



Publisher/Editor in Chief—Bruce Hall

Volume 87 Number 2 — July / August 2022

Brooke Blackburn Memphis BOUND !



Photo Credit Janet Alilovic TBS

The judges had their work cut out for them with all these talented acts to choose from. In the end, it was the fabulous Brooke Blackburn who was chosen to represent the Grand River Blues Society. He'll be doing us proud at the International Blues Challenge in 2023. Congratulations Brooke and good luck in Memphis.

Thank you to all the performers, volunteers and patrons for your tireless support!

Grand River Blues Society Solo Duo Competition

Road To Memphis 2023

On March 27th at Stonewalls Restaurant in Hamilton, the Grand River Blues Society judges chose the world-class Bywater Call as the band representative for the International Blues Challenge in Memphis (In January 2023. Now it's the solo/duos time to shine. Bobby O'Briens in Kitchener hosted the solo/duo competition on Sunday, May 29. With the delightful MC Fiona Macfarlane playing musical ringmaster, the lucky attendees were treated to seven incredible, talented acts.

Lester Smith



Lester Smith kicked things off with an impressive harmonica solo. This was followed up by a few amazing rootsy blues numbers that had everybody taking notice, including tunes from his recently released CD 'Another Day in Paradise'. Lester is the current front-man/harp master for the legendary band, Crowbar and a former member of Hamilton blues mainstays Trickbag.

The veteran performer showcased his great lyrical prowess, guitar slinging and harmonica skills. A fabulous start to a soon-to-be-epic event! <https://www.facebook.com/people/Lester-Smith/100063074808866/>

Jim Dan Dee Duo



Next up was the Jim Dan Dee Duo featuring James Stefanuk (guitar/vocals) & Bobby Sewerynek (sax) - a stripped down but still powerful version of the Jim Dan Dee Band. Their sophomore album 'Real Blues' has been receiving much-deserved national and international acclaim as of late. The two focused on tracks from the release and wowed the crowd with their traditional blues sound with a one-two punch of originals and few covers. <http://jimdandee.com/>

Grand River Blues Society Solo Duo Competition Road To Memphis 2023

(con't)

Ackroyd and Jackson



Gayle Ackroyd & John Jackson followed up with a dual guitar attack packed with soul and emotion. The duo was tremendously energetic, infectious, super-talented and made sure everyone had a wonderful time. Gayle is a globe trotting singer, songwriter, guitar player, business owner, entertainer and teacher. John performed with the unforgettable band, Kensington Market, Loreena McKennitt and Perth County Conspiracy.

Big Dan & Toshi



After that, Big Dan Jeffares (guitar/vocals) and Toshi Otani (guitar, lap steel) took the stage. From different ends of the earth, the brilliant international duo delivered. This cultural divide manifested itself into quite a unique, layered sound. Thanks to Dan's meat and potatoes growl and Toshi's jazzy, flashy, intricate finger picking, the audience definitely experienced something many have never heard before.



Grand River Blues Society Solo Duo Competition Road To Memphis 2023

(con't)

Frank Cosentino



The next incredible performer was Frank Cosentino, a man known for his loud, wailing electric guitar sound. This time, Frank rocked the place with just his acoustic guitar, proving that he didn't need amps and distortion to move you. Armed with only

his commanding voice and impressive guitar skills, Frank took command of the stage. You could tell he's handled an axe since he was 5. That undeniable talent got him inducted as a Master Blues Guitarist in the Blues Hall of Fame in the USA in 2017!

<https://www.facebook.com/FrankCosentinoBand>

Brooke Blackburn

The remarkable acoustic music continued with Brooke Blackburn, whose glorious storytelling, soulful vocals and spirited guitar plating grabbed a hold of everyone and didn't let go until the end. His over three decades of experience was on display as he skillfully flowed through various styles with ease. All four of his astounding originals were well-received by the crowd as he took them on an emotional musical journey.

