



The Philadelphia Blues Society's
Quarterly Newsletter
October to December
2026

Intown Innerview with Maria Muldaur



Language of the Blues by Debra Devi

Blues Book Club Corner by Kathryn Gregoire

CD Reviews by Phillip Scott

In Memoriam

Upcoming Blues Concerts at our home-base venue, Jamey's House of Music

...and much more!

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Letter From The Editor:

Summer is officially over and cooler months are ahead as we roll into the Fall season. The Philadelphia Blues Society has some great events coming up from October to December.

Beginning in October, with our 1st Thursday presents showcase on Thursday, October 1st, we feature the legendary, American folk and blues singer-songwriter, **Maria Muldaur**, along with the virtuoso keyboardist, **Bruce Katz**, for an evening of bawdy Blues and syncopated Jazz.

Also, in October the Philadelphia Blues Society returns to Temple University Ambler Campus Theatre, in Ambler, PA, for our **2nd Annual Philadelphia Blues Festival on Saturday, October 10th from 12pm to 7pm**. Gates open at 11:30am! This year's line-up includes **Sugar Ray & The Bluetones, Steve Guyger & The Excello's, Kelli Baker Band, One Dime Band, Debra Devi Band**, and the **Wendy Logan Band**. This year we'll have an acoustic stage in our beer garden featuring **Garry Cogdell**.

November kicks-off with something new - our 1st Thursday presents the **"Juke Joint"** on Thursday, November 5th at Jamey's House of Music, 32 S. Lansdowne Avenue in Lansdowne, PA. The **"Juke Joint"** will feature a night of friendly competition. Musicians will have the opportunity to sign up in advance, and perform during the evening. This is meant to have the feel of a **Juke Joint/Jam setting**. So come ready to play, bring your energy, and get the crowd involved!

And there's something on the line...



\$100 CASH PRIZE!

The winner will be selected through a **combination of audience voting and a judging panel**, so musicians will have a chance to impress both the crowd and our judges.

The evening will also feature **10% off brisket and ribs**, drink specials, 50/50 Raffle and plenty of great blues!



Interested in Participating in our "Juke Joint"?

If you or your band would like a chance to perform, **please e-mail** Khadijah Renee at: reneequena@aol.com for more information.

Space will be limited, so we encourage interested musicians to sign up early!

This is something new for PBS, and we'd love to have our member musicians and Philadelphia-area musicians help us turn the "Juke Joint" into a great night of **blues music, friendly competition, food, and community**.



Our Philadelphia Blues Society Holiday Party takes place on Saturday, December 12th, from 8pm to 10p, and will feature the **James "JB" Barnes Band** and **The John Brennan Blues Band**. Tickets are \$25 in advance/\$30 at the door. To get your tickets please visit www.jameyhouseofmusic.com or www.philadelphiabluessociety.org.

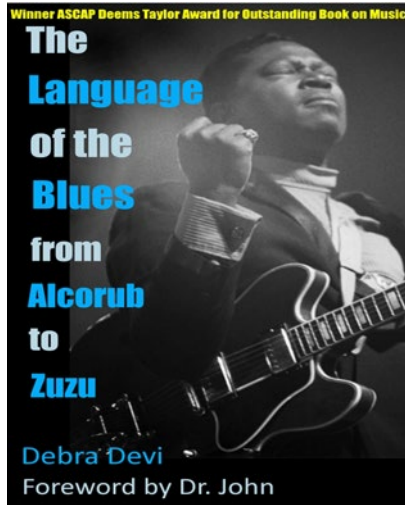
Remember, all Philadelphia Blues Society members get 10% off all Philadelphia Blues Society events such as the Philadelphia Blues Society 1st Thursdays at Jamey's House of Music as well as our Philadelphia Blues Society Holiday Party.

On behalf of the Philadelphia Blues Society, I would like to say "thank you" to our sponsors, society members, volunteers, and contributors for being a part of our journey in "Preserving the Past, Building the Future" of the Blues in the Philadelphia region.

Greg Gaughan
Managing Editor

Language of the Blues

By: Debra Devi



BANJO

Enslaved members of the Kimbundu, a Bantu-speaking tribe from Angola, brought a stringed

instrument they called the mbanza to the American colonies as early as 1630. By 1781, it had caught the attention of Thomas Jefferson, who wrote: “The instrument proper to them [enslaved Africans] is the Banjar, brought from Africa, and which is the origin of the guitar, its chords being precisely the four lower chords of the guitar.”

Jefferson was likely referring to the banjar’s strings, not “chords.” The ukelele-banjo is typically tuned in the same intervals as the guitar, while the standard banjo’s four strings are tuned to the same intervals as a violin.

African languages are complex and interwoven. Bantu, for example, is not a single language; it is a group of languages held together by a common core language called Luba-Kasai that contains forty-seven percent of over 500 terms common to all

the Bantu languages. The word mbanza, therefore, is strictly speaking a Bantu-Kimbundu word. In the colonies, mbanza became banza, banjar, bangie, and finally banjo.

The slaves made their banjos from gourds, wood, and tanned skins and strung them with hemp or gut strings. Until the 1800s the banjo was considered a strictly African instrument by Southern whites who, like Jefferson, had observed their slaves playing it at dances.

In the 1830s, however, white minstrel performers began using it in their blackface acts. At first these acts were relatively straightforward imitations by Southern whites of the songs and dances they had seen, and sometimes participated in, back home, but in the years leading up to the Civil War (which began in 1861), the caricatures became increasingly vicious.

The minstrels’ mocking of African songs and dances brought the banjo to the attention of the nation, but prompted many African Americans to abandon the instrument, leaving it for Southern whites to use in bluegrass and country music.

