

# BLUES NEWS



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CBS OFFICERS AND  
BOARD ELECTIONS

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November 13th, 2017

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Do you have an idea for an article?—email Elaine  
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By Bob  
Schnuck

# OCTOBER JAM

## ANTHONY LOVANO'S SUPERNATURAL BAND AT THE MUSIC BOX SUPPER CLUB



### Anthony Lovano on Drums, Tim Matson on Guitar, Art Jenson on Bass and Reginald Redd on Sax

Cleveland native and fine drummer, Anthony Lovano, has been blessed with a wonderful family background beginning with his dad , Tony "Big T " Tony Lovano, who he played with right up until his passing in early 1986, and his brother, national recording jazz saxophone artist Joe Lovano. Anthony has been a Blues Society member since the beginning. His current band, Supernatural, and other outfits he plays with, feature some of the top players in the area. He also has

been hosting jams of his own all around town, and for the past three years at Coaches Place every Tuesday. His dad was a big influence, where he gained exposure to John Coltrane, Miles Davis, Elvin Jones, McCoy Tyner, Stanley Turrentine, and Wayne Shorter at a young age. All this led to his current love for BE BOP JAZZ. Here locally, he points out his guitarist Tim Matson is "his guy" on guitar. Anthony feels" he is blessed to play music" and it is " his true love". What does he look for when playing and jamming? "A great groove!". Currently he has been digging on the music of Robin Ford. Check it out. Anthony points out that you have to be a certain kind of person to host a Jam Session. He points out that you must be organized,





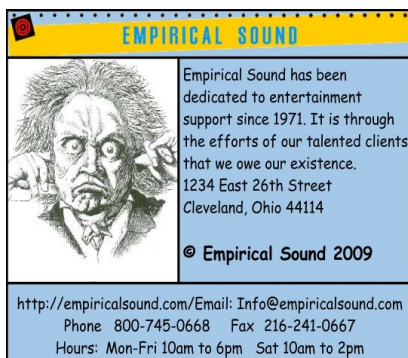
make sure all equipment is there and working, and most importantly try to match the various players that want to participate in the jam. He points out that alot of the jammers don't have gigs or bands, "they just want to play with others"....and, of course, "have fun"! He pointed out that "sharing and playing with others is what music is all about"!!! Semi-retired, and a Taurus, music keeps him pretty busy, although he has his own mechanical, business, likes to tinker with cars occasionally, and has a daughter that just became an RN!..... We don't know if he does, but we have a feeling that he probably takes his "sticks" with him most everywhere he goes!! Get out and see Anthony and his bands to see and hear some of the best "progressive" blues and jazz around. [Anthonylovano.com](http://Anthonylovano.com)



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### Upcoming Jams

11/13/2017	Sand Trap	Blue Collar Band
12/11/2017	Paradise On Babbitt	Ms. Butterscotch & The Bonafide Blues Band
1/06/2017	Beachland Tavern	Blues Chronicles
2/12/18	Smedley's	Nightwalkers

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## TITLE TEXTBECOME A

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Here's How.

If you would like to volunteer for any of the CBS committees or contribute articles to the CBS Newsletter, contact your CBS Board members at

**info@clevblues.org**

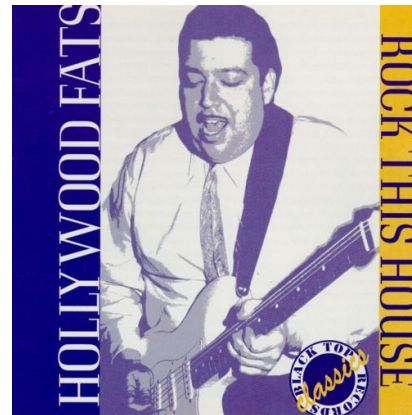


# Blues You Should Know

by  
Bob Frank

## HOLLYWOOD FATS

When I joined the Blue Lunch band as their guitarist in 1995, Pete London, the band's harp player and leader, told me that he wanted to add elements of the West-Coast blues sound to the repertoire, which meant my learning to play in the "West-Coast Guitar Style". I was familiar with the progenitors of the style: T-Bone Walker, Pee Wee Crayton, Lowell Fulson and others who followed the Great Migration pattern that sent African-Americans from East Texas and Oklahoma via the T-99 highway to California, but because of my twenty or so year hiatus from the blues to play bluegrass music, I was unfamiliar with some of the newer guitarists who had recently made their mark playing in the West Coast style.



