

Sound Waves

Magazine

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Volume 33
Issue 1
January 2023

1990  2023

An Interview
with

**LARRY
McCRAY**

Plus

- Tas Cru
- Lucas Neil
- The Boneshakers
- Joe Lewis Walker
- The Bargain

Also



**Christine
McVie**

**A Southern New England
Entertainment & Dining Guide Since 1990**



NEW LONDON COUNTY - MYSTIC - WESTERLY - RHODE ISLAND

INSIDE THE WAVE

Music Notes.....Pg. 6
Gramma's Attic.....Pg. 8
Band DatesPg. 10
Cover StoryPg. 12
Bar FlyPg.16
Local BeatPg. 18
Dining OutPg. 20
Hearing Aid.....Pg. 23
ClassifiedPg. 26



MAILBAG

Dear Readers,
Sound Waves Magazine is celebrating 33 years of publication! 33 years! It doesn't seem like that many years have past. We have had some great interviews, a few being the first covers for some now nationally know artists. One thing though is I still enjoy what I am doing.

The magazine has also remained free. All because of you our readers. Keep it up! Tell the advertisers within these pages that you saw their ad here. Maybe even help us out a little and mention to places that are not in Sound Waves that they should promote their business in this publication. Too many are just using social media. Even though we get over 25,000 hits per month on our web site! Let's keep this magazine going for a few more years!

We plan on doing an event this year to celebrate the many years of publication. So let's have a party!

Happy New Year
David Pottie ~ Publisher

2 SOUND WAVES

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Sound Waves

January 2023

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She Was Perfect: A Tribute to Christine McVie

By Mark T. Gould

It seemed like every Fleetwood Mac fan seemed to fall the hardest for Stevie Nicks.

Maybe it was her whirling-dervish “Rhiannon” stage presence and cult of personality. Maybe it was her voice. Maybe it was Lindsey Buckingham. Who knows?

Not me.

I fell for the Songbird, Christine McVie.

Stylish, sophisticated, angelic voiced, the absolute epitome of an English countess of the Old Country, yet hip, stylish and a bit funky at the very same time.

In short, perfect, or to utilize her maiden name, Perfect.

McVie, who passed away on November 30 at the age of 78, had a long, varied musical pedigree, steeped in the early British blues and her later fame as the songstress of the ever-evolving Mac.

Music was clearly in her DNA. McVie was born in the English Lake District village of Bouth and grew up in the Bearwood area of Smethwick near Birmingham. Her father was a concert violinist and music lecturer at St Peter's College of Education, and taught violin at St Philip's Grammar School in, Birmingham. McVie's mother was a medium, psychic, and faith healer. McVie's grandfather was an organist at Westminster Abbey.

She was introduced to the piano when she was four but did not study music seriously until the age of 11, when she was reintroduced to it by a local musician who was a friend of her brother John. She continued classical training to the age of 15 but shifted her musical focus to rock and roll when her brother acquired a Fats Domino songbook. Among her other early influences was the Everly Brothers.

McVie studied sculpture at Moseley School of Art in Birmingham for five years with the aim of becoming an art teacher.

But, her destiny was revealed when, at the school, she met budding musicians in Britain's blues scene.

Her introduction to performing music came when she met guitarist Stan Webb and bass player Andy Silvester, who were in a band called Sounds of Blue. Knowing that McVie had musical talent, they invited her to join them. She also sang with Spencer Davis.

By the time McVie graduated from art college, Sounds of Blue had split up. She did not have enough money to launch herself into the art world, so she moved to London, where she worked briefly as a department-store window dresser.

In 1967, McVie, then performing under her maiden name Christine Perfect, heard that Silvester and Webb were form-

ing a blues band, to be called Chicken Shack, and that they were looking for a pianist.

She contacted them and was invited to join the band as pianist, keyboard player and backing vocalist. She stayed with the band for two studio albums, and her genuine feel for the blues became evident in her Sonny Thompson-style piano playing and her authentic “bluesy” voice.

She received a Melody Maker award for the UK's best female vocalist in 1969 and again in 1970. She left Chicken Shack in 1969, having married Fleetwood Mac bassist John McVie a year earlier, feeling that she would not see her husband if they were in different bands.

McVie was a fan of Fleetwood Mac, and the two bands would often meet while she was touring with Chicken Shack. Both bands were signed to the Blue Horizon label, and McVie played piano as a session musician on Peter Green's songs on

Fleetwood Mac's second studio album, “Mr. Wonderful.”

Encouraged to continue her career, she recorded a debut solo studio album, *Christine Perfect*, which was later reissued as *The Legendary Christine Perfect Album*.

She was invited to join Fleetwood Mac as a keyboard player in 1970 after the departure of founding member Green, having already contributed piano and backing vocals, uncredited, to their next album, “Kiln House.”

McVie became an integral member of Fleetwood Mac as keyboard player, songwriter and female lead vocalist. Before she joined there had been talk of the band splitting up, but Fleetwood himself said later “Christine became the glue [that held the band together]. She filled out our sound beautifully.”

In 1974, McVie moved to California with the rest of the band, and they soon added Nicks and Buckingham. The line-up now contained two female lead vocalists who also wrote songs. McVie bonded instantly with Nicks and the two women found their voices harmonized perfectly.

McVie wrote and sang lead on four tracks on the first studio album of the new line-up, “Fleetwood Mac,” including “Warm Ways,” “Over My Head,” “Sugar Daddy,” and my all-time favorite McVie song, “Say You Love Me.”

A little over a year later, the band released their classic album, “Rumours,” a tour-de-force, biographical storyboard of the increasing personal turmoil and drug use within Fleetwood Mac.

To date, “Rumours” has sold over 40 million copies worldwide, making it one of the most successful and popular albums of all time.

McVie remained with the Mac until 1999, when she moved back to England to be with her family. Despite a few one-off performances, she did not formally return to Fleetwood Mac until 2014, although the band toured very little before her death.

“There are no words to describe our sadness at the passing



of Christine McVie,” the band said in a statement released shortly thereafter. “She was truly one-of-a-kind, special and talented beyond measure.

“She was the best musician anyone could have in their band and the best friend anyone could have in their life. We were so lucky to have a life with her. Individually and together, we cherished Christine deeply and are thankful for the amazing memories we have. She will be so very missed.”

Nicks referred to her as “my best friend in the whole world,” and Buckingham said “she was my musical comrade.”

Ann Wilson of Heart called her a “gem,” and a “beautiful songwriter,” while her sister, Nancy Wilson, called her as “an understated genius.”

Sheryl Crow described McVie as “an amazing human being.”

Melissa Etheridge said “we have lost a beautiful writer and songbird.” Belinda Carlisle of the Go-Gos said McVie had “the voice of an angel.”

She had a beautiful alto voice that had elements of blues and church choral music, which in many ways set her apart from some of her contemporaries,” said Steve Winwood. “Her beautiful, syllabic style was a joy to listen to. Together with her engaging, heartfelt songs she will be greatly missed.”

“There was no one like Christine in the universe,” said latter-day Mac guitarist Mike Campbell. “I’ve never met anyone with such an angelic aura. Always so kind to everyone. No one could ever fill those shoes.”

“She was such an undeniable talent,” said Bob Seger. “She was responsible for so much of that band’s success.”

Mick Fleetwood wrote, “This is a day where my dear sweet friend Christine McVie has taken to flight, and left us, reminding one and all that love is all around us to reach for and touch in this precious life that is gifted to us.

“Part of my heart has flown away today. I will miss everything about you

Christine McVie. Memories abound... they fly to me.”
Just like a Songbird.



4 SOUND WAVES



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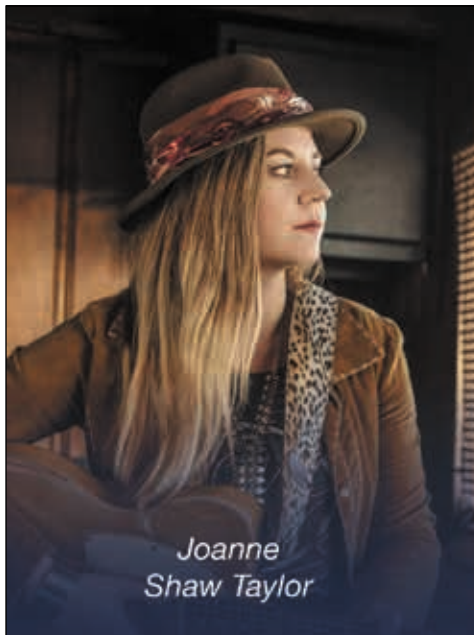
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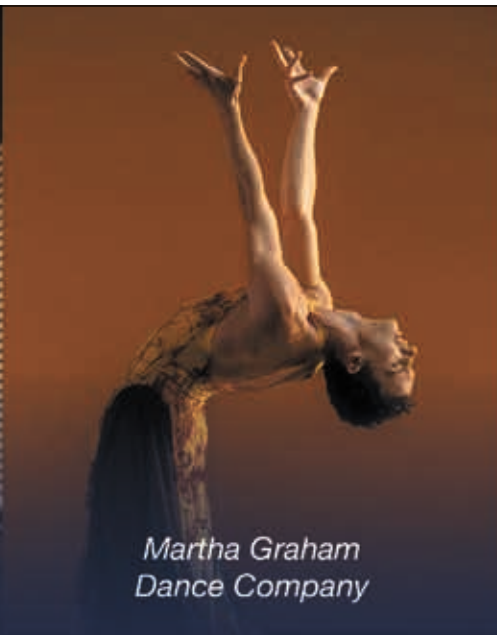
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MUSIC NOTES

“They Changed The World, But First They Changed Him”

By Mark T. Gould

It's such a stroke of genius that I'm surprised no enterprising writer thought of it before now.

