

BLUES



KARI LISTON

going viral!

The St. Louis Blues Society

BluesLetter

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The Monthly Magazine of the St. Louis Blues Society

The St. Louis Blues Society is dedicated to preserving and perpetuating blues music in and from St. Louis, while fostering its growth and appreciation. The St. Louis Blues Society provides blues artists the opportunity for public performance and individual improvement in their field, all for the educational and artistic benefit of the general public.

November 2013

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On the Cover..

Kari Liston performed vocals on a post-season Cardinal rally song that reached over a quarter-million hits on YouTube during the World Series.

Photo by Reed Radcliffe

DISCOUNTED EVENTS FOR BLUES SOCIETY MEMBERS
show your Blues Society Membership card to receive discounts at these venues:

BB's Jazz Blues and Soups **Nov.**
700 South Broadway
HALF-PRICE DISCOUNTED EVENTS

8	JW- Jones Band	10 pm
9	Stacy Mitchhart Band	10 pm
14	Lil' Ed and The Blues Imperials	9 pm
16	James Armstrong Blues Band	10 pm
17	Hector Anchondo	9 pm
21	Matthew Curry and The Fury	9 pm
22	Creole Stomp	7 pm
22	Harper and Midwest Kind	10 pm
23	The Bel Airs	10 pm
30	Ivas John Band	10 pm

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THE SLBS NEEDS YOUR HELP

BLUESLETTER - volunteer for creation of content and advertising representation.

MEMBERSHIP OUTREACH - help sign up new members and arrange for new membership benefits.

EVENT COORDINATOR - help coordinate all SLBS events and work on promotion.

EDUCATION - help create curriculum for Blues in Schools and fill SLBS website with content.

BUSINESS OUTREACH - help get more local businesses involved with the SLBS.

STREET TEAM - help with getting the word out about the SLBS by hanging posters, passing fliers and distributing BluesLetters.

Contact Jeremy Segel-Moss
to volunteer
jsegelmoss@stlouisbluessociety.org
314-482-0314



The St. Louis Blues Society is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit Missouri corporation. Memberships to the Blues Society are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

St. Louis Blues Society

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St. Louis MO 63178

www.stlouisbluessociety.org
mktönnies@stlouisbluessociety.org
facebook.com/St-Louis-Blues-Society



Hey Blues Fans,

First of all, we would like to congratulate Big Mike Aguirre & The Blu-City All-Stars and Bob “Bumblebee” Kamoske as winners of this year’s *International Blues Challenge - Road To Memphis*. We had an outstanding group of musicians competing and a very well-attended event by blues loving fans! Stay tuned as we lead up to the National IBC event in January!

2013 has been a great year for the St. Louis Blues Society and St. Louis blues as a whole. With the holidays approaching, it seems like a good time to reflect on just how good St. Louis has it. Let’s be thankful for our world-class musicianship, multitude of venues who host blues music, community of supportive music fans, and radio stations like KDHX who remind us daily of what an amazing musical city we live in. While you’re out enjoying music this holiday season, take time to thank the musicians and venues who through *great* effort continue to provide some of the best music in the world.

Looking ahead, 2014 is going to be a big year for blues in St. Louis. The St. Louis Blues Society turns 30 years old, the song “St. Louis Blues” turns 100, and if all goes well, the National Blues Museum will be opening. All of these projects take an enormous amount of work to keep going and we need your help. We’ve listed some of the jobs that need doing on page two, but specifically we want to hear what you would like to see us accomplish in 2014. Send us an email, drop a line on facebook, or just stop one of the board members when you see them at a show. It will take all of us to make an already great music scene better, so please don’t hesitate to step up.

Thank **YOU** for supporting the blues in St. Louis.

