



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello music lovers!

I want to let you know what actions we took during the recent pandemic with its many restrictions. Throughout 2020, TGGBS produced nine blues music videos using three different studios and launched these marvelous performances on three different platforms: Can't Stop The Blues, Howlive.tv, and Piedmont Piano. We showcased some amazing Bay Area talent such as Alabama Mike, Aki Kumar, Kyle Rowland, Al Von, HowellDevine, Neicey LivingSingle, Michael Skinner, Sam-One, and on June 24<sup>th</sup> we will sponsor Steve Freund & Jan Fanucchi. These performances will remain on our [YouTube channel](#) - available to the artists, fans, and promoters. We hope that you will subscribe to our new channel and enjoy these shows.

I recently created a tagline for TGGBS: "Your Gateway to Bay Area Blues." This has a multitude of meanings. TGGBS is a source and pathway to many significant experiences with blues music for musicians and fans alike. We want to thank each and every one of you for your vital donations and sponsorships. Membership dues are flowing in. When you donate to TGGBS, you are directly benefiting Bay Area artists. And for that we are grateful.

Yours Bluely,

Richard MacLaury, President of TGGBS

**HERE ARE OUR JUNE 2021 TOPICS:**

- EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH D’MAR & “DRUMS & MORE” by CATHY LEMONS
- RECOMMENDED BAY AREA SUMMER SHOWS (LIVE & LIVESTREAM)
- REVIEW OF CHRIS CAIN’S “RAISIN CAIN” by JOSPEH JORDAN
- STEVE FREUND & JAN FANUCCHI AT PIEDMONT PIANO (TGGBS SPONSORED)
- TGGBS 2ND SUNDAY JAM CALENDAR @ TURF CLUB – MICHAEL SKINNER
- STEVEN OVADIA “WORKING MOJO”
- BESSIE SMITH EMPRESS OF THE BLUES PODCAST (by KATHLEEN LAWTON)
- CLUB RE-OPENINGS/ UPDATES (BISCUITS, SALOON, CLUB FOX)
- 2021 BLUES MUSIC AWARD WINNERS
- 2020 WINNERS INTERNATIONAL SONGWRITING COMPETITION /BLUES
- CALL FOR SPONSORS AND VOLUNTEERS

**INTERVIEW WITH D’MAR ON “DRUMS & MORE”**



**About Derrick L. Martin**  
 Derrick L. Martin is a true musician who is an accomplished drummer, producer, artist, and songwriter with an impressive professional career that spans over 20 years. His works have placed him as the lead drummer for Little Richard for over 14 years, established him as an international musician, artist, executive producer for several independent artists and garnered him many TV performances. Most recently, Derrick was cast in a supporting role as Elgin Evans in the upcoming movie CHESS (scheduled for a 2009 release).

A passion for music and collective experiences have given Derrick the vision to form an interactive, informative, and energetic clinic and lecture series for all grade levels using the drums as the key ingredient. The workshops showcase the evolution of the drum-set and its uses and sounds throughout America’s music history. These workshops also draw parallels between the educational and practical uses of music and how music can bring success with school subjects, one’s attitude, pride, and ability to display good social skills.

Derrick continues to be a part of musical performances in many arenas and knows this is one of the few ways to pioneer new concepts in the area of study and one’s appreciation for all types of music and performances.

The Drums & More Workshop Series is set upon three levels: Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced Presentation.

**Beginner Presentation**  
 The Beginner Presentation is designed to engage students in grade levels 1 through 5 while learning about the drum-set’s role in music history and the drum-set’s components by name, sight, and sound. The main ingredient is audience participation! As a fun and interactive demonstration of the drum-set’s history is performed, students are selected to perform along with the demonstrator. This encourages team work and active listening for all students as they learn the various types of music. In addition, the congas, piano and electric percussion instruments are introduced. This level emphasizes the drum-set being used more as a musical instrument and means of communication rather than just a time keeper.

**Intermediate Presentation**  
 The Intermediate Presentation is formatted specifically for middle and high school students. The students are introduced to basic drum-set history and concepts, as well as marching, orchestral percussion, and rudimental drumming. Performance presentation, good practice habits, sight reading, discipline and audition techniques are highlighted to motivate students in striving for excellence. Furthermore, the Intermediate presentation can be tailored to fit the specific needs of your music program to enhance the student’s musical experience.

**Advanced Presentation**  
 The Advanced Presentation’s purpose is to expose college level students and professionals to studio and stage performance, as well as address how to determine the similarities and differences between the two. In addition, the participants are taught production methods on how to create just the right part for a song, programming and television performance. This level also emphasizes having and maintaining a positive attitude and personal development, which is one of the most important components to being successful, even above one’s ability to play.

**Booking Information**  
 To Book The Drums & More Workshop Series, please contact Derrick Martin at (601) 454-3745 or via email at dmar@airtightproductionsonline.com.



## DRUMS & MORE, AN INTERVIEW WITH DERRICK 'D'MAR' MARTIN

[Drums & More](#) is a clinic and lecture series developed by D'MAR that covers the history of the drum set and helps inspire students to embrace arts & education. This is an exclusive interview for The Golden Gate Blues Society. Cathy Lemons interviews and discusses with D'MAR his program and why it is so important.

*"I'm always telling children that music and arts are important because it teaches us discipline and conflict resolution. Music in general forces us to use both sides of our brain, the analytical and the creative parts. And that serves us in our life and makes us better people."*

CATHY LEMONS: Mr. Derrick D'MAR Martin is going to talk to us today about his brainchild, Drums & More. And I'm going to turn it over to D'MAR to explain briefly what this program is all about.