Dan Greenberger's "The Boys Next Door" is a spectacular, wry and clever work of musical history fiction, depicting the epic growth of The Beatles during their halcyon yet hectic days working clubs in the red-light district of Hamburg, Germany, their musical proving ground that propelled them to heights that literally changed the world.

It's told through the eyes, and the writing, of Alan Levy, a wanna-be poet of somewhat stuffy pretensions, who starts off despising the band members, but who, like most of us baby boomers in the coming years, embraced The Beatles' music, attitude, and look that triggered a cultural revolution not long after that time.

The original lineup of the Beatles, John Lennon, Paul McCartney, George Harrison, Stuart Sutcliffe and Pete Best, regularly performed at different clubs in Hamburg, during the period from August 1960 to December 1962; a chapter in the group's history which honed their performance skills, widened their reputation, and led to their first recording, which brought them to the attention of Brian Epstein, the man who refined their look and unleashed them on an unsuspecting world.

The Beatles' booking agent, Allan Williams, decided to send the group to Hamburg when another group he managed proved successful there. Having no permanent drummer at the time, they recruited Best a few days before their departure. After breaking their contract by playing



at another club, Harrison was deported for being underaged, and McCartney and Best were arrested and deported for attempted arson.

The Beatles first met photographer Astrid Kirchherr in Hamburg, and she was instrumental in their adoption of the mop-topped Beatle haircut. During

their period in Hamburg, Sutcliffe decided to leave the group to continue his studies. In April 1962, less than a year after leaving the group, he suffered a brain hemorrhage and died as a result.

Hamburg had once been West Germany's main seaport, the fourth largest in the world, but during World War II half of the city was reduced to rubble by American and British bombing raids.

By 1960, when The Beatles arrived, the Hamburg that had grown up from the ruins of the war had established a reputation throughout Europe as a city of vice and criminal activity.

Yet, in contrast to an economically depressed post-war Liverpool where the band members grew up, Hamburg was a wealthy city, albeit with its social warts.

It was there that they honed their talents at the Kaiserkeller club.

McCartney later said, "We lived backstage in the Bambi Kino, next to the toilets, and you could always smell them. The room had been an old storeroom, and there were just concrete walls and nothing else. No heat, no wallpaper, not a lick of paint; and two sets of bunk beds, with not very much covers—Union Jack flags—we were frozen."

Lennon remembered: "We were put in this pigsty. We were living in a toilet, like right next to the ladies' toilet. We'd go to bed late and be woken up next day by the sound of the cinema show."

After having been awakened in that fashion, the group were then obliged to use cold water from the urinals for washing and shaving. They were paid £2.50 each a day, seven days a week, playing from 8:30–9:30, 10:00–11:00, 11:30–12:30, and 1:00–2:00.

Harrison, at least before he was kicked out of the country, remembered Hamburg as the best thing the group had ever seen, as it had so many neon lights, clubs and restaurants, although he cautioned that, "the whole area was full of transvestites and prostitutes and gangsters, but I couldn't say that they were the audience ... Hamburg was really like our apprenticeship, learning how to play in front of people."

It was their proving ground, and Levy, who had the pigsty, er, room next to them was there to see it all,



and it affected him just like The Beatles ultimately affected all of us upon their return to England and then the world.

Any baby boomer worth his or her haircut, clothing, speech and persona will relish many of the band members' quotes in the book, many referencing lyrics in Beatles' songs that were recorded and released years later.

Moreover, those of us who grew up with The Beatles, and were so affected by them, will be astonished by the book's ultimate climax, with Levy

smack dab in the middle of it.

But the story within the story, if you will, is what the effect of The Beatles had on Alan Levy.

He, like the millions of us after him, transformed his entire personality and identity after being influenced by "The Boys Next Door."



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GRAMMA'S ATTIC REVUE

"And Lucas Neil A New Rising Star for the New Year"

By Gramma

The complexity of finding community members to write about is very real. I scroll venues pages, listen to community members suggestions, and often just look through videos that come up on my feed. I was scrolling through videos one such day early in 2022 and happened on an ad for the Knickerbocker Tap Room with a name that I had never heard before, it was Lucas Neil. I thought to myself "Wow if he is good enough for Mark at the Knick then he must be good enough for Gramma's Attic Music Revue. Rarely do I invite musicians to come to the show sound unheard but as fate would have it this was one of those rare times and it turned out to be an amazing show. What a true gift from the universe I was about to receive. Into the studio came this young looking, humble old soul that sang like an angel and wrote 99% of the music that he performed on the show that day. I was blown away!!! Immediately I invited him to come to the radio station to do a live interview on WCNI 90.9FM. Since I met Lucas, he has done 185 shows just in this year I am anticipating that he is going to go far. On December 22, 2022, he dropped his first album that can be found on all of your favorite streaming platforms.

Lucas was born in Saratoga, New York in 1997. He and his family came to the Salem area when his dad came to work at EB in Groton. Lucas is the youngest of four but truly he is an old soul so is his mom they seem to feed off each other's old soulness if that is a thing. Although his dad worked at EB he was also a musician most of his young life he just played music but

8 SOUND WAVES



during the 80s he was a professional drummer and some of his music from those days can still be found on www.themakeband.com. Lucas finds that seeing his dad in videos to be very cool. Lucas's dad is still very invested in mu-



sic especially Lucas's and gives Lucas lots of advice and encouragement.

Lucas remembers his first musical experience to be with, not a Walkman, but a cassette player. He had a southern rock greatest hits CD that he played every day coming to and from school as

he rode the bus. The bands that were on that CD included CCR, Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young and Norman Greenbaum. It is amazing to me that so much of his early music memories are some of my favorites also. I owned CSNY 4 Way Street when I was in Middle School on of course vinyl, and CCR has been a favorite of mine for decades. Lucas finds that many of his musical influences come from that era of music. He also follows many singer-songwriters and finds that when he is out in nature this is the style of music that manifests itself as he is writing a song.

Some of Lucas's earliest concerts were at The Saratoga Performing Arts Center. He was in the sixth grade when he went to his first concert there. That concert was a 3-band show with Cheap Trick, Heart, and Journey. I am thinking that that must have been one heck of a show. Other bands that he saw at that venue were Styx, REO Speedwagon and Elton John's first Last Tour... lol really not a last tour at all.

When Lucas was in 5th grade he started his stage career in Musical theater and also started to play the drums with some influence from his Dad who would give him some tips but mostly

would point him in the direction of songs that would be good for him to learn allowing him to learn his own rhythm. It was also during this time that Lucas started to learn to play the piano.. Lucas did not start to learn to play the guitar until he was 21 years old. It baffles me that he is as good as he is with so short of time on his instrument of choice. Although Lucas has played several instruments, he feels drawn back to the guitar especially when he is out in nature. Lucas wrote his first song on guitar, picking patterns that he was drawn to and felt compelled to add words from poems that he already had written. Lucas feels as if he has always been a writer. Adding his words to music usually comes easily. He says that it just flows out ...usually all at once.

Lucas had his first experience as a performer outside of musical theater feels like a very profound experience. He was living in a shack on Block Island and a well-known poet, Coleman Banks, was doing some readings of his

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poems and asked Lucas to play a couple of songs on the piano. Lucas felt like a rockstar and realized that he really just wanted to play for people. When I first met him, he had done approximately 120 live shows. Now he has, in one year done over 185. That is quite accomplishment for such a young performer. I was musically smitten by his voice, his old soul, and his passion for his own original music. Although he is always ready and willing to play it is always with truly humble spirit that he brings forth the songs that he shares with us. With this busy schedule it is never hard to find him playing in many venues. Some of them include: The Barn, The Knicker-



bocker Cafe, The Danial Packet Inn, Frier Tucks, The Reef in Newport, and Bridge Restaurant and Eastern Connecticut College.

