

Blues music can be sad, but can also be about love, happiness, and healing the spirit. When I'm playing Blues, it's as if the music completely consumes me." ~ **Stefan Geisinger**

After hearing B.B. King live at the Regal, a then-17 Geisinger picked up a guitar and dug deep into the roots of Blues music. "Something touched me. King's impassioned voice and guitar playing made me tear up. I still get the same feeling when listening to - or performing - Blues today."

Geisinger, a native of Rice Lake, WI, honed his guitar skills for eight years; at age 23, ready to bring his distinctive style to live audiences, he formed The Stefan Geisinger Band with Buck Barrickman (The Pumps, "Cover To Cover") and Travis Nocolai (Big Back Yard; Greg Gilbertson, "Surviving The Echoes").

"When performing, I try to entice people to experience the same emotions I am. Playing Blues is the only means I have to share emotions with an audience. Music, to me, can express a happiness so intense that it makes you cry. For me, music is a feeling."

The Stefan Geisinger Band plays recognizable covers from Blues guitar greats such as Stevie Ray Vaughan, Albert King, Jimi Hendrix, and Howling Wolf, as well as original tunes.

"I write songs about current situations going on around me - the good and the bad. Whenever I'm experiencing a heightened mood, I pick up my guitar, put pencil to paper, and just let the words flow through me. Writing songs and expressing myself through both my lyrics and my guitar is like a double whammy; I get to share my feelings with the world by combining words with music."

Geisinger's expressive and skillful - not to mention spirited - performances have drawn rave reviews from audiences. Listeners often remark that there seems to be an old soul inhabiting such a relatively young Blues artist.

"When performing, I feel free. All worries slip away as they come out through my guitar. I close my eyes, and I'm transported to a different world. I hope to do that for listeners."

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

August 9, 2022 at Owen Park

Stefan Geisinger



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A Little About the Blues

Snatch it Back and Hold It? Messin' with the Kid? Many blues artists have covered these two songs and others by the Hoodoo Man, **Junior Wells**.

Wells was one bad dude, strutting across the stage like a harp-toting gangster, mesmerizing the crowd with his tough-guy antics and rib-sticking Chicago blues attack. Amazingly, Junior Wells kept at precisely this sort of thing for over 40 years; he was an active performer from the dawn of the '50s until his death in the late '90s. Born in Memphis in 1934, Wells learned his earliest harp licks from another future legend, Little Junior Parker, before he came to Chicago at age 12. In 1950, the teenager passed an impromptu audition for guitarists Louis and David Myers at a house party on the South Side, and the Deuces were born. When drummer Fred Below came aboard, they changed their name to the Aces.

When Little Walter left Muddy Waters in 1952 (in the wake of his hit instrumental "Juke"), Wells jumped ship to take his place with Waters. That didn't stop the Aces (who joined forces with Little Walter) from backing Wells on his initial sessions for States Records, though -- his debut produced some seminal Chicago blues efforts, including his first recording of "Hoodoo Man," a rollicking "Cut That Out," and the blazing instrumentals "Eagle Rock" and "Junior's Wail." More fireworks ensued the next year when he encored for States Records with a mournful "So All Alone" and the jumping "Lawdy! Lawdy!" (Muddy Waters moonlighted on guitar for the session). Wells was already exhibiting his tempestuous side -- he was allegedly AWOL from the Army at the time.

In 1957, Wells hooked up with producer Mel London, who owned the Chief and Profile labels. The association resulted in many of Wells' most enduring sides, including "I Could Cry" and the rock & rolling "Lovey Dovey Lovely One" in 1957, the grinding national R&B hit "Little by Little" (with Willie Dixon providing vocal harmony) in 1959, and the R&B-laced classic "Messin' with the Kid" in 1960 (sporting Earl Hooker's immaculate guitar work). Wells' harp was de-emphasized during this period on record in favor of his animated vocals. With Bob Koester producing, the harpist cut an all-time classic LP for Delmark in 1965. Hoodoo Man Blues vividly captured the feel of a typical Wells set at Theresa's Lounge, even though it was cut in a studio. With Buddy Guy (initially billed as "Friendly Chap" due to his contract with Chess) providing concise lead guitar, Wells laid down definitive versions of "Snatch It Back and Hold It," "You Don't Love Me," and "Chitlin' con Carne."

