

Artist Blurbs for the Pitchbook

11:00-11:30 – Gridley All Star Performers (GASP!) (Gridley Middle School):

The Gridley All-Star Performers have been a dream of their teacher, Andrew Nickles, for decades. Having a small guitar orchestra along with a supportive chamber ensemble to add depth and richness to the sounds of Jimi Hendrix, Albert King, Johnny Cash, metal and hip-hop artists gives the vibrant ensemble an ear to the past with an eye toward the future. Replacing commonly acoustic instruments with electric ones allows his students to blend their classical underpinnings with blues and rock idioms that keep their audiences moving. Nickles attended the University of Arizona on a cello scholarship, received his master's degree from University of Illinois and has recorded a tango album with his trio, Piazzolla da Camera. He continues his over 20 year tradition as a Tucson Unified School District (TUSD) middle school music instructor to bring the greatest artists of all genres to light by arranging and composing for his amazing students.

11:45-12:45 – Missy Andersen:

Born in Detroit and living in San Diego by way of Queens, New York, Missy Andersen followed her self-titled debut album with a timeless follow-up of blues going straight to the spirit and body. With her band leader/guitarist/husband Heine Andersen, she offers audiences a personal soundtrack for good times and the pain and joys of love.

As a child, Missy was exposed to her parent's extensive music collection that included soul, R&B, blues, jazz, and gospel. It didn't matter what the genre was as her favorite songs were always the ones that told a story. Later she would discover Dinah Washington, Sarah Vaughn, and Billie Holiday and that eventually lead her to O.V. Wright, Bobby Bland, Little Milton, James Carr, Ray Charles, Ann Peebles, and Irma Thomas.

Missy began fronting bands in her early teens, playing local venues which quickly led to doing studio sessions and performances as a background vocalist. She continued honing her skills and moved to San Diego, California where she met Heine, a seasoned musician visiting from Denmark. They would eventually marry and form the San Diego-based band, Tell Mama. It wasn't long before they decided to strike out on their own and immediately began touring Europe for several years, recording the debut CD's rhythm

tracks in Copenhagen between performances. Their first CD, “Missy Andersen,” was received extremely well despite having just two original songs.

Their followup studio release, “In the Moment,” has received rave reviews from both critics and fans since its August 2014 release. Since then, the album has maintained a steady presence on four of the Roots Music Report album charts (Blues, Contemporary Blues, California, US Blues), as well as two song charts (Contemporary Blues, California) for radio play. The CD ended that year by being named one of Living Blues Radio Charts Top 50 Albums of 2014.

1:00-2:00 – Whose Blues:

For those who love and appreciate anything related to the Blues, Whose Blues was formed to celebrate our collective appreciation for the blues. Whose Blues features a 4-piece band comprised of Jim (JD) Nashu on guitar and vocals, Rich Bonner on drums, Scott Lukomski on bass, and Terrence (TK) Kelly on guitar and vocals. Upon completion of their set at our festival, Terrence Kelly will be formally inducted into the Arizona Blues Hall of Fame, recognizing his smooth vocals (containing a hint of the classic whiskey-soaked burn that is the hallmark of the blues), mimicked by his intricate, somewhat brash and sometimes reserved harp playing.

“While there are those who feel that 'the blues' must meet some specific genre definition (country blues, southern blues, delta blues, Chicago electric blues, etc), our thought is to select songs we like and do justice to them in our style....which we call Whose Blues!”

2:15-3:15 – The Bad News Blues Band:

The Bad News Blues Band is a horn driven, swing loving, tongue in cheek homage to the days of old. With a huge nod to Louis Jordan and Charles Brown, and the guitar influence of Texas legends Long John Hunter and Johnny “Guitar” Watson, the Bad News Blues Band creates its own brand of pure Arizona blues that will get you up on your feet for a musical joyride. The Arizona Republic has lauded the band as Arizona’s premiere purveyors of electric Blues, aptly describing its style as “Hardcore Blues meets Big Band Swing.”