Lucas has now released his freshman album called That Inward Sky. It dropped on December 22, 2022 and can be found on all of your favorite streaming platforms. It can also be found on his website which is www.lucasneilmusic.com. There is also a second album in the works and you should expect to start hearing murmurings of its release in the fall of 2023.

Lucas is a deep and intimate invested musician that connects to nature and deep thoughts about life. My favorite song of his is "Dandelion". Here are the shows that he has for the next few months.

Jan, 6, 2023, Viste, Newport RI., 7-10pm
 Jan. 13, 2023, No Worries Brewery, Hamden, CT, 7-9pm
 Jan. 20, 2023, WeHa Brewery, West Hartford, Ct., 7-9pm
 Jan. 29, 2023, High Nine Brewery, Deep River, 7-9pm
 Feb. 17, 2023, The Buttonwood Tree, Middletown, Ct., 8pm

Feb. 20, 2023, The Danial Packer Inn, Mystic, Ct., 7pm

Feb. 26, 2023, The Knickerbocker Taproom, Westerly, R.I., 7pm

Lucas Neil can be found on Facebook, but his favorite platform is Instagram.

Happy New Year to you all. I thank you all for reading this article. Next month we will have a fun visit with an amazingly in love musical couple, Dana and Bryan Newman.

Stay safe and enjoy 2023!!!!

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BAND DATES

THE CARTELLS

4,25 - Knickerbocker, Westerly, RI 7:30-10pm
 7,29 - Maugle Sierra, Ledyard, CT 3-6pm
 8 - Bill's Seafood, Westbrook, CT 3:30-6:30pm
 14 - Community Center, Groton, CT 7:30-9:30pm
 15 - Maugle Sierra, Ledyard, CT 3-3:30pm

CHRISTOPHER JOHN

5,21 - Village Pizza, Preston, CT 8-11
 6 - Dublin, E. Hampton, CT 6-9
 7 - Glendale Grill, Easthampton, MA 6-10
 12,27 - Rosy Tomorrows, Danbury, CT 6-9
 13 - Friar Tucks, Mystic, CT 9:30-12:30
 19 - Stumble Inne, Old Lyme, CT 7-10
 28 - Blackledge Tavern, Hebron, CT 6:30-9:30

DARIK & THE FUNBAGS

7 - Chicago Sams, Cromwell, CT 9pm
 21 - Woodbury Brewing, Woodbury, CT 8:30pm

DOS AMIGOS

6 - Surf Cantina, Westerly, RI 10pm
 10 - Angie's, Mystic, CT 5-8pm

F & BLUES BAND

20 - Filomena's, Waterford, CT 6-9
 27 - Black Eyed Sally's, Hartford, CT 8-11

JAMES HARRIS

4,11,13,18,23,25 - Daniel Packer, Mystic, CT 9pm
 6 - The Barn, Groton, CT 5-7pm
 13 - Rocks 21, Mystic, CT 4pm
 22 - Maugle Sierra, Ledyard, CT 3pm
 28 - Stonington Vineyards, Stonington, CT 2pm
 29 - The Barn, Groton, CT 4-7pm

KNOX CHANDLER & BOBO LAVORGNA

13 - Cultural Center, Hamden, CT 7pm

NICK BOSSE

13 - Tamarack Lodge, Voluntown, CT 6-9pm
 14 - Knickerbocker, Westerly, RI 8-11pm
 20 - Surf Cantina, Westerly, RI 8-11pm
 21 - Stone Cow, Barre, MA 3-6pm
 27 - Rathskeller, Charlestown, RI 9-11pm
 29 - Taylor Brooke, Woodstock, CT 2:30-5:30pm

10 SOUND WAVES

RAMBLIN' DAN STEVENS

3,10,17,24,31 - Nightingale's, Old Lyme, CT 6pm
 6 - Stumble Inne, Old Lyme, CT 7pm
 7 - Daniel Packer, Mystic, CT 8:30pm
 8 - Fort Hill Brewery, Easthampton, MA 3:30pm
 13 - Bidwell Tavern, Coventry, CT 8:15pm
 14 - Packing House, Willington, CT 7:30pm
 15 - Shunock Brewery, N. Stonington, CT 4:30pm
 19 - Essex House, Island Pond, VT
 20,21 - Bullwheel Tavern, Jay Peak, VT

SHAME DAN SCANDAL

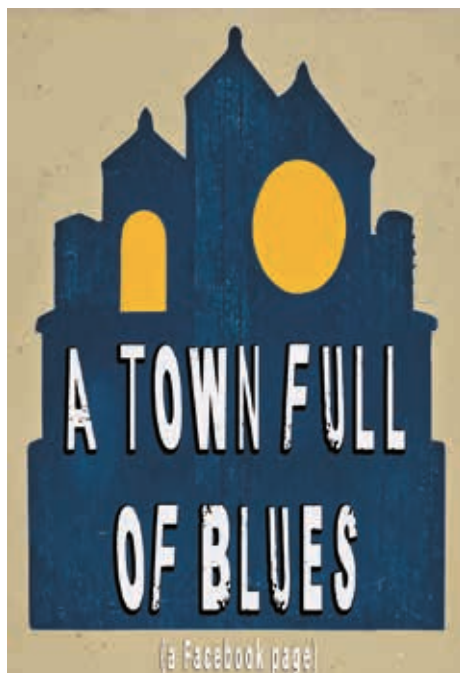
21 - Providence Brewing Co., Providence, RI 7pm

THE SECOND CHANCE

7 - Still Hill Brewery, Rocky Hill, CT 4-7pm

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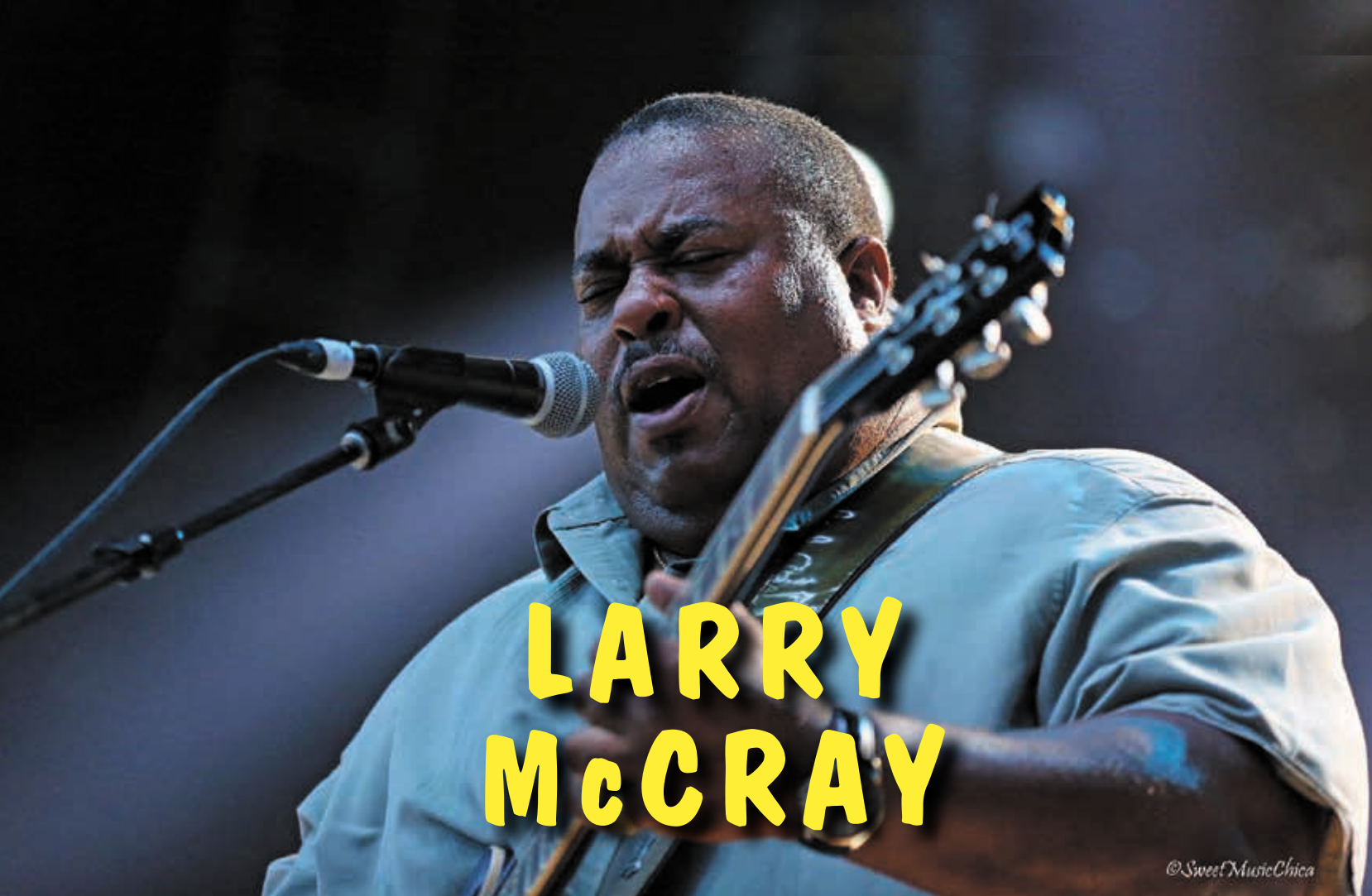
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by Frank T. Walsh

It wasn't a coincidence that the rain stopped, the clouds parted, and the sun came out and shone over Jim Carty's yard in Old Lyme, Connecticut on that day in November. It was destiny. Larry McCray and his assembled band of world-class musicians were about to take the stage.

