

BLUES NEWS



The CBS Board would like to thank everyone who attended our Fall picnic on Sunday, September 24th at Camp Forbes. Blues DeVille entertained us with an awesome performance for CBS members and many new friends.

There was plenty of food and fellowship. What a great way to spend a Sunday then with your Blues Friends! Each attendee received a reusable CBS shopping tote.

We also held our annual meeting outlining all the accomplishments that the current board has completed or in the process of completing.

CBS also gave Blues DeVille their award for winning the CBS Members Blues Choice Award for

the Best Group Category.

Elaine DeStephano and Diane Mocniak, the committee chairpersons of the picnic, would like to thank everyone for volunteering, the musicians, members and new friends who came to hear some great Blues on a Sunday.

Thank you to all our volunteers, Bill Koteles, Anthony Lovano, John Adams, Susanne Mayer, Robert Dickow, Becky Francen, Mike Kormos, Michael Henighan, Penny Holycross, Linda Calkins, Rick Aquilano, Emily Murphy, Jody Turano, Gordon Mocniak and Lloyd Braun.

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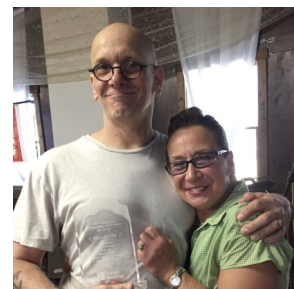
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FALL PICNIC





Blues You Should Know

by
Bob Frank

THREE LADIES I LOVE

The first blues singers to record were women, all of them. In fact, no male blues singers were to be found on record at all from 1920, when Mamie Smith recorded the very first blues record, *Crazy Blues* (backed with *You Can't Keep a Good Man Down*), until March of 1926 when Blind Lemon Jefferson went into the studio for Paramount to record *Booster Blues* and *Dry Southern Blues*.

Historical blues geek note: While it's true that Sylvester Weaver recorded *Guitar Rag* and *Guitar Blues* in 1923, these were instrumental tracks only so he was not technically a "blues singer". Also, Blind Lemon did make his first recordings in 1925 but these were gospel songs and not technically "blues".

This early period of blues recording is known as the era of "Classic Blues". Most of these recordings featured women singers accompanied by early New Orleans style jazz orchestras of varying size. Popular singers from that era included Mamie Smith, Clara Smith (no relation), Louise Hegamin (the second woman to record a blues), Ida Cox, Ethel Waters, Ma Rainey, Sara Martin, and, the most popular and truly the greatest of all: Bessie Smith (also no relation to either previously mentioned Smith). During these years blues was considered "women's music" and men were to be found only as accompanists.

These early recordings made through 1927 or so, were made un-electronically, that is to say, without a microphone, recording console, or any other means of electronic amplification. The vocalist and the accompanying musicians would sing and play into a large horn that would transfer the vibrations they produced onto a wax disc or cylinder, much the same way Thomas Edison recorded *Mary Had a Little Lamb* in 1877. To modern ears, recordings from that era sound crude and scratchy with a very narrow dynamic range, but at the time they were considered state-of-the-art, and something of a miracle.

This column is not about those early recording pioneers. I also do a radio feature *Blues You Should Know Spotlight*, an audio version of these columns, that airs on Marty "Madcat" Puljic's WJCU-FM blues show (Tuesdays 8-10PM) and frankly, I don't think I could get people to listen to 30 or 40 minutes of these early Classic Blues recordings. They are just plain hard to listen to for anyone but the most hard-core and rabid early blues fanatics.

For this column I've selected three woman blues singers from a later era, the late 1940s-early 1950s, for the simple reason that I really like them. They are three of my all-time favorites. As usual I've avoided the most well-known singers for the reason that I feel my purpose here is to "pull your coat" to artists who are deserving, but for some reason fly under the radar these days. These ladies are worth listening to and are worth checking out on-line. You can easily find their recordings on YouTube for instance. It's not heavy stuff, just fun music.

Lil Green

Lil Green's recording career was short, but produced some wonderful music and even a major hit.



Lillian Green was born in Mississippi in 1919 and moved with her parents to Chicago in 1929. As a young girl she was both attractive and talented with a high, girlish soprano that was somehow both innocent and sexy at the same time.

When still a teenager, she began working the Chicago clubs as part of guitarist Big Bill Broonzy's group. In 1939 she was approached by legendary record producer Lester Melrose, then working for Bluebird Records, who arranged for her first recording session. On May 9, 1940, backed by Bill Broonzy and his group, she recorded four songs for Bluebird, and one of them, *Romance in the Dark*, became a hit.