<https://www.facebook.com/blackburnbrothersmusic/>



Grand River Blues Society Solo Duo Competition Road To Memphis 2023

(con't)

The Vaudevillian



Lastly, attendees were treated to a visual feast as well as an extraordinary sonic experience when the Vaudevillian popped in. Consisting of Brendan Stephens aka “Jitterbug James” (resonator, harmonica, carzoobamaphone) and Norah Spades (washboard, spoons, vocals) the duo’s sound and look was a throwback to the pre-war blues era. Their interesting looking instruments were matched with fun, original songs made in classic ragtime style. <https://thevaudevillian.ca/>

Events like this would not exist without you! A special thank you goes to Fiona Macfarlane as our wonderful MC at the event and for keeping everyone informed and on time. Thank you also to the behind the scenes organizers, roadies, and stagehands Bruce Hall, Bob Barkshire, Chris Arsenault and Claude Cloutier and to Bobbie O'Brien's for offering the venue for this event.

Luis Pereira—Hamilton Blues Lovers

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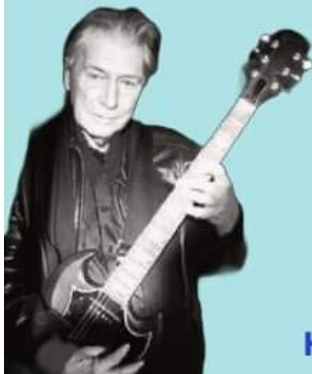
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2022 Blues Music Awards Winners the Blues Foundation Memphis TN

Bay Area guitarist Tommy Castro was the big winner at the annual Blues Music Awards, held the first week in May from Memphis. Castro took home three top prizes including the coveted B.B. King Entertainer of the Year Award and Album of the Year honors for his LP “A Bluesman Came to Town.” Castro’s group, The Painkillers, also earned the Band of the Year award.

Presented by the Memphis-based Blues Foundation, the Blues Music Awards recognize the year’s exceptional achievements in blues music recording, performance, and song writing. This year’s ceremonies — the 43rd edition of the awards — was held at Downtown Memphis’ Renasant Convention Center and marked the return of live ceremonies following two years of virtual awards, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Blues Foundation Memphis TN

<https://blues.org/>

B.B. King Entertainer of the Year - Tommy Castro

Album of the Year - Tommy Castro Presents A Bluesman Came To Town, Tommy Castro

Band of the Year - Tommy Castro & The Painkillers

Song of the Year - “I’d Climb Mountains”, written & performed by Selwyn Birchwood

Best Emerging Artist Album - Live On Beale Street: A Tribute to Bobby “Blue” Bland, Rodd Bland, and the Members Only Band

Acoustic Blues Album - Dear America, Eric Bibb

Blues Rock Album - Resurrection, Mike Zito

Contemporary Blues Album - 662, Kingfish

Soul Blues Album - Long As I Got My Guitar, Zac Harmon

Traditional Blues Album - Pinky’s Blues, Sue Foley

2022 Blues Music Awards Winners the Blues Foundation Memphis TN

(con't)

Acoustic Blues Artist - Keb' Mo'

Blues Rock Artist - Albert Castiglia

Contemporary Blues Female Artist - Vanessa Collier

Contemporary Blues Male Artist - Christone "Kingfish" Ingram

Soul Blues Female Artist - Annika Chambers

Soul Blues Male Artist - Curtis Salgado

Traditional Blues Female Artist (Koko Taylor Award) - Sue Foley

Traditional Blues Male Artist - Taj Mahal

Instrumentalist Bass - Danielle Nicole

Instrumentalist Drums - Tom Hambridge

Instrumentalist Guitar - Eric Gales

Instrumentalist Harmonica - Jason Ricci

Instrumentalist Horn - Jimmy Carpenter

Instrumentalist Piano (Pinetop Perkins Piano Player Award) - Mike Finnigan

Instrumentalist Vocals - John Németh

<https://blues.org/blues-music-awards/>



339 York Blvd, Hamilton, ON (905) 577-0808

<https://www.stonewallshamilton.com/>

ARE YOU READY ! GRAND RIVER BLUES CAMP ... IT'S BACK !!!