The eager and enthusiastic group of Jim's invited friends, many of whom who had traveled from all over New England and as far away as New Jersey, settled in their chairs with plates of BBQ on their laps and beverages in hand as they anticipated the show to begin.

A few weeks earlier, when Jim announced the show, Jim asked me if I would like to film the event and to interview Larry for my "TALK n TUNES" TV show that I produce and host at Stoughton Media Access Corporation, a/k/a, SMAC-TV. It was an offer that I could not refuse because I had the good fortune to interview his musical guests in previous years at Jim's parties such as Johnny Rawls and Lady D. and others.

I met with Larry before the show and we decided to conduct the interview in between his scheduled two sets and estimated that we would chat for 15 to 20 minutes. After burning through an hour or so long set of smokin' hot blues numbers, Larry wiped his sweaty brow, chatted with the guests for a few minutes and found his way over to the buffet table that was overflowing with Jim's famous BBQ ribs, pulled pork, sausages and every fixing that you can imagine to go with it.

With our plates piled high and cold beverages in hand, we

sat at a picnic table, enjoyed the food and reviewed what we were going to discuss; all the while, listening to some cool music that was being performed by a couple of guest musicians. We figured we'd cover the usual topics: background, music influences, awards, the future, etc., for 15 to 20 minutes.

A short time later, our bellies were full and our mouths wiped clean of BBQ sauce, we carried our chairs to a quiet and sunny spot of the yard and sat in front of the camera that was being operated by my multi-talented wife, "The Lovely" Laura Walsh, who has filmed several of my TV shows and musical events over the 14 years that we have been together.

Oh, remember that I said that our interview would go for 15 to 20 minutes? Sorry, I was WRONG. When Laura took aim and the camera's red light went on, it stayed on for almost 45 minutes.

Before we get to the interview, let's learn a little about Larry McCray.

Larry McCray was born in 1960 in Steven's, Ark., about 12 miles from the Louisiana line. He spent his early years on a farm before moving to Magnolia, Ark. He was the second youngest of nine siblings. After trying his hand at saxophone in school, his older (and only) sister, Clara, introduced Larry to the guitar and the transformative music of the three Kings of the blues (B.B., Freddie and Albert).

By the late 1980's, Larry attracted the attention of Virgin Records executive, John Wooler, who had recently started a

subsidiary label, Point Blank Records, featuring blues, soul and Americana artists. He signed Larry as his first artist. Larry's debut album, "Ambition" fused elements of blues, rock, and soul to create a contemporary blues sound and it was recorded in a friend's Detroit basement studio. It was released in 1990 to critical acclaim.

Throughout the 1990s, Larry continued to help define blues/rock by collaborating with artists such as labelmate and fellow guitarist, Albert Collins, and released the much more polished album, "Delta Hurricane" in 1993 which was produced by British blues maven Mike Vernon. Subsequently, "Meet Me at the Lake" was produced in 1996 and "Born to Play the Blues" was produced in 1998.

Over the past three decades of nonstop touring and recording, Larry has played and shared the stage with such blues greats as BB King, Buddy Guy, Albert King, John Mayall, Johnny Winter, Robert Cray, Keb Mo, Jimmie Vaughan, Kenny Wayne Shepherd and Joe Bonamassa. His versatility also allowed him to accompany world-renown rock legends the Allman Brothers, Phil Lesh, Jonny Lang, Joe Walsh, Levon Helm, Chris Robinson, Dickey Betts and countless others.

In 2021, "Blues Without You", Larry's latest 12-track release, was recorded on famed blues rock guitarist Joe Bonamassa's "Keeping the Blues Alive" non-profit label with producer Josh Smith and was released in March of 2022 which rocketed to the Number 1 on the "Blues Rock Review. And, not only this, Larry learned that he is nominated for 3 Grammy Awards. "BEST AMERICAN ROOTS PERFORMANCE", "BEST AMERICAN ROOTS SONG" and "BEST CONTEMPORARY BLUES ALBUM"

An honor for which he is humbled and profoundly grateful.

To quote Joe Bonamassa: "Larry's still a relatively young man, with a lot to say, and the world needs to know who he is. It's the perfect time to have a rebirth of his music." Joe also says. "He knows he's a badass, he just needs to be reassured and reassure himself that he can stand up there with the greats."

Now let's see what he had to say.

"Hey Larry, how does it feel to be here at Jim Carty's playing for such an enthusiastic group of old and new friends?"

Well Frank, there ain't no party like a Carty party (laughs and high 5's). This is my first time here, but I've known Jimmy for a long time. We've known each other since the 1990's and we've run into each other and have gotten together all over the United States. And let me tell you, that boy can cook. He is the master of the Q.

"Larry, can you expand a little about being raised in such a small and remote area?"

The community I was raised in was a small mecca where everyone knew each other. We meet up at the grocery store, the post office or church. That was about it.

"That doesn't sound like a hotbed of music to me {laughs}. How did you get into the music scene?"

In the 60's when I came through, it wasn't a hotbed for musicians, but each place and culture has its own unique group of minstrels and music. My father was a musician; he was a

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guitar player and harmonica player. From time-to-time different, musicians would come by to play and hang out. Especially, on Sunday. They would come by all gussied up fine with their dark shades on and sit out on the porch, with a few sips if you know what I mean, (winks) and play music as I just watched and listened. Also, my grandmother on my father's side started my big sister Clara, who was 17 years my elder, on guitar. So, by the time I was old enough to appreciate music, my sister was playing guitar with Michael Franks father in the band called "Clara and the Rockets". Seeing my sister playing in this band was inspiring to me. It was the first kind of music that I saw. My sister was the one who inspired me to get into music.

"When did you 'Get that bug'? you know, was there a seminal moment when you said to yourself "THAT'S WHAT I WANT TO DO or I gotta play like THAT or play like HIM?"

I kinda wanted to play since day one. But, I didn't actually get to touch an instrument or play a guitar until I moved to Michigan. My sister moved to Saginaw in 1964 and in 1972 right after grade school I went to visit her. At the end of that summer, my mother told her not to send me home to Arkansas because the family was moving to Michigan. So, that's what happened.

"How easy or difficult was it for you to learn to play guitar? Did it come naturally or did you have to really work at it?"

To be honest, guitar was not my first instrument; it was the saxophone. But, there were no other sax players in my area, so I had no one to look up to.

(Jokingly) "I bet you listened to a lot of Junior Walker on the radio?"

(Laughing) I sure did, I loved Junior. As a matter of fact, he is another one who inspired me. I tried to use some of his style and sax licks on my guitar. I truly admired him. He had a (making one with his hands) big wide heart and had a wide range of music style.

"I bet you were a 60's guy. I can hear some of it in your music."

Yes. Yes. I was a big 60's guy. Stax, Motown, Atlantic...all those people. And one of the people I have to mention is Miss Candi Staton. She was a big influence. You know, she may not be as recognized as Aretha or Gladys, but I think if they ever added another name after them, it would be Candi. She did some disco in the 70's, you know the Bee Gees, Nights on Broadway and she even did an amazing cover of the Doobie Brothers "Listen to the Music."

"Now let's get to the blues. Who were some of your early blues influences? I can imagine B.B., Muddy, Howlin' Wolf and the traditionalists?"

That's the school I come from, all those guys, the old school. Now I may not be as modern or progressive as some of the guitarists out there today. The instrument ain't what it used to be. So many guitarists playing different techniques with all those notes off the chart, but amongst all those notes, I believe there is still room for passion and a feel for the music,

SOUND WAVES 13

as well. The blues ain't something you learn in a book. It ain't gonna teach you passion and a feel for the music.