Subsequent sessions with the Bronzy group in 1941 produced more hits, including a song taken from a 1936 recording by the Harlem Hamfats and written by Joe McCoy, *The Weedsomaker's Dream*, and given a name change by Melrose to *Why Don't You*

Do Right. The song is a minor key “drag”, with a wonderful guitar solo by Broonzy and equally marvelous piano by Simeon Henry. Lil removed many of the more obvious dope smoking and prostitution references found in the original and turned the song into woman’s plea for her husband to get up off his lazy behind and bring home some cash. In the McCoy original, the man is telling his woman to hit the street corner and make HIM some money.



A year later the song was covered by Peggy Lee with the Benny Goodman Orchestra and in 1943 she sang it in the Hollywood film *Stagedoor Canteen*. Lee explained in a later interview:

"I was and am a fan of Lil Green, a great old blues singer, and Lil recorded it. I used to play that record over and over in my dressing room, which was next door to Benny's. Finally he said, 'You obviously like that song.' I said, 'Oh, I love it.' He said, 'Would you like me to have an arrangement made of it?' I said, 'I'd love that,' and he did."

Lee and Goodman’s recording sold well over a million copies, and was yet another, if early, example of a white “cover” eclipsing the original in sales and mainstream popularity.

Nevertheless, the success of the record enabled Lil move from the Chicago club scene to the big-band theater touring circuit. She recorded mostly with these larger groups up to the end of the 1940s, and by 1951 her career was pretty much over, due either to bad health, or, as suggested by her friend R.H. Harris of the Soul Stirrers, a prison sentence for a part in a nightclub killing. Either way, by 1954 she was dead from pneumonia, her great voice silenced at age 34.

Annie Laurie



Do an internet search on “Annie Laurie” and you’re most likely to find references to the Scottish folk song of that name and its use in the film *Tree Grows in Brooklyn*. For blues fans the name Annie Laurie belongs to the sensuously voiced singer who made records throughout the mid 1940s and ‘50s.

Not much is known of Laurie’s early life, but it’s believed she was born Ann Page (yes, just like the A&P’s house brand ketchup), in 1924 in Atlanta, Georgia. By her early twenties she was touring the Chitlin’ Circuit with various territory bands and in 1945 she made her first recording, a cover of *St. Louis Blues*, that made some noise on the R&B charts. After a move to New Orleans, she teamed up with pianist, bandleader, producer and general musical *empresario* Paul Gayten with whom she would record for the rest of the decade. Their first major hit together came in 1947 with a cover of Ella and Buddy Johnson’s *Since I Fell For You*. Ella Johnson was a good example of a mediocre singer backed by a really good band and it wasn’t hard for a superior vocalist like Annie to do a lot more with the song. New Orleans studio maven Cosimo Matassa said of Laurie’s version:

“Annie Laurie did the first really good record that I liked... [She] was just fantastic, I mean nobody will ever make another version like that.”



Following the success of *Since I Fell For You*, Gayten and Annie cut several more records that did well, including *Cuttin’ Out*, *You Ought To Know*, *I Need Your Love*, *Now That You’re Gone* and *I’ll Never Be Free*, which has subsequently been covered by Kay Starr, Ella Fitzgerald, Etta Jones, Dinah Washington, and, believe it or not, Kay Starr again in a duet with Tennessee Ernie Ford. (It’s actually a pretty great record.)

After leaving Gayten in 1952, Annie moved to Savoy Records, and then to De Luxe for whom she had her biggest hit *It Hurts to Be In Love*, a great swinging dance record that found Annie backed by a do-wop vocal group called the Students. It’s a terrific record and it’s interesting to compare it with the cover by Frankie Lymon that came out shortly after. Both records are suburb and show what first-rate singers can do with a great song.

Annie continued to tour and record and in the early 1960s did several of the early multi-artist rock & roll and r&b tours with artists like Screamin' Jay Hawkins, the Five Satins, Joe Turner, Faye Adams, Ben E. King, and Nappy Brown. She made her final recordings for the short-lived, New Orleans based Ritz Records. You might want to avoid these; Annie is wonderful as always, but the reverb-drenched production on these records is awful.

By the late 1960s Annie had become a devout member of the Jehovah's Witnesses and had given up the music business. In the 1980s blues researcher and radio host Steve Cushing tried to look her up hoping for an interview. He found her house and when she came to the door he explained who he was and that he wanted to interview her. Annie shook her head, denied being Annie Laurie, and closed the door on him. There's some irony here: a Jehovah's Witness closing the door on someone else. She's believed to have died in Titus, Florida in 2006.

Annie Laurie had an open, clear, accessible voice with a wide, steady vibrato. Her enunciation and phrasing were impeccable, and in early photos she was clearly a beautiful woman. Dinah Washington was quoted as calling Annie her favorite singer. Perhaps in a later age, she would have been a world-wide star.