D'MAR: Well, first of all, thanks for having me and having an interest in talking about the program. It's a program created about 20 years ago; it's a workshop that I do for grades K – 12. I cover the history of the drum set and, also, the history of American popular music. I start with traditional forms of music, like from New Orleans. And we eventually get into hip hop. The interesting thing about the drums is that unlike wind or brass instruments, the modern drum kit traces to early twentieth century New Orleans and "Baby" Dodds. I talk about early history, and at the end of the program, I show the kids how to play the drums so they get a hands on experience. They're these little subliminal messages in drumming. We talk about the importance of great communication skills, having a good attitude, the importance of being able to read, the importance of mathematics. And then I tell them, "If you can count to 4, you can play music!" I go to a lot of schools and work with teachers who might have a theme or something they want me to focus on.

CL: So the drums are kind of like the musical grid for a student in music. It's the architecture that you begin with in some way; it's what's holding the music together -- understanding the two and the four. And you take this workshop to different schools from K - 12. If you're dealing with children, how young are the children?

DM: Well, I start with kindergarten, five or six years of age. And then we also go to high schools. I've been told for years now that it's hard for most people to keep kindergartners and second graders engaged—but they are focused in my class. I play the drums as much as I can

while I'm talking to them. I'm engaging with them all the time. And then at the end of the program, they're all looking forward to playing with me. They get their carrot. Because I tell them I will be inviting them up to play with me. They all get a kick out of it.

CL: Oh, my God, I can just picture it. How important do you think music is in public education here in the United States for children of all ages?

DM: Oh, I think it's the most important thing. I mean, I guess I'm by definition encouraging them to play by being there. I always ask how many students play an instrument. And I encourage every single student to play an instrument. And it's not necessarily to pursue a career in music, but it's so important. A traditional classical education is arts, literature, mathematics, and science. In the American school system, the arts are for the last few decades getting pushed to the side.

I'm always telling children that music and arts are important because it teaches us discipline, conflict resolution. Music in general forces us to use both sides of our brain, the analytical and the creative parts. And that serves us in our life and makes us better people. It makes us more thoughtful and makes us better thinkers.

CL: Yeah, when I was a kid growing up, there was a lot of music in schools. I was in a lot of different public schools because my mother moved us around a lot. There were always choirs that I was part of. Years later I began to hear in the news about music classes being terminated in public schools. Do Bay Area schools still have music programs?

DM: I'm a member of [Young Audiences of Northern California](#), which is an arts program that's been around for 60 years. They fund music in schools. And what I have discovered in going into the North Bay and San Francisco is that they have amazing music programs--both in the school and in after school programs. I did a workshop in one school in San Francisco and it was like a time warp. I heard a concert band, a choir, they had three or four ensembles. All the kids played instruments. It was amazing. And for the most part, most of the schools that I've gone to have some sort of music program as a mainstay. And that's why they get really interested in bringing in artists like myself. The school district has had relationships for decades with this organization YA-NC and they've invested in bringing in the arts. When the funding isn't there, [YA-NC](#) is able bring in artists like myself to keep music programs going.

CL: Oh, I am so, so happy to hear this, because personally, I kind of have a theory that when we started pushing the arts to the side in our public schools, that people began to see art as not important. And I agree with you that critical thinking is part of appreciating art. What I've been seeing is that there's sort of a downward turn in our culture right now. If you look at the songwriting and some of the product that's coming out and the way that the music industry

has sort of become three companies, it's sort of a monopoly now. Independent artists are struggling to get their voices heard more and more. I think what you're doing is so important because I think you probably are going to give a child hope if they discover a hidden talent that they have and a focus and a place to put that talent.

Have you, in your 20 years of doing this work, found children that were exceptionally talented and watched them grow and become professional musicians?

DM: Oh, yes, of course. A friend of mine, Fernando Jones out of Chicago, he is involved with an organization called [The Blues Kids of America](#). He and I met some time ago. During the summers he facilitates these blues camps and even brings in professional musicians. And I participated for the last five to seven years. It's all grant funded. The kids audition. Some have become professional blues musicians. I would teach a group of kids, and later see them as professional musicians and songwriters doing their thing. Over the last 15 years or so, I have talked to children from those programs, and they would tell me, "Oh, my father now is gigging and playing drums and he attended your class when he was in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade!"

CL: Oh, that's so great.

DM: Oh yes. From time to time somebody will come up or send me an email or someone will send me their music and tell me about recording artists that were once in my class.

CL: Oh, that's so exciting. We've talked about little children and how you engage with them and how you invite them up to play -- how you're playing and demonstrating. So let's talk about high school kids. I know that high school kids can be tough. Tough to please, you know, rebellious to some degree, tuned out with their phones and stuff. So what's it like going in to a high school somewhere and teaching this course?

DM: Well, in middle school and high school kids are trying to figure out the cool stuff. I basically just kind of disarm them. I'll say, "Look, I know you guys are cool, but, can you this?" And I'd show them something on the drums. I do understand a lot of times when it comes to perceived behavioral problems in most cases those are defense mechanisms where a child is insecure about something. So they put on this facade. I will engage that person that seems to be the most apprehensive. I'll say "Come and help me do something." We make eye contact, we do a firm handshake, and that kind of breaks the glass. And I usually find somebody that seems to be "the guy" -- the kid that's least likely to want to participate.

*"I come from the same places --the same background. I was raised in a poor community. Your background or your environment does not necessarily have to define your destiny."*

Music is the tie that binds us all together. So at some point while I'm teaching, I'll cross the line of something that they're interested in. Regardless of age we can connect. We have, you know, a unified thinking. We build on mutual interest. When I was working in Alabama and Mississippi, I was going to certain schools. I would have teachers that would pick out particular young men that they thought were having problems. So I would do my presentations. But then I would also hang out for another hour with these young men that were picked by the teachers. I would just talk music or have conversations. I would tell them "I come from the same places –the same background. I was raised in a poor community. Your background or your environment does not necessarily have to define your destiny." I tell them "I was on the Tonight Show, I played with Little Richard, but you're important enough for me to be here to talk to you – it's all about you right now."