"I feel like I'm on a Jeopardy TV show, because you just partly answered my next question (laughs). I was going to ask you to compare and contrast traditional blues vs. the modern blues. Talk about where the blues was, where it is now and where do you think it's going."

As I said before, the old music was based on interpretation and a passion for the music. It's just about the way B.B. and Muddy played guitar and sang and Albert Collins There's no denying the power and passion that Freddie King had even though he didn't have a whole lot of notes. Listen to his interpretation of "Big Legged Woman" or "I'm Goin' Down" (I interject. "So many people have covered those songs"). You know what they say, Frank. "Always imitated and never duplicated.

"Where do you place yourself and your music? You seem to cross both bridges here."

I try not to be too opinionated or criticize other's music, because it opens me up to be criticized and I can accept it. What I would say is that I am the 'first child' of B.B. King, Freddie King and Albert King. Now, there is an extended generation like Joe Bonamassa, who produced my latest CD, Mr. Fred Fletcher, Ariel Posen from Canada who is a great guitarist G.E. Smith and Eric Gales ...there are so many. These guys are complete guitar masters and blow my generation out of the water in terms of technique. But, old school is still holding on in terms of passion. It's like country music. When you hear the new artists, they don't compare to the likes of George Jones, Charlie Rich and the others who created the genre. Those people really hit home. There is something authentic about that music that I don't think will ever be replaced.

"Can you think of any of the current musicians out there who are still carrying the torch for traditional blues like a Kingfish Ingram, and the like?"

That's a good question, a REAL good question. (I interject, "I stayed up all night thinking of that one." We laugh). I'll have to think on that one, but most recent who comes to mind is Lucky Peterson. He was in many ways modern, but he would always go back to his roots. He was a master. (He pauses, puts his head down for a few seconds) I really gotta think about it.

"What do you think of some of the women of the blues? The Shemekia Copeland's on the scene."

Well, in that case, there is Nora Jean Bruso, also. And, (long pause to think), Mmmm, Mmmm, Mmmm, you got me on this one, Frank; let me sit on this one, you stumped me already. (We both laugh, not my intention, my friend. It'll come to you).

"Now Larry, you have a lot of friends and connections around this area. You know Holly Harris, Anthony Geraci, and folks like these."

I love Holly and Anthony. Then there's John Hall, Ricky

King Russell, so many others I could name. (He pauses in thought and shakes his head.)

"Then let me ask you this, anyone you want to recognize or give some shout outs to?"

Well, I've been hanging around a lot with Mr. Devon Allman; he's been very kind to me. He's been willing to accept me and expose my music. I had a long history with his father, and of course after that, with Dicky Betts and their resurgence all through the 90's. It's been a pleasure to be around and play with them. Also, Eric Gales has been a big influence and supporter. I've known him a long time going back to when he was in his 20's. Jontavious Willis is another; he's one of those guys who brings it back to the old school. (I interject Jason Ricci). Yes, Jason Ricci is another guy. He and I, along with a drummer, a bass player and "The Original Kingfish Medeiros" --before Mr. Ingram -- went down to Alabama and played down there.

"And, you're going to be going on the road with them again, aren't you? What do you say we touch base after the tour and you can give your impressions."

Let's do it, Frank. I'd like that.

"Now Larry, if I gave you a big block of granite on a mountain, a hammer and a chisel, who would you carve out to be on your Mt. Rushmore?"

WOW, just 4 (laughing and a long pause). Well, I have to say Ray Charles, B.B King, James Brown and Aretha Franklin. Just 4 is tough.

(I interject, "How about some honorable mentions?"). Now we're talking. Definitely, Gladys Knight, Candi Staton, Jimmy Smith, Junior Walker. And, as far as modern players, I'd say Mr. Chris Cain, Derek Trucks, and James Montgomery. One of the greatest experiences I ever had with James, who got to play a lot with in the 90's, is when he and I and Hubert Sumlin (the late great) went to play down in Argentina. Matt Smith was there at one of the gigs. He recently had a stroke and he hadn't fully recovered, was so inspired by a piece of music that he got down on his hands and knees and CRAWLED up on the stage at 80-something years old. We got him a chair and I gave him the Les Paul guitar I had around my neck -- you know how I play and do my thing -- and he just rocked that thing out. Matt played clean, yup CLEAN. It was so moving to me that it brought tears to my eyes. He crawled up on the stage and played my guitar. (looking at the camera with his arms extended outward) Frank, that's it that's my BEST story.

"Larry, we could talk all day. I knew that once we got started it would be hard to stop. I am thrilled that we had the opportunity Thank you so much."

Frank, this was an honor for me and I'm glad we were able to do this. I hope that this reaches anyone who aspires to play the blues and might inspire anyone to pursue it or take an interest in it or my music. Frank, let's do it again sometime.

"On Christmas Eve afternoon, I called Larry to chat about his Allman Reunion Tour and to tell him that I was writing

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BAR FLY JOURNALS

By Stephanie Shawn

Hello, my sweet Bar Flies! We made it! Resolutions in place? Mine are to be more of a Bar Fly!

And I'm starting the year off right with a trip to STRANGE BREW in Norwich. JASON WALLACE! I miss you! And I can not believe I missed the PARLIAMENT FUNKADELIC VS TALKING HEADS TRIBUTE NIGHT. Whaaaaa?? CHRIS GONSALVES, hope your head is feeling better!

I'm choosing between several Tribute Bands playing at STRANGE BREW. Which should I go to? Decisions, decisions! WHITE PONY by DEFTONES, with vocals sung by RYAN MANNING



(which I guess I missed :() CHRIS CORNELL? EMO NIGHT LIVE put on by TEAM CAT EVENTS or a GRATEFUL DEAD band? What's a girl to do? I'll keep you posted!

Just arrived home safely after a NEW YEAR'S EVE to remember. MATUNUCK OYSTER BAR with foie Gras, oysters, caviar and Champagne. And Oysters..and oysters! Can it get any more decadent?

Uh yeahhh, heading over after MA-



16 SOUND WAVES



TUNUCK in my high boots to see DON'T TELL LISA at newly renamed to its damn former self, ROSALINI'S! Thank you, baby Jesus. Every time I went to the previously named place I felt like I was walking into rehab!

Saw many of my old friends at way more Wakes and Funerals than any one should ever have to go to. RICKY JOSEPH, I was so sorry to hear about your wife, GEORGINA. LENA WEYANT, MARK GAVITT, ROBIN TURANO, FRANKIE CRUZ, GEORGE WERRBACH, PAUL ANDERSON. Uggggg. Its too much, sometimes.

Romper Stomper, baby! Happy Birthday to besties WENDY CARR and TAMI ALGIERE, also DEB BROCHU, JOHN BABIN, CAROLINE BALL, JOHN HIGGINS, SAMANTHA ANNETTE, WALTER HOUGHTALING, SPENCER WHITE, RICHARD BROWN, HEATHER ST CLAIR, ED ADAMS, NELL CHEVALIER, GAYANN YODER, ERIC DONCH, FRANKIE SERRANO, ANDY PUPILLO, RONNIE HARNNESS, DEB TREIBER, CARL FUSARO, BEN SHERMAN, TIM RIQUIER, CHRIS GONSALVES, DONNA KNOLL, LARRY MATHEWS, DINO COZZOLINO, CANDICE STAMM, WENDY GARAFOLO, Miss MICHELE MITCHELL, CHRIS POST;) and how could I forget ED ST CLAIR?

Love you all!

GAME TIME in Groton?? My girl ALICIA O'NEILL tells me it's a super fun new spot to hang at and watch the Games! WILD NIGHTS on January 20! Also, check out their FaceBook page for their many specials. Ladies Night on Fridays, Tuesday Trivia and the Whole NFL package on a wall of TV's! I hear Miss TETLOW has already given it a big thumbs up, especially the Super Big Nacho Plates!

Thank you to the WESTERLY YACHT CLUB, RICK BROWN, BRIAN our bartender and CHRISTINE, for making our 25th Annual Family Christmas Party a huge success. Musical chairs has never been so much fun. Don't break a hip!

Don't forget the HOLIDAY LIGHTS SPECTACULAR at the OLDE MISTIC VILLAGE, OPEN MIC on Thursdays at the HYGENIC, KAT WRIGHT at the KNICK, DOS AMIGOS at ANGIE'S, BOB LAVALLEY at SHUNOCK RIVER BREWERY or NICK BOSSE at the RATHSKELLER! Also KATHY ELLIS from the BROWN DERBY is turning 60! Stop by and celebrate with her on Saturday!