The banjo was introduced to Europe when the Virginia Minstrels toured England, Ireland, and France in 1843, 1844, and 1845. Their leader, an American of Irish descent named Joel Walker Sweeney, has been widely credited with adding a droning fifth string, called the “chanterelle,” to the banjo. Paintings dating before Sweeney’s birth in Virginia in 1810, however, show the

fifth string on plantation banjos, which makes sense given that droning strings had been used for centuries on African and Indian instruments, such as the Senegambian akonting, with its short drone string, and the Indian tanpura (or tempura).

Banjos were fretless until 1878, when Henry Dobson of New York State created a fretted model to improve intonation. Banjos were plucked with the fingers until the invention of steel strings at the turn of the century enabled players to experiment with metal and ivory picks. Some players began removing the fifth drone string to make fast picking easier.

Modern bluegrass banjo players tend to fingerpick using metal picks worn on the thumb, index, and middle fingers. Old-time players have retained the African American style of picking, called “frailing,” in which the index finger brushes the fretted strings on the downbeat and the thumb picks the drone string on the upbeat.

During the swing era, the Duke Ellington band was the first to drop the banjo for the guitar. Other swing bands soon followed suit, and in response guitar companies developed the tenor guitar- a guitar tuned like a banjo- for working banjo players who needed to switch but didn’t want to learn a new tuning.

BARRELHOUSE

A barrelhouse is a bar where whiskey is served straight from the barrel. Add a piano

and you’ve got a party. Rural South barrelhouses were rough wooden shacks where African American laborers gathered to drink and dance at the edge of small towns and levee camps. The up-tempo piano blues played in these establishments came to be called barrelhouse, as well, as in “I want to hear some barrelhouse tonight.”

Barrelhouse piano playing was basically the blues sped up for dancing. It substituted a different percussive instrument- the piano- for the drums that had been outlawed during slavery. Like the African drummer who drives the dancers moving in front of him and is in turn inspired by them to play harder and faster, the barrelhouse piano got the bar swinging.

As Texas barrelhouse piano player Robert Shaw explained: "When you listen to what I’m playing, you got to see in your mind all them gals out there swinging their butts and getting the mens excited. Otherwise, you ain’t got this music rightly understood. I could sit there and throw my hands down and make them gals do anything. I told them when to shake it and when to hold it back. That’s what this music is for."

This raw, high-spirited playing began to take shape as boogie-woogie- a strident, uninhibited, and forcefully rhythmic new American music.

Songs:

“Barrel House Blues”- Lovie Austin, performed by Ma Rainey (Gertrude Pridgett Rainey)

"Change My Luck Blues"- Blind Lemon
Jefferson (Lemon Jefferson)

"I Feel So Good"- Big Bill Broonzy (Willie
Lee Conley Broonzy)

"Traveling Riverside Blues"- Robert Johnson

BAYOU

The word "bayou" comes from the Choctaw bayuk, which French settlers in Louisiana appropriated as bayouque. It describes the brackish inlets and outlets from the Gulf of Mexico that meander sluggishly through the cypress swamps of the Louisiana lowlands.

The people living in the rural wetlands communities of Louisiana use the bayous like roads. "The road in front of my house ends at the swamp," noted blues guitarist Tab Benoit, who grew up in the boggy bayou of Houma, Louisiana, "and you go some more in a boat and reach the Gulf."

Growing up, Benoit traveled north to Baton Rouge, where he heard the "swamp blues" of Slim Harpo, Lightnin' Slim, and Lazy Lester. Their songs reflect the easygoing quality of bayou life.

Songs:

"Bayou Boogie"- Tab Benoit

"Bayou Drive"- Clifton Chenier

BELLY FIDDLE

The "belly fiddle" was slang for the guitar from the early 1900s. It was especially popular during the swing era (1930s-1940s), when it seemed every instrument in the band had a corny name- the clarinet was a

"licorice stick," the drums were "a suitcase," and the trombone was a "slush pump."

BISCUIT

The blues is loaded with culinary references to sex- this is a form of signifying, or the use of innuendo and doubletalk that is fully understood only by members of one's community. A delicate flaky biscuit dripping with butter and honey, therefore, becomes a metaphor for a delectable young woman, and her skilled lover is called a biscuit roller.

The biscuit roller can be male or female, as evidenced by Robert Johnson's lyric from "If I Had Possession Over Judgment Day":

I rolled and I tumbled and I cried the whole
night long
Boy I woke up this morning, my biscuit
roller gone

In the 1930s and 1940s the word biscuit was also sometimes used to refer to a human skull. The King Biscuit Blues Festival in Helena, Arkansas, by the way, has nothing to do with any of these meanings for biscuit. It's named after the King Biscuit Flour Company, which used to sponsor the famous King Biscuit Time radio program.

Songs:

"Biscuit Roller Blues"- Kokomo Arnold
(James Arnold)

"If I Had Possession Over Judgment Day"-
Robert Johnson

"Big Mama's Door"- Alvin Youngblood Hart

Intown Innerview

with Maria Muldaur

by: Greg Gaughan

1. What drew you to singing, and especially singing folk and blues?



When I was a very young girl, about 4 years old, my mom's younger sister, my aunt Katie,

introduced me to what she called "Cowboy Music"..... which was very early Country & Western music. This was in the mid-1940s! ~ I fell in love with all of it, especially Hank Williams & Kitty Wells & at age 5, I was singing a lot of their songs while my aunt played the piano!

In my pre-teen & early teen years, I tuned into early R&B stations at the very end of the radio dial, & fell in love with Muddy Waters & Little Walter, Ruth Brown, Laverne Baker, Chuck Willis, Little Richard, Fats Domino, etc..... Their music was the precursor of what became known as Rock & Roll. I loved it all & had an a cappella girls' Doo Wop group named the Cashmeres in high school.

2. What was it like growing up in Greenwich Village in the 1940's and 1950's and living in Greenwich Village during the 1960's and being part of the American Folk Revival?

