterill may live in California, but his music has the Tulsa Sound written all over it. His laid back country blues style shows the heavy influence of **J.J. Cale** with shades of **Gordon Lightfoot** and **John Prine**.

Hocus Pocus, in fact, was written as a tribute to Cale only three weeks before his passing in July 2013. "They say he's the best in this 'ole land, 'cause he's the Hocus Pocus Mojo Music Man." It doesn't hurt that Tulsa's own **David Teegarden** mastered this CD at Natura Digital Studios.

Willie We Miss Ya is a wonderful tribute to one of Kenny's biggest supporters who suddenly passed away, featuring a melancholy harmonica by **Harpin' Jonny**. Scottish folk-pop troubadour **Donovan** makes a special guest appearance on this album, which is filled with jewels. Kenny Butterill is a genuine wordsmith creating original, sensitive, warm and memorable songs, with a host of talented musicians contributing to this album. – **Bill Martin**

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Oklahoma Native Eldon Shamblin's Famous Gold Strat



Strings West owner Larry Briggs and Eldon Shamblin in about 1989 or '90. (Photo by Larry Cagle)

By Gretchen Mullen

Western swing phenomenon **Eldon Shamblin** was born in 1916 in Clinton, OK and his family soon moved to Weatherford, where he was raised. By the time this self-taught rhythm guitarist died in the little town of Sapulpa, OK in 1998, his obituary would appear

worldwide. Eldon Shamblin rose to fame as one of the first electric guitarists, a member of **Bob Wills and The Texas Playboys** and a touring member of the **Merle Haggard Band**. Posthumously, Eldon Shamblin was inducted into the *Rock and Roll Hall of Fame* in 1999 and into the *Oklahoma Music Hall of Fame* in 2006.

Eldon Shamblin received a 1954 Stratocaster as a gift from **Leo Fender** himself. In a 1992 oral history conducted and documented by **Jean Boyd** for the Baylor University Institute for Oral History, Shamblin recalled the way he came about his first Fender Stratocaster: "The old guitar they gave me in '54; Mr. Fender was a pretty good—he was a pretty good friend of mine... One of the guys that worked for him said, 'Old Fender always did like you,' so he give me these guitars. And the first one he gave me was a 1954 model."

In *The Stratocaster Chronicles*, a book commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Fender Strat, author **Tom Wheeler** gives the specifics on Shamblin's unique instrument. The guitar carries the serial number 0569 with a body dated June 4, 1954 and a neck dated 5/54. Wheeler writes, "Eldon jettisoned the tremolo handles, blocked the trem assembly, and installed 'chicken head' amp knobs."

In the book *Echo and Twang: Classic Guitar Music of the 50s*, editor **Tony Bacon** quotes California swing guitarist turned Fender employee **Bill Carson** as saying, "Eldon had the first experimental finish on a Stratocaster, a gold guitar." Carson adds, "Leo gave it to Eldon himself and asked him to try it out. Eldon Shamblin has probably exposed the Stratocaster to more multitudes than anyone else, all the years he's been playing."

(Continued on page 7)



Shamblin's Strat... (Continued from page 6)



There is a plethora of misinformation about the Eldon Shamblin guitar circulating on various guitar forums on the Internet. There have even been suggestions that Eldon Shamblin owned the first Strat that was ever made. This is not true, and the definitive answer has been provided by **Larry Shaeffer**, former owner of Cain's Ballroom and vintage guitar collector and dealer. In fact, it was Larry Shaeffer who purchased Shamblin's Strat in the early 1990s, but more on that later.

Concert promoter and producer Larry Shaeffer rose to Tulsa music history fame by purchasing and revitalizing Cain's Ballroom in 1976. Also a vintage guitar dealer, he owned and operated Cain's until 1999. According to Shaeffer, "In 1954, since the Stratocaster was so new, and still being developed, I would call the majority of 54 Strats *'prototypes'* in that Fender was always tweaking minor things to make the product better. I have owned four different 54 Strats (Including Eldon's) and they were all different in some aspects than the others. By 1955 the Stratocaster was in full production so you will see more uniform neck shapes, body contours, etc., by 1955."

Shaeffer elaborates, "Eldon's Stratocaster was simply one pulled off the line and painted gold. No custom specs or anything. According to my friend (and fellow Okie) and Stratocaster co-creator **Bill Carson**, Leo Fender badly wanted to paint a gold guitar, mainly due to the fact that Gibson was selling their solid body 'Les Paul' that came with a gold finish at that time and that Leo was a fan of that color anyways."