Headed over to ANDIAMO'S ITALIAN RESTAURANT in Mystic with the Salon Girls for our own Xmas Party after the hairy Xmas season! And Thank you to JIM and FERN for hosting us, for the LION KING, and for dinner at BOBBY VAN'S STEAKHOUSE in the Big City!

Also spotted ANGELA THOMAN-MILLER and NICOLA LAMONT JOHNSON at MYSTIC SANTACON, who knew? Next year, Im in!! I'm out and about so let me know if you need me! Love you long time! Ciao for now my Sweet Bar Flies!



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LOCAL BEAT

“Brass Band Accompanies Sonorous Middle School Choir During Festive Church Concert”

By Andrew Kerbs

Twas the week before Christmas and all through the church, at Connecticut College between the oak and the birch. I had the pleasure of seeing local Bennie Dover Jackson Middle school and great brass band ECSO and perform some well known Christmas carols, courtesy of the Eastern CT Symphony Orchestra, on Dec. 17. What was most interesting about the performers were the purity of their voices and the fact that the tuba player played the melody (not just the bass notes) which, along with the trombonists unique middling harmonies, were a nice counterpoint to the shrill trumpet which usually dominates such concertos.

The brass band consisted of a trombonist, french horn player, tuba player and trumpeter in black suits and red ties. Fans clapped away to Leroy Anderson's 1940s classic "Sleigh Ride" with its trebly staccato trumpet accompanying its ascending tuba bassline. They even ended with a squonky horse neigh similar to the radio versions of that song itself. On the other hand, their version of "Little Drummer Boy" consisted of a smoother timbre with horns weaving together harmonies as the tuba played staccato beats. The delivery was royal in its originality and almost medieval in its shift to a minor key mid-way through the song.

Furthermore, the french horn player led an original medley of carols starting with "God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen" and its interplay with the trombone on "Wassail/Love and Joy." The trumpet resumed pecking the melody on the refreshing "Good King Wenceslas." Things got fun as the trumpet (which is



really a "flu horn") fluttered into melody with flourishing nuance as he ever so-briefly segued into "3 Gymnopedies" by Erik Satie after playing Vince Guaraldi's "Christmas Time Is Here" with its slow strange key shifts and chord changes. If I closed my eyes, I could imagine the Peanuts characters scurrying along to the beat past Snoopy's red dog house.

The horn players started off "Rudolf the Red Nosed Reindeer" with that famous introductory line followed by a deep tuba "ba ba ba ba" segue into the playful bassline that comprises the chorus. There was also a jazzy break for the bridge of that song in which the tuba switched to playing the melody. The trumpeter ended that break with a sharp high pitched toot before sliding back into the sing-along chorus.

One of the players even brought in a dixie mini-horn and squeaked high notes on the Afro-American classic "Go Tell It On the Mountain" as the tuba and trombone held the bottom notes of that piece. This was the transition into the choral section of the concert.

That choir that approached the front of the church was the Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School choir: a mostly female singing group donning red Christmas sweaters. They sang swell numbers such as "What a Wonderful World" in a key with near perfect pitch. The accompaniment nearly drowned out their nice singing voices for a moment

and I wished their delivery featured harmonies instead of sticking to a monochromatic melody line. But alas, a harmony of "ooohs" finally cascaded over the church audience and simple beauty of that choir of voices cut above the rest of the instruments like the arrival of angels. Other moments include their beautiful rendition of Dionne Warwick's "What the World Needs Now (Is Sweet Love)." The choir's rendition of that song was a staccato waltz with each syllable sharply articulated as the singers volume peaked and the chorus key modulated midway through the number. Their conductor Lisa Marien ended their performance with a grand swipe of her hands.

The brass band joined the Middle School choir and ended the concert with a medley of famous carols which included "Deck the Halls" and "Hark the Herald Angels Sing." "Hark" was most majestic like Manheim Steamroller's well-known Christmas concert blaring with great melody. The noble-sounding tuba honked great bass harmonies underneath the choir and the rest of the (higher) horn quintet. All were brought together at the concert's conclusion: the merrily secular "We Wish You a Merry Christmas" which was one musician's "favorite" (as it was his kids'). Trombonist — was at his best, tooting middle harmonies that held the rest of the performance together. I couldn't help but imagine a fiery lump of plum pudding with a stake of holly being plopped onto a candle-lit dinner table.

Its family concerts like this that comprise the Christmas spirit and are as essential as a manger scene or Christmas trees or wassail by the fireplace. Be sure to make Dec. 2023's concert should either of these great performers reprise their show next season.



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DINING OUT

“Ditch Your Sweat Pants”

By Elizabeth Saede

Are you tired of limiting your fun to what's on TV and whatever tumbles out of the freezer? Shoreline restaurants and attractions have far better options. Varied activities, food specials, and plentiful parking beckon, even if your post-holiday wallet is skinny. Ditch your sweatpants and slippers; they probably need a break from you anyway. Invite a friend, pull on adult clothes, and venture out for comfort food, lively music, and a much-needed break. Reward yourself with face-to-face conversations, laughter, and delectable flavors while pausing adult responsibilities. Whether you prefer intellectual sparring, live music, fresh-air exercise, or history, here are suggestions to break out of winter doldrums.

Tasty suggestions are included because your favorite cooking shows are purely for entertainment. Scraping ice off a windshield is a small price to pay for this much fun and flavor.

TRIVIA: Is your brain packed with decades of TV and music details? Do you recognize celebrities? Compete in five fast-paced rounds at the Best Trivia Night Ever on Tuesdays from 7:00 – 9:00 pm at The Barn 13 Fort Hill Rd., Groton. Munch on complimentary CHEX mix or warm up with Woodfellas' delectable wood-fired pizza, freshly-pressed paninis, or crisp salads. Try ah-MAY-zing air-fried teriyaki or Buffalo jumbo wings, chili, and chowder with a drink from the well-stocked bar. Accumulated correct answers reap bragging rights and gift cards, while wrong answers add to the laugh-out-loud fun. Larger groups have a strategic advantage, but solo participants are entirely welcome. Thursday night Karaoke, abundant free

20 SOUND WAVES



parking, and a packed schedule of live music make every night worth going out. January acts include Young Rust, Don't Tell Lisa, The Best of Led Zeppelin, and more. barnct.com

OLD-TIME MUSIC: Travel to Louisiana on Wednesdays for Old-Time music and vibrant food via Bayou BBQ.



& Grill, 224 Shaw St., New London. Musicians play lively Appalachian-style tunes on fiddles, guitars, a squeeze-box, and sometimes a washboard from 6:30–8:00 pm. Voices occasionally join in with “Waiting for the Federals,” “Seneca Square Dance,” and other timeless melodies. Enjoy queso fundito, loaded nachos, or full meals surrounded by New Orleans inspired art and tin ceilings. A huge orange fish mural hangs above the sleek wooden bar. You're not likely to find deep-fried gator bites, but mildly-spicy gumbo and jambalaya tickle the taste buds really well. Enjoy

a mini vacation without a passport or plane ticket. The cheerful, timeless Americana music inspires hand-clapping, foot-stomping, and smiles. [bayouBBQandgrill](http://bayouBBQandgrill.com)

NAUTICAL HISTORY: Have you wondered what it is like inside a submarine, or what kind of person spends months crammed within a metal tube in the depths of the ocean? Do you know why Groton, CT, is considered the submarine capital of the world? Find these answers and more at the Submarine Force Library & Museum, 1 Crystal Lake Rd. Groton. Discover the history of the US submarine force and walk inside the USS NAUTILUS,



the world's first Nuclear-powered submarine. NAUTILUS passed under the North Pole in 1958 and is docked on the Thames River in Groton at the Naval Submarine Base. Nine spectacular outdoor exhibits dot the grounds, and QR codes unlock interactive experiences. The museum and grounds are fully accessible, but the submarine tour requires a bit of strength and coordination. Enjoy stunning river views from atop the sub, inside the museum, and from Nautilus Overlook Park. Open Wed. – Mon. 9:00–4:00 pm. Parking and admission are free, but donations are welcome. Stop into Mañana Café 970 Poquonock Rd. in Gorton for lunch or dinner for Tex-Mex favorites, authentic Mexican food, and creative drinks. The restaurant's cheerful décor and delicious food is suitable for all ages. usnautilus.org mananacafect.com

LIVE MUSIC & HAPPY HOUR: Are you driving around with hungry passengers and looking for any excuse to avoid making dinner? Stop in at Angie's Pizza & Pier 27 Lounge 25 Roosevelt Ave., Mystic; the red corner building across from the train station. From

www.swaves.com

3:00–6:00 pm Monday – Friday save half-off appetizers and a range of drinks in the adults-only Pier 27 Lounge or in the enclosed and heated all-ages patio. Take advantage of Angie's every day "buy 3 get 1 free" pizza deal to satisfy a crowd or enjoy an authentic Greek meal. Ages 21+ enjoy local musicians several nights a week with no cover charge. Find out why Angie's is where locals eat and local musicians play. angiespizzaandpier27lounge

