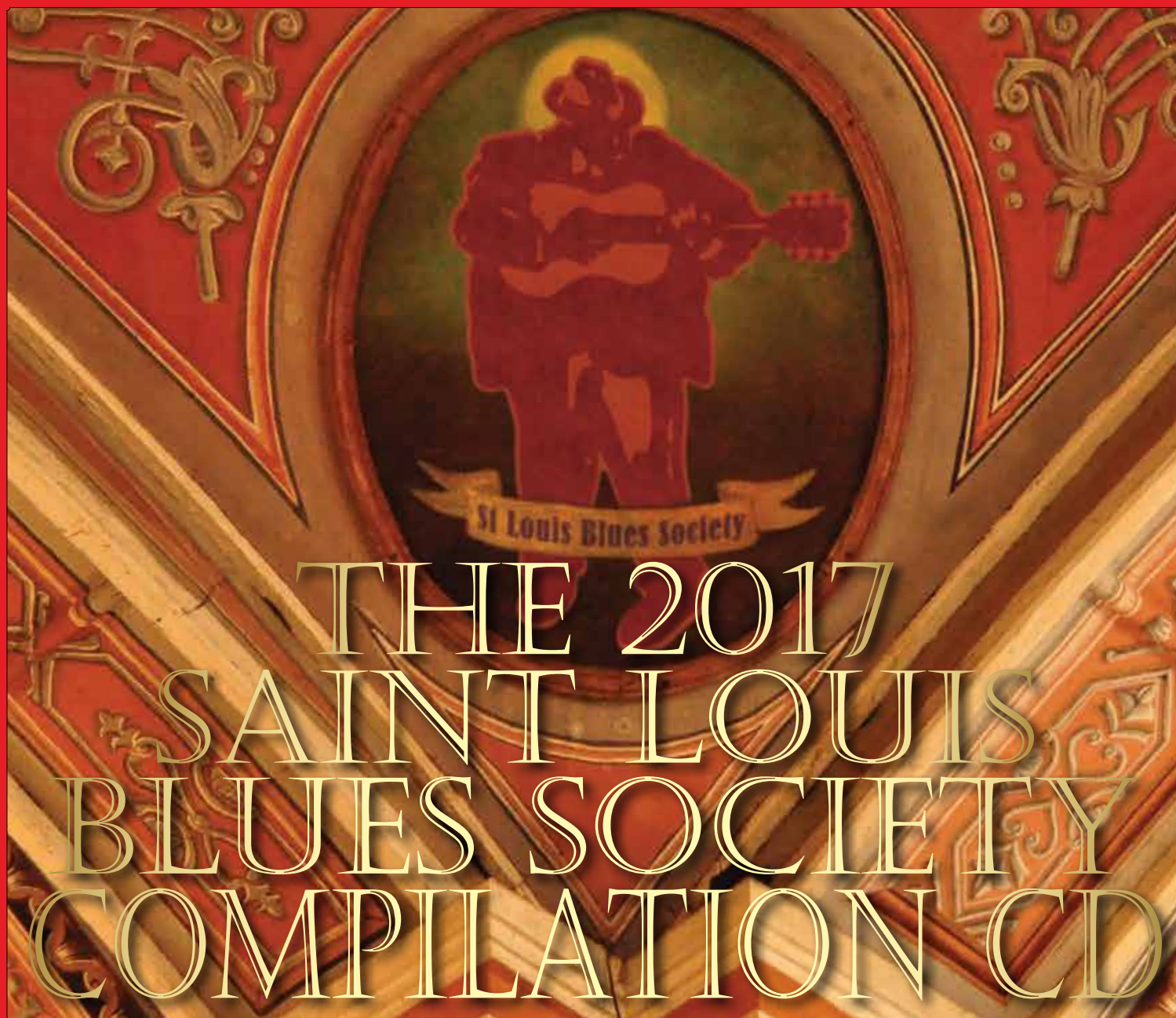


THE BI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE OF THE SAINT LOUIS BLUES SOCIETY Jan/Feb 2018 Number 88

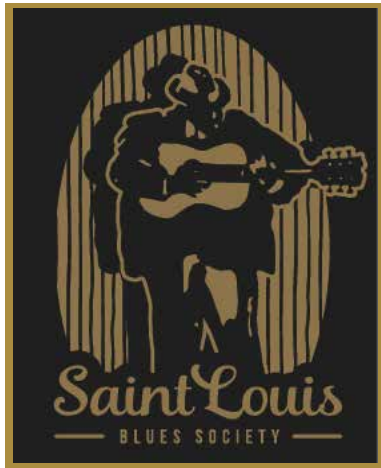
# BLUES LETTER



**PLUS: KDHX and the St. Louis Blues Society present a conversation series on Race and Blues in St. Louis**

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# PRESERVING AND PERPETUATING BLUES MUSIC IN AND FROM ST. LOUIS SINCE 1984



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Happy 2018! First off I'd like to congratulate the St. Louis Blues Society representatives at the International Blues Challenge. **Torrey Casey & the Southside Hustle** and the **Kingdom Brothers Duo** did an outstanding job representing St. Louis on the International stage. Thanks to all the fans who showed up at our local IBC Challenge, went to fundraisers and even took the trip down to Memphis!