I took home a cd Pete gave me to listen to by someone I'd never heard of; *Rock This House* by The Hollywood Fats Band. The cd itself was a rather budget looking affair with a crudely designed two-color cover featuring one grainy photo of a stout fellow with a pencil-thin moustache wearing a white shirt and tie, and playing a white Fender Stratocaster. The cover wasn't much but the music inside was something else. Fats played every riff as if it were going to be his first and last. His authority, authenticity, power, and technique were impeccable. Stylistically, he seemed to move effortlessly between T-Bone styled swing and hard Chicago blues. Fats didn't sing at all; that was left to the band's harmonica player, Al Blake, but the band clearly existed to showcase his guitar playing. The rest of the band was top-notch as well: Fred Kaplan on piano, Larry Taylor on upright bass, and Richard Inness on drums.

How could I have missed this guy? Pete explained to me Fat's importance and influence in the West Coast blues world and said that he even belonged to an informal group that tape-swapped live

recordings of Fats with his own band and others. I was familiar with the two other preeminent guitarists of that style during that era, Stevie Ray Vaughan and Duke Robillard, whom I'd seen with Roomful of Blues many times during my college years in Boston, but Fats was something else entirely. Apparently his career pretty much took place during my years away from blues in the bluegrass world because by the end of 1986, he was dead at age 32.

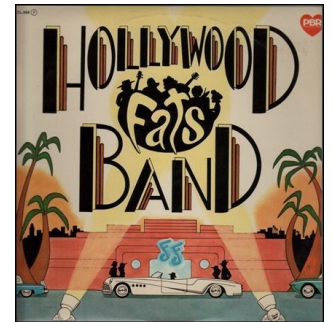


Michael Leonard Mann was born in Los Angeles in 1954 to a well-to-do Jewish family. The elder Mann was a physician and Michael grew up in the wealthy Los Angeles suburb of Brentwood, not far from where O.J. Simpson committed his infamous deed. I haven't been able to find out much about Fats's early life, but I'm surmising that he was a



somewhat reclusive, lonely, overweight child. We do know that after his mother bought him his first guitar at age ten, young Michael devoted his time exclusively to learning to play, to the exclusion of pretty much everything else. His obsession with the guitar was so complete that his parents allowed him to drop out of school after the eighth grade so that he could devote himself to practicing. This seems highly incongruous for Jewish parents; clearly there must have been other issues involved. Both of Michael's siblings went on to earn degrees in medicine and law.

From about age twelve until he was old enough to drive, Michael's mother or father would drive him and his guitar, night after night, into the black areas of Los Angeles to listen to, and hopefully sit in with whichever blues artists were playing in clubs around town. He met Shaky Jake, the Chicago harp player and first cousin of Magic Sam, who helped him secure his first gig with the 400 pound singer Big Sadie. Michael, barely a teenager, was now a professional musician.



He also began hanging around Ed Pearl's Ash Grove music club where he met and was befriended by Freddy King, Magic Sam, and Buddy Guy, who affectionately nicknamed him "Hollywood Fats."

Fats managed to parlay these acquaintances into an amazing six-year stretch of road gigs; first with J.B. Hutto, then John Lee Hooker, Muddy Waters (he shared the guitar chores with Bob Margolin), Albert King, Jimmy Witherspoon, and others. With Albert King, Fats can be seen conspicuously standing behind his boss in the 1976 film *Wattstax*. Legend has it that he was fired shortly after by King, who felt that Fats was trying to upstage him.



Returning to Los Angeles in 1976, Fats hooked up with harp player Al Blake to form a blues duo, and after adding Kaplan, Inness and Taylor, they then formed the Hollywood Fats band. The aforementioned cd represents the only recordings Fats made with his own band and under his own



name. The tracks were recorded at Ted Brinson's studio in a black section of LA. Brinson, who had mostly worked with soul and r&b artists, had recently remodeled his studio with brand-new state-of-the-art equipment. Brinson was nonplussed when the band demanded his pull out his old, three-track recorder for their sessions. They wanted the old-time sound. All tracks were done live with no overdubs.

The Hollywood Fats band was not particularly successful in the clubs, but was the in-demand group for backing touring artists who didn't carry their own bands. The group played dozens of clubs, concerts and festivals with the likes of Big Joe Turner, Roy Brown, Eddie "Cleanhead" Vinson, Lloyd Glenn, Percy Mayfield, Johnny Shines, Louis Myers, Otis Rush, Albert Collins, Joe Willie Wilkins,

Freddie Robinson, Finis Tasby, Roy Brown, and Lightnin' Hopkins. Largely because of Fats' extraordinary versatility, the band was chameleon-like in their ability to adapt to whomever's style they were playing with.