Julia Lee



Julia Lee was a Kansas City girl. Born there in 1902, as a child she studied piano with Scrap Harris who himself had been a student of Scott Joplin. By the age of sixteen she was playing piano a band led by her brother George E. Lee, a veteran of WWI, who led a popular local band throughout the 1920s that at times included bassist Walter Page and saxophonist Benny Carter. George E.

Lee's band was, for a time, the main competition to Benny Moten's band, the band that eventually morphed into the Count Basie Orchestra.

In the early thirties, George had merged his band with Moten's and Julia set out on her own. She wasn't a touring performer but played a multi-year residency at the Tap Room, a popular Kansas City nightclub. It was there that Dave Dexter, a local jazz buff and journalist who had recently been hired as an A&R man for the newly formed Capitol Records, became a lifelong Julie Lee fan and promoter.

Dexter went on to great success for signing Frank Sinatra, Stan Kenton, Peggy Lee, Nat King Cole, Duke Ellington, Woody Herman and Kay Starr to Capitol and then to some notoriety later, for rejecting the Beatles.

Julia entered the studio for Capitol in 1944 to record *Come On Over To My House* with the Jay McShann's Kansas City Stompers. Julia did not play piano on this first record. On all subsequent sessions she plays all of her own piano with her group, Julia Lee and her Boy Friends. The Boy Friends would often include such Kansas City notables as Red Callender, Vic Dickenson, Red Norvo and Benny Carter.

Julia was an excellent pianist and though she could play virtually anything and recorded all types of songs, she became known for her double-entendre songs with titles like *King Size Papa*, *Don't Come Too Soon*, and *The Spinach Song (I Didn't Like It The First Time)*. These songs were considered very edgy in their day, though they seem somewhat quaint by modern standards.



Unlike Lil Green with her sexy, little-girl voice, or Annie Laurie with her powerful, clear alto, Julia's voice was deep and husky. She did not have a great deal of vocal range but made up for it with sincerity and expression.

Playing the same spot, The Tap Room, for years on end, meant that Julia developed a broad and loyal following. One of her most devoted fans was Harry Truman, himself a product of Kansas City politics, who liked her so much that he had Julia hired to play at the White House Correspondents Dinner in 1949. Truman was himself something of an accomplished piano player, and on visits to The Tap Room, would often share the piano bench with Julia and play four-hands parts with her. Another fan was Frank Duncan, star catcher and player-manager for the Negro Leagues Kansas City Monarchs. She and Duncan were even married for a time.

By 1952 Julia's recording career was over. She continued to perform around the Kansas City area until her death from a heart attack in 1958 at age 56.

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SEPTEMBER JAM

Butch Armstrong and the Armstrong Bearcat Band
at Union House



Our September CBS monthly jam was held on September 11th at the Union House with the Armstrong Bearcats. Thank you to everyone who came out to support Live Music – the musicians and the fans. You can catch Butch Armstrong and his band – to find upcoming events, visit his webpage at: www.armstrongbearcatband.com

Photos by Lisa Parsons





Upcoming Jams

10/09/2017	Music Box Supper Club	Anthony Lovano's Supernatural Band
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

CAST YOUR "NOTE"

CBS ELECTIONS ARE NOV 13TH

*Be sure to attend the CBS Jam November 13th at
The Sand Trap ,*

6824 Bunker Rd, North Royalton, OH 44133

*All CBS Members in good standing will have an opportunity
to vote for officers and board members at large for the
upcoming period.*

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PRESS RELEASE

oWOW announces veteran Cleveland musician Alan Greene as the new host of *BluesTime*.

Cleveland, OH – October 2, 2017 - oWOW, Cleveland's locally owned, operated, and programmed online Timeless Rock radio station, announced today that Cleveland blues guitarist and band leader Alan Greene is the new host of *BluesTime*, the weekly three-hour blues music program that runs from 9 pm to midnight every Saturday night.

BluesTime features the many shades of blues music by navigating the decades from the folk blues of Robert Johnson to blues legends like B.B. King, Howlin' Wolf, and Muddy Waters, and today's blues masters including Joe Bonamassa, Kristine Jackson, Robert Cray, and Gary Clark, Jr.

"*BluesTime* restored the Cleveland radio tradition of a weekly Saturday night blues music program. For many years, Clevelanders ritually listened to Michael Fitzpatrick's *Blues with Fitz* Saturday evenings on WCPN," said oWOW Chief Content Officer John Gorman. "Alan Greene is a well-known respected blues musician and band leader. He was our first and only choice to host *BluesTime*."

"We're thrilled to have Alan Greene join oWOW as the new host of *BluesTime*," adds Steve Pappas, operations manager, music director, and afternoon drive host of oWOW. His vast knowledge of the blues and experience in the music business is second-to-none. He's taking *BluesTime* to a new level!"