The new St. Louis Blues Society compilation CD - **17 IN 17** - is now available. This year's CD features a whole new batch of musicians and original songs. Big thanks to Paul Niehaus, Mike Zitt, Tony Esterly and all of the musicians who participated. We very much hope you enjoy the CD and pass it on to all of your friends. Note, that if you did not receive a CD in the mail it means your membership has lapsed. Renew or sign up now to get the new CD!

I also wanted to thank KDHX FM for making last year's CD - **16 IN 16** - the most played record of the year! KDHX plays more blues music than any other station in St. Louis, so thanks to the DJs, the station, and all the listeners for putting St. Louis music first!

Thanks also to everyone who showed up for our Annual Membership Meeting. We have scheduled **bi-monthly Meet and Greets** at the KDHX Stage in 2018. One of our goals this year is to create more opportunities for volunteers who want to get involved. With so many projects in motion we *do need help* with many aspects of the organization. If you'd like to get involved plan to attend the next Meet and Greet on **February 26 from 6-8pm** or feel free to contact me directly.

Thanks as always for supporting St. Louis Blues Music!  
Jeremy Segel-Moss

## E-mailJeremy

I'd love to hear from you!

Please write me at [jsegelmoss@stlouisbluessociety.org](mailto:jsegelmoss@stlouisbluessociety.org) and tell me your ideas for new projects.

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**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.**

*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.*





SUN • FEBRUARY 4, 2018  
Doors: 1:30 pm / Show: 2:00 pm



SUN • FEBRUARY 11, 2018  
Doors: 1:30 pm / Show: 2:00 pm



SUN • FEBRUARY 4, 2018  
Doors: 1:30 pm / Show: 2:00 pm



The Stage at KDHX  
3524 Washington Avenue  
St. Louis, MO 63103



KDHX and the St. Louis Blues Society present *Race and the Blues in St. Louis* community dialogue series, featuring conversations designed to cultivate understanding around race relations as they pertain to the blues. This series will provide the context and tools to enable a continuing, constructive dialogue in the music community and bring people together by celebrating the legacy and future of the blues in St. Louis. Conversations will be led by Dr. Rosalind (Roz) Norman, professor of business at Webster University, former National Blues Museum interpretative coordinator, member of Cinema St. Louis and other artist guilds, and producer of media projects for Double Helix and various sources. Discussion panels will consist of musicians, historians, broadcasters, promoters, recording studio owners, venue managers, and community members with deep connections to the blues in St. Louis. Ample time will be allowed for audience participation in each dialogue session. Each conversation will have a different focus, but all will address issues of appropriation and roadblocks for artists and advocates, and how to remove them. By organizing this program, KDHX and the St. Louis Blues Society hope to shine a light on these issues, move the conversation forward, and help us all navigate a difficult and sometimes uncomfortable topic. In addition to the program, there is an ongoing conversation about race and blues music in St. Louis that's taking place at performance venues throughout the region.



**Spring 2018**  
**St. Louis Blues Society**  
**Meet and Greet Events**  
at KDHX - The Stage, 3524 Washington Ave.

Monday, February 26, 6-8pm  
Monday, April 23, 6-8pm  
Monday, June 25, 6-8pm

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- 1: GOT CONVICTION - Devil's Elbow - 2:42
- 2: I GOT TO FIND MY BABY - Marcell Strong and the Apostles - 3:36
- 3: A LETTER TO MY CITY - Alonzo Townsend - 5:13
- 4: LITTLE GIRL LOST - Kim Massie - 3:36
- 5: SAILOR MAN - Chase Garrett - 5:10
- 6: HOW DO YOU LIKE YOUR BLUES? - Teec'a Easby - 3:35
- 7: LORD KNOWS (AIN'T PERSONAL) - Brian Owens - 4:01
- 8: WHEN A FELLOW IS FEELIN' LOW - Nick Pence & Joey Glynn - 3:30
- 9: MISTRESS - Charisse 'Swan' Sauls - 3:57
- 10: SCARS - Brother Jefferson Band - 5:20
- 11: RATTLIN' - Matt 'The Rattlesnake' Lesch - 3:54
- 12: WHAT IS LOVE? - Eastsiders Review Band - 3:53
- 13: YOU DONE ME WRONG - Marty Abdullah - 3:37
- 14: A QUIET MAN'S DREAM - Jason David Cooper - 3:31
- 15: YOU BREAK IT, YOU BUY IT - Annie & The Fur Trappers - 2:53
- 16: LITTLE GIRL - Kyle Yardley - 5:19
- 17: COLD AS ICE - Melissa Neels Band - 5:51

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ALL SONGS ARE CO-PRODUCTIONS OF THE BAND/ARTIST

# Race and the Blues in St. Louis Community Dialogue Series

by Dr. Rosalind (Roz) Norman

KDIX and the St. Louis Blues Society present *Race and the Blues in St. Louis* community dialogue series, featuring conversations designed to cultivate understanding about race relations as it pertains to blues music, its legacy and future.

I'm excited to serve as the moderator for this series. With more than 40 years in managing projects for entertainment/media and cultural arts, I also am a native St. Louisan, arts enthusiast, community advocate, and adjunct professor of business at Webster University. I believe love for the arts especially music, which has been documented to aid in healing individuals, should be a common ground for bringing together people from diverse cultures and to restore a sense of community that bridges race relations in support of blues music in the community.

As I reflect on stories of and about my grandfather, a sharecropper and blues musician from the Mississippi Delta, I also am honored to be on the same stage with blues musicians, historians, broadcasters, promoters, recording studio owners, venue managers, and arts community advocates who share deep connections to the blues in St. Louis.

