

## Review for The Great British Rhythm & Blues Festival, Colne Lancashire – 23<sup>rd</sup>- 25<sup>th</sup> August 2019



The weather was really kind for the '**30<sup>th</sup> Great British Rhythm & Blues Festival**' which filled the streets of the small Lancashire, Pennine town of Colne. With four main Stages and eight official Roadhouses, plus the numerous busker stations throughout the town, everyone one was poised for a great party.



Sadly, with so much going on in the town I was only able to catch acts on the main stages, but I have to say the feedback from visitors to the Roadhouses was all positive.

### Friday

Kicking off the festival for us were **James & Black**, a funky soul combo at the Muni.



James & Black

Popping next door to the Mini Muni, the **Intercity Blues Band**, from Liverpool - who deservedly won the Busker vote last year - were giving it their all. With harmonica driven Chicago blues they got the audience going with great interaction and some well put together music.



Intercity Blues Band

Back in the Muni for the kings of rhythm and blues, **Paul Lamb & The King Snakes**. Still sounding fresh, they gave a great harmonica driven performance and It is poignant that they played at the first Great British Rhythm & Blues Festival 30 years ago.



Paul Lamb & The King Snakes

Heading off to the Hippodrome we caught the charismatic performance by the **Sean Webster Band**. He did not disappoint, playing his now signature tune, the Eta James classic, 'I'd Rather Go Blind' with such passion.



Sean Webster Band

Following on were **Geoff Achinson & The UK Souldiggers** with the individual style of Australian Geoff Atkinson with soulful blues supported by great musicianship from his UK Souldiggers.



Geoff Achinson & The UK Souldiggers

Closing the evening at the Hippodrome were the **Danny Bryant Band**, but we headed to the Muni for **Rufus Black** with their eclectic mix of blues funk, soul and rock. A great performance and what a voice from front man Gavin Condor, shades of Stevie Marriot meets Paul Rodgers.



Rufus Black

### Saturday

After a good night's sleep we finally got into town to catch the **Little Triggers** on the Jessica Foxley Stages in the Hippodrome. A very lively and animated young band playing a good mix of high energy rocking blues and some slowed down classic blues numbers.



Little Triggers

A quick dip into the Mini Muni for **Ma Bessie & Her Pig Foot Band**, playing music from Bessie Smith to a packed house.



Ma Bessie & Her Pig Foot Band

Then it was back to the Hippodrome for **The Hiding Magpies**, a local band who are causing quite a stir on the Americana scene. Fronted by Jake Dixon, they are building up a reputation country wide, so watch out for these talented emerging artists.



The Hiding Magpies

First visit to the Little Theatre to see the **Head Hunters Blues Band** as a duo today, showing more raw talent from the North West as these guys are from Liverpool. Taking us back to the Delta, it was great to hear chilled out versions of classic roots blues with Slackjaw Jonnie Hodson on vocals and Big Bill Riding on guitar.



The Head Hunters Blues Band

Over to the Mini Muni for the brilliant **Achievers**. They have great stage presence and a fresh approach to 'the blues', straying into the realms of blues laced Americana. With musicianship that is top class and harmonies that work so well, what is not to be liked.



The Achievers

We missed the Hereford's King of the slide guitar **Troy Redfern** and his band at the Hippodrome but to all accounts he played some rockin' raw blues, which I've witnessed before.

We stayed at the Muni for **Tom Gee** and band and what a delight of funk, soul and blues, with that big band sound. From West Yorkshire it was good to hear this talented band from 'over the hill' and I, for one, shall be looking to see them again soon.



Tom Gee Band

Popping back into the Mini Muni we caught some of the set by **George Shovlin & The Radars**. He plays old school authentic early blues with a modern twist and great chat with the audience. Wandering back up to the Hippodrome it was wonderful to feel the 'vibe' in the street, with all the busker stations and music coming from pubs and bars on the way.



George Shovlin & The Radars

**Chris Bevington Organisation** next at the Hippodrome, they never fail to give a superb performance. This collective band of top class musicians came as a nine piece to give the 'big band' sound of blues, soul and rock. Always a crowd pleaser and today was no exception.



Chris Bevington Organisation

It was nice to see **Russ Tippins Electric Band** back in the frame. Russ, who is often out of the country touring with the acclaimed band 'Satan', is a fine guitarist and with his power trio can rock the joint. With rocking Chicago blues through to Latino it all added interest to the evening.