August 2 – 5, 2022

8:30a.m.-3:30p.m.

Cameron Heights Collegiate, 301 Charles St. E. Kitchener, ON (LRT at the door)

Like everything else around the globe, for the past two years the pandemic prevented the GRBS Blues Camp from taking place. Every year for the previous eleven, the week immediately prior to the TD KBF saw 50+ students and approximately a dozen amazing local musicians, jamming in empty School Board classrooms, learning how to play instruments, sing songs, and become musicians in a band and performance context.

2020 was to have been the 20th anniversary of the TD Kitchener Blues Festival and the 11th for the Camp. Springing forward to 2022, we're re-setting the clock and going for broke! Dennis Cuomo and George White, along with long time Musical Director Don Featherstone, Camp Directors Janet Wendell and Neil Tarswell as well GRBS representative Brenda Thyer, have been busy! On their work roster have been the tasks of inviting musicians, establishing fees, confirming a venue, talking to donors and sponsors, selecting a play list, and looking forward with anticipation to seeing new and returning students!

The Camp traditionally runs Tuesday through Friday of the first week of August. With only four days to become performance ready, there is no room for delay! Tuesday is a rapid-fire assessment day and finds Campers and musicians breaking off into groups based on instrument of choice: brass, guitar, bass, percussion, and keyboards! Vocalists also find a home room ASAP. Practicing professional musicians and their interns, the latter previous campers themselves, quickly determine who should be in which room, who should practice with which musician, who would be best at this or that song, this or that instrument in this or that song, who should solo and who should harmonize! It's fast and furious and by day the end of the day everybody is learning performance pieces. By rehearsal on Friday morning, the 50+ campers are in unison: buzzing like a hive and ready for show-time!

All joy and enthusiasm aside, the pandemic has been hard on the Camp: our instructors/musicians and sponsor/restaurants have suffered significantly over the past two years. In light of this we are extremely grateful to those who have continued to help out the Camp. Without their help we could not have operated the Camp. If you are interested in supporting this volunteer driven not-for-profit Camp, please contact us at grandriverbluescamp@gmail.com

More information including Registration can be found at
<https://www.grandriverblues.org/blues-camp.html>

Please Note: There may be some operational changes to camp to meet the required safety protocols due to COVID-19. We are monitoring this on a daily basis. If the camp has to be cancelled there will be a refund of all payments.

WILLY A'S CD REVIEW

Bettye Smith – **The Good, The Bad and The Bettye** (Ruf Records)

Bettye Smith, who will be appearing at this year's TD Kitchener Blues Fest, is the epitome of the word survivor. It wasn't enough that she was raised in Brooklyn's rough and tumble **Bedford- Stuyvesant** area (Bed-Stuy to the locals), she also suffered a deep personal hurt, that clung to her for years. I'll elaborate later in this review.

Ms. Smith is not your average Blues singer. Her Rockin' RnB, take no prisoners approach to her repertoire and vocals, will grab your attention from the first song and won't let go. With this recording, **The Good The Bad and The Bettye**, you'll hear her full range of musical influences, from gospel she heard in church to Soul music heard on the street corners. Wrap this in a blanket of Rock with a huge growling, insistent voice and you've got the makings of a truly diverse, what'll she do next, recording. Ms. Smith had a vision for the album and her producer, **Matt Patton (Drive By Truckers)**, totally got what



she was looking for. He immediately enlisted fellow (DBT) member, **Patterson Hood**, and **North Mississippi Allstar, Luther Dickinson**, to guest and provide creativity. The result is an album that's musically solid with just enough quirkiness to stand above the crowd.