From 2:00 pm to 3:30 pm on Sunday afternoons in February 2018, dialogue sessions have been scheduled to take place on The Stage of KDIX. We will have a different focus for each dialogue session: The first session addresses *The Past: Stigma of the Blues* (February 4<sup>th</sup>). The second session deals with *The Present: Reality of Blues Music Today* (February 11<sup>th</sup>). And the third session explores *The Future: Evolution of the Blues* (February 25<sup>th</sup>). All dialogue sessions will address issues of appropriation and roadblocks for artists and advocates, in addition to how to remove the stigma and hindrances for blues as an original artform. When describing this opportunity, I think James Weldon Johnson said it best: "It is from the Blues that all that may be called American music derives its most distinctive characteristics."

After having an opportunity to work with acclaimed Emmy-winning documentary film producer and director Joanne Fish on *Mr. Handy's Blues*, which was presented on November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2017 for *The 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Whitaker St. Louis International Film Festival* on The Stage of KDIX, the documentary film explored the life of William Christopher Handy (W. C. Handy)—"Father of the Blues". Through the skills and talents of W. C. Handy, blues music was decoded and published for the first time as an original artform to be heard and shared with people worldwide.

W. C. Handy codified the moans and groans of pain inflicted on the body and soul of Black people in the cotton fields of the South. He translated their chants, the call and response of music that transcended the excruciating pain of having your family torn apart by being separated from loved ones because you were considered a commodity instead of a human being, and having negative stereotypes perpetuated about you as African Americans. He captured the spirit of how inhumane treatment of slaves, and later sharecroppers, who often were lynched and further dehumanized through enforced discrimination in education, housing, incarceration, and other injustices of Jim Crow laws. Despite the atrocities of an enslaved culture that produced post-traumatic experiences which continue to present-day, blues music was conceived.

Blues music provided an outlet—an expression for Black people who had not and still do not have "a voice" and opportunities because of their skin color. Whether it's labeled racism, it's about the perception and the practices that uses a person's skin color to determine how they're treated. For Black musicians as artists to cope with racism that colored everything that influenced their lives and that of their loved ones, the blues became their vicarious voice, their expression through music. And the music reflected pain, loss, love, disappointment, hope, and celebration of what life was and could be.

After W. C. Handy put this unique music into musical notes that reflected pieces of a person's soul and experiences of what poor, oppressed Black people felt, he composed music and words that could be played on different instruments such as a guitar, harmonica, piano and other musical instruments—homemade and otherwise. Nowadays, blues music has grown in its means of expression. People of various races and experiences have adopted it.

Unfortunately, in many cases, blues music has been stolen from Black musicians who were uneducated and lacked business savvy. Their music was and continues to be co-opted for the profit of others who did not originate the music. Even in one case which affected W. C. Handy, his first blues song "Memphis Blues", considered the first blues song ever published, felt prey to exploitative business practices. Because of this, he learned a lesson the hard way. W. C. Handy, subsequently, set up a structure to retain ownership of his songs and created his own publishing venture with a songwriter and entrepreneur named Harry Pace. And by 1914, under the Pace & Handy Music Company, "St. Louis Blues" was released. To this date,

"St. Louis Blues" remains one of the top-selling blues song internationally and in the history of blues music.

Since the inception of blues music, many blues songs and musicians have attracted international attention and commercial success. All anyone needs to do is visit the National Blues Museum, located at 615 Washington Avenue in downtown St. Louis. At this museum, a person can discover how some blues instruments date back to pre-slavery and the oral traditions of African griots, a visual timeline of blues music history in the United States, artifacts relating to local and internationally-renowned blues musicians, video and interactive displays that show the development of famous and lesser known artists of the blues, and weekly live performances.

In addition to the National Blues Museum, there are several local legendary venues for blues artists of the past and present. Some of these venues pre-date the opening of the museum. However, the history of blues music in St. Louis encompasses so much more. During its earlier heyday with its musical vitality and popular ragtime and hot dance music that combined folk music roots with a variety of more formal musical traditions, this city played a huge role in the creation and development of the blues. For instance, blues music was more innovative, showing rhythmic invention and virtuosic playing in the 1920s. Then throughout the 1930s and 1940s, musicians continued an interaction between blues and jazz and other genres. Since then, St. Louis musicians also contributed to the creation of rhythm and blues and rock and roll as well.

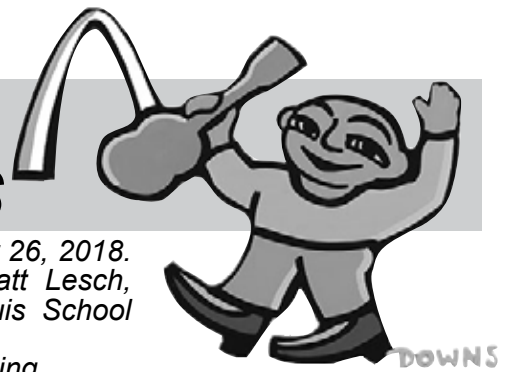
As the moderator for *Race and the Blues in St. Louis*, it is my hope that the overall dialogue series will accomplish more than just talking about the problem. I hope it will culminate in efforts to bring together culturally diverse people on a common ground and produce the following:

1. To improve the perception of Blues music as a respected American artform,
2. To broaden its acceptance as viable music that's as equally important and highly esteemed as classical, jazz, and any other genre, and
3. To increase support for local Blues musicians.