"Being a life-long Clevelander and full time musician, I was always keenly aware of John Gorman's behind-the-scene role in helping shape Cleveland's radio landscape during FM's heyday," Alan Green adds. "For me to have an opportunity to become part of John's team at oWOW is something of a dream for me. Blues music is at the very roots of Rock and Roll. It's my privilege to be named host of Saturday night's *BluesTime*. Thanks, oWOW!"

About Alan Greene. A veteran of the Cleveland music scene, Alan Greene was voted Best Guitarist in Northeast Ohio in the 1997 *Scene Magazine* Annual Readers Poll and the 2004 *Free Times* Readers Poll. Alan was also a member of Breathless, the reformed Humble Pie, the Innocent, and the Mr. Stress Blues Band. Greene has also performed and recorded with Michael Stanley, Donnie Iris, Trent Reznor, and Pere Ubu. Greene also co-authored "Angel Love" on Carlos Santana's *SuperNatural* Legacy Edition.

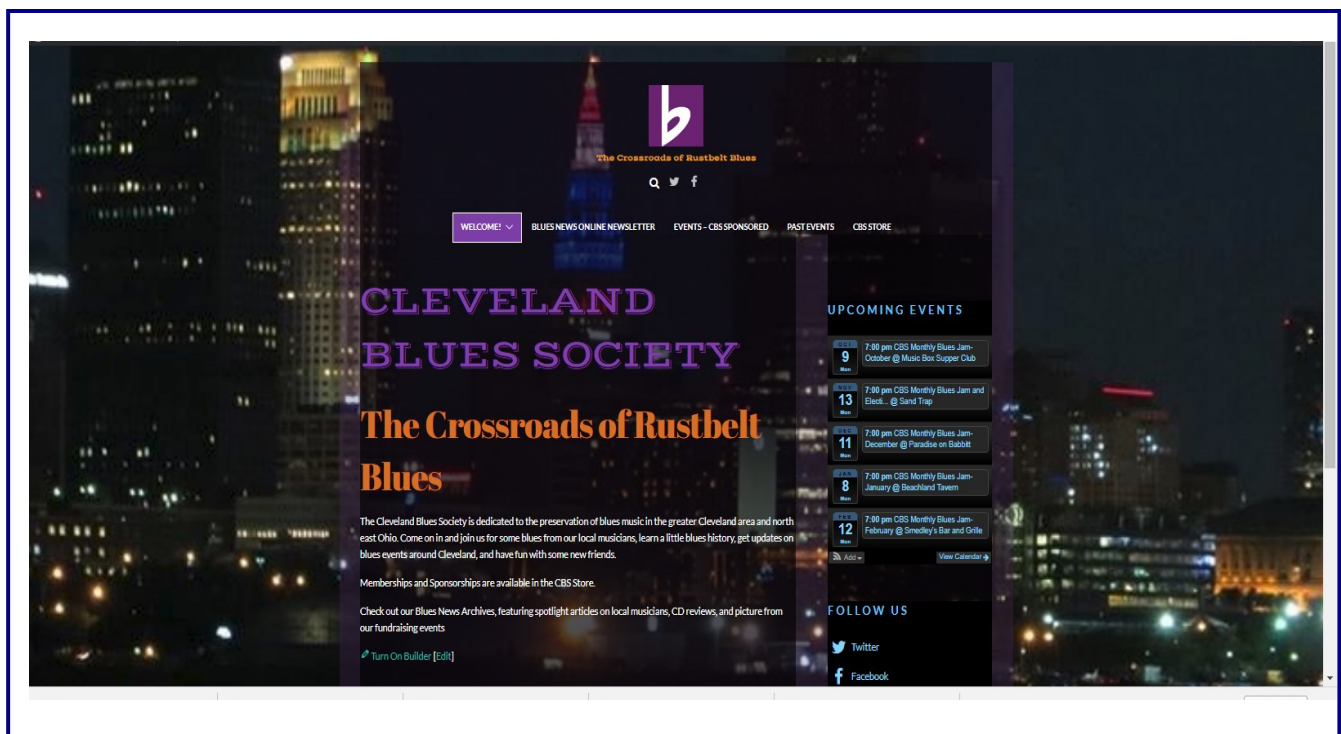
About oWOW. Now in its third year, oWOW is Northeast Ohio's online radio station. oWOW's Timeless Rock format features a diverse playlist of rock, progressive pop, reggae, rhythm and blues and singer – songwriters. oWOW is locally owned, operated, and programmed. oWOW is available worldwide online at oWOWnow.com and through its custom smartphone, tablet, and connected vehicle apps. oWOW is also available on all Amazon Alexa, Google Home, and other brand smart speakers. oWOW is also available through the TuneIn portal app for Roku, Sonos, and Blackberry users.

MORE FALL PICNIC PICS



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.