Jeremy Segel-Moss

Vice Chairperson, St. Louis Blues Society

blues to dos november 2013

Monday	4	Hardtale Blues Band at Beale On Broadway
Tuesday	5	St. Louis Social Club at BB’s Jazz, Blues & Soups
Wednesday	6	Alley Tones at The Rustic G.O.A.T
Thursday	7	Jeremiah Johnson & The Sliders at Hammerstone’s
Friday	8	Marcell Strong & The Apostles at Hammerstone’s
Saturday	9	Best of The BOB at The Broadway Oyster Bar
Sunday	10	Margaret Bianchetta & Friends at The Shanti
Monday	11	Trombone Shorty & Orleans Ave. at The Old Rock House
Tuesday	12	Tommy Halloran & Guerrilla Swing at BB’s Jazz, Blues & Soups
Wednesday	13	Chuck Berry at The Duck Room
Thursday	14	Kim Massie & The Solid Senders at Beale On Broadway
Friday	15	David Dee & Hot Tracks at Hammerstone’s
Saturday	16	Cash Box Kings at The Blues City Deli
Sunday	17	Skeet Rodgers & Inner City Blues Band at Denise’s Place
Monday	18	Johnny Winter at The Old Rock House
Tuesday	19	Bootigrabbers Delight at The Livery Company
Wednesday	20	Sarah Jane & the Blue Notes at Feasting Fox
Thursday	21	Larry Griffin Duo at Southtown Pub
Friday	22	Marquise Knox at The Moonshine Blues Bar
Saturday	23	North of the Quarter at Highway 61 Roadhouse
Sunday	24	Blue Sunday at The Great Grizzly Bear
Monday	25	Soulard Blues Band at The Broadway Oyster Bar
Tuesday	26	Brian Curran at The Broadway Oyster Bar
Wednesday	27	Funky Butt Brass Band & Bottoms Up Blues Gang at Broadway Oyster Bar
Thursday	28	Hudson & Logan at Southtown Pub
Friday	29	Leroy Pierson at BB’s Jazz, Blues & Soups
Saturday	30	Mojo Roots at The Blues City Deli

KARI LISTON

3000 GIGS AND GOING VIRAL



By Bruce Olson

In the year 2000, a young woman from South County who had been doing office work in Chicago and Milwaukee came home. She was tired of cold-call sales work, tired of being away, and most of all, she missed singing. The woman was Kari Liston, and the decision she made that year has served her—and the city of St. Louis—well ever since.

The decision led her to stages all over the city and all around the country; a decision that by age 36 has led to her current band's 3,000th gig, to three CDs, two EPs, and to a post-season Cardinal rally song that has topped 250,000 hits on YouTube. She is part of a long tradition of women blues singers in St. Louis; a tradition that by the end of the decade will reach 100 years.

Her singing style has been formed on the stage with playing partners, Jeremy Segel-Moss and Adam Andrews, that make the trio at the core of the Bottoms Up Blues Gang. Liston's style is cool and crafty, sometimes brassy and always full of emotion, energy and humor. She's a balladeer, a rocker, a leader who crosses the bridge from the nineteen-twenties to the twenty-tens.

No matter how often she has played that week or that day, no matter how long a drive she's had to make to that particular stage, be it on the edge of a cliff overlooking the Pacific Ocean, at the foot of a Colorado mountain, or on New Orleans' Frenchmen Street, Liston walks onto the stage full of beans, full of sass and full of the St. Louis sound.

During a recent BluesLetter interview, conducted at Blueberry Hill just after the celebration at the Broadway Oyster Bar of her 3,000th performance, Kari spoke of how she went from being an Oakville High School grad to a career blues singer. "I went to high school with Brian Curran, whose family had a recording studio in the basement. His Dad had all this stuff. He also had a pool and we'd have pool parties, playing and jamming. You know, making up songs on the fly. That was my first introduction into singing live around people."

By the time she was 23, she decided she wanted to be a singer. "I didn't necessarily want to be a blues singer, I just wanted to sing. Brian had started a jam at Beale on Broadway so I went. But there would be nobody in there because everybody was at BB's seeing Johnnie Johnson

or Oliver Sain or Fontella Bass. But I went to see Brian to see how I could get started. I get to Beale and there are two other people in the bar. One's Jeremy [Segel-Moss] and one's Adam [Andrews]. Brian called me up to sing a couple of songs and then he brought Jeremy up and Adam up and then he introduced us all to each other. We didn't know each other at all. We started talking."