Fats' next move, along with Taylor, was to join the recently re-vamped Canned Heat with whom he played the Tenth Anniversary Woodstock festival in 1979. They stayed until the death of Bob Hite, Canned Heat's front man, lead singer and harp player.

From here on it's pretty close to impossible to come up with a time-line for Fats. He played and recorded in bands with pretty much everyone including extended stints with James Harman, William Clarke, and Rod Piazza. By the early 1980's the *Blues Brothers* inspired blues boom was on full force in California and Fats was gigging continuously in the clubs in Long Beach, Laguna Beach, Hermosa Beach and elsewhere around Los Angeles. Fats was in demand and everyone wanted him. Even Stevie Ray Vaughan took time out from one of his West Coast tours to track Fats down at a club where he later exclaimed, "My jaw dropped".

Fats was comfortable playing in any style of blues, both electric and acoustic. There didn't seem to be any type of blues he couldn't play effectively and convincingly. In the early '80s, Chicago writer/producer/composer Terry Abrahamson was making a series of television commercials for Levis jeans using blues artists in the ads along with their music as a backdrop. For one spot he hired John Lee Hooker to sing and play a specific riff he was known for. When he played the recorded riff to Hooker and asked him to re-create it, Hooker's response was, "I can't play that no 'mo". No amount of coaxing would get Hooker to try the riff, so someone in the studio suggested they contact Hollywood Fats. Fats showed up, and without saying a word, played the part perfectly in one take.



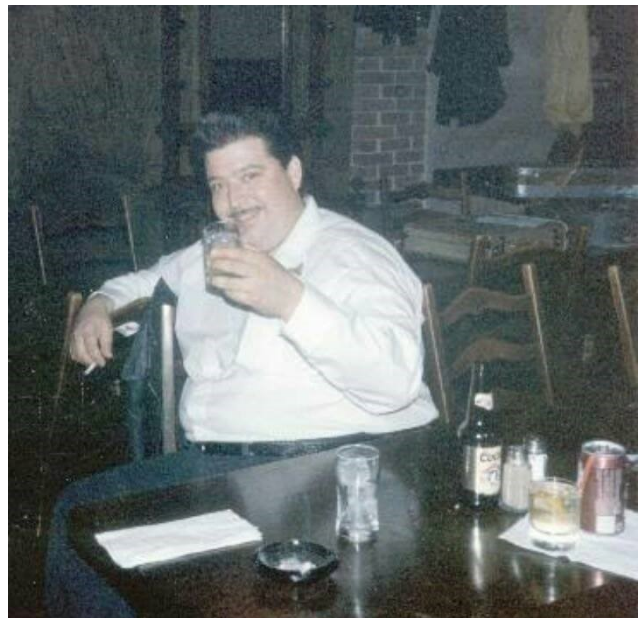
Also around this time, Fats also began playing with a hair/thrash/metal band called Dino's Revenge. There is some interesting YouTube video of the band with Fats, while looking somewhat out-of-place, playing furious heavy-metal guitar and thrashing like the best you ever heard, on the same red Gibson ES-335 he played in blues bands.

He joined the Paladins for a time, then left to take Dave Alvin's place in the Blasters. Phil Alvin's comment at the time was, "I feel like I've lost the world's best songwriter but gained the world's best guitarist". Whether or not the Blasters was the best vehicle for Fats' playing is open to debate. Unlike with his own band, or with Harman or Clarke, where he would stretch out with five or ten minute solos featuring dozens of choruses of unrepeatable ideas; in the Blasters, Fats was limited to short, single chorus breaks that suited their punk-influenced format. In his obituary written four days after Fats' death, LA Times writer Randy Lewis wrote, "seeing Fats' guitar work squeezed into the Blasters' short roots rock songs was like watching a Rolls-Royce being used to make beer runs to the corner 7-Eleven."

In late 1986 Fats reformed the Hollywood Fats band for a show at an upscale music showcase room in Los Angeles called the Music Machine. The show was well attended and the audience included many celebrities and much of LA's music elite. People who were there remember it as being one of Fats' best shows and that he seemed in superb form. Following the show Fats left with friends to celebrate. At some point in the evening, his friends noticed that he wasn't moving, then, that he wasn't breathing. Fats had taken to using heroin and that night he took too much. Sometime in the early morning hours of December 8, 1986, Hollywood Fats, aged 32, died of a heroin induced heart attack.