*"You have to respect me if you want me to respect you. I'm not deterred. I'm here to love you and support you in spite of what happens. There's nothing you can do to make me not love you and not be here to help you."*

I've done a lot of hip hop. And so, of course, you can drop these group names that they know of like Drake, for example. And they think, "This guy knows something about my generation." I also was a teenager. You have to find the common place to flow from so they understand that we are the same. I remember in one of the high schools, I had on a tangerine t-shirt. And one of the students did not like my shirt. So I engaged with him and said, "Let's talk about why my shirt offends you?" We started to discuss ideas. We started to deconstruct things. I'd say, "Let's talk about why you feel disrespected by my shirt. What do you think makes a man? What makes a human relationship?" Then they would start to share their ideas. I would say "You have to respect me if you want me to respect you. I'm not deterred. I'm here to love you and support you in spite of what happens. There's nothing you can do to make me not love you and not be here to help you. So let's have the conversation." It's just about knowing how to reach them in a different way.

CL: So the music and the "Drums and More" workshop becomes more than music. It becomes a mentoring program and a way of showing kids what can be done with their lives if you apply discipline and passion. You know, if we could encourage kids to be more of who they WANT to be instead of what everybody else thinks they should be, I think we'd have a lot more artists in this world. People that would not be afraid to say what they think or wear a tangerine t-shirt. You are probably wonderful with these kids.

What gave you the idea to do this? What started the program?

DM: Well, it started when I was a junior in college at the [Jackson State University](#) in Jackson, Mississippi. I was taking a class in jazz history and my professor challenged every person in the class before we had a list of projects. He said, "In order for you to understand your instrument you need to trace the lineage of that instrument before you learn how to play it." I had to find out as much as I could – who was the first person to play the drums, where did jazz drumming come from? Most of my classmates traced their woodwind instruments back to Europe. But I traced the drums back to "[Baby Dodds](#)" from New Orleans. And that's when I started to get the idea for a program. Later, my oldest son Jordan would have a parent day. And I would go to participate. I'd do a parent presentation on the drums. So I would just go wherever my kids were in school. And I started doing this program and I started talking about the history, which was based on my information that I got in college. And after doing it a couple of times, one teacher said, "You do realize that there are organizations that provide grants that will pay you to do just what you're already doing."

And that was 20 years ago. And of course, it just it keeps growing and morphing. I learn from my students. For example, I have a component on drum machine programming and studio stuff now because the kids are interested in that.

CL: That is incredible. It's kind of a magical thing that happens sometimes when we do the things we love to do and wind up getting paid for it.

DM: Yes! I think that's one of the reasons that the program is successful with children. I truly love what I am doing.

CL: That makes total sense to me. I have a another question, and this is a bigger, broader question in today's situation with covid-19. Out of all the industries that got hit, the music industry was hit the worst. And I think it's a reflection of our culture and the value of music in our culture. We should be supporting artists and we should be supporting young voices. We should be bringing music to schools, as you are doing, and encouraging children to be what they can be. You will save a life that way. I know a lot of kids that are very, very gifted, but they have nowhere to put it. So this is an opportunity to save a life, really.

So my question is this: why do you think music is important and why should the United States of America do more to support music?

DM: Well, for me, music is important because music is as fundamental as water. Without water we can't survive. And I think that's why people take it for granted so much – "Oh music is always there." No matter who you are or what you like, there is some always some kind of music that motivates you or inspires you. You celebrate with it.

*What we have to do now is use both sides of our brain. Artists have to use the creative side and the analytical. We have to be able to put these things down on paper. Because the people that make policy don't understand the value of art. They have millions of dollars, but we can't access that money if we don't know how to create a proposal and develop projects in black and white that quantify the benefit.*

CL: Well, why should the U.S. do more in terms of federal funding. Don't we need a president talking about the arts and our public figures pushing the arts? How do we shift this culture to appreciate artists? I mean, you know, me being a touring musician, it's really, really hard in the last decade, whereas before it was much better. The money was better, the clubs paid more, the guarantees were higher. And there's been a shift that I've noticed personally in my life where there's just this under devaluing of a performing artist. And I'm just wondering if you have any insights into how we might change that. Why, for example, it is so very important to have music and that musicians are paid.

DM: You know, you can trace it back to the moment when they cut federal funding for music programs. If you want to have a measuring stick, a barometer in a society, just take a look at their music and arts. When I was in my high school band, I could pick from a roomful of instruments. I could choose whatever instrument I wanted, a trumpet, a clarinet. There were free instruments right there for everyone to play. And everyone learned to read and write music.

When they cut funding, children's interest in music did not change. The emphasis went from art education to testing. I have friends that are band instructors now, and they said the band classes have been taken away. The focus became on how to pass a test.

CL: That was the Bush George W. Bush years. They got full on into testing; they thought that was the most important thing. They lost sight of reaching students and developing the talents they had. It's tragic in my opinion.

DM: You are right! It's a trickle-down effect. So the leaders of tomorrow are in school today. When we were in school, we became leaders in the arts. No matter what we did moving forward, whether it was in politics, banking, performing or whatever, we knew how important the arts were to our wellbeing. Now, many children today don't get to have experiences with the arts. When those children grow up and become leaders, they won't understand. For example, I was part of a group in Mississippi that lobbied the legislature on funding an arts program called [Pike School of Art](#) in McComb, Mississippi. And I just thought, oh, this will be easy to get these legislatures to fund this school. Then I learned as I was talking to these legislators that were voted in, people that are the smartest people, that they had no



understanding. I would tell them all the reasons that we needed this music program. And those people were looking at me like I was crazy. "What? Yeah, really? Are you serious?" And then I began to realize the problem: those people that write the laws, that write the policy, they don't have an understanding of the value of art.