Curran also had a solo show at Mike and Min's in Souldard and that's where Bottoms Up Blues Gang came about. "Brian would invite various people to play with him, like me and Jeremy and Adam, like Eric McSpadden and Sharon Foechner and a couple of his guitar students. Jeremy dubbed us the Bottoms-Up Blues Band because all we did was drink and play blues. But one day we were sitting around and I go 'how many people are there playing in this thing actually?' And we starting counting people up and there's maybe eight. And so I go, 'that's not a band, that's a gang, and we'll kick your ass!' So that was the joke and when we got our first gig we were like, 'what will call ourselves?' We went by the Bottoms up Blues Gang.

Segel-Moss was hanging out at Beale and the band that previously worked Monday quit. Jeremy said he could get the gig. "He said, 'I won't take anything for it, but we get to practice on a stage.' We went for it. You can practice in your basement all you want but it's not that sink-or-swim experience on the stage that you need. There were four of us, me, Jeremy on guitar, Adam on harp and Adam's brother Nate, who also played harmonica, and would switch sets with Adam. Within about a year, we had a CD and had built up a pretty good crowd. We played 300 to 350 gigs a year our first three years, which turned out to be too many. I had surgery on my voice when I was 28. It came from playing 300 shows a year. We would sometimes play eight gigs a week. We'd play a happy hour then go play a four hour show and we'd do that sometime three or four times a week. It's not possible for the voice to take that. Anybody who tries to do that the voice will give out. I ended up rupturing a varicose vein on my left vocal cord."

An operation in 2005 and some coaching set Liston straight. She cut the playing down to 200 shows a year, playing more on the road, especially in New Orleans and Colorado. "It was like getting a voice transplant. I could hit notes I'd never hit before. It was a brand new voice. I was more clean, the raspiness was gone."

By then the economy has gone into a ‘Great Recession,’ the city’s beloved blues masters are dead and some people are declaring the blues scene over. It is kept alive however, by the veteran bands and players such as the Soulard Blues Band, Big George Brock, Rich McDonough and Rough Grooves, Leroy Pierson, Renee Smith, the Ground Floor Band, Marsha Evans and a wave of new and young bands that filled the void left by the deaths of Townsend, Johnson and the others. Liston and Bottoms Up are very much a part of the survival of the St. Louis scene, even though it remains underground as far as a national audience is concerned.

The lack of national buzz out of St. Louis, she says, is a “double edged sword. I was talking to [former Fabulous Thunderbird] Preston Hubbard. He says St. Louis is like Austin was before Austin became Austin. If you look at Austin, I don’t want to be in Austin, I don’t want to live there. I don’t want St Louis to turn into that scene. I don’t want St. Louis to become Bourbon Street. But, at the same time we want people to come to St. Louis.”

“We want a resurgence and I think that’s happening, I know it’s happening. I can see it in the last ten years. The blues scene has changed a lot. There was a time when Brian and Bottoms Up were about the only young players around. Now you have four or five young groups and way more young players than even five years ago. Blues and blues roots bands are coming up, for sure.”

There was plenty of buzz for Liston around World Series time when a classmate from high school, Marc Patton, saw a blog called *Dead Spring* entitled “Why the Cards Suck.” Patton wrote a response called “You’ll Never Be Cardinals,” a Royals remix sung by Kari and produced by Nathan Hershey at Phat Budda. The song went live on the Tuesday before the series started and reached 200,000 hits in the first five days.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ev3Y4wrDy_Q

Liston is more than a singer. She plays a kazoo she found in the French Market in New Orleans, she whistles, she bangs on a tambourine and she is a master of the band’s secret weapon, the afuche-cabasa used by Liston as a drum, which gives the band a deep-rooted feel. The instrument, a wood and metal contraption that sounds like a rattlesnake, was invented in 1964 by a Latin-jazz percussionist in New York and is a variation of the African cabasa gourd and bead instrument.

But for Kari Liston, all these extras are just that—extras. Her voice and singing style are her thing. Indeed, that decision made 13 years ago has made many people happy to be part of the St. Louis blues scene. 🎵




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KILLER BLUES REPORT

by Steven Spencer

Local blues legend **Tommy Bankhead** was feted recently in a gala hosted by the St. Louis Blues Society and the Killer Blues Headstone Project (KBHP). The guitar player, who passed in 2000, was honored that night with a headstone to mark his resting place. The grave-stone was funded through donations received before and during Bankhead's celebration on October 20, at the Schlafly Tap Room. Fans, friends and family were in attendance to see the night far exceed expectations.