The Bad News Blues Band was formed in 1992 by Mike “Johnny Guitar” Blommer (or “Mighty Mike,” as he’s been dubbed by Blues legend Johnny Rawls!), and has

performed all over the world. From local dive bars to international stages, as headliners or support for legendary artists, this band has done it all. With eight albums released since 1997, the Bad News Blues Band has received radio airplay worldwide, and at one time even held the distinction of “Most Downloaded Blues Song” on the website MP3.com. Another proud achievement came when the band’s original song, “*Texas*,” was broadcast as the theme music during the NASCAR Texas Cup Series race.

In addition to being the very first band inducted into the Arizona Blues Hall of Fame, each member has also been inducted individually on their own merits. The Bad News Blues Band has won multiple awards including the Arizona Blues Shootout (twice!), and over 20 local TAMMIES awards. 2023 will mark its induction into the Tucson Musician’s Museum.

With 30 years under its belt, the Bad News Blues Band stays anchored in its roots while continuing to grow, evolve, and spread the magic of the blues to all!

3:15-3:45 – Arizona Blues Hall of Fame Induction and Jam:

Following the performance by The Bad News Blues Band, Mike Blommer, president of the Arizona Blues Hall of Fame (and current Southern Arizona Blues Heritage Foundation board member), will officially induct Whose Blues singer and harmonica player Terrence (TK) Kelly into the Arizona Blues Hall of Fame. Kelly’s induction will then be celebrated with a “Hall of Fame Jam,” featuring members of The Bad News Blues Band (Hall of Famers – both individually and collectively) and other Blues Hall of Famers, including Kelly, himself.

4:00-5:30 – ***Our Headliner***, Sugaray Rayford:

“Sugaray” Rayford is a Grammy-nominated Soul/Blues singer and songwriter. He has released six albums to date and was named “Soul/Blues Artist of the Year,” by the prestigious Blues Foundation at their annual Blues Music Awards ceremony, in both 2019 and 2020.

A chance meeting in Memphis laid the groundwork for a unique musical partnership between soul-blues powerhouse Sugaray Rayford and producer, songwriter Eric Corne. Combining classic soul melodies with funky R & B grooves, raw blues power, and mashed up with modern sensibilities, the pair's first collaboration, *Somebody Save Me*,

earned Rayford a 2020 Grammy nomination, while later that year he took home Blues Music Awards for 'Soul Blues Male Artist' and 'B.B. King Entertainer of the Year.'

Last summer's adventurous single "Homemade Disaster" took things further, landing on multiple retro soul and new blues playlists on Spotify, with PopMatters declaring the track "will appeal to fans of Gary Clark Jr. and Chicano Batman."

Sugaray Rayford returns with a new album, "In Too Deep." Combining classic soul melodies with funky R&B grooves, raw blues power and mashed up with modern sensibilities, the album takes on issues such as PTSD, civil rights and social justice. With vibrantly detailed arrangements tailored to showcase Rayford's deft portrayals and interpretations, "In Too Deep" is a poignant album that seeks to inspire and uplift.

Albumism described Rayford as having "a sound that's undeniably fresh and inspired," while PopMatters declared that it "will appeal to fans of Gary Clark Jr. and Chicano Batman."

At his core, Sugaray Rayford is a galvanizing uniter. His live shows are a party. Some conversations may be had, and some self-reflection may occur, but at the end of the day, people leave feeling a sense of joy and togetherness.

5:45-6:45 – Black Cat Bones:

This five piece Rockin' Blues Band was formed in 2004 by core members Charles Pitts (lead vocals and principal songwriter) and Jeff Daniels (bass and vocals), who set out to form a band that would stand the test of time and enable members to grow as songwriters and performers. Black Cat Bones has matured over the years and released four studio albums, featuring original songs that incorporate musical elements from the blues, rock-n-roll, jazz, and soul. Our influences include Blues greats such as B.B. King, Howlin' Wolf, Muddy Waters and the like – plus Blues/Rock kings Johnny Winter, Savoy Brown, and ZZ Top. Over the course of nearly 20 years, Black Cat Bones has entertained audiences at festivals, club dates, and mid sized venues in the Southwest region; and club dates on the east coast. Black Cat Bones offers dual lead guitars, soulful vocal stylings, and a pulsating rhythm section. With a fifth studio release imminent, Black Cat Bones remains committed to bringing fans rockin' blues that is on the cutting edge!