NATURE HIKE: Work off holiday indulgences strolling through Connecticut's wild coastline at Barn Island Wildlife Management Area (249 Palmer Neck Rd. Pawcatuck/Stonington), Bluff Point State Park (55 Depot Rd. Groton), or Haley Farm State Park (24 Haley Farm Ln. Groton, CT). Trek pristine woods and wetlands beside shell-covered beaches and adjacent to Fisher's Island Sound. These and other local parks have free admission and parking during daylight hours, and well-behaved pets on leashes are welcome. Peaceful wood and water vistas provide gorgeous photo ops, and maps

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are available online. Stop by The Bridge Market, 118 Fort Hill Rd, and Groton for wood-fired pizza and uniquely-delicious sandwiches from 10:00 am - 7:00 pm on weekdays. Zoe Bear sandwich-



es and pizzas include freshly-grilled chicken, peanut satay sauce, cheese, and roasted garlic. Or warm up with Dog Watch BBQ at 20 Stonington Rd. in Mystic for award-winning, house-smoked BBQ, lobster rolls, burgers, salads, and more. Half-off Dog Watch appetizers and pizza from 4-6 pm every day and until 9 pm on Mondays. Stop in for \$12 pasta on Tuesdays or Thursday Date Night/Trivia Night specials. Barn Island Bluff Point State Park Haley Brook State Park bridgemarketgroton.com dogwatchcafe.com

WINTER SPORT: If you have fond memories of ice skating as a child, you're in luck. Ice skating remains awkward and notoriously painful on adult ankles and legs but is also nostalgic, affordable fun. Ice skating at the Washington Trust outdoor rink at 61 Main Street in downtown Westerly, RI, is weather-dependent through March. Hobble into CC O'Brien's 8 Mechanic St. Pawcatuck, CT, after skating for hot comfort foods, cold drinks, and warmth to soothe sore muscles. You've earned those delicious wings, luscious burgers, crispy fries, and fried fish, even if all you did was stand in the cold to watch others skate. WashingtonTrusticeskating.com ccobriens.com

Elizabeth Saede is a freelance writer and the author of *Lobster Summer* who has published articles and photos in *ThisIsMystic.com*, *Mystic Neighbors* magazine, *The Day*, and elsewhere. She loves to kayak, boat, fish, and promote this gorgeous shoreline community where notable food and entertainment thrive. ElizabethSaede@gmail.com

22 SOUND WAVES

LARRY MCCRAY CONTINUED

this feature on him. After four or five rings, a sleepy sounding voice said "Hello". After my introduction and stating the purpose of my call, he snapped alert and I could hear the smile in his voice."

Oh, my God!! Really, Frank!! WOW!! I feel so honored. Thank you!! Thank you!! And, please tell David Pottie I said thank you, too!!

"Larry, tell me about some of your experiences on the tour?"

Well, Frank, this was my first experience on a bus tour?

"REALLY?"

Yup, first time. 18 cities in 6 weeks. It was really something. Living out of a bag. Sleeping in the seats, funky shower arrangements, different foods than I'm used to eating. It was very interesting. It was great to hang around with and get to know the crew and some of the musicians better, like Jimmy Hall and Orbie Orbison, Roy's son, the drummer. Frank, it wore me out but I'd do it again in a heartbeat. But, I'd be better prepared next time. I am so honored that this experience opened the door for future opportunities and it gave a wider audience the opportunity to hear me and my music; for that I am eternally grateful. The audiences were so into the music and it energized me and the band to play our best. Truly something.

"You sound really tired, Larry."

Right after the tour, I went to Florida for 2 weeks to record some musical instruction videos. It was amazing. And, while there, I learned that my album, "BLUES WITHOUT YOU" is Number One Blues Album on ROCK REVIEW'S "Top 20 Albums of 2022" (The magazine cited it "a damn near perfect blues album and one that blues enthusiasts should be listening to and talking about for years.")

Also, Frank, from JAZZFUEL, I learned that I came in "The Top 25" as one of the greatest guitarists of all time. And, GUITAR TECHNIQUES MAGAZINE, RAW RAMP, FIREWORKS MAGAZINE, ROCK AND BLUES MUSE had high praise.

(Additional quotes in the magazines included: "a truly magnificent work of blues art"; "one of the strongest blues guitar albums released for many years."; "Fresh and contemporary with a nod to the past." And, BLUES ROCK REVIEW, defined Larry's title track "BLUES WITHOUT YOU (For Paul)" as a "career defining song" that could rival "THE THRILL IS GONE" or other blues classics.)

"Wow, Larry, that is such well deserved high praise. So, what's next for Larry McCray. More shows, another tour? You coming back East around here?"

(Chuckling) Well, Frank, the first thing I'm going to do is catch up on my sleep in my own bed. As for the gigs, I've got a few lined up and it will be seen if I get back out on tour with Devon and the boys or with others. I'd love to come back East and see you all again. Please tell Jim Carty and Holly Harris I said "Hello".

"Larry, I bet you hadn't had the time to watch the video of the TV show we did at Jim's party and my wife, Laura, videoed?"

No, I hadn't. Been so busy. You sent it to me, right? You know what I'm going to do right now when I get off the phone, Frank? Now that I'm awake, I'm going to pull up YOU TUBE on my TV and watch "TALK n TUNES". Doing that was so much fun. And, please give my regards to your beautiful wife, Laura.

"Do you remember how I closed the show, Larry. I told you that all that Grammy stuff, your awards and praise was all well and good, but now you know "YOU REALLY MADE IT" by appearing on "TALK n TUNES?"

As they say in show-biz, "Leave 'em Laughing"



www.swaves.com

HEARING AID



The Boneshakers

"One Foot In The Groove"

Take It To The Bridge Records

The Boneshakers first came into the blues roots scene twenty-five years ago, with their album *Book Of Spells*, which included the hit *Cold Sweat*. To get back to that original vibe, their latest album, *One Foot In The Groove*, has been produced by John Wooler, who originally signed the band and produced their early albums. Guitarist Randy Jacobs leads the musical ensemble, which includes a prominent role of musicians and backing vocalists; to which a new voice, a true force in the world of power vocals in the person of Jenny Langer, has been added. The result is ten tracks of fresh interpretations of old songs along with some new compositions, the former played with an energy and musicality that creates a whole new reality separate from the origins of the songs.

This is immediately clear on the opening track, a funk-driven, rhythmic cover of Mr. Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore, co-written by Bob Dylan with Don Was of Was (Not Was); it is a sound one strains to rectify with Dylan, yet shows the universality of his words on paper. This is followed by an instrumentally-embellished, equally funky version of the Stones' *Let's Spend The Night Together*. On this track, both Langer's vocals and the backing musicians are given room to soar and shine. Jenny Langer's voice throughout is expressive, powerful and nuanced, with a touch of a rough edge that inflects her blues with raw emotion. This is on display in the wide-ranging emotions of *I Am The Blues*, the feelings as present in the soft or surging passages.

Randy Jacobs, meanwhile, provides a

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finely balanced accent of guitar throughout, adding to the songs without distracting from them. This changes up on the Jacobs/Langer collaboration, *Big Legged Man*, on which Randy Jacobs opens up with his guitar licks, playing off Langers vocals with powerful effect. The theme of energetic, funk-driven blues, whether fast paced or slowed down, carries through this entire album, accented by Jenny Langer's ever-expressive vocals. This album is an excellent soundtrack for any who enjoy some good funk music with impassioned singing. More info may be found at officialbone-shakers.com, or on their Facebook page.

- Jon Persson



TAS CRU

"Riffin' The Blues"

SubCat Records

Riffin The Blues is produced by Tas Cru but also gets a little bit of help from his friends, most notably Mike Zito (Gulf Coast Records) and renowned keyboardist, Bruce Katz. Mike puts his guitar stamp on two songs, the album's title track and the closing track, *"Memphis Gone"*. And Katz contributes his world-class piano and Organ talent on ten of the album's eleven songs. This is my tenth review of a CD that includes Mike Zito as either the head liner or guest guitarist, and it's the second time I reviewed a Tas Cru album. Like a fine wine, Tas only gets better and better. I liked his first album I reviewed two years ago but I absolutely love this one. The idea of building songs around simple riffs is not only courageous it's genius. Other musicians on this project include Bob Purdy on Bass, Andy Hearn on Drums, and Mary Ann Casale doing Backup Vocals.

