

Many an aspiring bluesboy stoked his passion by wearing out albums of the masters and sneaking into bars to hear the locals. Count **Ross William Perry** among them. But the young guitarist from Minnesota did his peers one better: He raided the library.

After discovering the wonders of blues guitarist Stevie Ray Vaughan, Perry made a shopping list of albums by musicians that Vaughan liked. "Then I went to the library and found a ton of books on the blues, and tried to track it that way," a very youthful-sounding Perry says. "In school we had study halls. I was never doing homework, I was reading books on music and the blues." Perry was primed at an early age to love music. His father owned a bar with live music, but more importantly jam sessions were held at the Perry house starting when Ross was about 3 years old.

A few years later he was given his first guitar. "I'd go out there in the living room and irritate them, strum my open-strung guitars as loud as I could and not make any music," Perry says with a chuckle.

"For the first couple of years Dad taught me chords, taught me some surf songs. Then when I was about 7, 8, 9, I wanted him to teach me a song. He said, 'You know what I think, it's time for you to learn on your own.'" Cutting the leash was tough on the young pup. "It really upset me. I didn't realize what he was doing back then, but I eventually figured how to play by ear."

His dad had records from the Rolling Stones, Creedence Clearwater Revival and Booker T. and the MGs. Perry and his buddies were naturally drawn to that music, "but we didn't really know why." "Then I stumbled upon Stevie Ray Vaughan. I started reading some interviews that he did and found out that the style of music that we really liked and didn't know what to call was called blues music." Perry formed his first band when he graduated from high school and has performed mainly in Minnesota, Iowa and Wisconsin.

"I enjoy writing. It's interesting to give your own perspective," Perry says, all of a sudden sounding older. "Playing other people's songs is great, but art is about expressing yourself and sometimes you feel like you can do that better playing your own material."

Perry says he struggles with his desire to remain true to the blues yet at the same time expand his horizons. "I don't want people to think that I forgot my roots. I'm torn between two things because I don't want to keep doing what Howlin' Wolf and Muddy Waters have done, I want to come up with my own thing. I don't want it to be a final destination."

Kevin Sheedy, The Wichita Eagle

Tuesday Night Blues 2022

All shows begin at 6:30

May 31: 7 Swings The Blues

June 7: Joyann Parker

June 14: Paul Tweed Band

June 21: Bridget Kelly Band

June 28: Tommy Bentz Band

July 5: Ross William Perry

July 12: Jay Stulo Band

July 19: Howard 'Guitar' Luedtke & Blue Max

July 26: Whyte Orfield Band

August 2: Josh Hoyer & Soul Colossal

August 9: Stefan Geisinger Band

August 16: Avey Grouws Band

August 23: Mark Cameron Band

August 30: Mojo Lemon

Find out more about the bands and listen to samples at TuesdayNightBlues.com



Tuesday Night Bluesletter

July 5, 2022 at Owen Park

Ross William Perry



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A Little About the Blues

With five Grammys, 14 Blues Foundation Awards, most recently for Best Acoustic Blues Artist in 2022, and a groundbreaking career spanning nearly 50 years under his belt, **Keb' Mo'** has got nothing left to prove. Just don't tell him that. "I may be turning 70," Keb' reflects, "but I'm still breathing and I'm still hungry. I'm still out there going for it every single day."

Born and raised in Compton, CA, Keb' began his remarkable journey at the age of 21, when he landed his first major gig playing with Jefferson Airplane violinist Papa John Creach. For the next 20 years, Keb' would work primarily behind the scenes, establishing himself as a respected guitarist, songwriter, and arranger with a unique gift for linking the past and present in his evocative playing and singing. Though he recorded a one-off album in 1980 under his birth name, Kevin Moore, it wasn't until 1994 that he would introduce the world to Keb' Mo' with the release of his widely acclaimed self-titled debut. Critics were quick to take note of Keb's modern, genre-bending take on old school sounds, and two years later, he garnered his first GRAMMY Award for Best Contemporary Blues Album with *Just Like You*. In the decades to come, Keb' would take home four more GRAMMY Awards; top the Billboard Blues Chart seven times; perform everywhere from Carnegie Hall to The White House; collaborate with many including Taj Mahal, Willie Nelson, Bonnie Raitt, The Chicks, and Lyle Lovett; have compositions recorded and sampled by artists as diverse as B.B. King, Zac Brown, and BTS; release signature guitars with both Gibson and Martin; compose music for television series like *Mike and Molly*, *Memphis Beat*, *B Positive*, and *Martha Stewart Living*; and earn the Americana Music Association's 2021 award for Lifetime Achievement in Performance.

In addition to his extraordinary musical output, Keb' also established himself as a captivating onscreen presence over the years, appearing as himself in Martin Scorsese's *The Blues*, Aaron Sorkin's *The West Wing*, and even the iconic children's series *Sesame Street*. He flexed his acting chops in a wide variety of projects, as well, portraying Robert Johnson in the 1998 documentary *Can't You Hear The Wind Howl*, *Howlin' Wolf* on CMT's *Sun Records*, and the ghostly bluesman *Possum* in John Sayles' 2007 film *Honeydripper*. A fixture on late night TV and award show stages, Keb' has also performed on *Letterman*, *Leno*, *Conan*, *Colbert*, and *Austin City Limits* in addition to appearing on nationally televised broadcasts from The Kennedy Center, The Ryman Auditorium, and Eric Clapton's *Crossroads Festival*.

(continued)

A passionate philanthropist and outspoken activist, Keb' has devoted countless hours and helped raise hundreds of thousands of dollars in support of social, environmental, and racial justice throughout his career. As a celebrity mentor with The Kennedy Center's Turnaround Arts Program, which began under the guidance of First Lady Michelle Obama and the President's Committee for the Arts and Humanities, Keb' "adopted" The Johnson School for Excellence in Chicago, where he teamed up with teachers, students, and parents to help develop a thriving arts education program, and as a longtime ambassador for the Playing For Change Foundation, he's supported the non-profit from its early days in its quest to provide free music education and basic needs like food, water, medicine, clothing, books, and school supplies to children around the world.

Bringing it all back home, Keb' looked to his own story for inspiration on his captivating new album, *Good To Be*, artfully linking the grit and groove of his Compton roots with strum and twang of his more recently adopted hometown of Nashville, TN, where he's lived and worked for the last eleven years. Drawing on country, folk, blues, and soul, the collection transcends genre and geography, weaving together a joyful, heartwarming, and relentlessly optimistic tapestry that manages to encompass the entirety of this once-in-a-generation artist's larger-than-life career. (courtesy of kebmo.com)

You can catch Keb' Mo' opening for Sheryl Crow at The Ledge Amphitheater in Wate Park, MN on July 5, 2022! Get your tickets soon!

Next Week (July 12, 2022)

Jay Stulo Band

Jay Stulo first picked up guitar at the age of 14, learning some basic chords from his father, a early rock-a-billy guitarist. He joined his first working bar band *gypsy rose* at the age of 17.

Jay hit the road early with Blues legend Luther Allison, then later with James Solberg. Jay co-founded founded *The Mighty Aces* in 1996 and toured full-time for a decade leading the *The Jay Stulo Band*.

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