



BOP Blues Club Festival Newsletter October 22nd – 25th 2020

Welcome to the BOP Blues Club Festival Newsletter, eagerly awaited by our fans from all around the World, (UK, South Africa, South America, Australia, Netherlands, Canada, Chicago, USA) New Zealand, Bay of Plenty and ...**Tamaki Makaurau (Auckland)**....

Well, where to start with our update of the 2020 Rotorua Blues Festival, such an amazing array of talented musicians from various parts of New Zealand and a couple of wonderful performers from Australia too.

What an incredible long Labour Weekend of live music we had in Rotorua starting with the Rotorua Night Markets on the Thursday Night where proceedings were kicked off by local duo Peri Grant and Jimmy Murray from “Hammer On” and then followed by another local act in “Nikau and the Natives”. With a good crowd in attendance enjoying good food and good music on a nice warm evening in town the Festival was off to a great start...



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Friday the 23rd saw a couple of regular events return for the Blues Festival, one of which was the Youth Workshop, sponsored by The Rock Shop and held at Rotorua Intermediate School with music teacher and BOP Blues Club member Rob Powley for students to learn music techniques from guest musicians Roy Hudson, lead singer and songwriter from Tauranga Band “Hybrid Blues”, local music icon’s Michael Barker playing drums, Peri Grant playing harmonica, local singer songwriter Alayna Powley and young up and coming guitar player, 13 year old Sean Lurman who travelled with his Mum from Hamilton to help Roy’s rhythm guitar with his polished lead guitar work. It was great for the students, who are all about Sean’s age, to see what is possible if you put in the practice.



Friday Night saw the other regular Festival event return to the Social Club in the form of a Meet and Greet night for musicians and punters alike. Comprising six bands from Rotorua and the wider Bay of Plenty area. The night was kicked off by local duo’s Keith and Lyndsey and then “Hammer On” followed by “Brown Dog & the Muttleys” from Tauranga who were joined on stage by our very own percussion Queen “Lady” Di Riddel, the “House Band” from Whakatane, Kawerau and Rotorua “Hybrid Blues” from Tauranga and then finally local band “Theory 89”. The fabulous atmosphere and ambience were emphasized by an active dance floor and many enjoying the lovely menu and bar service offered by the friendly Social Club staff.



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At Noon on Saturday 24th we once again were honored to have local Te Arawa FM radio personality Mercia Dawn-Yates MC to start proceedings for the Festival and started with a special Karakia. The Mayor of Rotorua, Hon Steve Chadwick, then officially opened the festival at our Eat Street Party at the Lakefront End of the restaurant precinct.



The well-known Local Rotorua band “Nikau and the Natives” started the festivities. Followed by a great performance from “Shotgun” from Hamilton who were representing the Hamilton Blues Society as part of the celebration of their 25th anniversary as a society.



The great “Flaming Mudcats” from Auckland “Kokomo” and “Hybrid Blues” both from Tauranga rounded out the afternoon with some polished musicianship all round. We were so lucky with the weather and it was just great to have an appreciative crowd enjoying the happy vibe. Especially the kids dancing and having fun too.



The Festivities continued during Saturday afternoon with also a line-up of bands occupying the stage at the “Social Club “from midday. Featuring Blues News, B Side Band, The House Band, Bruce Bisset, and Dr Blue – Mike McKeon.

The House Band



the Bruce Bisset Trio



Featuring Merenia

Dr Blue – Mike McKeon



The “Hamilton Blues Society bands” having the run of the Social Club Stage from 5pm till Midnight providing some foot tapping tunes throughout the day and night to keep the eager crowd moving and happy. Featuring Roger McKay, Conman, Hillman Hunters, Agnostic Contrarians, Magic & 3am Blues, Shotgun and Velvet Bulldozer



Arron the Sound Guru doing his magic

Added to that on Saturday we also saw a full day of live music held at the Rotorua Citizens Club with two stages on the go from late morning until late in the evening with an eclectic mix of traditional solo blues provided by the likes of very talented musicians “Moondog Blues” and “Dr Blue”- Mike McKeon right through to the beautiful, soulful and rhythmic tones of the superb Merenia Marin, a kiwi girl now residing in Sydney, performing with her bass playing Dad, BOP Blues Club Committee member Rob Gillies and the “House Band”.

These artists were also balanced by traditional Blues artists “Keith And Lyndsey” and the fuller sounds of “Blues News” and local bands like “Theory 89” and “Contraband”, “Hammer On” and “Nikau and the Natives” through to the even more full sounds of “Rumble Strip” from Hamilton and the fantastic “Lazy 50” who travelled all the way from Gisborne to provide their very energetic sound to the festival, just one of many, highlights of the weekend...