“Fistful of Dollars” is the funky hard driving opener and the band is cookin' from the start. Horns punch out a relentless groove, while the chunky guitar wraps that groove so tight that it's a dancer's delight. Dare you not to shake your thing on this cut.

“Whistle Stop” really showcases Ms. Smith's voice, which conjures up a little **Betty Lavette**, a little **Macie Gray** and a little **Tina Turner**. It's the recollection of an ill-fated love that cuts like a knife and you can feel every drop of pain in her vocal.

<https://www.bettesmith.com/>

<https://www.rockandbluesmuse.com/2021/06/04/rock-and-soul-singer-bette-smith-releases-new-video-im-a-sinner/>

Willy A's Blues Music Reviews *(con't)*

"I'm a Sinner" really rocks the Blues and she bares her soul to mistakes made in the past that we all can surely relate to. Interesting too, how the song fades out to what appears to be an impromptu out take, with thirty seconds of vocal and acoustic guitar. One of those quirky moments that's very cool.

"I Felt It Too" is pure Rock, utilizing some interesting fuzz box guitar riffs.

Next up is **"Signs and Wonders"**, which unexpectedly relaxes the listener in a Southern Rock and Soul style, nicely helped along by **Luther Dickinson's** subtle, understated guitar. The ability of the album to switch gears from Soul to Blues to Pop friendly tunes, while always keeping a Rock undercurrent, is what I feel, gives Ms. Smith her edge over other artists of the Neo-Soul era.

"Song For a Friend", one of her Pop friendly tunes, is all about the people who are there for you when the times get tough while other so-called friends pull a disappearing act. This is followed by the slow Blues-Rock confession, **"Pine Belt Blues"** ("I was lost; now I'm found"), utilizing a full choir to gospelize the message.

"Everybody Needs Love" is a slow Rocker that maybe is stating the obvious but sometimes we lose the message and think we can go it on our own. Not easily done. Nice tune for jolting us back to reality. Ms. Smith apparently lost a family member and it haunted her for years. But she's finally reached that elusive mindset of acceptance and this song seems to reflect that transformation. She's moved on and this recording reflects the many stages her life has gone through.

Facing your demons and finally being able to express your feelings in words/songs is a huge step forward. She expresses it clearly in the closing number, **"Don't Skip Out On Me"**. Although not stated in any liner notes, the song reflects heavily on her mother, who abandoned her in her youth. It's very heartfelt.

In summary, this is a unique recording, produced by **Matt Patton**. There's a little musical something for everyone here and Bettye Smith is a true chameleon of styles and genres. I'm looking forward to catching her live show at the **2022 TD Kitchener Blues Festival** and coincidentally, her producer's band, **Drive By Truckers**, is playing the festival as well. It's a great opportunity to check them both out. See you there.

