

BLUES IN BRITAIN

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ELLES BAILEY
Shadows And Light

The Head Hunters Blues Band
Christone Kingfish Ingram
Wille & The Bandits
John Mayall
Eric Gales

Welcome

Reading Pete Clack's feature on Steve Gibbons in January's issue (no. 241), I was reminded of the last time I saw Steve perform. It was at a charity concert held many moons ago in St. Peter's Church at Northleach, in Gloucestershire. Very much unpublished and unadvertised, the concert (in pre-Covid days) had become something of an annual event for locals (and anyone else who got to hear about it on whatever grapevine they had their ear pressed to), supported by the town's most famous son, Steve Winwood, who (often wearing what appeared to be a shepherd's hat and smock) unassumingly stuck to playing bass for the house band, rarely stepping into the spotlight except for the occasional lead vocal. This particular year was to prove somewhat special however. Both Steve's, Winwood and Gibbons, performed splendid short sets of rhythm and blues staples, but in truth their performances were somewhat overshadowed by the sight of a familiar, lion-maned figure who, amid an audible murmur of delight and anticipation, took his place in the half-light in front of the altar. The murmured rumours proved, for once, to have been true. Robert Plant is one of the very greatest rock singers there will ever be. But he's also one of the very greatest singers there will ever be in the history of popular music. Singing into a bog-standard mic, emitting through a small vocal p.a., he delivered a sublime 3-song set of folk-blues/Americana to perfection, pulled from his *Band Of Joy* album. I've seen Robert perform on many occasions, but this will be the one I remember. If anybody'd thought to bring one along, you could've heard a pin drop.

This issue, David Robinson talks to another living legend. John Mayall has announced his imminent retirement from the live circuit and we talk to him about his lengthy career, though to do that career justice would fill several books, let alone three pages. And then there's a potential legend in the making; our cover star, Elles Bailey who talks about her new album and the joys of motherhood. And still plenty of ink and paper for the fabulous Eric Gales, Christone 'Kingfish' Ingram, newcomers The Headhunters Blues Band, sax player Patsy Gamble and Wille Edwards, who leads a new brotherhood of Bandits into the fray once again. Enjoy!

Nicholas John
Editor
editor@bluesinbritain.org

Both Live and CD Reviews can be sent to:
review@bluesinbritain.org

For advertising enquires, contact Sue Murphy:
advertising@bluesinbritain.org

For subscriptions, contact Annabel St. Clair:
subscriptions@bluesinbritain.org



FEBRUARY NEWS

The Mark Pontin Group, Misty Blues, Daniel De Vita, Dust Radio, Jimmy Regal & The Royals and Five Points Gang are just some of the artists on the roster of London's **Lunaria Records**, which celebrates its 2nd Anniversary this month. Launched pre-pandemic by sax player **Chris Rand**, what was initially viewed as a way of getting artists out on stage and performing, turned into ten album releases – no mean feat in any circumstances, let alone ones hampered by lockdowns and restrictions. Despite the hurdles of COVID, the label has continued to grow with each new release and the musical output has been impressive and consistently innovative. "I wanted to start a label that offered artists a level playing-field to release their music," says Rand. "I never anticipated the label doing as well as it has. All our releases are getting airplay and the support from magazines and reviewers has been incredibly positive. Lunaria Records is now a part of my musical life, and I'm so excited to see how it develops this coming year." 2022 will see new releases from **Consummate Rogues** and Dorset cow-punks, **Pronghorn**.



"The Robert Johnson Blues Park will be a monumental tribute to a legendary bluesman for his ageless recordings from the 1930s, and to restore the history of the man behind the 29 songs which are still being performed today. It will be a global destination that will bring blues fans together, teach new generations the priceless history of the land, and inspire all musicians alike. As well as a tribute to the famous bluesman himself, the park entrance gate pays tribute to the State of Mississippi as the birthplace of the blues, which reflects the music of the blues branching out around the globe. The park will be the first of its kind in preserving a chapter of America's blues music history." So speaks **Earl Klatzel**, a Canadian artist specialising in blues music and its history, who is an integral part of the design team planning the proposed park. The Park will be run by the **Robert Johnson Blues Foundation**, an organisation dedicated to preserving the music and memory of Robert Johnson through the provision of art education, competitions and scholarships. Its President is **Steven Johnson**, grandson of Robert Johnson. More details and design images by Earl Klatzel can be found at www.earlyblues.org With thanks to Alan White.

Blues & Roots Radio Worldwide have announced their choice for the station's inaugural award for **Radio Presenter Of The Year 2021**. **Paul Long**, who had a long and distinguished career as a live music producer at the BBC and is perhaps best known in these pages as a member of **Catfish**, presents **Blues And Roots Connections** for the Canadian station, having been with them since their beginnings. Blues & Roots Radio's headquarters are in Toronto with a hub in Melbourne, Australia and connections all over the world. It presents 50 weekly radio shows in many varying



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