Saturday evening then saw us host the first of our two “Bumper Concerts” of the long weekend which kicked off with the “Dirty Tones” from Auckland providing a great mix of original tunes and covers alike followed by the extremely talented Fiona Cosgrove and her band of equally talented musicians “The Holy Pocket”. It was just fantastic to see Bruce Madden on his Hammond Organ providing an unrivalled and unique depth of sound rarely seen or heard these days.

“Brown Dog & the Muttleys” from Tauranga brought their usual energy to the stage and kept a great vibe going through the evening with yours truly unable to help myself from getting on the dance floor and (enthusiastically...) encouraging others to do the same.

“Kokomo” also from Tauranga brought a more laid-back vibe to the evening with a very polished, toe tapping set of original tunes and some incredible musicianship from the harmonica player and fiddle player alike, just great stuff...

The night was then topped off by a fantastic performance by Auckland band the “Flaming Mudcats”, great energy and a good mix of tempo in their set including some awesome saxophone playing by the harmonica playing lead singer. Another real highlight of the Festival indeed.

Dirty Tones



Fiona & the Holy Pocket



Lovely Fiona



Browndog and the Muttleys



Kokomo



Flaming Mudcats



Very Happy Raffle Winner on Sat Night Bumper Concert!



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Sunday 25/10 afternoon saw the return of many of the acts at the Rotorua Citizens Club that had already played at the festival the previous day but the afternoon was also balanced by the return of the "Blues Cruise" on the Lakeland Queen paddle steamer on Lake Rotorua where the eager crowd was entertained by the highly talented Mike Garner from Papamoa and his band. A great mix of traditional blues cover's and some brilliant original tunes were well received by the audience and a fantastic afternoon was had by all.



Trevor Braunias



Warren Houston



Mike Garner



Stu Lawrence

**Pic's supplied by Sally Garner and Lynda Ford*

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Our second “Bumper Concert” for the weekend on Sunday evening was started with the extremely talented “Boogie Woogie Woman” Jan Preston from Sydney, Australia. Jan’s keyboard playing and singing are exemplary and provided a great balance of sound to the festival and she was backed by an equally impressive band, Nigel Masters on double bass and her husband Mike on percussion and who was just as impressive showing off his washboard playing skills too.



“Fiona and the Holy Pocket” and the “Hybrid Blues” once again both graced the stage with their polished and professional sounds before the stage was set for our major headline act of the weekend “The Michael Barker Experience”.





Very Cool sounds from Hybrid Blues



Michael Barker is a local legend in the music industry and has travelled the world extensively with such acts as “The John Butler Trio” from Australia among others and is an extremely talented guitar player, keyboardist and a fantastic drummer. He was backed by a fabulous band comprising of Brett Adams on vocals and guitar, Ben Wilcock on Keyboard and Bass guitar, a very talented Vito Ramos on full percussion, talented Billy Rother, and Peri Grant on harp, and when they started their set with the Peaky Blinders theme song “Red Right Hand” written by Australian singer/songwriter Nick Cave, I just knew we were all in for something very special indeed, and a memorable performance it was. Even people who have seen Michael on stage before said that they had never seen him perform quite like that. So tight and polished and a complete set of music from the entire band that really was something very, very special.



I was very humbled indeed when myself and our own “Lady” Di Riddel were asked by Michael to join him and the band on stage if I would sing while Di would play percussion for the last song of their set “Honky Tonk Woman”, what an honor and the fact that the dance floor filled up straight away was a great way to finish a very successful weekend of live music.

The evening was ended off with drawing our raffles for the night



Our Main Raffle Prize of the Alto Uber Professional XP 100-watt Amplifier was won by Marion Forbes whose son Adrian was the lead guitarist and singer for "Running Mint" one the BOP Blues Clubs first Youth Bands.

Marion was so pleased to have won the raffle prize on behalf of her son Adrian, who is now studying at Auckland University, and assured us that he will get A LOT of use out of it. We are so pleased it is going to someone who will appreciate having such a great piece of kit and be able to use it to its full capacity. Well done and congratulations!



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Some random happy snaps of the happy people of the Rotorua Blues Festival 22nd – 25th
October 2020





We, the BOP Blues Club Committee, would like to take this opportunity to send out a HUGE thank you to everybody who made it possible for us to be able to put on the Rotorua Blues Festival this year. From the awesome sound & production crew, the photographic crew, Murray and Esther Turner, the lovely Volunteer Ladies Ineke Smets and Lynn Nothing working front of house, and back of house volunteers to the staff and management of both the Rotorua Citizens Club and the Social Club and not least the fantastic musicians who came from far and wide and without whose support the Rotorua Blues Festival would not have been possible. Thank you so much!



22nd October – 25th October 2020

Please keep yourselves well, safe and happy and we look forward to seeing you all again in the very near future.

Regards,

“Humbucker Brother” Paul Verney