*So, reserve a date and join us  
in a conversation on  
"Race and the Blues in St. Louis" 🎵*



# Reed Radcliffe's Baby Blues Showcase Photos



The 16th Annual Baby Blues Showcase took place on Sunday, November 26, 2018. Young and upcoming acts included Marquise Knox, Aaron Griffin, Matt Lesch, Beulah Flakes, Little Dylan, Ian Buschmann, Troy Rolen, The St. Louis School of Rock, and The St. Louis Blues Society Youth Band!

Mr. Alonzo Townsend, STLBS Board Member, was the emcee for the evening.



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### ♦♦♦♦♦ JANUARY EVENTS ♦♦♦♦♦

<b>SUN 21</b>	<b>11:30AM</b>	Brunch with <b>Miss Jubilee &amp; The Humdingers</b>
	<b>6:30PM</b>	<b>Taylor Kropp</b> Nashville, TN
<b>MON 22</b>	<b>7:00PM</b>	<b>Sam Hadfield</b> Nashville, TN
<b>TUES 23</b>	<b>7:00PM</b>	<b>Pat Joyce</b>
<b>WED 24</b>	<b>7:00PM</b>	<b>Cherokee Moon</b>
<b>THUR 25</b>	<b>7:00PM</b>	<b>Feyza Eren</b>
<b>FRI 26</b>	<b>7:00PM</b>	<b>BoogieFoot</b>
<b>SAT 27</b>	<b>7:00PM</b>	<b>Blues City Swing</b>
<b>SUN 28</b>	<b>11:30AM</b>	Brunch with <b>Miss Jubilee &amp; The Humdingers</b>
	<b>6:30PM</b>	<b>Mike Lipel</b>
<b>TUES 30</b>	<b>7:00PM</b>	<b>Sissy Brown</b> Byers, TX
<b>WED 31</b>	<b>7:00PM</b>	<b>Dave Black</b>

### ♦♦♦♦♦ FEBRUARY EVENTS ♦♦♦♦♦

<b>FRI 02</b>	<b>7:00PM</b>	<b>Jess Novak</b>
	<b>8:15PM</b>	<b>Karen Choi</b>
	<b>9:30PM</b>	<b>Leslie Sanzaro</b>
<b>SAT 03</b>	<b>11:30AM</b>	Brunch with <b>The Sidemen</b>
	<b>7:00PM</b>	<b>Maple Jam</b>
<b>SUN 04</b>	<b>6:00PM</b>	<b>The Jazz Troubadours</b>
<b>WED 07</b>	<b>7:00PM</b>	<b>Glen Smith &amp; Eric Slaughter</b>
<b>THUR 08</b>	<b>7:00PM</b>	<b>Cary Colman Jazz Trio</b>
<b>FRI 09</b>	<b>7:00PM</b>	<b>Analog Thief</b>
<b>SAT 10</b>	<b>7:00PM</b>	<b>Paul Davis, Joe Park, Glenn Meyers</b>
<b>SUN 11</b>	<b>11:30AM</b>	Brunch with <b>Roya &amp; The High Timers</b>
	<b>6:30PM</b>	<b>Roanoke</b> Nashville, TN
<b>MON 12</b>	<b>7:00PM</b>	<b>Honeywise</b> featuring <b>Sophia Landis</b> Cedar Falls, IA
<b>TUES 13</b>	<b>7:00PM</b>	<b>Caroline Cotter &amp; Michael Howard</b>
<b>WED 14</b>	<b>7:00PM</b>	<b>Joe Bozzi Band</b>
<b>THUR 15</b>	<b>7:00PM</b>	<b>Brent Stewart</b> Carbondale, IL
<b>FRI 16</b>	<b>7:00PM</b>	<b>Amanda Raye</b>
<b>SUN 17</b>	<b>7:00PM</b>	<b>BoogieFoot</b>
<b>SUN 18</b>	<b>11:30AM</b>	Brunch with <b>Miss Jubilee &amp; The Humdingers</b>
<b>MON 19</b>	<b>7:00PM</b>	<b>Pocket Vinyl</b> New London, CT
<b>TUES 20</b>	<b>7:00PM</b>	<b>Daniel Smith</b>
<b>WED 21</b>	<b>7:00PM</b>	<b>Izzie and The Cloud Jumpers</b>
<b>FRI 23</b>	<b>7:00PM</b>	<b>Sarah Jane &amp; the Blue Notes</b>
<b>SAT 24</b>	<b>7:00PM</b>	<b>Crimson Calamity</b> Nashville, TN
<b>SUN 25</b>	<b>6:30PM</b>	<b>Oddsoul and the Sound</b>
<b>WED 28</b>	<b>7:00PM</b>	<b>Brian Vaccaro Duo</b>

❖ FOR COMPLETE SCHEDULE OF EVENTS ❖  
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## **Devil's Elbow**

### **"Got Conviction"**

Niehaus says the Devil's Elbow *Got Conviction* is a "gut bucket blues number by an up and coming band that really plays two guitars together well." This is the first original for Mat Wilson and Elliot Sowell who Mat says are "still finding their style." Influenced by old 78s and obscure Chess artists, he says they wrote an "easy rocking shuffle with a cool vibe that kinda swings."