*It's really frustrating as a musician to realize you can make more money through TALKING about what you do in an hour than you can gigging for two weeks.*

That's why the funding is cut. That's why testing and memorization of facts instead of critical thinking and art matter to them. We have to, as artists, put programs together and take art back into the classrooms. Artists have to now use the creative side and the analytical. We have to be able to put these things down on paper. Because the people that make policy don't understand creativity. They have millions of dollars, but we can't access that money if we don't know how to create a proposal and develop projects in black and white that quantify the benefit. It's really frustrating as a musician to realize you can make more money through getting a grant and TALKING about what you do in an hour than you can gigging for two weeks.

CL: Oh, dear Lord, are you serious?

DM: Well yes. With Young Audiences of Northern California, they have every year in January in New York performances through [APAP](#). all the theaters and venues from around the country book their performances for the year: music programs, performance artists, storytellers, and new music education. But you have to put it on paper to get the funding.

*Get in front of students so they can see music. Where there's an arts alliance, there's an avenue to find out how you can partner with schools. Put your skills in front of children, because if we all start doing that, we will affect the next generation. We have to start.*

I've seen this for the last 10 or 15 years. This lady principal at school told me, "When your program is in line with every one of the national reports, which is put out by the national education, blah, blah, blah. If you can show, point for point, where your program lines up with the rubric, there is no limit to the amount of money that you can receive in grants."

CL: What's a rubric?

DM: It's a term for policy or structure. It's interesting that all of the stuff that I'm doing in the classroom is stuff that we learn from just doing what we do as artists naturally. When I go into the classroom what I love and teach is not from a book. It's from what I learned as an

entertainer and a musician and from doing it for a living. I know how to reach these kids. I know this information is also important. It's valuable. We need to find ways to continue to get people that are writing policy to change the educational system in this country.

I think there's a direct line you can trace, this devaluing of the arts from policy and attitude. It started about 20 years ago, a direct line to devaluing musical artists. Now we have a situation where billion-dollar companies like Spotify cheat songwriters and performers. They get paid \$0.0033 - \$0.0054 per stream. I saw an [article](#) where the head of Spotify, Daniel Ek, said artists are lazy. "They just need to put out more content," he says. Like we are little mouse on a treadmill shoving him chunks of cash.

CL: Yeah, they exploit.

DM: But that comes down to laws and lobbyists and people that put things down on paper. I encourage everybody to put it on paper. I encourage people to support my program. But above all, I mean, everybody needs to speak out -- call your local supervisor in your city, call your senator -- ask them, "Where are we in the arts?" We've got a shot. I would love to see some changes so a child can see a working artist that's successful, in their school, and they are inspired. If they can't see a successful working musician, how are they going to become one? Every artist needs to have an educational component as a part of their plan. Something where they participate in a school district. Get in front of students so they can see music. Where there's an arts alliance, there's an avenue to find out how you can partner with schools. Put your skills in front of children, because if we all start doing that, we will affect the next generation. We have to start.

CL: We could inspire a whole new generation of music lovers and mentorship.

DM: Yeah, mentorship.

CL: I love what you're doing. Thank you so much for doing this interview. You're showing everyone what an artist like yourself, a great drummer, like yourself, can do in the world. But you're also showing the kids that you can come from a poor community and make a life for yourself just through grit and intelligence. And I think that's an amazing role model for these kids. D'MAR you're my hero today, and I'm going to thank you again.

DM: My pleasure.

**RECOMMENDED BAY AREA BLUES SHOWS:**



**The Daniel Castro Band,**  
Wednesday, Jun 9, 7 PM PDT on  
[Howlive.tv](https://www.howlive.tv) (Live Streaming Blues  
from the Club Fox Stage)

**Chris Cain,** Saturday, June 12, [Murphy's Irish Pub](#), 6 – 9 pm PDT, Murphy, CA.  
[TICKETS](#) (SOLD OUT)

**Terry Hiatt,** June 12, 6 – 9 PM PDT at [Poor House Bistro](#), San Jose

**Michael Skinner and The Final Touch band (with special guest Wanda Diamond),** Sunday,  
June 13, from 3 – 7 PM at [World Famous Turf Club](#), Hayward



**GG Amos,** Sunday, June 13 (every Sunday), 6 PM PDT  
[Gestalt](#), San Francisco Mission District

**Ben Rice,** Wednesday, Jun 16 @ 7:00PM - Streaming on [Howlive.tv](https://www.howlive.tv)

**Steve Freund & Jan Fanucchi**, *THE SHOWROOM SESSIONS: Streaming LIVE* from Piedmont Piano Company, Thursday, June 24, 2021 from 5 – 6:15 PM PDT

[WATCH ON FACEBOOK](#)

[TGGBS Interview with Steve & Jan - YouTube](#)



**Chris Cain**, Friday, June 25, [Elk's Lodge](#)/ San Mateo, 6:30 PM PDT (CD Release)

[TICKETS](#)

**Chris Cain**, Saturday, June 26, 2021 at [Empress Theater](#) /Vallejo, 8 pm PDT

[TICKETS](#)

**Chris Cain**, Saturday, July 3, [Poor House Bistro](#), 7 pm PDT, 7 - 10 PM PDT

Outdoor venue, tickets sold by the table \$40 to \$120

[TICKETS](#): [manager@poorhousebistro.com](mailto:manager@poorhousebistro.com)

**Wendy Dewitt with Takezo Takeda**, Monday, July 5, 6:00 -8:30 PM PDT, [Blue Wing Saloon](#), Upper Lake

**The Lucky Losers**, Sunday, August 1, 5 – 6:15 PM PDT, [Sunday Corte Madera Concert Series](#), Corte Madera

**Tommy Castro & The Painkillers**, Saturday, September 18, Cornerstone Craft Beer and Live Musi, 8:30 PM PDT

[TICKETS](#)



