

Cultural Daily

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L.A. Has The Blues

Jim Storm · Wednesday, May 3rd, 2017

“I don’t have a lot of money but the Blues have made me rich deep down in my heart..” — Sista Sherry Pruitt

It’s not New Orleans. Not Chicago, Memphis or even San Francisco.

This is Los Angeles, and these are the Blues, filling every corner of our city with its mournful longing. The Blues in L.A. originated on South Central Ave. This heartfelt music migrated from the small dive bars and converted garages such as Bell’s Blues Workshop, a fixture for decades, to profoundly influence the music business, breaking down racial barriers along the way.

Here are photos of Franklin Bell and the Blues musicians, Lucky Otis, Ike Willis, Carlos Verde, Johnny Echols, Sister Sherry Pruitt, Louis Leadbetter, Peter Assing, Hylen Burt, Gary James and ‘Lil Pee Wee playing the Blues.

—Jim Storm



Legendary owner and proprietor of Bell’s Blues Workshop on location on April 2, 2017. Photography by Jim Storm.



Carlos Verde during “Stormy Monday” at The Theory on April 17, 2017. Photography by Jim Storm.



“Hell on Wheels and Laughter even with the Blues.” Lucky Otis and Lil’ Pee Wee at Bell’s Blues Workshop in November 2016. Photography by Dr. Valerie J. Pronio-Stelluto.



The “Soulful Sound” of Peter Assing at The Theory on April 17, 2017. Photography by Jim Storm.



“Heartfelt and Passionate. Soul to the Soul”. Living for the Blues with beauty and grace, Sista Sherry Pruitt at Bell’s Blues Workshop in March 2017. Photography by Jim Storm.



“Being in the mournful moment and loving the sound.” Louis Ledbetter and Peter Assing at The Paladino on April 17, 2017. Photography by Jim Storm.



“Move over Bojangles!” Mr. Lee Parker is dressed to the nines and exemplifies the spirited Blues moves at Bell’s Blues Workshop in November 2016. Photography by Dr. Valerie J. Pronio-Stelluto.



Still thinking of Frank Zappa, Ike Willis plays with Lucky Otis at The Theory on April 17, 2017. Photography by Jim Storm.



The legendary Blues Sax Trilogy featuring Carlos Verde, Gary James, and Peter Assing at The Theory on April 17, 2017. Photography by Jim Storm.



“The Heartbeat of the Blues”. Drummer Duane Waider plays at The Theory on April 17, 2017 with Lucky Otis. Photography by Jim Storm.



“The King of the Blues Players.” Lucky Otis in the photography studio of Jim Storm in February 2017. Photography by Jim Storm.



“No one does L. A. Blues better.” Lucky Otis, Ike Willis, Johnny Echols, and Duane Waider play The Theory on April 17, 2017. Photography by Jim Storm.

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***Jim Storm** is a photographer living in Los Angeles. The last four years he’s been traveling and photographing people on the move, riding in Greyhound buses, exploring the northwest states of Montana, S. Dakota and North with a little Nebraska thrown in. “The heart of America is the open road,” Storm declares. Living up to that quote, Jim plans to spend the spring and summer months in Pine Ridge, South Dakota, photographing Lakota artists.*

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***Dr. Valerie Pronio-Stelluto** is a physician with a passion for photography. As a former Director of Medical Student Education and “Humanism in Medicine” award recipient at Harvard Medical School, Valerie was also a photojournalist documenting the clinical journey of her Harvard and MIT students in becoming competent and compassionate doctors. As a member of the Board of Governor’s of the Massachusetts American College of Physicians, Valerie has been lauded for her photo contributions. Valerie looks forward to joining Mr. Storm in continuing to photograph the Lakota people.*

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