Achieving the look that Fender sought turned out to be a bit of a challenge. Shaeffer notes, "They had DuPont mix several different shades and variations of gold to apply to the Stratocaster. Problem was, metallic paints are known for 'mottling' and every time they shot it in gold, the paint would mottle and so they would sand, paint, re-sand, and paint it again." Noting that Bill Carson was becoming frustrated, he simply "headed to the local Fullerton hardware store and found a cheap can of gold paint, brought it to the factory and that's the gold that did the trick."

Ultimately, says Shaeffer, "That guitar is most definitely considered as one of the 'Holy Grails'" as well as being "the FIRST one ever... to sport a Non-Sunburst finish."

So why did Leo Fender give this guitar to Eldon Shamblin? While the extreme popularity of Western Swing was waning (the advent of American television had dramatically reduced the popularity of dance halls), Shamblin's reputation as one of the world's finest guitarists had not changed, and Mr. Fender was both a friend and a fan. "The thought of having his new Stratocaster in the hands of his favorite band playing in front of thousands per year" was very appealing to Fender, Shaeffer says.

In addition, Shamblin had clearly established himself as one of the pioneers in the use of an amplified guitar and Leo Fender relied on

feedback from musicians to perfect his design. In a radio interview conducted in 1981, Shamblin recalled that the very first amplifier he ever used belonged to Bob Wills. (Shamblin joined up with Wills for the first time in November of 1937.) The amplifier, Shamblin said, became a case of necessity in order for the guitar to be heard. By 1940, he was using an electric guitar for recording. Once he made the transition, he found it difficult to ever return to the acoustic guitar.

In the 40 or so years that Shamblin had the '54 Stratocaster, the guitar traveled thousands of miles, playing stages and recording studios throughout the west coast, the western and southern states, from Nevada to Nashville and back again. After a break from the road, Shamblin began touring and recording with Merle Haggard in 1970. He also filled his days by playing Tulsa's Caravan Ballroom and teaching at Tulsa's Guitar House. He was also highly sought after to tune and service pianos and electric organs.



So, back to the famous '54 Strat. In his oral history, referring to Fender's Bill and Susan Carson, Shamblin recalled, "I was up here at...at this St. Louis Steel Guitar Convention—not realizing that the guitar was valuable. So, this guy that works for Fender...out of the Nashville office—what's his name? Anyway, his wife...she said, 'Would you be interested in selling that guitar?' I said, 'Well, what are we talking about?' She said, 'I'll give you ten grand for it.' I said... 'Well, that would

be a pretty good deal. It's worth about two hundred, probably, because it's wore out.' But anyway...her husband's...the salesman out of the Nashville office. They came out and spent two or three days with me here not long ago...I said, 'Well, I'll let you know whether I want to sell it to you or not.' So I thought...if she'll give me ten thousand, somebody else will give me more. So the old boy that's got Cain's Academy down here—well, he bought it. He bought this guitar, but he gave me \$12,500 for it."

Shaeffer confirms: "I bought the Stratocaster from Eldon in the early 90s. I actually still have the receipt, signed by Eldon on the day he sold it to me... **Eric Clapton** and **Paul McCartney** among many others who tried to buy it but Eldon decided I was the guy he wanted to see own that guitar."

Larry Briggs, vintage guitar dealer and owner of Sperry, Oklahoma's Strings West, later purchased Eldon's famous Strat from Shaeffer. The guitar is heavily documented on Strings West's Facebook page in a photo album titled "**Eldon Shamblin's Famous Fifty-four Strat.**" <https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.104201777447.115348.93530552447&type=3>

Eldon Shamblin would probably be happy to know that today his well-worn guitar is on loan at The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, categorized within the Main Exhibit Hall under "Roots of Rock and Roll: Country, Folk & Bluegrass." (<http://rockhall.com/photo-gallery/spotlight-artifacts/1612/>) **It is currently owned by an anonymous Texas collector.**





Coco Montoya, who *Guitar One Magazine* calls “the hottest southpaw in the blues” and raves about his “master touch and killer tone,” will headline the Bixby BBQ and Blues Festival in May. He credits his career to this day, dating back to a phone call he received from John Mayhall. For more information, see story on page 1.

Blues Society of Tulsa

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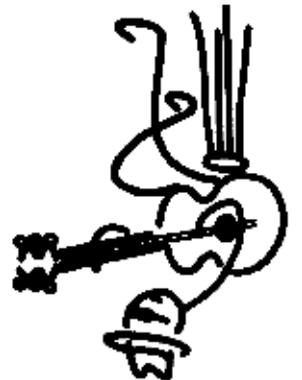
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