I was very lucky to be born & raised in Greenwich Village, in lower Manhattan, which had been a mecca for all kinds of artists, sculptors, poets, writers, musicians & all kinds of free thinkers & free spirits since the early 1900s, so I grew up in a very culturally rich & liberal atmosphere!~By the late 1950s Greenwich Village was simply the epicenter of All Things Hip!~The Beatnik scene was flourishing & the Folk Music scene was just emerging~ it was a time when lots of people from the urban North were discovering & exploring all kinds of American roots music, old-time Appalachian music, bluegrass, blues, gospel music, most of which emanated from the rural South, as well as a faction of the folk scene that primarily focused on contemporarily written songs protesting various social issues & problems of the day!.... known as "protest songs"!

3. Tell our readers about your early career in Greenwich Village as a performer with John Sebastian and David Grisman?

Starting in early 1960s I became enamored of Appalachian fiddle music and started learning to play the fiddle~ I briefly sang lead in a Bluegrass quartet called "Maria & the Washington Square Ramblers", which featured a brilliant young mandolin player named David Grisman.

About a year later David Grisman & John Sebastian formed The Even Dozen Jug Band with a bunch of other young musicians.

The Classic Blues Queen, Victoria Spivey, who had started her own record label, Spivey Records, signed them to her label

and told them they needed "some sex appeal" in the band and suggested they invite me to join their band, which I did! ~She took me under her wing & mentored me on how to sing & perform the Blues. She believed in me way before I believed in myself, & in gratitude for all her support & encouragement, I recently recorded a tribute album (my 44th!) to her called One Hour Mama, the Blues of Victoria Spivey, which was nominated for a Grammy & also for a Blues Music Award!

4. You joined Jim Kweskin & The Jug



Band in the 1960's as a featured singer & fiddle

player. How long had you been playing the fiddle when you joined the band, and do you still play the fiddle today?

When I joined Jim Kweskin & the Jug Band in 1964, I had been playing the fiddle for about 3 1/2 years.

During the first part of my solo career my fiddle playing kind of went by the wayside, but about 20 years ago, my old friend Bob Dylan urged me to take it up again, saying "People need to hear that rustic way you play"! ~ I said "Rusty is more like it!", but with his encouragement, I did start playing again and love to play old-time fiddle with friends.

5. Do you remember performing at The Fenway Music Theatre in Boston in the early 1970's? Who were you performing with?

Sorry, but after 50 years I can't remember every single gig I ever played, and don't have a clear memory of that particular gig!

6. I understand you play guitar, too. What is your favorite brand of guitar to play, and why?

I have a lovely hybrid Martin/Washburn acoustic guitar, but my guitar playing is so rudimentary, it's really not worth mentioning here!

7. When did you decide to move to California, and why?

In 1973 when Warner Bros. gave me the opportunity to record my first solo album, I came out to California and lived in LA while recording that album, I went back to Woodstock, NY where I owned a home, but I never was very fond of the winters there; so decided to move to California, & eventually settled in Northern California in the San Francisco Bay Area.

8. What was it like being a backing vocalist and touring with The Jerry Garcia Band in the late 1970's?

Singing harmony with Jerry Garcia & Donna Godchaux in the Jerry Garcia Band was quite a unique experience!



John Kahn, my boyfriend, played bass, & Elvis Presley's drummer, Ron Tutt, played

drums, & it was an amazingly Soulful band! I have great memories of that experience!

9. In the early 1980's, you released the live gospel album, "Gospel Nights", which was recorded at McCabe's Guitar Shop in Santa Monica, CA, and the album, "There Is A Love". What drew you to record these two gospel albums?



In 1979, I had the profound experience of reconnecting with my Creator, & as I've always loved old school Gospel music, it was only natural to

want to express my joy & liberation by recording a couple of gospel albums!

10. I understand that your daughter Jenni is a singer-songwriter. Does she ever ask you for musical advice?

Yes! Sometimes about which tunes to sing for a particular occasion, sometimes about musicians. Music is something we have very much in common!

11. You have recorded a few children's albums throughout your career, too. What is it like recording an album for children that is different when recording an album for your adult audience?



When I was approached by the wonderful children's record label, "Music for Little People", to do an album for them,

I hadn't at all been thinking about doing a kid's album, but I decided that children deserve to hear really great music played by really fabulous accomplished musicians. So

I gathered the very best jazz players in the SF Bay Area, & recorded several albums of tunes that were originally written for grown-ups in a bygone kinder gentler era... songs that had been popular hits on the radio when I was growing up..... as opposed to corny mundane little songs written "down" towards children! Kids deserve to hear well-written songs & wonderful musicianship! As a result of that philosophy, those kids' albums were very well received and still beloved today!

12. Throughout your musical career, you have sung on many artist's albums, and collaborated with many artists on your own albums. What are some of your fondest memories recording with other artists'?

1. Recording an old Spiritual originally recorded by Mississippi Fred McDowell & his wife Annie called "It's a Blessing" in my living room with Bonnie Raitt singing & playing slide guitar

2. recording " Louisiana Love Call" as a duet with Aaron Neville (Oh heart be still!)

3. recording Bob Dylan's Well Well Well with Mavis Staples & Sonny Landreth

4. recording "Somebody Was Watching Over Me" with Mavis Staples, Ann Peebles, the Neville Brothers, Tracy Nelson, & John Cleary

5. Recording Hoagy Carmichael's "Old Rocking Chair" in duet with Hoagy Carmichael & Benny Carter & an All-Star big band

6. Recording Dolly Parton's " My Tennessee Mountain Home" with Linda Ronstadt etc. on my first solo album

13. You have recorded albums in many genres throughout your career. Why is Blues your favorite genre of music?

The Blues are just so timeless, soulful & elemental! The most direct & authentic expression of the human heart & soul!