(continued)

Toward the end of his career, Wells just didn't seem to be into recording anymore; a pair of sets for Telarc in the early '90s were major disappointments, but his last studio session, 1997's *Come on in This House*, found him on the rebound and the critics noticed. The album won the W.C. Handy Blues Award for Traditional Blues Album in 1997. Even when he came up short in the studio, Wells remained a potent live attraction, cutting a familiar swaggering figure, commanding the attention of everyone in the room with one menacing yelp or a punctuating blast from his amplified harmonica. He continued performing until he was diagnosed with lymphatic cancer in the summer of 1997. That fall, he suffered a heart attack while undergoing treatment, sending him into a coma. Wells stayed in the coma until he passed away on January 15, 1998. A handful of compilations were released shortly after his death, as was the film *Blues Brothers 2000*, which featured a cameo by Wells. He is interred in the Oak Woods Cemetery in Chicago.

Wells told the following story, printed on the cover of *Hoodoo Man Blues*: "I went to this pawnshop downtown and the man had a harmonica priced at \$2.00. I got a job on a soda truck... played hookey from school ... worked all week and on Saturday the man gave me a dollar and a half. A dollar and a half! For a whole week of work. I went to the pawnshop and the man said the price was two dollars. I told him I had to have that harp. He walked away from the counter -- left the harp there. So I laid my dollar-and-a-half on the counter and picked up the harp. When my trial came up, the judge asked me why I did it. I told him I had to have that harp. The judge asked me to play it and when I did, he gave the man the 50 cents and hollered 'Case dismissed!'" (1948).

Biography by Bill Dahl for Allmusic.com

Next Week (August 16, 2022) Avey Grouws Band

Avey Grouws Band defies labels with their powerful Quad Cities sound, filled with blues, roots, rock and soul. Their sophomore album, "Tell Tale Heart", was recorded in Nashville, TN with Grammy award winner, Casey Vasner (Keb' Mo', Taj Mahal) during the pandemic. Released September 2021, "Tell Tale Heart" debuted at #7 on the Billboard Blues Album chart and continues to get positive reviews from publications like *Living Blues Magazine* and *Vintage Guitar Magazine*. Avey Grouws Band also hit #10 on the Billboard Blues Album chart with the 2020 debut album, "The Devil May Care".

The Tuesday Night Blues Story

In 2008 during an annual Blues fest called Coalition Blues a couple of Chippewa Valley Blues Society members were manning the membership table. Unfortunately for this one day festival, it was raining. With six acts scheduled and rain predicted for most of the day it was quickly becoming a non-event. In the back and forth of conversation the idea came up of spreading the fest out over a longer period in the summer. That is how the idea of Tuesday Night Blues On The River At Owen Park was hatched, or at least conceived. Later that fall these same members suggested that it was worth a try. The response in general was "sounds great, good luck with that". A committee was formed, and it began. Having several seasons on the books now, it's hard to believe how much of a struggle it was making those first shows happen

With no funding, very little experience, and a great passion for the blues and live music, the idea grew and eventually became the primary thrust of the Chippewa Valley Blues Society. With the promise of a small matching grant in that first season and a small group knocking doors for sponsors, it began to come to life. The Chippewa Valley is blessed with music events, but most wanted the musicians to contribute their time & talent. Tuesday Night Blues wanted to pay the talent as well as possible. We couldn't afford a lot, but justified it with the idea it was a Tuesday night gig, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., with a very easy load in/out. We actually pay better than some taverns, which isn't saying a lot.

The opening night was in the 60's and light rain. About 200-250 showed up. We were ecstatic. When you arrive you are presented a Tuesday Night Bluesletter, with a small amount of sponsor ads, a band bio, a segment of history of the blues, the annual schedule, and maybe a push to a local fundraiser or Blues On The Chippewa

We have had people come in to town from New York, Massachusetts, Florida, California, Chicago, St. Louis, all over. They are almost always impressed, reflecting that they don't have anything like this where they are from, and wishing they did. Every band wants to come back. Imagine a Tuesday Night crowd of 500 plus loving you, compared to the hit and miss bar crowds in modern America, with all the reasons not to go out to a bar on the weekend. Can you blame them?

You can read this entire article, originally published in 2013, by visiting TuesdayNightBlues.com/tnb-story.

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