Riffin The Blues is an excellent title for this

album because these great songs are structured around "riffs". For you non-musicians it's that relentless melody that grabs you and just won't let go! It's the melodic hook you sing in the shower, or while driving your car, and stays with you all day long! Right from the title track, *"Riffin The Blues"*, you clearly hear the walking bass line that carries the song into a heavy shuffle, well-suited for blues-rock guitar master Mike Zito. On *"Brown Liquor Woman"*, the song starts off with a simple chicken picking guitar riff but when Katz adds his sizzling piano playing the song flourishes into full sound mode ready for a two-step country dance. In *"Stand Up"*, Tas opens with a tasty infused rock riff on his call to-action. In *"One More Time"*, Katz keys clearly creates a harmonious marriage with Tas' soulful guitar playing, and when you add his vocals you get a very respectable impassioned ballad. Truly a soulful 12 bar blues. In *"Throw It All Away"*, somehow this song reminds me of a Frank Zappa tune with similar vocals and style. Tas' guitar riff again is the prominent foundation for *"Crazy Getting In My Way"*. In *"Heal My Misery"* is where Tas gets his funky groove on, and *"House of the Blues"* is another soulful ballad with the spot light on Tas' great guitar playing and where Mary Ann Casale's backup vocals really shine.

You'll find more excellent vocals on *"Let It Happen"*, where Tas' Lenny Cohen style raspy voice harmonizes beautifully with Casale's rich, smooth vocals. And a little behind the scenes info, *"Miss This Man"* was actually co-penned by Mary Ann Casale where Tas' vocal melody follows the piano line and is another Tas Cru feel good song. *"Memphis Gon'e"* closes the album with a song whose vocal melody is enhanced by the haunting echos of Mike Zito's slide guitar and the beautiful melancholy theme evoked by Tas' voice and rich backup vocals. By now you know I highly recommend buying this CD. *Riffin The Blues* is only available direct from www.TasCru.com. Well worth the price of admission, and I'll do one better, this album is going on my personal play list.

Until Next Time – Adrian Webb

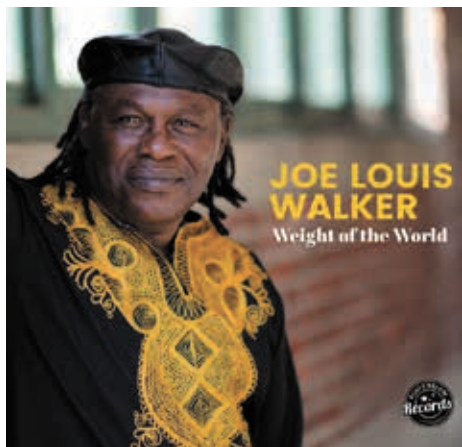
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SOUND WAVES 23



JOE LEWIS WALKER

"Weight Of The World"

Forty Below Records

Today I have an album review for you so new and hot off the press, it won't be available to the retail market until Feb'23. It's from the legendary blues artist Joe Louis Walker, a Blues Hall of Fame inductee and four-time Blues Music Award winner who celebrates a career that exceeds a half century. Walker has shared the stage and musically collaborated with a diverse group of first-rate artists including Branford Marsalis, James Cotton, Tower of Power, Bonnie Raitt, Buddy Guy, and Taj Mahal to name a few.

My hats off to our editor who was able to get a pre-sale copy.

Weight Of The World was recorded by Forty Five Below Records just outside of Woodstock, NY, with musicians Scott Milici (Keys), John Medeiros Jr. (Drums), Geoff Murfitt (Bass), Eddie Jackson (Bongos), Marc Pender (Trumpet), David Ralicke (Saxophone), Eric Gorfain (Violins), Gia Ciambotti (Background Vocals) and Producer Eric Corne (Background Vocals, Guitar), who also engineered and mixed the album.

Weight Of The World opens with a comfortable, easy going, bluesy gospel style song with great organ playing and backup vocals. If you close your eyes you could see the backup singers in choir robes singing on the church stage. "It's A Matter Of Time" ramps up the mood with an upbeat tempo and a great horn section. Next up we have "Hello, It's The Blues" which unfortunately is a forgettable slow blues ballad, even a little corny and outdated. In "Waking Up The Dead" Walker picks up the pace from the previous track but maintains that outdated theme with a slide guitar that sounds more like a Kazoo than anything else. The beat is monotonous and I found the song overall to be boring. "Don't Walk Out That Door" is finally a track that I really enjoyed. Yes, it's another comfortable, easy going bluesy

24 SOUND WAVES

style song but this time more reminiscent of Smokey Robinson & The Miracles, or The Temptations. Probably appreciated by more of a mature audience. "Count Your Chickens" is where Walker gets his funk-on, and "Blue Mirror" is a really well done 60's Chuck Berry style boogie woogie that will definitely transport you to the "sock-hop" at the local high school gym. Just think of the movie "Back To The Future". "Root Down" is a heavy hitting Chicago style blues true to form and in "Bed Of Roses" we have a slinky, sensuous bluesy tune that I can easily see as the opening sound track for a James Bond film. Very cool, very smooth! On the final track "You Got Me Whipped", Walker uses bongos as part of his percussion section. Bongos... really?? As a drummer/guitarist myself I see so many other options he could have used on this song. Maybe add horns? But definitely get rid of the Bongos. Sadly, I can't give this CD title a buy recommendation. This is only my opinion but when I like less than half of the titles on a CD I would say let this one go. Weight Of The World will be available on Amazon and FortyBelowRecords.com in mid Feb, 2023

Until Next Time – Adrian Webb

To my regulars - it's never too late to Wish All Of You a Happy & Healthy 2023.

This year will commemorate my fourth year of writing for Sound Waves Magazine.

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The Bargain

"'22"

Bonehead Studios
and Shandyland Studios

The Bargain is a trio of musicians and songwriters based in New Haven, their name drawn from a self-proclaimed legend featured in their promotional materials: "A bargain was struck with the devil and each other to write, record, and perform

the songs we lasso while sitting around the kitchen table." With such a deep, urban, yet domestic origin story, it follows that some songs of serious introspection and observation would find their way into the works of this band; and so it does, prominent on this eighth album, starkly titled: '22.

The tone is quickly set on the opening track, Garden Of Sorrows, with the hook line "it's in the very nature of the common man, to grow a Garden Of Sorrows for the quick and the damned." A subdued rhythm-guitar beginning moves into some hard paced rock and roll. Last Sunrise is a contemplative piece, finger-style guitar setting the mood, which ponders mortality with "how do you want to spend your time, if this is your last sunrise." The tempo picks up a bit, some slide guitar giving the song a roots and country feel.

Sitting at that kitchen table lassoing songs are Frank Critelli, Muddy Rivers, and Shandy Lawson, who provide the vocals, rhythm, and lead guitars which bring the sounds to the songs. They are joined on this album by Bobo Lavorgna on bass, Jim Stavris on drums, and Mark Mirando on keyboards; the latter add layers of flavor to the songs, though the core sound remains the original trio's. All of which comes together on The Imposter, with bass and drums nicely underscoring the rhythm guitar and vocals, carrying into some melodic lead guitar. Funhouse Mirror continues this theme, but at a quicker tempo, with intricate guitar riffs. Real Time features a mandolin introduction and more intricate guitar, setting a reflective mood for reminiscing about past days, past things, contrasting with our present, Real Times.

More info about The Bargain, their albums, and live shows may be found at thebargain.bandcamp.com, or on their Facebook page.

- Jon Persson



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Ken is the award winning author of The Code Name Series of books. The series is based on his father's experiences behind enemy lines in World War II. He has won awards in the Readers' Favorite contest, The NABE Pinnacle Awards in Military Fiction, and Hollywood, Paris, and New York Book Festivals.

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FRIDAY, 02.10.23 | 8 PM

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SUNDAY, 03.12.23 | 3 PM

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TUESDAY, 03.21.23 | 7:30 PM

The true heirs of Ireland's folk heritage return to the Garde celebrating 15 years at the top of their game, they will be joined by Gaelic Storm with 20 years of their own success. A magic evening for all. Co-presented with the Katharine Hepburn Cultural Arts Center.

KENNY WAYNE SHEPHERD BAND

TROUBLE IS...25TH ANNIVERSARY TOUR

SUNDAY, 03.26.23 | 7 PM

Twenty five years into his recording career Kenny Wayne Shepherd continues to create genre-defining blues-infused rock n' roll. Shepherd has built an enviable resume as an accomplished recording artist, a riveting live performer and on of the most talented and distinctive guitarists of his generation. The Kenny Wayne Shepherd Band will take the Garde stage to perform his classic album Trouble Is... in its entirety.

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FRIDAY, 06.23.23 | 8 PM

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FRIDAY, 09.29.23 | 8 PM

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