14. You have recorded albums paying tribute to such female blues musicians as Memphis Minnie, Blue Lu Barker, and most recently Victoria Spivey. What is it about these female blues musicians and their music that you chose to pay tribute to them by recording an album of their songs?

All the early blues women that I've admired so much all my life have been great role models for me.... not just in their musical artistry, but because these women were women who liberated themselves from the social, gender, economic, sexual, racial, & religious barriers & restriction of their era decades before anyone dreamed up "Women's Liberation", & expressed themselves in a totally honest, unabashed & authentic way about all the issues that concern the human condition in a way that's so clever, funny & soulful, that their music still resonates with people 100 years after it first emerged!

15. You're doing an east coast tour in early October with pianist/keyboardist, Bruce Katz performing an intimate evening of bawdy Blues and syncopated

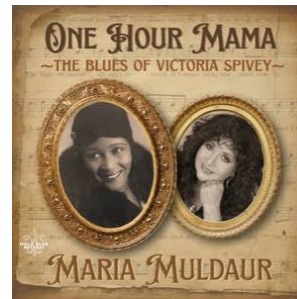
Jazz. Will you basically be doing the songs of Memphis Minnie, Blue Lu Barker and Victoria Spivey?

Yes! Songs by those artists & many more! We'll also include everybody's old " fan favorites" from my early repertoire that folks always love to hear!

16. When you are on the road touring, and you happen to have a day off between shows, what do you like to do on your day off?

I rarely have days, but when I do I love to find a place to swim laps! When I'm home, I swim laps outside every day... rain or shine!

17. Do you have any future plans to record another album, and what style of music would that album consist of?



When I recorded "One Hour Mama", I thought it might be my last recording, but I've decided to bring it all the way back

around full circle, & my next project will be a tribute to the wonderful female country artist that was my very first Inspiration when I was five years old... The Soulful Miss Kitty Wells!

Maria, thank you for taking the time to do this interview for the Philadelphia Blues Society's quarterly newsletter. On behalf of our board members, our society members, and all our readers, I wish you good health and all the best with your music career going forward.

For more information about Maria Muldaur, please visit www.mariamuldaur.com.



The poster features a blue and red color scheme. At the top left is a circular logo for 'THE PHILADELPHIA BLUES SOCIETY' with a harmonica illustration. The background shows a silhouette of the Philadelphia skyline with musical notes floating above it. On the right, a blue electric guitar is partially visible. The main title 'PHILADELPHIA BLUES FESTIVAL' is in large, bold, red and blue letters. Below it, the lineup of bands is listed. The bottom section contains event details: date, time, location, ticket price, and a call to action to get tickets now. There are also icons for live music, food trucks, craft vendors, and friends/fun. A tagline at the bottom reads 'More Than a Concert—It's a Blues Experience!' and 'Bring a Friend. Spread the Blues!'.

THE PHILADELPHIA BLUES SOCIETY

2ND ANNUAL

PHILADELPHIA BLUES FESTIVAL

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GREAT PEOPLE
A GREATER
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STEVE GUYGER & THE EXCELLOS
ONE DIME BAND
DEBRA DEVI
THE WENDY LOGAN BAND
GARRY COGDELL

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2026-philadelphia-blues-festival](https://events.ticketleap.com/tickets/philablues/2026-philadelphia-blues-festival)

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PRESERVING THE LEGACY. BUILDING THE FUTURE.

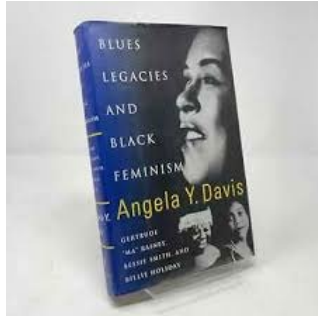
*Bring a Friend.
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Get Your Festival Tickets here:
www.philadelphiabluessociety.com/festival/

BLUES BOOK CORNER

By Kathryn Gregoire

Blues Legacies and Black Feminism by Angela Davis



Angela Davis examines the lives and music of Gertrude “Ma” Rainey, Bessie Smith and Billie Holiday in her

book *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism* (2006)

which she describes as “an inquiry into the ways their recorded performances divulge unacknowledged traditions of feminist consciousness in working-class Black communities...through the prism of the present.”

Davis first explores the work of Ma Rainey and Bessie Smith, two blues singers identified with the early or “Classic” blues of the 1920’s. Her transcription of their songs is provided in the second half of the book. Ma Rainey, born in 1886, began performing at age 14 in southern tent shows. She made 92 records, mostly in Chicago between 1923 and 1928.

Bessie Smith modeled herself after Ma Rainey. Her first record “Down Hearted Blues,” in 1923 was Columbia’s first popular hit and first race record, selling 750,000 copies. She sold millions of records in her life and was financially successful. Women dominated the blues scene in the 1920’s,

giving way to country bluesmen in the 1930’s. Unfortunately, by this time blues musicians were heavily exploited by white men who realized there was money to be made. Bessie Smith portrayed women as independent and assertive. When blues songs presented women as subservient and tolerant of violence for the sake of being loved, this was done with the indirect methods of sarcasm and irony. The women in Ma Rainey’s blues were likely to be the ones to do the abandoning and even abusing. Song themes do not include children, domestic life, husbands and marriage, all of which were irrelevant to blues women who were financially independent and free to travel without family responsibilities. Only four of the 252 songs recorded by Bessie Smith and Ma Rainey referred to marriage. Those four were recorded (but not written) by Bessie Smith at the end of her career and appear to be an attempt by John Hammond to appeal to a White audience. *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism* does a thorough job of analyzing Ma Rainey and Bessie Smith’s songs, revealing a wealth of socially significant themes ranging from discrimination in the work place to the vulnerability of marginalized populations in disasters such as flooding. The book provides a comprehensive cultural and historical overview of the era of Classic blues women. Book club members took turns leading the discussion based on a song theme they selected from the book. Members also *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism* by Angela Davis discussed the