Tommy Bankhead, interred in Laurel Memorial Gardens in St. Louis, is the sixth recipient in this river city to receive such recognition from the KBHP. The October 20 event raised enough funds to ensure that **James Crutchfield** and **James "The Bat" Robinson** will be given the same recognition. The KBHP is looking forward to continuing this partnership with the St. Louis Blues Society and wishes to thank all those who were in attendance and those who contributed to such a successful evening for Mr. Bankhead.

Benefit for Charles Hunt







medical bills
and necessities

Sunday, December 8
3 pm to 7 pm
BB's Jazz Blues and Soups
700 South Broadway


Kim Massie
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Bottoms Up Blues Gang
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★ BB's Jazz, Blues & Soups

700 S. Broadway

★

Big Mike and “Bumblebee” Bob win St. Louis IBC Challenge



Jerry Minchey, St. Louis Blues Society Treasurer, presents the IBC Challenge winners. Left, Big Mike Aguirre and The Blu-City All-Stars; Right, Bob “Bumblebee” Kamoske.



Winners announced at show

By Bruce Olson

Photos by Reed Radcliffe

Kirkwood. October 13 — The St. Louis Post-Dispatch ran a story on the front page of its Sunday entertainment section last month with a lead sentence that followers of the blues must have found rather startling: “Blues music is a dying form, and there’s probably little you can do to keep it going.”

Hmmm. This in a city where blues music is played every night, where artists from their teens to their 80s perform to often cheering crowds, where the annual *Bluesweek Festival* annually draws over 50,000 people from around the world and where the new National Blues Museum, probably opening in 2015, is looked upon as a lynchpin to downtown development.

And, we can now add to the list a lively contest of quality blues music sponsored by the St. Louis Blues Society, a contest to pick the city’s representatives to compete with musicians from all over the United States and places like Japan, Australia and Holland in the world’s biggest blues competition.

There were three winners at the St. Louis International Blues Challenge on a Sunday in October at the Kirkwood Station Brewing Company: the first two on the stage—Bob “Bumble Bee” Kamoske in the solo/duo category and Big Mike Aguirre and the Blu-City All-Stars in the band competition. The other big winner was perhaps the most important—the city and its music fans, first place in the “keeping live music alive” category.

The venue was humming all afternoon and into the early evening as eight different performances rolled across the stage, each doing short sets, keeping a couple hundred fans whooping, waving arms, dancing and having a generally excellent Sunday afternoon.

From Miss Molly Sims’ start with the classic “Haul Off” and her rendition of the local favorite “East St. Louis”

all the way to the killer “Running Out of Lies” from Big Mike, the crowd intently followed the competition, judging right along with the three out-of-town judges.

The opinions of the judges, who came from blues societies in Central Illinois, the Ozarks and Decatur, were matched by the opinions of the crowd, the day’s winners getting the biggest cheers.

Miss Molly, backed by the harp of Adam Andrews, was a favorite in the solo/duo category, mixing in a couple of rowdy originals, “Angry Evil” and “Usual Suspects” before turning things over to the eventual winner, Bob “Bumble Bee” Kamoske.

Kamoske is a veteran of the St. Louis scene, a consummate guitar player who gives the kind of emotion on the stage that makes it impossible for blues music to become a dying form. His set included a couple of winning standards, the Muddy Waters’ “I Can’t Be Satisfied” and the Big Joe Williams/Henry Townsend St. Louis classic “Baby Please Don’t Go.” But Bob’s original, “Never Understood the Women in My Life” really got the crowd going and clinched his victory in the category.

Pamela Devine and Vincent Saletto, the third contestants in the solo/duo portion of the competition, were handicapped by a malfunctioning computer-driven keyboard, but Devine handled the glitch with grace, showing her skill in a couple of a cappella songs she had up her sleeve.

The band competition included five large ensemble groups, including an eight-piece New Orleans review, Toby Mechem and North of the Quarter, that filled the room with a rowdy set led by the powerhouse singing of Mae Soule.