## **Nick Pence and Joey Glynn**

### **"When a Fellow is Feeling Low"**

The opening resonator guitar and clicking bones tell you this is traditional country blues comin' at you. Nick says, "it's all about the groove with Joey Glynn's bass setting the tone." He says he wanted "to sing with truth and that dealing with race and hate comes down to accountability and taking care of one another."

## **Marcell Strong and the Apostles**

### **"I Got to Find My Baby"**

This live cut with his band was the first time they ever saw the song. Strong said, "I just wanted to get their first impression." Niehaus says the 77-year-old singer is "a living legend delivering southern soul at its finest." You can feel that "little bit of Otis Redding-Wilson Picket-60s rhythm-feel" Strong says he was shooting for in this cut.

## **Jeff Chapman, Brother Jefferson**

### **"Scars"**

Cut live in the studio the opening sax takes you straight to Memphis. Chapman says the song "had been sitting in the cobwebs for a couple of years and it strays a bit from our usual Americana and southern rock blues" This deeply personal soul song has all the elements with Chapmans heartfelt vocals and space for the guitar and sax to tell the story with Chapman. Yes, you can feel the scars.

## **Kim Massie**

### **"Little Girl Lost"**

St. Louis has waited a long time for this one, Kim Massie's first original song. She says, "I've had the lyrics and tune in my head for a while." With a lush background arrangement, she uses her beautiful voice in a "bluesy/soul/easy listening style" to softly tell her story. It's a real life one about lost children, drugs and grandparents raising their grandchildren. Kim says, "I wrote this song for inspiration and to bring awareness."

# **17 in 17**

## **Charisse "Swan" Sauls**

### **"Mistress"**

This collaborative first original began with Swan "identifying what notes I liked to sing, trying a minor key and finding a haunting melody." Niehaus and Kevin O'Connor provided the music and Gene Jackson the lyrics. Swan says the song was "personally tough for her" but realizing that "a song is just a role I am playing" allowed her to deliver a Motown soul rendition that fits with her love of Amy Winehouse and Sharon Jones stylings.

## **Brian Owens**

### **"Lord Knows (Ain't Personal)"**

The opening chords set up a classic old school soul song straight out of Ferguson by Brian Owens. The song is a collaboration between Niehaus, Owens and his 18-year-old son, CJ Mobely who wrote the lyrics. Owens says, "we didn't try to overthink it ... and we got the early 60's soul style with a deep gospel feel in the background vocals."

## **Teec'a Easby**

### **"How Do You Like Your Blues?"**

Folks have taken notice of Easby since she wowed audiences at Big Muddy and the regional IBC with Torrey Casey and the South Side Hustle. Teec'a says her song, co-written with Niehaus, was "inspired by watching an audience respond to blues songs." The collaborative effort with Niehaus, Casey on background vocals and Sean Allen Canan's slide guitar opens with a bit of funk for her "upbeat, dancey, good-times blues" that allows her big voice the space it needs to soar.

## **Marty Abdullah**

### **"You Done Me Wrong"**

This recording may be Abdullah's first original song, but most know him from a decade with the Soulard Blues Band and now the Rhythm Rockers Band. Marty says he uses a "southern soul/R&B style to tell a true story." Chase Garrett provides a rich piano backing and solo that rolls this upbeat little rockin' soul tune along.

**That's it! The table is set. Time to pull up a chair, grab a plate and hit that 17 In 17 buffet line for a heaping serving of St. Louis blues.**

**Check out the menu:**



# =A Blues Buffet

by Bob Baugh

## **Eastsiders Review Band**

### **“What is Love?”**

On her first original song drummer and vocalist Alice Monroe delivers what Niehaus calls “meat and potatoes St. Louis soul ... a gem of a track.” Monroe says the “lyrics are something I wrote with my sisters’ years ago.” The delivery features a series of well-placed shifts of between a slower more deliberate pace into a hoppy up-tempo style.

## **Kyle Yardley**

### **“Little Girl”**

No mistaking the Chicago blues style here which is what Yardley does so well. He says he often writes songs by telling the band “here’s the key, play a shuffle, and then I make it up as I go.” That’s how this shuffle came to be while playing with Rich McDonough one night. It features two guitars because Rockin’ Johnny Burgin, who happened to be staying at Paul’s house the day of the recording, agreed to join in the session with Aaron Griffin.

## **Matt “The Rattlesnake” Lesch**

### **“Rattlin”**

There was a time Matt “didn’t feel I was good enough to play the blues – no future.” He lays that notion to rest from the opening electric blues licks of this tune. Paul describes the song as an “energetic straight-eighth traditional blues” while Matt says he was just “trying to get a Walkin’ the Dog feel.” This song celebrates his desire “to keep playin’ the blues forever.”

## **Melissa Neels Band**

### **“Cold as Ice”**

This is the first recording of a song Neels has been performing for several years. This straight up roadhouse blues number features her Bonnie Raitt inspired guitar work. The piano and guitar are outstanding with their interplay lending it a sweet rocking jazzy feel. Neels agrees and says she is really happy with this “rousing song and the way the piano and guitar solos turned out.”

## **Chase Garrett**

### **“Sailor Man”**

Chase Garrett and his friend Ethan Leinwand have really enlivened the St. Louis piano and swing scene. Most have seen him with Sweetie and the Toothaches. “Sailor Man” is a solo effort where his voice and keyboard shine in this self-defined “lighthearted tongue-in-cheek number.” This slow blues tune is written in the rarely used B natural, “which” Garrett says, “allows me to play like Otis Spann.”