movie "Black Bottom" about Ma Rainey and the 3-piece documentary "St. Louis Blues" about Bessie Smith. Moving into the next era, the author looks at Billie Holiday, who made her first record shortly after Bessie Smith's last recording. Davis views Billie Holiday's repertoire as being "deeply rooted in the blues tradition" by its "intimate connection between love, sexuality, individuality and freedom". She states that Holiday's approach to the lyrics "both borrowed from and transformed ways of representing black female sexuality associated with Classic blues women." Government officials considered her music to be subversive and connected to communism; they kept a close watch on her performances. The FBI forbid her from including certain songs in her stage shows, most notably "Strange Fruit," written by Abel Meeropol in protest of lynching. Holiday recorded this haunting song in 1939 which was inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame in 1978. In 1999, Time magazine named "Strange Fruit" as the "Best Song of the Century." "Strange Fruit" eventually sold over a million records, but, unfortunately, Billie Holiday lived a life of limited means and never had a best-selling recording during her lifetime. In addition to reading and discussing Blues Legacies and Black Feminism, the book club members also watched the award-winning 2021 American biographical drama film The United States vs. Billie Holiday based on the book Chasing the Dream: The First and Last Days of the War on Drugs by Johann Hari. This moving account of the personal and political

struggles of Billie Holiday, available on Hulu and DVD, brought her songs to life for the book club members. Once again, we enjoyed and learned from the renditions and research of our talented book club members. Hannah Sherman sang one of her all-time favorites "Black-Eyed Blues" by Ma Rainey. Hank Imhof sang and played several songs on his guitar from the Classic Blues era as he talked about the music. Hank Imhof writes: "I performed all songs on a 1917 Washburn style 1915 /1922 parlor style guitar which had become popular in that era through the 1920's and 1930's expressly to market to women because of a smaller size, very similar to the popularity of ukuleles in that same time period.

Throughout our book club investigation of anything associated with the history of the "Blues" we have come repeatedly upon a term "the Classic Blues". So, with a bit of reading and research I tried to show the differences between the different kinds of blues, if there were any. After all, wouldn't the Blues be the Blues no matter if it was designated "Delta Blues", Piedmont, Chicago etc. Our conclusion, although open for discussion, was that the Classic Blues exemplified by Gertrude "Ma" Rainey, Bessie Smith and Ida Cox and many others used a more complex chord and harmony structure than, for example, the Delta Blues. Usually this involved more players supporting the singer and this allowed for more complex harmonies. Many of these compositions came from WC Handy and other writers and composers of the time and were more polished and structured to

appeal to a wider range of listeners, white and black. As today, nothing is out of bounds if it sounds good and connects. I played "Spoonful" as a single chord song, as it was played by Howlin' Wolf and showed how other players added other chords, electric guitars, a bass, drums, piano, horns and background singers, all good if it sounds good and works. All the above stylings of one-chord songs will appeal to different tastes at different times. Back to the Classic Blues, in the 1920's and 1930's a vaudeville style approach to entertainment and music became very popular. Bessie Smith would anchor the show with her band but there may be comedians, magicians and other show people involved. So the music that Bessie was singing would be termed the Classic Blues. It was mainly applied to the black female singers and their music in that era. In the mid 30's it went out of style until male band leaders incorporated it into what we call Jazz and Blues which is another wonderful discussion. There are, of course, exemptions and examples to all written above but I feel this is a generalization that works. I also played Jimmy Cox's version of "Nobody Knows You When You're Down and Out" written by Bessie Smith, a song which was played by many different artists throughout all the history of the blues. I showed how the words and chords were changed by artists from Scrapper Blackwell to Eric Clapton - same song but with differences in each version. I also picked a Bessie Smith song which was written with a standard blues A, A, B lyric style. The first line is repeated which is the A, A statement

and the answer or B response is in the last line of each verse. This song didn't fit the Classic Blues format but could be adapted to that styling. If any of this is of interest, please look into joining Kathryn and the rest of the book club. It's been a wonderful trip through the Blues and the history of our country"

Radio Stations bringing you The Blues!

WXPN – 88.5FM – "The Blues Show",
Saturday - 7pm – 11pm w/Jonny
Meister

The Blues Journey w/Greg G. –
www.rtds.ca – Saturday @
9am/3pm/9pm EST, Sunday @3am
EST or any time on demand

WBJB – 90.5FM – "Box of Blues"
w/Stu Coogan, Sunday – 9pm to
12am

SiriusXM – Bluesville – 24/7

WDIY – 88.1FM – "Blues After Hours"
w/Joe Cassano, Tuesday – 11pm to
1am

RMU Radio – www.rmuradio.com -
"Damn Right I Got the Blues" w/Don
Luisi, Thursday – 4pm to 5pm

Upcoming Shows at our home-base venue, Jamey's House of Music

32 S. Lansdowne Avenue in Lansdowne, PA 290

October

Thursday, October 1st – P.B.S. 1st Thursday presents Maria Muldaur with Bruce Katz (SOLD-OUT)

Thursday, October 8th – The Claudettes

Friday, October 9th – The Outcrops

Saturday, October 10th – Closed – We'll see you at our 2nd Annual Blues Festival at Temple University Ambler Campus Theatre! **(P.B.S. Members get 10% off tickets)**

Saturday, October 17th – Dukes of Destiny

Thursday, October 22nd – Curtis Salgado w/Gypsy Joe & The Perpetrators

Friday, October 23rd – Blues People

Saturday, October 24th – The Deb Callahan Band

Saturday, October 31st – The Dave Keyes Band with Special Guest Benny Turner

November

Thursday, November 5th – P.B.S. 1st Thursday presents our new "Juke Joint" Night
(P.B.S. Members get 10% off tickets)