Russ Tippins Electric Band

Back down in the Muni one of my favourites, Birmingham's own **Tom C Walker** and his superb band playing funk at its best. They played one of the tightest sets I've seen, adding a touch of funky blues and soulful ballads to the mix. A brilliant band and well recommended.



Tom C Walker

At the Hippodrome, **Beaux Gris Gris & The Apocalypse** certainly gave a lively performance with a New Orleans flavour of blues soul and funk. They were joined on stage by the amazing Jon Amor which certainly was a bonus.



Beaux Gris Gris & The Apocalypse

We sadly missed the headline acts of blues man **Danny Bryant** with his nine piece big band at the Hippodrome and the King of boogie woogie **Mike Sanchez** at the Muni, by all reports we missed a treat.

## Sunday

Opening at the Hippodrome were the talented, fresh, emerging artists **The Jupiter Blues**, from Liverpool. They were picked to play by BBC Radio Lancashire and delivered an exciting set of blues infused soul and rock 'n' roll. They were certainly one of my favourite bands of the festival giving a charismatic entertaining performance and superb musicianship. Fronted by the flamboyant vocalist Dale Orenda, with excellent guitarist Chris Mitchell, with Rick Davies and Danny Mac on bass and drums. Do catch them if you can.



The Jupiter Blues

A very talented **Charli White** and her band next, at the Hippodrome on the Jessica Foxley Stages. An incredibly soulful performance from Charli and certainly an emerging band, so watch this space.



Charli White

Down at the Muni, **Dana Ali Band** were strutting their stuff with soul and a dash of reggae. We moseyed along to the Little Theatre to listen to the young and very talented singer songwriter Dom Martin, from Belfast. As an acoustic artist he was able to hold the audience with superb guitar playing and fabulous vocals giving us pure blues roots.



Dana Ali Band

Back in the Muni the **Blues Boy Kings** were ripping it up with great energy rockin' blues. A fabulous band and R&B at its best.



Blues Boy Kings

At the Dressers, the only Roadhouse venue we visited, were the best of the local talent, **J-Bear & The Giants**. They are emerging artists of the highest calibre with a new album 'Reedley Hallow' just out. Jossy Owen, singer songwriter, fronts the band and is a fabulous performer. It was packed in the Dressers and hot, but the people stayed so it says a lot about the band. They opened on the mainstage at the Hippodrome last year and they are another band I would recommend seeing live, just brilliant!



J-Bear & The Giants

Back to the Hippodrome for the young hard hitting blues rock trio **Delta Fuse**, from Northern Ireland.



Delta Fuse

They were followed by the **Ash Wilson Band**. Ash is a superb guitar master of blues rock and part of the four piece scratch band, featuring Roger Innis on bass and Bob Fridzema on keys and brother Phil Wilson on drums.



Ash Wilson Band

**Andy Gunn** from Scotland played blues and soul with a dash of funk at the Muni, with his scratch band.



Andy Gunn

He was followed by one of the best bands on the blues rock circuit, the **Rainbreakers**, from Shrewsbury. They have evolved over the past few years into a much more rock orientated band, but the blues influences remain and their set of blues rock and soul was well received, especially the title track from their album 'Heavy Soul'.



Rainbreakers

Visiting the Mini Muni it was great to see a refreshing up beat harmonica driven blues roots band with an edge. **Goofa Dust** from Suffolk, are fronted by the harmonica wiz Giles King .



Goofa Dust

Another of my highlights of the festival were the **Greg Coulson Big Band**. Wow, what a performance of blues, funk and soul with the big band sound, going out as a six piece with added brass. A far reaching entertaining and energetic performance showcasing the multi instrumentalist Greg Coulson on vocals keys and guitar. Just superb!



Greg Coulson Big Band

The Danish big band **Thorbjorn Risager & The Black Tornado** next at the Muni. Great vocals, rhythm and blues at its best. They were sadly the last band for us at the festival.



Thorbjorn Risager & The Black Tornado

Anthony Gomes from Canada was headlining at the Muni with **Big Boy Bloater, Gerry Jablonski & The Electric Band** and **Sari Schorr & The Engine Room** completing the evening at the Hippodrome.

What a fabulous festival with matching weather, playing a big part in the success. Thanks have to go to **Paddy Maguire and Jason Elliot, The Colne Town Council** and all the volunteers who made this possible. A special thanks go to all the performers who made this 30<sup>th</sup> celebration so perfect. Roll on next year for number 31!!!

**Rosy Greer – Lancashire Blues Archive and Independent Reviewer**