## **Annie & The Fur Trappers**

### **“You Break It, You Buy It”**

A banjo, washboard and tuba set-up this jaunty upbeat tune. Known for their “traditional jazz blues Dixieland style” Annie says the band “chose to write their first original song in a jump blues style.” It was new for them to do a blues in G but, “we were quickly able to adjust and decide on our solos.” Annie said it also fit because they have been “dabbling some in blues and are going in that direction.”

## **Jason David Cooper**

### **“A Quiet Man’s Dream”**

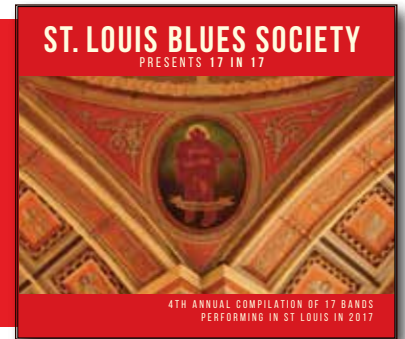
Cooper is a west coast transplant who shared the stage with Johnny Lang when both were teenagers. He moved to St. Louis a few years ago because of his love of the blues and the chance to play regularly. Cooper says his “jazzy swing style tune is a hopeful charming love song.” The song shuffles right along with keyboardist Jesse James Gannon complimenting Cooper’s jazzy guitar riffs.

## **Alonzo Townsend**

### **“A Letter to My City”**

This the first original song from the son of the St. Louis’s legendary bluesman Henry Townsend. It’s a spoken word tune done in what Niehaus calls “a Fat Possum blues style.” Alonzo says, “I had the idea for a long time, but it took five years of Jeremy Segal-Moss poking me to do it ... when it was time to write, it came fast and natural.” It’s a song with a message about the times and city we live in that Townsend says is about “what works and what makes us strong.” 🎵

# 17 IN 17 HAS THE BLUES YOU LIKE



Ten years ago, a provocative Post-Dispatch headline asked, “Have the blues ‘done left this town’?” The article noted the passing of the Great Migration generation of artists and how the tastes of the digital and hip hop generation had drifted away from the blues and live music. The St. Louis Blues Society’s new CD, *17 IN 17*, is a rousing response that shouts the blues are alive and well in this town.

## An Identity Crisis

Situated halfway between Memphis and Chicago, St. Louis has long suffered an identity crisis around the blues. Bolstered by a vibrant recording industry, Chicago patented its electric blues sound while Memphis nailed down the rockabilly/southern soul scene. They made their music a brand as did New Orleans, Nashville and Austin. St. Louis remained a city loaded with talented musicians without a brand or marketing.

If there was one musician that put a stamp on St. Louis, it was Oliver Sain who opened his Archway Studios in 1965. Over four decades his musical talent and production skills pumped out music and shaped careers. But, when Sain passed away in 2003, Archway closed its doors and the city lost a musical anchor that helped define a part of the St. Louis sound.

It’s a tricky business when it comes to defining the “St. Louis blues sound.” The influences of the Delta roots music swirls through this city like the crosscurrents of the Mississippi. Our 20<sup>th</sup> century bookends of musical history Scott Joplin and Chuck Berry used those Delta roots to create ragtime and

rock and roll. While Oliver Sain helped define our soul, Henry Townsend and other Delta legends kept our blues true. And, in a city with a longstanding piano tradition, Jazz, Dixieland, barrelhouse and blues always played well with one another.

All those influences thrive in St. Louis without a recording industry defining the sound. Our tradition is of having one of the liveliest local music scenes in the country with many shades of blue. It is that variety that is the spice of St. Louis blues life. If that is our advantage then the trick is to encourage it, expand it and find the ways to share it within our community and with the world.

## Raising Visibility

Jeremy Segel-Moss, the STLBS chairperson, likes to tell how “for years we (The Bottoms Up Blues Gang) would be traveling and telling people in the places we played about the amazing music here, but we didn’t have anything to back it up.” The need for a CD of original music by St. Louis artists was obvious and thus sat at the top of his to do list when he was elected as the Society’s chairperson in 2013.

The CD idea wasn’t just about visibility. It is also an organizing tactic as Segel-Moss points out: “We wanted honest participation with our town’s musicians. With the CD they get one song recorded for free and encouragement to make nine more for their own CD.” He also says with pride, “It’s a statement about who we are... We stand alone even in the best blues cities in the country. They don’t have the depth of talent or the variety that we have here.”

## by Bob Baugh

The first CD, *14 IN 14*, a compilation of recorded songs submitted by musicians, was a learning experience. “Doing it,” Segel-Moss says, “was a tough sell...we encountered lots of ‘No’s’ and apprehension from older artists who had been screwed by record companies. We also found many well know local artists didn’t have any original music.” That needed to be remedied with the next one.

## Building a Box Set

*15 IN 15* took that step by collaborating with local wunderkind Paul Niehaus (STLBS board member), a young well-known local musician who was beginning to stretch his wings as an engineer/producer. Paul and Jeremy shared a vision of “inclusion” or as Paul puts it, “Seeking an intentional stylistic diversity.” He also said a key to his creative process is the ability to make an artist “feel relaxed, comfortable and at ease in the studio.” It certainly worked.

*14 IN 14* broke the ice for the STLBS, *15 IN 15* ended up as KDHX’s most played album of the year and *16 IN 16* is positioned to do the same. The CD has broad appeal among the KDHX DJ’s because, as Jeremy says with a smile, “with the variety there is something for everyone.” The hoped-for spin-offs also became a reality with Niehaus working with Roland Johnson to produce his first original CD, *Imagine This*.