Friday, November 6th – Kurt Crandall

Saturday, November 7th – The Billy Price Band

Saturday, November 14th – Regina Bonelli

Friday, November 20th – The Kelli Baker Band

December

Thursday, June 4th – P.B.S. 1st Thursday presents To Be Announced
(P.B.S. Members get 10% off tickets)

Saturday, December 12th – The Philadelphia Blues Society Christmas Party Show featuring:
James "JB" Barnes Band & The John Brennan Blues Band

(P.B.S. Members get 10% off tickets)

Thursday, December 24th – Gypsy Joe & The Perpetrators

Saturday, December 26th – Clarence Spady

For more information on these shows and to purchase your tickets, please visit the Jamey's House of Music website: www.jameyshouseofmusic.com

Happenings at Jamey's House of Music

Jon Shain & Bob Beach – Friday, June 26th – Jamey's House of Music



Thursday, July 2nd – Jamey's House of Music
Philadelphia Blues Society presents Bluestime



Thursday, September 3rd – Jamey's House of Music
Philadelphia Blues Society presents Gypsy Joe & The Groove Prophets



Sunday Blues Brunch & Jam – Every Sunday at Jamey’s House of Music



The Philly Blues Kings with Clarence Spady & The Clarettes



Steve Shanahan, Philadelphia Slim, Jerry Peet, Mike Blackwell with unknown bass player



CD Reviews compiled by Greg Gaughan

John Primer and Friends - Tribute to Theresa's Lounge~

By Phillip Smith; June 27, 2026

Original source: phillycheezeblues.blogspot.com



Tribute to Theresa's Lounge from John Primer and Friends is one of those records blues fans will fall in love with from right the beginning. Founded by Theresa Needham in 1955 and located in the basement of an apartment building on South Indiana Avenue in Chicago, Illinois, Theresa's Lounge would become a hotbed for blues music and a sanctuary for blues musicians. The bar once hosted the best bluesmen in the world: Muddy Waters, Little Walter, Howlin' Wolf, Buddy Guy, Junior Wells, Otis Span, and Hound Dog Taylor just to name a few. The establishment permanently closed in 1986, and Needham passed away a few years later at the age of eighty in 1992. John Primer, who got his first gig at Theresa's Lounge in the 1970's, brings together a group of legendary blues artists who also had the experience of playing at Theresa's to join him in making this wonderful thirteen-song tribute. Along with Primer (guitar/vocals) on this recording are his friends Billy Branch (harmonica/vocals), Bob Stroger (bass), Mary Lane (vocals), Willie Buck (vocals), Carlos Johnson (guitar/vocals), John Watkins (guitar/vocals), Harmonica Hinds (harmonica), Twist Turner (drums), Tony Mangiullo (drums), and Jeff Brinkman (bass).

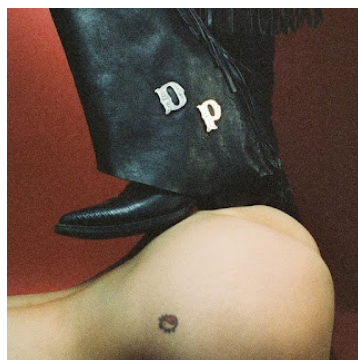
Primer gets the party started and sweeps me off my feet by rippin' it up on the Junior Wells classic "Up in Heah". Following up next is "7 Nights For 7 Years", written by Primer, this homage to Teresa's Lounge song grabs me with its intoxicating rhythm and autobiographical lyrics. With Billy Branch on harp and vocals, it's great to hear the Muddy Waters classic "Sugar Sweet" from Muddy's 1969 double album Fathers and Sons. The performance of "Cut You A-Loose" is riveting and features more searing harmonica from Billy Branch. As a song which landed at number 20 on the Billboard R&B charts in 1963 for Ricky Allen, this recording absolutely cooks. Served low and slow "Blues Survivalist", another original from Primer, hits deep and cuts to the bone as he sings about keeping the blues alive. The listening experience heats up with "Here I am Knocking on Your Door Again" the title-track from Watkins' 1985 album Here I Am. Watkins on lead vocals and guitar along with Hinds on harmonica, this one sure raises the roof.

John Primer and Friends' Tribute to Theresa's Lounge is a must-hear for blues fans. This is what the blues is all about.

Dida Pelled – I Wish You Would

By Phillip Smith; June 20, 2026

Original source: phillycheezeblues.blogspot.com



As I listen in delight to **Dida Pelled's** latest album *I Wish You Would*, I find myself absolutely swept off my feet from the sound of her voice. **Pelled**, a **Brooklyn**-based jazz prodigy and host of *The Dida Show* on **Radio Free Brooklyn**, beautifully delivers nine scrumptious tracks of classic blues songs in her heart-melting, torch-singer style. With **Pelled** on guitar and lead **vocals**, she is joined by **Sullivan Fortner** on piano/Rhodes, **Tony Scherr** on bass, and **Kenny Wollesen** on drums.

Pelled's re-imaginering of **John Lee Hooker's** "Dimples" ushers the record in a jazz-noir, be-bop fashion, and I love every bit of it. Beautifully played and gorgeously sung, "Hesitation Blues" is breathed a new and much sexier life than the versions performed by Sixties blues-rock legends **Hot Tuna** and **Janis Joplin** which I cut my teeth on. The classic 1945 **Buddy Johnson** ballad "Since I Fell For You" never sounded so good. I dig the dreamy way she sings this one and how she gently decorates it with a **George Benson**-esque style of scat-vocalizing adjoining every note she plays on guitar. Her recording of the 1930 classic "Sittin' On Top of the World" from **The Mississippi Sheiks** elevates the song to a captivating whole new level. Following next is an elegant, smooth-jazz cover of the theme for the 1942 film "Blues in the Night" which earned a nomination for an **Academy Award** for *Best Original Song*. Her performance on this is positively stunning.

