

Southland **BLUES** MAGAZINE

Southland Blues Magazine is published on the first Friday of every month.

FEATURES

Cover Story

8 MISSY ANDERSEN



The San Diego based blues singer gracing our August cover was once a shy background vocalist but has now claimed her place in the spotlight as the talented lead singer of her own band. Her latest CD *Missy Andersen* was nominated for "Best Blues CD" at the 2009 San Diego Music Awards. Pat Kramer talked with her recently about her life and career in music.

10 SPECIAL EVENTS

Guitar Center's "King of the Blues" Finals

Five finalists out of thousands compete for the title at the House of Blues in Hollywood.

15th Annual Sonora Blues Festival

Tommy Castro, Michael Burks, Roy Rogers, Nick Moss, Rick Estrin and many more will perform.

August 2010

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Missy Andersen

Inset Photos: Nena Anderson

Other Photos: Missy Andersen Collection

Southland Blues Magazine is now published on the first Friday of every month.

Southland Blues Magazine supports the Blues Foundation which produces the Blues Music Awards, International Blues Challenge and Keeping the Blues Alive Awards in Memphis, Tennessee. To join or find out more about the Foundation visit www.blues.org. We also support the Blues Heaven Foundation and our local Blues organizations including the Southern California Blues Society, Los Angeles Blues Society, Santa Barbara Blues Society, Santa Clarita Valley Blues Society and Blues Lovers United of San Diego.

Missy Andersen

Coming Full Circle

When Denyce Isaac (aka: Missy Andersen) was six years old, her mother Elaine entered her in a talent contest in Queens, New York. Every day after school, she practiced singing a Dionne Warwick song for the competition with the goal of winning. Then one day, the practice sessions stopped when the contest was cancelled. Says Missy, "From that day on I was 'hooked' on singing. It became my outlet and a way for me to get over my shyness."

Fast forward to April 2009, when the Blues singer's debut CD, *Missy Andersen* (Main Squeeze Records) was released, rising to the second and third positions on the Real Blues Top 100 Chart and holding that position for nearly a year. Last year, it was nominated for "Best Blues CD" in the 2009 San Diego Music Awards bringing recognition to the former backup singer for recording artist Earl Thomas. The extended airplay also led to an interview in June 2010 with Elwood Blues (Dan Aykroyd) on his syndicated "House of Blues Radio Hour" show.

While her rise to fame seems fairytale-like, it's been nothing short of hard work with lots of twists and turns in the road. From the time her mother encouraged her to sing as a small child, it was always Missy's first love. During her youth, her grandmother introduced her to the Blues playing albums by Howlin'



Photo: Neen Andersen

Wolf, Muddy Waters and Irma Thomas. But she also loved soul and R & B artists like Gladys Knight, with whom she would sing along and who would later influence her style.

The problem was, she was painfully shy and never believed she had the personality to be a lead singer. As she puts it, "I preferred being in the background supporting other singers. That was my comfort zone for a very long time."

While she sang as a hobby during her formative years in New York, it wasn't until she graduated from college with a business degree that she began pursuing a career in music. Through contacts she made while living in Manhattan, Missy earned a living as a backup singer working on recordings for a number of contemporary artists.

"I was really good at harmony," she notes. "I always came prepared and would listen to the lead singer's phrasing so I could support that."

After moving to San Diego, Missy met bluesman Earl Thomas who hired her to perform as one of his Juke Joint Jezebels in 1999 for a private party honoring the Spirituals. That performance was so well received that the Jezebels went on to record on his *In the Village* CD in 2000.

From the year 2000 until 2004, Missy performed with Earl Thomas and The Blues Ambassadors at venues and festivals in San Diego, San Francisco, Los Angeles and Europe, sharing the stage with such luminaries as B.B. King, Ray Charles, and John Hammond.

During their 2001 tour in Europe, she met Danish blues

guitarist Heine Andersen (Candy Kane), who played lead guitar for Thomas on that tour. Andersen and she married the following year and he now performs as her producer, band leader, guitarist, songwriting partner and husband.

Working with Earl Thomas was a major turning point for Missy, who was given an opportunity to step into the spotlight and solo for the first time. Later, when Heine decided to form his band "Tell Mama" in 2006, she was ready to take the stage as lead singer.

In January 2008, the band took on the name "Missy Andersen" and with it came the current line up: drummer David Coates, Rafael Salmon on keys, Matt LaBarber on bass, and Heine on lead. In 2009, the band released its first CD to rave reviews as Missy's star started to rise with the chart topping position on the Real Blues Top 100 Chart and the "Best Blues CD" nomination. To date, the band has been very successful in building a local following in San Diego as well as a fan base in Europe.

In May 2010, Missy's commitment to her music went from part-time to full-time when the bank she was with for over a decade eliminated her job as vice president. Looking back on this she says, "It was probably the best thing that ever happened to me. I had been trying to

Andersen see next page

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transition out for the last two years to really concentrate on what the band was doing, but when you have direct deposit and healthcare, it's really hard to let go. Sometimes you need to be kicked out of the plane whether you are ready or not."

With her business experience in hand, Missy has plunged full steam ahead into the business of music – and it's paying off. In addition to ongoing performances in the San Diego area, the Missy Andersen band will co-headline the Legendary Rhythm and Blues Pre-Cruise Party with Earl Thomas in October. In November, Missy and Heine will join band members in Denmark for a six date tour.

In coming full circle, one of the most rewarding experiences for Missy has been her work with "Blues in the

Schools" as a lead presenter for Blues Lovers United of San Diego. In this role, she teaches students in kindergarten through sixth grade the importance of having music in their lives.

"I sing for them and have them do 'call and response' and I tell them how I loved to sing as a child," says Missy. "We bring in percussion instruments and have them play along and we show them how the beats and the rhythm found in the Blues is also present in R & B, Hip Hop, Rock, and Pop. That seems to hit home with them and it's very rewarding."

As if summing up her own experience, she adds, "I tell them not to worry if they aren't good at it right away; it will come to them if they have a passion."



Blues Guitar Corner by Robert Dean

"WORST CAR ON THE BLOCK"

When I was a kid, we had a certified auto mechanic living next door. He worked five days a week at an automotive repair shop. Then, on the weekends, he would fix, or tune up friends' or neighbors' cars. Weird thing though, his car would barely run!! He would drive to work on three cylinders, with smoke pouring out, barely making it down the street. That's the way it is with a lot of working guitar players...myself included. I've had a lot of students ask about the equipment I use on stage. I even had some students show up at my gigs, look at my "rig", and say, "Is that it?" Well, here goes. First off, I've never owned a Marshall amp. My main amp is a 1980's Fender Super Twin black face (2-12 185 watts). I use a Boss digital delay box to make it sound "alive."

I also use a Danelectro Daddy-o overdrive box to give me some punch on lead lines. Each one of these boxes cost about \$75 each. For guitars, I use a 1963 Fender Strat, a 1980 Fender Telecaster, and a Cort Larry Coryell jazz guitar. I do have some other guitars, but these are the ones I use most. You can see these guitars on my YouTube videos. Just go to YouTube and type in robert dean guitar. When putting your set-up together, just make it simple. If it gives you "the sound" you want, who cares if it smokes a little...you're getting the job done...right? If you need a good guitar teaching dvd, be sure to go to www.robertdeanblues.com.

And remember...always play the blues. --Robert

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