By the time *16 IN 16* was in the planning stage artists were calling Jeremy and Paul to see how they could get on it. It turned out to be a delightful gumbo of St. Louis music that garnered



heavy airplay. It too led to first timers wanting to do their own album. Gene Jackson's, *1963*, was the first and others are working on theirs. It's part of broader local recording trend according to Niehaus, "St. Louis is on a big upswing, it's a pot ready to boil over musically." And, as Segel-Moss notes, "It's young and vibrant not just old and vibrant."

With the release of *17 IN 17*, the STLBS will have put out four CD's covering 62 songs and artists. Jeremy says: "We have run the numbers. There is the potential for at least two more CD's of original material without repeating any band. The plan is to retire *14 IN 14* after this year and go forward with Blue Lotus in producing two more original CD's. By the end the STLBS will have 5 CD's. It will be a box set of St. Louis blues to market to the world."

## Making 17 IN 17

Teec'a Easby's debut song, "How Do You Like Your Blues?" could easily be the anthem for *17 IN 17*'s big buffet of St. Louis Blues. There are plenty of tasty choices including traditional and country blues, a deep soul swing, a slathering of electric, piano and jazzy blues and some straight up spoken word blues.

Like the earlier CD's the songs are determined by the artists and this year has a decidedly soulful thrust. It also features more women artists. Another noticeable trend is the fine piano and keyboard work. Chase Garret is out there workin' the ivories on his own song *Sailor Man* and on Marty Abdullah's cut. Melissa Neels' hot guitar work is complimented by her keyboardist as is Jason David Cooper's song by Jesse James Gannon's Wurlitzer and organ.

What's most impressive is that half the songs are the first original songs any of these artists have ever recorded. It pays to have a musician/engineer like Paul Niehaus who can play almost any an instrument, co-write lyrics and gently push an artist for the best take. It also helps to have Kevin O'Connor who played drums on four tracks, co-wrote two songs, and did the string arrangement for others. Paul also has friends like singer/songwriter Sean Coray who sat in on Alonzo Townsend's cut.

Socially conscious songs are part of the mix too with Kim Massie, Alonzo Townsend and Nick Pence weighing in on that end. "No surprise there," according to Segel-Moss, "these musicians are making social commentary through original music...Blues is folk music—telling stories of our lives with no pretense." That's a good way to think about this CD. It tells the truth about St. Louis with the blues you like. 🎵



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# TORREY CASEY AND THE SOUTHSIDE HUSTLE CAN'T KNOCK THE HUSTLE

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by Michael Higgins



The BB King cassette was cracked—not broken, mind you—just cracked. But when teenager Torrey Casey played it on a 1996 summer’s eve, a new world burst forth from the speakers.

Representing St. Louis at the 2018 International Blues Challenge in Memphis, Casey and his Southside Hustle have hit the local music scene with equal force. In fact, many folks have been asking, “Who the heck are these guys?”

Originally from Crystal City, MO, Torrey and his band have played throughout the Festus and Jefferson County area. But it wasn’t until their jaw-dropping debut at the 2017 Big Muddy, that the river city really took notice.

Working a funky blues groove with a soul-induced cadence, their October IBC appearance at Kirkwood Station Brewery dripped with gospel fervor. So much so, they won the honour of representing St. Louis in Memphis.

*Can't Knock the Hustle* is the group’s very first release and this catchy five-song EP showcases 21 minutes of their edgy, yet soulful brand of funkified blues.

The leadoff – “If It Ain’t Funky” sets the CD’s tone. The horns of Charlie Cerpa, Reggie Morrow and Bryan Coughlin spark a slinky groove. Shaped with Sly and The Family Stone like harmonies, Torrey and his other core singer, soulstress Teec’a Easby, set an approach reminiscent of an early Ike & Tina Turner.

The Southside Hustle’s songs like “Becky” and “Playa” bring a new-skool flavor filled with hip-hop spice. Casey’s lyricism flows easily with a rapping beat, very reminiscent of Johnny “Guitar” Watson’s early 70’s foray of funk blues.

“Becky” is a sexy, funk-dance throw down, while “Playa” starts with some sweet keyboards offering a true player’s lament: “Playin’s all I know to do,” sings Casey to a jilted lover’s dad after leaving her all alone at the altar.

The fourth track, “Gold Digga”, follows a similar theme, but this time in reverse. Sparked by some excellent sax, Time Murphy’s sympathetic keys, and Easby’s roaming background vocals, Casey sings without defense, “And now it’s Saturday night, and look who’s come back in my life.”

With all the hustling though, the final song, “Guitar in My Bed,” brings it all back home. Cranking some smoking lowdown guitar, Casey brings it with BB King like passion. True to the roots of the blues, and the CD’s full theme, a full day of hustling has made the bedroom lonely, except for the comfort of his guitar.

It’s been a true joy to see the sudden emergence of Torrey Casey and The Southside Hustle. Thanks to the St. Louis Blues Society and such ongoing projects like The Big Muddy, the local IBC, and their yearly CD compilations, one wonders if St. Louis would’ve ever had a chance to hear the likes of the Southside Hustle. My thoughts are that it would’ve happened (the music is just too good), but the opened opportunities have set a true bar for greater exposure.