Gifted with an amazing voice and a mastery of guitar, **Dida Pelled** collides the two worlds of jazz and blues, forging a tremendously remarkable listening experience with *I Wish You Would*.

www.jameyhouseofmusic.com

Classic Blues from the Smithsonian Folkways – Classic Blues

By Phillip Smith; June 13, 2026

Original source: phillycheezeblues.blogspot.com



Smithsonian Folkways Recordings has now reissued its 2003 Classic Blues compilation on vinyl, and it sounds amazing. Featuring twenty-fix blues songs recorded over a fifty-year span from 1942-1992, this double album gem delivers a diverse cross-section of the blues to the listener, covering artists such as Lead Belly, Lightnin' Hopkins, Son House, Pink Anderson, Rev. Gary Davis, and David "Honeyboy" Edwards. The blues nerd in me greatly appreciates the inclusion of a two-sided, three-page foldout with historical notes and references for each of the tracks too. There's some very interesting information to soak up in those pages.

The story-telling genius of Big Bill Broonzy shines bright on "Mule-Ridin' Blues". And to experience this on mint vinyl is a delight. I love hearing the original 1948 version of "Mercury Blues" by K.C. Douglas. I remember hearing this song for the first time in 1976 after spinning my freshly-purchased copy of Steve Miller Band's Fly Like an Eagle. Douglas' original is so raw and stripped down compared to all the other versions I have heard over the years, and that's what makes this such a standout. Big Joe Williams' "Don't Leave Me Here", a song he based on an earlier and more popular recording of his "Baby Please Don't Go" lands with an instant familiarity. The Piedmont blues of Rev. Gary Davis is delightful as ever with his take on "Candy Man", a song he claimed to have first heard at a carnival in 1905. The vintage sounds of guitarist/singer Brownie McGhee and harmonica master Sonny Terry covering "Red River Blues" with their version called "Rising Sun" is an absolute treat which was captured during a recording session in 1955. The guitar instrumental "Vastopol" from Elizabeth Cotton is a magnificent serving of acoustic blues. According to the liner notes, the song-title has roots based on the Crimean seaport Sevastopol and the open-tuning guitar term which was named after it. The album ends with a spirited duet by Lead Belly and Josh White called "Don't Lie Buddy", making for a bragging contest which surely cooks.

The deep-cuts and stories behind each song on these records are sure to pull the listener in for an engaging listen. I highly recommend Classic Blues from Smithsonian Folkways Recordings for every blues fan.

Giles Robson – Nine Blues Originals

By Phillip Smith; August 8, 2026

Original source: phillycheezblues.blogspot.com



UK harp-master Giles Robson continues to represent the blues with a legitimate authority on his latest release *Nine Blues Originals*. This is his fifth album since picking up a Blues Music Award in 2019 with the Alligator Records release *Journeys to the Heart of the Blues* he recorded with Joe Louis Walker and Bruce Katz. Containing nine timeless tracks of original unplugged blues stripped down to the bare necessities, this new record features Robson teaming up once again with acclaimed blues guitarist Manny Fizzotti for an up-close and

personal listening experience.

It's almost impossible to not be bombarded with some kind of conflict each and every day. It's better to pick and choose one's battles for a number of reasons, and "I Ain't Got a Dog in That Fight" is a worthy reminder to mind one's own business. Fizzotti's acoustic guitar performance smoothly blends with Robson's blues-soaked harmonica and vocals on this very catchy song. I love his re-working of Memphis Slim's "Boogin' and Bluesin'". Bestowed with new lyrics and a new title, the song "Town to Town (For Memphis Slim)" is a riveting homage to one of Robson's blues heroes and is a tribute to the working bluesman on the road. Contrived by Robson after looking back on his extensive tours covering over eighteen countries a year, this one is a surefire stand-out. With each listen to "Never too Clever for the Blues", I'm quickly drawn into the pre-war blues sounds of The Mississippi Sheiks and Robert Johnson. Robson delivers a warm and flawless performance as Fizzotti pours a genuine authenticity into the song on resonator guitar. Two fan-favorites are thoughtfully brought onboard from prior albums, originally recorded with a full band, one can now hear them re-recorded in a duo format: "Your Dirty Look & Your Sneaky Grin" and "The G.R. Shuffle". Closing out the album is "Blues for Joe Louis Walker", a beautiful instrumental tribute to Robson's friend and mentor. Prior to Walker's passing in 2025, Robson had organized and performed on his last tour.

Giles Robson's *Nine Blue Originals* serves up the blues in its purest form with true musicianship. It's definitely an album which blues aficionados will want to hear.

www.philadelphiabluesociety.com

Kat Riggins – Everyday Is Saturday

By Phillip Smith; August 22, 2026

Original source: phillycheezeblues.blogspot.com



It's always a pleasure to hear new music from Kat Riggins. She's one of my absolute favorites. Her new album, "Everyday is Saturday", delivers a message we should all heed: to enjoy life as if every day is Saturday. This ten-track album of all-original songs features Kat on lead vocals with, co-writer/multi-instrumentalist/backing vocalist Tim Mulberry, guitarist Erik Guess and backing vocalist Shaelyn Mulberry.

Kat kicks the record off with a blast of high-energy blues-rock on "Heads Are Gonna Roll". Her voice is fearless and soulful as Guess tears it up on guitar. The infectious rhythm of "Do My Thang" hooks me immediately for a fun and funky dance-inducing listen. The groove continues to keep me glued in, as instant favorite "I Say So" follows next. This one definitely puts a smile on my face. "Tears Like Gasoline" hits with a ferocity that cuts right to the bone. Vocally, lyrically and instrumentally, this breaking-free anthem is a powerful serving of blues. I dig the swampiness Guess brings to "Holy Water" on slide guitar and how Kat injects an immense fortitude into the song through her voice. It's an amazing listen. The album comes to a close in a strong and beautiful way with the heartfelt ballad "Live in Peace". Accompanied by the vibrato sounds of organ, rolling cymbals and soaring guitar, the song has a sincere pastoral effect.