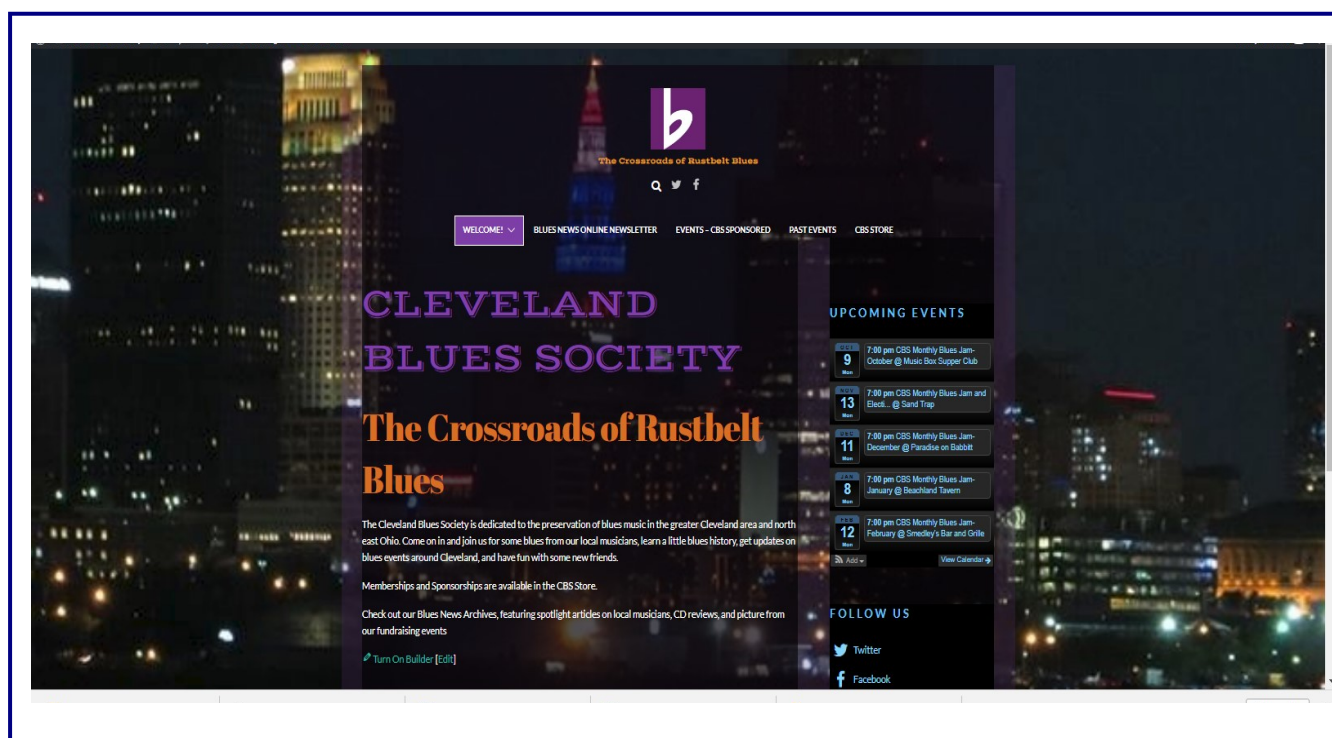
Fats' legacy, particularly among California guitarists, is huge. Players who knew and worked with him like Jr. Watson, Kid Ramos, Alec Schultz and Dave Gonzales are quick to cite the influence he had on them and the creative inspiration he gave them. His recordings and reputation also inspired a new generation of players that includes Nick Curran, Rick Holmstrom, Teddy Morgan, Kirk Fletcher and Laura Chavez. Fats never married and had no children, but he left huge footprints to follow.

With the exception of the one album of songs recorded in 1976, Fats' recorded legacy is spotty and diverse, but it's out there, on recordings by Canned Heat, the Paladins, William Clarke, James Harman and others. In a way, his real recorded legacy is on YouTube where you can see videos of his phenomenal playing with Harmon and Clark, and also hear audio only videos with Roy Brown and Smokey Wilson. Check him out. Your jaw will drop too.



# THE CROSSROADS OF RUSTBELT BLUES

“CLEVELANDBLUES.ORG” GETS AN UPDATE



The Cleveland Blues Society’s new website is ready to launch. Updated features include a move to a WordPress format, integrated calendar options, integrations with Facebook and Twitter to catch the latest feeds from social media, mobile friendly layout that is responsive

to phones and tablets, an easy to read “e-magazine” for online viewing of the monthly newsletter, quick link to the CBS Store, all in a sleek and very cool new look.

Stay tuned for even more great content and updates to the website.