**Buddy Guy (Ally Venable opener) Thursday, September 2 PDT, [Uptown Theater](#), Napa, 8 PM PDT [PRE-SALE TICKETS](#)**

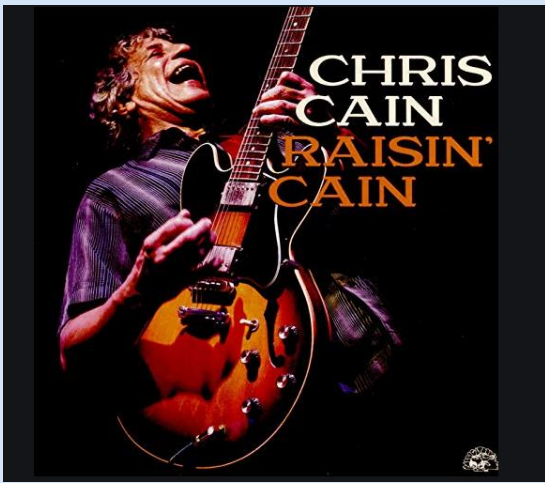
**Boz Scaggs, Thursday, September 16 PDT, [Uptown Theater](#), Napa [TICKETS](#)**



Also, always check out The Saloon in San Francisco for great blues acts such as [GG Amos](#), [Dave Workman](#), [The Lucky Losers](#), [Wendy Dewitt](#), [Daniel Castro](#), and more.

Click [HERE](#) to see The Saloon Schedule – OPENING IN JULY

## REVIEW OF CHRIS CAIN'S, "RAISIN' CAIN" (ALLIGATOR RECORDS) COURTESY OF BLUES MUSIC MAGAZINE (JOSEPH JORDAN)



Chris Cain has been near-legendary on the Northern California Blues Scene for decades.

The San Jose, CA-born Cain has previously released 14 indie and small-label recordings, and though all were regionally acclaimed, he's never broken out to the extent his talents were recognized beyond the Left Coast and impressively, several huge swaths of Europe, Scandinavia, Russia and Down Under.

Now with Blues powerhouse Alligator Records having signed the 64-year youngster, and the release of his sparkling new effort "Raisin' Cain," this extraordinarily talented musician will quite possibly gain the States' and perhaps the worldwide recognition he truly deserves.

Cain's a multi-Blues Music Award nominee who can be completely true to himself as well as give listeners musical hints and tips of the hat to many masters on his guitar. Along with his deep, rich and more than pleasing baritone vocals, he's a consummate musician.

The twelve, all-original songs on the album showcase the vocalist/guitarist/keyboardist/songwriter in his Blues element. The proceedings start off with the funky "Hush Money" where one can hear evidence of Cain's similar vocal style to that of B.B. King, a major influence on Chris' development as a musician.

The more than humorous "I Think I Got Off Cheap," is one of the strongest cuts on the record. Albert King rears his head with Cain's emulative playing, all the while making his solos solely his own.

"Down on the Ground" has a Gospel-feel as Cain's heartfelt vocals meet his lyrics of desperate, sorrowful living. It's a passionate statement brimming with empathy for the destitute and down-trodden. "Born to Play" is a slow Blues burner that fans of the genre will relish, and also features a loving auto-biographical story of a close family and his musical influences. Chris plays so easily, as to make listeners wonder at his prowess on guitar.

"Found a Way to Make Me Say Goodbye" has Cain speaking truth to a rotten girl-friend and lousy situation, with a positive plan to move out and on. The closing tune, the breezy instrumental "Space Force" ends the potent album, which is filled with superb playing, marvelous songs, and all featuring a "new" kid on the block.

With only a few guest artists contributing to the mix, his touring band backs him up wonderfully on the recording. Solid drummer Sky Garcia, dynamic bassist Steve Evans and the engaging Greg Rahn on keyboards just shine on the recording. Outstanding percussionist Derrick "D'Mar" Martin contributes to several tracks and the omni-present brilliance of Greaseland Studio's producer/musician Kid Andersen musical excellence is in force throughout. The four-piece horn section, led by arranger, sax-man Michael Peloquin increases the enjoyability of Cain's music with a touch of jazz and provides a punch to the overall proceedings.

Recognized since his breakout in 1987 by a pantheon of industry professionals and guitar heroes living and passed as one of the most brilliant and vital figures making music of any kind, the stellar album displays in full this heart full of chops artist. It will make newcomers to his music opine, "why haven't I known about this guy?" Well lucky listeners will know soon enough. We enthusiastically feel it's one of the top releases of the year, as Chris Cain bursts out with his thrilling Blues bravado throughout "Raisin' Cain."



### **STEVE FREUND & JAN FANUCCHI JUNE 24**

THE SHOWROOM SESSIONS: Streaming LIVE from Piedmont Piano Company

Thursday, June 24, 2021 from 5:00 – 6:15 PM

Watch the LIVE STREAM on [youtube](#) or [facebook](#)

Donations/tips accepted via [paypal.me/tggbs](https://www.paypal.me/tggbs) or Venmo @tggbs

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"Steve Freund is one of the most consistently creative guitarists playing blues today... a commanding, quite soulful vocalist." -Lee Hildebrandt, Living Blues Magazine

"He is a great guitarist!" -Vintage Guitar Magazine

“Steve Freund plays with real taste, drive, and creativity.” -Pete Welding, Downbeat  
Guitarist, producer and bandleader Steve Freund, praised by Rolling Stone for his "masterful, no-nonsense guitar work," continues to share his feeling for the blues wherever he can. Developing his love for American roots music, including blues and jazz, in Brooklyn during the 1960's, Steve moved to Chicago after meeting the legendary pianist and singer Sunnyland Slim, in 1969 at a show in Greenwich Village. Slim told Steve to “look me up when you come to Chicago.” That is exactly what the young guitarist did, arriving in 1976 and staying until 1994. During that period Freund played an average of 200 shows per year, with many being two or even three gigs a day. The list of blues masters he has worked with includes Sunnyland Slim, James Cotton, Big Walter Horton, Koko Taylor, Floyd Jones, Luther Allison, and many, many more. He also has appeared on well over fifty recordings, and is an established Delmark recording artist. His latest release is a collaboration with long time colleagues under the name of Rockwell Avenue Blues Band. In 1994, seeking a change, he moved to the San Francisco Bay Area where he continues to work regularly, with occasional road tours and European shows. His work in the Bay Area includes live shows and recordings with Boz Scaggs and Maria Muldaur.