*Can't Knock the Hustle* is a fantastic starting point for this energetic and funky young blues band. Torrey Casey has some great lyrical skills and classy guitar chops. Combined with Teec’a Easby’s soulful pipes, they’ll be a musical force to be reckoned with in Memphis. Check out this wonderful debut CD. It’s well worth repeated listening. 🎵

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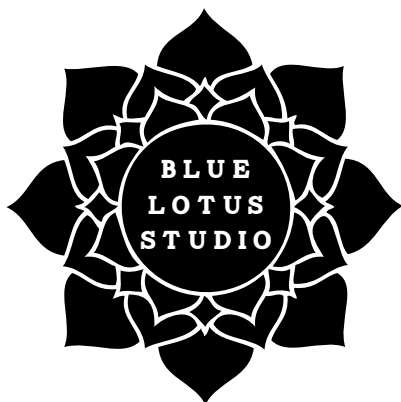


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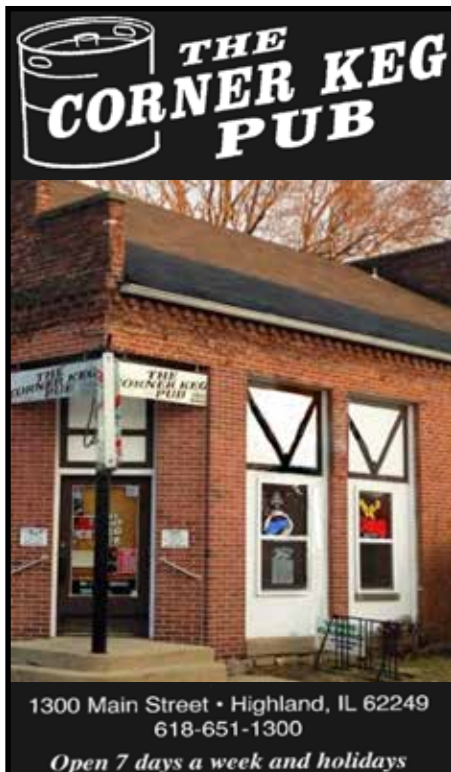


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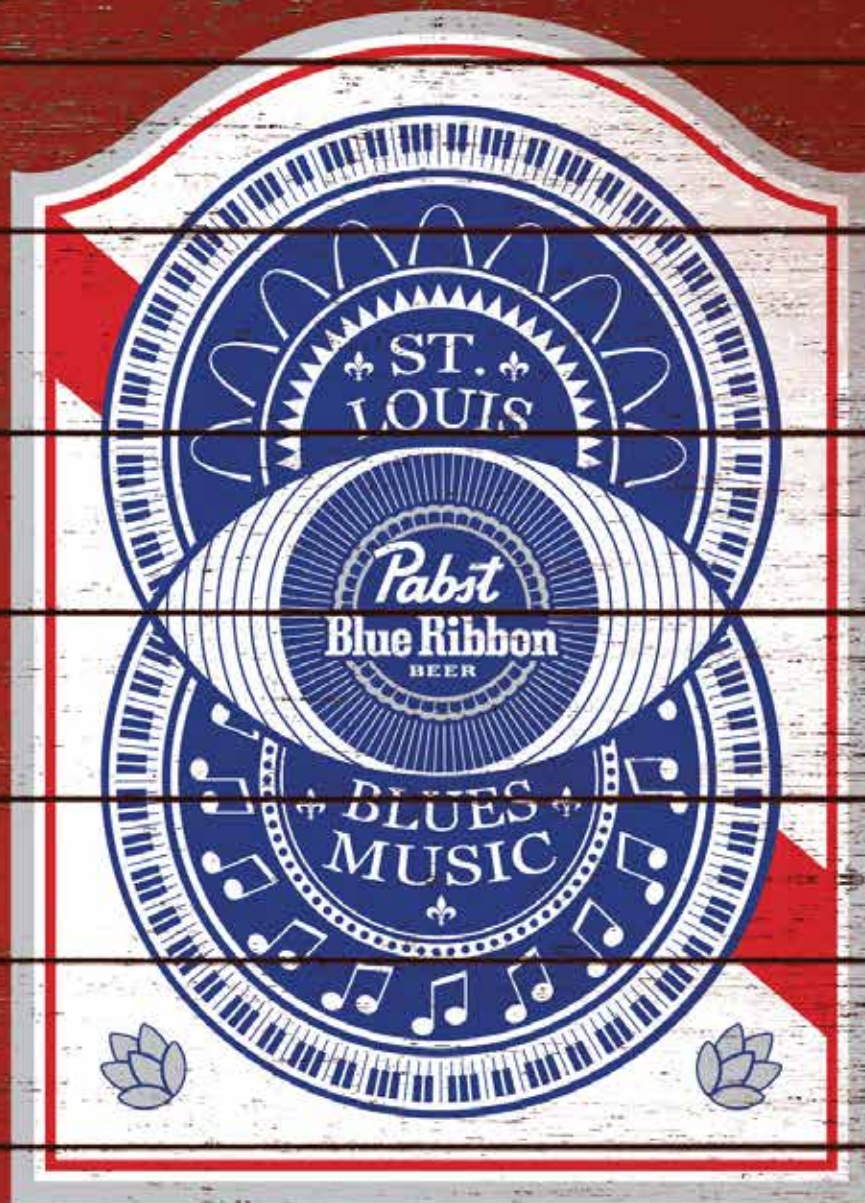
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