Kat Riggins', "Everyday is Saturday", is a dynamic feel-good record which I enjoy from beginning to end. I highly recommend this one.

Brandon Santini – Live at CSPS Cedar Rapids, Iowa August 28, 2026

By Phillip Smith; August 30, 2026

Original source: phillycheezeblues.blogspot.com



It's always a damn good time when Brandon Santini is performing on stage. Friday evening Santini played CSPS in Cedar Rapids and released two tremendous sets of smoldering blues. With Santini on vocals and harmonica, his band that evening was comprised of guitarist Sean McKee, bassist Jeff Cunningham, and drummer Ron James.

Santini ignited the show, starting off with “See That Pony” from his latest album *Which Way Do We Go*. That’s such an infectious song. It’s one of my favorites. It made me happy to hear the Delta blues classic “Rollin’ & Tumblin’”. That song always delivers. I appreciate that he played “Which Way Do We Go” and “The War Ain’t Over” back-to-back. Both from his latest album as well and positioned as the first two tracks. They’re such meaningful songs and promote a worldly message of hope and love. Covers of harmonica luminaries James Cotton and Sonny Boy Williamson II kept everyone’s attention with “Cookin’ With Cotton” and “Nine Below Zero”. Santini ended the first set with “One More Day” and dedicated it to everyone going through despairing times. That was really special.

With a riveting delivery of “Back to You” off his album, *The Longshot*, the second set began. It was great to see guitarist Sean McKee (Sean McKee Band) get the spotlight and rip it up on guitar as he belted out “Hard Feelings”. He’s such a tremendous player. Iowa bluesman Kevin Burt happened to be in attendance for the show and joined the band for a “The Thrill is Gone”. That was a real treat indeed. Santini brought the set to a close with an amazing performance of “Turn on Your Lovelight” which featured an awe-inspired, extended drum solo from James. After exiting the stage, the band returned for an exhilarating, groove-filled encore of “Come on Everybody”, which coincidentally was also the same track he closed out his *Live & Extended!* album. It was a terrific show from start to finish, and can’t wait to see Brandon Santini again.

The Claudettes – Live at CSPS Cedar Rapids, Iowa August 28, 2026

By Phillip Smith; September 6, 2026

Original source: phillycheezeblues.blogspot.com



For the second week in a row, I’ve made it to CSPS in Cedar Rapids, Iowa for live music. The Claudettes were in town Friday night, and I finally caught up to see this marvelous Chicago-based band. Comprised of lead vocalist Rachel Williams, pianist/songwriter Johnny Iguana, bassist Zach Verdoorn and drummer Liz Ele, the band delivered two fabulous sets heavily loaded with songs off their brilliant, recently-released album *Garage Glamour* (see link below for the PhillyCheeze review for this record). I was ecstatic to experience my favorite cuts from that album “Winter Came (While You Were Gone)”, “Whirlpool” and “That Could Be Arranged” performed live. It was quite an amazing show which came to a close with a hell of a grand finale covering Nazareth’s “Hair of the Dog”. If you get the chance to see this group, I highly recommend taking it.

In Memoriam

by: Greg Gaughan

Frank Lee Beard (June 11, 1949 – August 17, 2026)



Frank Beard was an American musician who was the longtime drummer of the rock band ZZ Top. He and bassist Dusty Hill performed with American Blues before the two joined guitarist Billy Gibbons on ZZ Top.

Before joining ZZ Top, Beard was a member of a fake version of the British band the Zombies, which toured in the U.S. without authorization from the original band members. He also played in the Dallas area band, Outlaws, with Dusty Hill.

ZZ Top cancelled its August 5, 2026 show at Hollywood Bowl in Los Angeles, reportedly due to Beard's health. He died of pneumonia and heart disease under hospice care at his ranch in Richmond, Texas on August 17, at the age of 77. Gibbons called Beard "one of the most naturally innovative drummers and a great and true son of Texas. His signature backbeat was key to keeping ZZ on top".

The day after Beard's death, Gibbons announced Beard's wish that the band continue their tour.

Benjamin William Lattimore (September 7, 1939 – August 22, 2026)



Lattimore was born in Charleston, Tennessee, on September 7, 1939, and was influenced by country music, his Baptist church choir, and the blues. Born with the surname, Lattimore; Benjamin used the single name, "Latimore", spelt with only one "t" throughout his professional career.

His first professional experience came as a pianist for various Florida-based groups, including Steve Alaimo. He first recorded around 1965 for Henry Stone's Dade record label in Miami, Florida.

In the early 1970s, he moved to the Glades label, and had his first major hit in 1973 with a jazzy reworking of T-Bone Walker's "Stormy Monday", which reached No. 27 on the R&B chart.

Lattimore moved to Malaco Records in 1982, releasing seven albums of modern blues music with that label. He briefly left the label in 1994 and released a song for the J-Town label,

“Turning Up the Mood”, before returning to Malaco in 2000 with “You're Welcome to Ride”. Next, Lattimore recorded an album with Mel Waiters' label, Brittney Records, called Latt Is Back.

In 2017, Lattimore was inducted into the Blues Hall of Fame.

Lattimore died on August 22, 2026, at the age of 86. His place of death is reported variously as Tampa or Riverview, Florida.



If you are interested in becoming a volunteer with the Philadelphia Blues Society, whether as a board member or helping out at one of our events, please email us at info@philadelphiabluesociety.org