Jan Fanucchi burst onto the San Francisco music scene in the early 1980's and created a hurricane of amazed fans and great reviews. Her powerful voice, combined with impeccable phrasing, many original tunes, and great taste in covers, kept her touring and working locally with her then musical partner, Doug Hamblin. After several years of non-stop work, she took time off to slow down and enjoy her life in California, but continued to play local Bay Area gigs with her own band. For the last 14 years she has been working with husband Steve Freund, a noted blues guitarist. Jan has been compared to Etta James for her powerful voice and delivery. She certainly does deliver the goods!!! She has played some highly prestigious venues and festivals, including Fillmore West, Slim's, Monterey Blues Festival, Redwood City Blues Festival, Great American Music Hall, and many others.



## JOANNA CONNOR DISCUSSES TASTE AND PRESENCE IN THE BLUES

A PORTION OF THE INTERVIEW  
FROM STEVE OVADIA'S "WORKING  
MOJO"



Steve Ovadia's project "Working Mojo" features in-depth interviews with blues artists about their songwriting process — a topic that's sorely under covered.

*Making 4801 South Indiana Avenue:*

Working Mojo: I was surprised you didn't write any songs on this one. How come?

Joanna Connor: To be honest, this is Joe's [Bonamassa, co-producer] vision for me. And he asked me, 'Do you trust me?' And I'm like, 'I have no reason not to [laughs]. You have a very good track record. I've made albums that I want to make. I've written songs, I've produced myself, and I'm game for whatever you're going to do. And I'll do the best I can.' So really everything about that record was his concept. He didn't force me. [He'd ask] 'Do you like the song?' I'm like, 'Yeah.' But everything on the record was him just guiding me through it.

WM: Did you pick any of the covers? Or were they all things he suggested to you?

Connor: He asked me about covers. And the only one I suggested was "I Feel So Good," Magic Sam, because we kind of did something like that in my band. But everything else, him and [co-producer] Josh Smith sat around and just started pulling up all [of] these [tunes]. We went through about 20 songs and came down to the ones we got.

WM: And how did you pick which ones you were going to do? Did you record all 20 of them?

Connor: No. The ones we recorded [were] the ones that are on the record. And literally the band was in and out of there within two days. Like they laid down everything. And I laid all my guitar solos down in two days, except for the last cut. We did everything live in the studio. The only thing we overdubbed was my vocal, a couple of solos from Joe, because he's playing rhythm the whole time, and the horns. That's it. And background vocals. Everything else is live.

WM: So what does it entail? Would you just listen to a song and then just go in and play it? Or were you sitting with it for a little bit to figure out what you wanted to do with it?

Connor: I landed on Sunday in Nashville and the next day went to Joe's house, with Josh, and we spent about eight, nine hours, going through songs, picking the keys that would go for my voice. And then him and Josh were hammering out arrangements with a notebook, pad, and their guitars, and then the next day I came back, we did a couple [of] more songs the same way. We finished it up and I played through a bunch of Joe's amps, and the next day we went in the studio. That was it.

WM: Wow. Were you thinking about it? I'm thinking of your vocals and your solos. Were you going home and thinking about what you were going to do the next day?

Connor: Nope [laughs]. The thing is that because I play so much, the last 10 years I'm probably averaging a minimum of 180 shows a year, if not to 230 or 240. I play so much in the sets for so long, I'm kind of just used to being an improviser and having played blues for so long, not that I'm an expert, but there's not too much you could throw at me that I wouldn't feel comfortable with. Plus having Joe there for the solos, I didn't plan anything.

Some of the things, Joe would say, 'Hey, I want you to play this really rough, like do like Hound Dog Taylor. I don't want it pretty.' There's a couple of solos that are much messier than I would usually do, but it's what he wanted. He's like 'Do blah, blah, blah.' Or some things he'd be like, 'Just hold one note here.' So he kind of guided me through some of the things and the rest was just me playing off the top of my head.

Now the vocals were a little bit [different], even though we did those in two days, he would have me sing and then if there were parts, he would sing some things to me, like, 'Hey, why don't you try it like this?' Or he would just get to the emotion of the song, kind of paint a verbal picture. It was very, very, very fresh, raw, and for the moment. Some of those songs I had never heard before, never sung before, never played before.

WM: Which were some of the ones that you've never heard or sang or played before?

Connor: "Please Help." The Albert King song, "For the Love of a Woman," we changed to "For The Love Of A Man," I had never done. I had never done "Bad News" by Luther Allison. I mean about half the songs. I'd never heard of "Destination," the opening track. Yeah, a lot. A lot of songs Josh wrote, I never heard [those], obviously [laughs]. I knew "Part Time Love." I knew "I Feel So Good," because I had done that. So really out of the whole record there's probably, shoot, two songs that I had known.

### *Taste and presence*

WM: Your guitar playing has a lot of melodies and hooks. Where does that come?

Connor: Thank you. I didn't know I did [laughs].

WM: I think you're joking, but your playing is melodic. There's a lot in it. It's not just like Guitar Center after school gets out.