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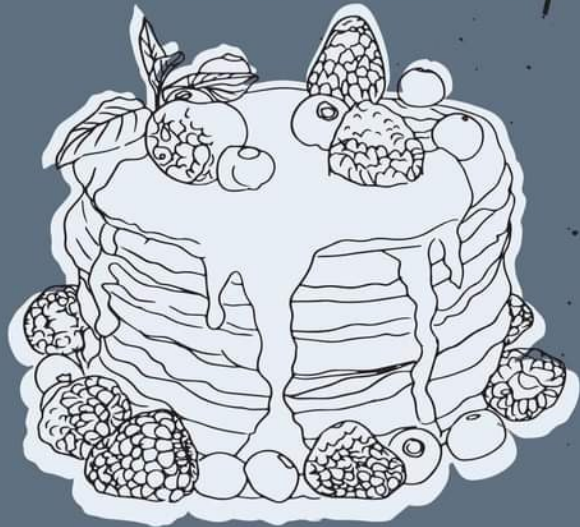
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Paisley Blues Festival May 31-June 2 Paisley ON
Orangeville Blues & Jazz Festival June 3-5 Orangeville ON
Pender Harbour Blues Festival June 3-4-5 Pender Harbour BC
Beaumont Blues and Roots June 17-18 Beaumont, AB
Edmundston Blues Festival June 17-18 Edmundston, NB
Toronto Jazz Festival June 24-July 3 Toronto ON
Vancouver Jazz Festival June 24-July 3 Vancouver BC
Montreal Jazz Festival June 30-July 9 Montreal QC
Tremblant Intl Blues July Mont Tremblant QC
Ottawa Blues Festival July 7-17 Ottawa ON
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Calgary Blues Festival July 25-31 Calgary AB
Kitchener Blues Festival August 4-7 Kitchener ON
Donnacona Blues Festival August 3-7 Donnacona QC
Nanaimo Blues Festival August 11-14 Nanaimo BC
Salmon Arm Roots & Blues August 18-21 Salmon Arm BC
Edmonton Blues Festival August 19-21 Edmonton AB
Markham Jazz Festival August 20-22 Markham ON
Trois Rivieres Blues Festival August 25-28 Trois Riviere QC
Limestone City Blues Festival August Kingston ON
North Bay Blues Festival September 1-4 North Bay ON
West Coast Blues Festival September 2-3 Goderich ON
Southside Shuffle September 9-11 Port Credit ON
Wasaga Beach Blues Festival September Wasaga Beach ON
Harvest Jazz & Blues Festival September 13-18 Fredricton NB

“Open Road” Wins the Juno Award

The Juno Awards took place on Sunday May 15, 2022



Congratulations to Colin James for his “19th” Juno Award Nomination and Win for “**Blues Album of The Year**” for OPEN ROAD.

He’s was in good company with other fantastic nominees Steve Marriner, Sue Foley, Colin Linden and Miss Emily.

<https://colinjames.com/>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colin_James

The JUNO Awards

<https://junoawards.ca/>

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CANADIAN BLUES STARS SHINE AT THE 25TH ANNUAL MAPLE BLUES AWARDS

*The Triumphant Return of Live Music Included Maple Blues Award Recipients from Across Canada
Steve Marriner, Sue Foley, and Colin James Sweep Awards*

Canadian Blues artists, industry, and fans gathered at Koerner Hall in Toronto to celebrate the return of in-person live music and the 25th annual Maple Blues Awards. Blues fans showed up and cheered on the performers and the winners at the gala event, which was hosted by Ottawa dynamo **Angelique Francis** and featured incredible performances from the MBA house band **The Maple Blues Band**, and guest performers **Bobby Dean Blackburn**, **Kat Danser**, **Sue Foley**, **Angelique Francis**, **Crystal Shawanda**, and **Colin Linden**.

The big winner of the night was **Steve Marriner**, who won four awards including Acoustic Act of the Year (Steve Marriner/David Gogo), Harmonica Player of the Year, Recording of the Year, and Songwriter of the Year. Other multiple award winners were **Colin James**, who took home awards for Male Vocalist of the Year and Electric Act of the Year. **Sue Foley** won awards for Guitarist of the Year, and Entertainer of the Year.

The Maple Blues Awards also honoured up-and-coming artists with the New Artist of the Year award, which went to Hamilton's **The Lowdown Dirty Mojos**.

This year there was a tie for Blues Booster of the Year award, shared by Kitchener Blues Festival Artistic Director **Claude Cloutier** and long-time St. John's Newfoundland radio host and champion of Canadian artists, **Terry Parsons**.

Powerful Toronto vocalist **Shakura S'Aida** was voted in at the Blues With A Feeling category by the blues-loving public for her long and varied career as a powerhouse performer, actress, and mentor.

The evening wrapped up with the popular After Glow party, hosted by Kingston's **Miss Emily** and featuring winners past and present jamming on the stage.