Al Holliday and the East Side Rhythm Band, a new band from across the river, had that old school East St. Louis flare that brought R&B to the world in the late forties

and early fifties, kicking up the dancers with a six-piece workout on songs including “Big Leg Women” and “On the Mississippi.”

Eric Gavillet and the Alley Tones, formed in 2012, presented a proficient four-piece blues show by a band that has just started to come into its own and beginning to get more local gigs including BB’s Jazz Blues and Soups and The Rustic Goat.

But the two fan favorites were clearly Big Mike Aguirre and the runner-up in the minds of the crowd (the judges didn’t reveal their second choice) Dawn Weber and the Swingin’ Blues Review, another the contingent of young players that show just how far from dead this kind of music really is in St. Louis.

Weber began with the chilling notes of the “St. Louis Blues,” a song that will be 100 years old in just a few months, but is still the standard of standards for the entire world. Weber’s take on her dazzling horn was that of Louis Armstrong, whose crucial years spent in St. Louis are little-known, but whose playing is very well-known indeed. Weber’s opening growl was simply a spine-tingler.

But it was the last act to play, Big Mike, who stole the show. The club filled up to the back with the cheers rattling and the dancers dancing. The judges, scribbling, were just about the only people in the place still sitting down. Aguirre has that Eastside background and is a veteran of the scene—a guitar player whose smooth vocals reflect the influence of older generation players like David Dee and Big George Brock.

Aguirre and his band know how to greet each other in their riffs, making the blues their own. They moved through Ike Turner’s “I Know You Don’t Love Me No More,” Aguirre’s own “My Dog,” the Earl King standard, “Up on the Hill” and finished with the smooth, soulful R&B masterpiece from the Memphis singer Johnnie Taylor, “Running Out of Lies.”

It didn’t take long for the judges to hand the first prize to Mike and his band: Benet Schaeffer, drums; Preston Hubbard, bass; Aaron Chandler, trombone; David Grelle, keyboards; and Adam Huckle on the trumpet.

By day’s end, no one needed any convincing that this music was not dead, not dying, not even in danger. Maybe that is happening someplace else, someplace out there in plastic America where authentic, vibrant music is on its way out. But not here, not in a place where Dawn Weber could put down her trumpet, tousle her brilliantly-pink hair and shout out, “I’m so proud and happy to call St. Louis my home.” 🎵

The two winners will play a showcase and fundraising event together at BB’s Jazz, Blues and Soups in December. The 30th annual International Blues Challenge will be held in Memphis Jan. 21 to 25, 2014. The competition feats over 150 acts in 17 clubs along Beale Street.



Competitors at the St. Louis Blues Society Road to Memphis. From top and left to right: Big Mike Aguirre and The Blu-City All-Stars; David Grelle, Aguirre, Benet Schaeffer, Aaron Chandler, Preston Hubbard, Adam Huckle. Bob “Bumblebee” Kamoske. Aguirre and Chandler. Kamoske. Dawn Weber. Molly Sims with Adam Andrews. Al Holliday.

BLUES CITY DELI

November Live Music

Thursday 7 Chris Ruest Band [Austin]
 Saturday 9 JW- Jones Band [Ottawa Canada]
 Thursday 14 Rich McDonough
 Saturday 16 Cash Box Kings [Chicago]
 Thursday 21 Dawn Weber
 Saturday 23 Big George Brock
 Thursday 28 closed
 Saturday 30 Mojo Roots [Columbia MO]

The deli has live music just about every Thursday and Saturday. Lookin' for a taste of the blues? Check out our website for upcoming shows and events!

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Sat. Nov. 23
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Sun. Nov. 24
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Wed. Nov. 27
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Fri. Nov. 29
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Friday Nov. 8

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Friday Nov. 15

Four on the Floor [Detroit] 10PM

Saturday Nov. 16

The Hatrick 10PM

Thursday Nov. 21

Nelson Lunding tribute to Johnnie Johnson 9PM

Saturday Nov. 23

Clusterpluck 10PM

Wednesday Nov. 27

Bottoms Up Blues Gang
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Friday Nov. 29

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ST. LOUIS musicians directory

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The St. Louis Blues Society

presents

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November 24

at the Great Grizzly Bear
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Last Sunday of the Month

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The Bottoms Up Blues Gang



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