Connor: I try to have taste. Because I'm a blues musician, [but] I think like a jazz musician. I'm not a jazz musician, per se. I've dabbled in it. I'm not at that level, but the idea of every night, even if I played a song a thousand times, I always bring something to the table that I'm feeling in the moment. I never played with a set list. Ever. I just go off what I feel is in the room on a gig or at the festival. Or in the studio, I just was vibing off of what was happening around me,

with all the great music that was being laid down. And it just felt so good. I think that's where my strength lies as a musician.

WM: If somebody asked you how to be present in the way that you are in the moment, what would you tell them? Because so many musicians are taught that preparation is the heart of performance.

Connor: Well it's funny, having been under this lockdown situation, which is the longest I've gone without gigging since I first was in a band at 17. I always played every week. The longest I ever had off was two weeks, when I had each child. They were both late—two weeks. I was supposed to take a month off, but it ended up being two weeks each time.

So I guess preparation-wise, I might run some scales to warm up or whatever. But I don't necessarily prepare. I think the only thing sometimes I do, especially with a really big show, or something with a lot of pressure involved, let's say, I'll kind of go into this little quiet space where I don't want to talk to a lot of people. People think I'm grumpy, but I'm just kind of going into that space, getting ready to bring some explosions to the situation [laughs]. I'm really about the moment with music.

I like structure, don't get me wrong. With my band we do have structure. We do have places we know we're going to go to and play a certain line. But I take 50% of what I do, even now, especially with the quality musicians, a lot of it's off the cuff, just going with the moment. I can't explain how I do it, it's just part of what makes me me, I guess.

WM: Because blues is so structured, how does that work for you? You want to be present and in the moment, but then you're working over like sort of similar sounding progressions. How do you keep it new and fresh, but then also stay within a defined structure?

Connor: That's been a real tricky scenario for me since I made my first record in 1989, in a sense of not playing at the blues. I'm hearing stuff now, and I'm not at purist, that are on the blues charts, and I end up going, 'How, in any kind of way, is this blues' [laughs]. I don't even hear the link in there. So I try to have some kind of root. And I've recorded some songs that are absolutely not blues, but for the most part there's always going to be that earthy quality, that bluesy quality, in the music.

[I've] backed people up and we literally will go and do like shuffle, shuffle, shuffle, slow blues, shuffle, shuffle, all night, and it's incredibly boring. And sometimes even in the same key. So when I'm doing a record or doing a show and it's blues, I'm cognizant of like, 'Okay, I'm not going to do a lot of songs in the same key in a row. I'm not going to play three slow blues in a row.' I'm going to try to appeal to the different rhythmic qualities of the blues. And I think you

hear that on the record. Some of this stuff is real swampy, some of it's more rock, and some of it's slow, some of it's minor, some of it's swinging. So we kind of brought in different aspects of blues, which I think, if you're going to listen to blues, that's a really important component. To keep it fresh.

As far as a blues thing, I mean, what's crazy about the blues is because it's such a "simple format," it's like an open canvas too, because you don't have like structured pop, where this is the tune, and there's really not a whole lot of room [to change things up], unless you're soloing, or maybe you're singing a little different cadence, whatever. But the song is what it is. There's jam bands and stuff, so I'm not going to paint all rock or pop like that, but there's a lot of music that you don't have that room to be expressive, in a sense. You're kind of limited to what the song is about, whereas in blues, it's a little bit more open.

WM: Do you like that openness?

Connor: Yeah, totally. That's what drew me to the blues too, because I heard it all my life. My mom played blues all my life, on records, and took me to concerts. I grew up in the 70s and I graduated in 1980, as [the] punk scene was coming along, and electronic drums and all this stuff; things that I wasn't too keen on, let's say.

I really appreciated the raw honesty of the blues and the passion and the emotion and the realness. It wasn't on MTV. There was no pretense about it. And a lot of the musicians were just really excellent musicians, too. I don't know. It kind of took over my life and I dove deeper and deeper into it during that time, because the 80s for me, the music...it wasn't the best time for me to listen to music, in my opinion [laughs]. That's just my opinion!

WM: I was hoping you would confess to being a big Depeche Mode fan.

Connor: Oh, nooooo. I mean, there were some bands that had some great music out there. But in my opinion, it was few and far between. But that's just my opinion. I can't speak for other people. What turns me on might totally not turn someone else on, so I'm not going to judge anybody about it.

### *Vocal mileage*

WM: Do you work on your vocals a lot too, like when you're not recording? Is that something you practice or exercise?

Connor: I should [laughs]. I started out as a singer. I did take some voice lessons. And I did take a voice class in college. But I know I don't do what I should with my voice. It's funny, because I did so much singing at the house gig I had, at the Kingston Mines, because it was so

many sets. My voice has gotten kind of a crispy edge to it now and it's gotten much deeper. I think it's from a lot of abuse. I mean, not too, too much. And I can still sing, but definitely weathered, let's put it that way. So it's a good blues voice now, but I had to be almost, you know, sixty years old to get it.

When I was younger, I would listen to my voice and go, 'Damn, it's so high.' I sound like a little kid when I hear some of my earlier records. I'm like, 'Oh, this is pre-puberty!' I went through puberty at 55 or whatever. But no, I don't practice, but I do like to sing with music, just for fun. And it's how I taught myself, too, just singing with different people. And I do think about what I do when I'm singing. I really think about things when I'm singing, like pulling up from my diaphragm. Not singing too much from my head, not pulling from my throat. I am aware of stuff.

WM: Would you say your singing is more deliberate than your guitar playing?

Connor: No, I think about my guitar playing too. I mean, I don't plan it out, but I do kind of look back at it. If I watch a video, [I'll see] what I could do differently. And I do think when I'm playing. I make it sound like I'm just flying by the seat of my pants. In my best moments, that's true, I'm not thinking at all, but other times I'm definitely thinking about what I'm doing instantaneously while I'm playing.