<https://torontobluesociety.com/archive/maple-blues-awards/25th-annual-maple-blues-awards/>



574 Lancaster St. W. Kitchener, ON N2K 1M3 519-743-4331

<https://lancsmokehouse.com/>

The 25th Annual Maple Blues Award Winners

Male Vocalist of the Year

Colin James

Female Vocalist of the Year

Miss Emily

Drummer of the Year

Lindsay Beaver

Keyboard Player of the Year

David Vest

New Artist /Group of the Year

The Lowdown Dirty Mojos

Blues Booster of the Year (tied)

Claude Cloutier & Terry Parsons

Acoustic Act of the Year

Steve Marriner / David Gogo

Electric Act of the Year

Colin James

Harmonica Player of the Year

Steve Marriner

Horn Player of the Year

Allison Young

Guitarist of the Year

Sue Foley

Bassist of the Year

Keith Picot

International Artist of the Year

Bonnie Raitt

Recording/ Producer of the Year

Steve Marriner - Hope Dies Last (Stony Plain)

Blues With A Feeling Award (Lifetime Achievement Award)

Shakura S'Aida

Songwriter of the Year

Steve Marriner

Entertainer of the Year

Sue Foley

For more information contact:

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sarah@sarahfrenchpublicity.com

Glenn Smith Toronto Blues Society
416-538-3885
info@torontobluessociety.com



Visit us on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/Grand-River-Blues-Society-408160155868047/>

Membership Has Its Benefits

We are pleased to announce to our members that our friends at **Encore Records** (*Queen Street, Kitchener*) have offered their support to the Grand River Blues Society by giving active members 10% off on all blues CD's. All members have to do to receive discount is show their membership card. This is a great way to spread the blues around and we thank **Encore Records** for their support.

Membership does have it perks, so be sure to keep your membership active!

Visit Our Blues Booth

Come on over and say "Hi" to your Board members and volunteers at our GRBS merchandise table.

Remember your purchases help financially support our programs!

Become a Member or Renew Your Membership
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	1 Year	3 Year
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Is this a renewal? Yes No

Membership #: _____

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Waterloo, ON N2J 4V1

Allow 6 weeks for processing

Grand River Blues Society Seeks a Secretary

We couldn't do what we do without great volunteers. There is currently a Secretary position in The Grand River Blues Society. We encourage Society members with experience or interest in this important task. If you are a GRBS member interested in becoming a Director and looking for information about how to get involved, please email grandriverblues@gmail.com

Your Grand River Blues Society

We continue to maintain strong membership numbers in our Grand River Blues Society with over 150 active members. Welcome to all our new members, and thank you to all who renewed!

Please continue to let people know about the Grand River Blues Society and tell them how to join. Better yet, pass on one of our new membership postcards and sign up some more members. If you need postcards, contact any of the Directors or e-mail the address noted below. You might also consider a membership for a friend or family member as a gift.

Also remember that as a member you are always welcome to attend the monthly meetings of the Board. Contact President Bruce Hall, via e-mail, at grandriverblues@gmail.com and let him know that you would like to attend. Another reminder: If you change your address, phone number or e-mail address, please let us know and be sure to subscribe to the Blues Buzz!

Grand River Blues Society

www.grandriverblues.org

Bruce Hall — President Claude Cloutier — Vice President

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Contact Information

Grand River Blues Society, P.O. Box 40109

Waterloo Town Square Post Office Waterloo, ON N2J 4V1

grandriverblues@gmail.com

Promote Your Event

If you are a blues artist, band or blues friendly venue with an event coming up, send your info to grandriverblues@gmail.com and we will get it into the weekly Blues Buzz. Be sure to provide all of the details and get the info to us early.



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Monthly Raffle Winner!

We have another winner of our bi-monthly draw. Each month one of our members is picked in a raffle for a blues related prize. Rick Guzik of Kitchener wins a 2022 TDKBF 20th Anniversary Tee Shirt and compilation Festival CD.

Next draw will be held in October. Keep your membership active to be eligible!

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Poster by Chris Arsenaull