But I think with music, for me, the whole process is I analyze myself and try to think of what I can do to be better. Not just practicing but actually thinking about, okay, what if I sing this lyric like this or what if I bend my voice this way, and also, in my band, my drummer is a singer and he's a very good singer. And kind of listening to how he sings. I listen to a lot of people and the ones that I like, I [think] 'Okay, what are they doing that I really like? Is there any kind of way I could incorporate this?'

WM: Is it kind of like game film? Do you go back after every show and review it or is it just if something caught your ear during the show?

Connor: Oh, well, now that there's social media, I can go watch every show, pretty much. Somebody's going to post something. Back in the old days, no, I never would, of course. So that is kind of cool. I do watch it.

It's funny. Most of the time in my head, I'm like, 'Oh my God. That sucked. Oh. I missed that note.' And I tell my bass player, 'Man, I just didn't have it tonight.' And then I go watch later, I'm like, 'Oh, I sound good.' It impresses me, because in my head I'm thinking of every little [mistake]. 'Oh, that was wrong. Oh, I missed that.' I'm my own worst critic. I'm thinking so rapidly. Because things that seem such a big deal, it's like literally a split second. I'll look at it later and think 'Wow, that felt like eternity but it was like, half of a second.'

Read the full Interview published in “Working Mojo” [HERE](#). Published May 5, 2021 by Steve Ovadia.

Joanna Connor's new album “4801 South Indiana Avenue” is available from [www.ktbarecords.com](http://www.ktbarecords.com)

**BESSIE SMITH, EMPRESS OF THE BLUES (BY KATHLEEN LAWTON) ON PRX (PUBLIC RADIO EXCHANGE) & KCSM**



Bessie Smith, the Empress of the Blues, was a phenomenon in her time and her powerful voice and style continue to impact artists to this day. In “Bessie, Her Wild, Wild Life,” we look at her tragic beginning and rise to superstardom — and some of her incredible adventures along the way. Produced by KCSM's Kathleen Lawton who hosts “Crazy Bout The Blues.”

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Biscuits and Blues  
San Francisco, CA Photo By: Wilson Zhang  
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**CLUB FOX:** Vince Caminiti’s high quality live blues jam in Redwood City returns EVERY Wednesday, from July 14, 2021 forward!

**BISCUITS & BLUES:** Steven Suen and his partner Tina Zhou have survived the pandemic and plan to reopen Biscuits and Blues in San Francisco – possibly in September or October! Please support this national club.

**THE SALOON:** Myron Mu plans to open the Saloon in San Francisco at full capacity as early as July 2021.

**POOR HOUSE BISTRO:** Jay Meduri Jay is feeling the squeeze of development in downtown San Jose. Google has agreed to help him move the iconic club to Little Italy, only a half mile away. The Victorian home that houses the beloved New Orleans-style eatery and music venue will be moved near Henry's Hi-Life by the end of the year of 2021. Jay will rebrand as "Famiglia Meduri's Poor House Bistro."

### **BAY AREA WINNERS OF 2021 BLUES MUSIC AWARDS**



A pair of blues veterans in guitarist Elvin Bishop and Mississippi-born, Memphis-raised harp man Charlie Musselwhite won multiple awards for their joint LP, "100 Years of Blues." The record nabbed *Album of the Year* and *Traditional Blues Album* honors.

Rick Estrin & The Nightcats won *Band of The Year!*

Congratulations!



### **2021 BLUES MUSIC AWARDS WINNERS!**

B.B. King Entertainer of the Year: Shemekia Copeland

Album of the Year: "100 Years of Blues," Elvin Bishop and Charlie Musselwhite

Band of the Year: Rick Estrin & The Nightcats



Song of the Year: "All Out of Tears," written by Walter Trout, Marie Trout and Teeny Tucker (performed by Walter Trout)

Best Emerging Artist Album: "Harlem," King Solomon Hicks

Acoustic Blues Album: "Rawer Than Raw," Bobby Rush

Blues Rock Album: "Mike Zito and Friends - Rock 'n' Roll: A Tribute to Chuck Berry," Mike Zito

Contemporary Blues Album: "Uncivil War," Shemekia Copeland

Soul Blues Album: "That's What I Heard," Robert Cray Band

**Traditional Blues Album: "100 Years of Blues," Elvin Bishop and Charlie Musselwhite**

Acoustic Blues Artist: Keb' Mo'

Blues Rock Artist: Mike Zito

Contemporary Blues Female Artist: Shemekia Copeland

Contemporary Blues Male Artist: Christone "Kingfish" Ingram

Soul Blues Female Artist: Bettye LaVette

Soul Blues Male Artist: Curtis Salgado

Traditional Blues Female Artist (Koko Taylor Award): Rory Block

Traditional Blues Male Artist: John Primer

Instrumentalist - Bass: Danielle Nicole

Instrumentalist - Drums: Kenny "Beedy Eyes" Smith

Instrumentalist - Guitar: Christone "Kingfish" Ingram

Instrumentalist - Harmonica: Kim Wilson

Instrumentalist - Horn: Jimmy Carpenter

Instrumentalist - Piano (Pinetop Perkins Piano Player Award): Anthony Geraci

Instrumentalist - Vocals: Ruthie Foster



## WINNERS 2020 INTERNATIONAL SONGWRITING COMPETITION

1ST PLACE (Down in the River)

**Zechariah Lloyd (Zechariah Lloyd)**

Vicksburg, MS, USA

2ND PLACE (All My Dues Are Paid)

**Frank Bey, Rick Estrin, Christoffer Lund Andersen, Kathy Murray (Frank Bey)**

Philadelphia, PA, USA

3RD PLACE (Surrender)

**Clarence Spady (Clarence Spady)**

Scranton, PA, USA

HONORABLE MENTION: The Lucky Losers for “Godless Land” written by **Cathy Lemons & Kid Andersen.**

[Learn more](#)

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The purpose of The Golden Gate Blues Society is to enhance the appreciation and understanding of the Blues, especially in the Greater San Francisco Bay Area.