

FORM - CARLISLE BLUES ROCK FESTIVAL 8th-10th October 2021

A great welcome at the The Crown & Mitre Hotel in the centre of Carlisle, for the **Form Carlisle Blues Rock Festival 2021**. Good to have you back and well done **Nick Westgarth** for all the effort involved.



Although we weren't staying at the Hotel many were, making this a grand occasion for all.

Friday

Kicking off the festivities were the **Starlight Campbell Band**. This husband and wife team Suzy and Simon, are prolific songwriters and after so long time away from the stage they gave their all, showcasing many new numbers from their new album, 'Language of Curiosity'.



Starlight Campbell Band

A superb performance followed from the immensely talented **Tommy Allen** and band. An under the radar performer, Tommy's guitar work could rival many of the greats. With a good mix of blues and rock, he certainly captured the audience with many dancers getting to their feet.



Tommy Allan

One of my favourite bands on the present circuit, **Climax Blues Band** never fail to deliver. As a top class six piece, who had their roots in the 1970's, front man Graham Dee provided the perfect vocal variety of soul drenched blues to get you hooked. Long term member and band leader George Glover on keys, added some humour to the mix. A great rendition of one of my favourites 'Kick in the Head' from their current album 'Hands of Time'.



Climax Blues Band

Giles Robson, the well-respected and world renown harmonica player, was headlining this evening. He struck up a great rapport with the audience and gave a superb performance with a mix of original material and blues classics. A great way to close the first evening of the festival.



Giles Robson

Saturday Afternoon

Wow, the opening act this afternoon was certainly a breath of fresh air. **Satin Beige**, a singer songwriter, guitarist and cellist gave a solo performance of jazz infused blues. A competent guitarist she also used her cello as a plucked instrument to great effect along with her enchanting vocals. Certainly a name to watch out for.



Satin Beige

Another solo slot, but this time from the amazing **Dom Martin**. Dom, from Belfast, has taken the UK by storm with his self-penned music, playing on acoustic or electric guitar, with a voice once heard it is never forgotten. He gave an exceptional performance to a totally engaged audience. Dom has won many prestigious UKBlues Awards and deservedly so. He is off to represent the UK in the solo/duo category in the International Blues Challenge in Memphis in January 2022, so we wish him good luck in that.



Dom Martin

One of my favourite bands up next. **The Achievers**, from Gloucestershire, are one of the most innovative and interesting bands on the circuit today. Their style of music strays into the realms of Gospel, Americana, folk, as well as rootsy blues. One of the iconic songs on their playlist was 'The Cuckoo' which has been also covered by the likes of Taj Mahal and Robert Plant but given an Achievers take, they made it their own. They certainly are a 'must see live' band and provide great entertainment. Fronting the band on guitar and vocals is Steve Ferbrache who also provided humour and banter throughout their excellent performance. He was ably supported by the rest of the band - Rufus Fry on harmonica, trombone and vocals, Robert Holmes on superb lead guitar and vocals, Jack Thomas on bass and Aron Attwood on drums and vocals and provided some fabulous harmonies. As winners of the UKBlues Challenge in 2019, they represented the UK in the International Blues Challenge in Memphis in early 2020 and reached the semi-finals. They were due to represent the UK in the European Challenge 2020 but sadly Covid hit the fan. They will be hopefully (Covid permitting) be playing in the European Blues Challenge 2022 in Sweden, as our UK representatives and we wish them well.



The Achievers

Rhinos Revenge gave a full-on rockin' performance to close the afternoon session. The band leader is John 'Rhino' Edwards (ex Status Quo), on vocals and bass, with Jim Kirkpatrick on lead guitar and vocals and Richard Newman on drums. They were joined for a couple of numbers by Rufus Fry, The Achievers harmonica player, all adding to the fun. Their set certainly got the dancers up.



Rhinos Revenge with guest Rufus Fry

Saturday Evening

Saturday evening kicked off with local Carlisle blues band **Redfish** with some good honest rhythm & blues. A great set, with the band fronted by newly installed Christian Shape, who also worked tirelessly as backstage crew throughout the festival.



Redfish

A fresh approach to traditional blues with the up-and-coming **Cinelli Brothers**. A brilliant performance from this London based band, with an eclectic mix on the blues spectrum from these talented young men.



Cinelli Brothers

A great set from **Deborah Bonham** and band with powerful heartfelt vocals and some class musicianship.



Deborah Bonham

Closing the Saturday evening revelry were **Band of Friends**, playing a tribute to the late great Rory Gallagher. With prestigious performers Gerry McAvoy on bass, Paul Rose on guitar, Jim Kirkpatrick on guitar and vocals and Brendan O'Neill on drums, they brought a great Rory experience to Carlisle. They finished off, what was a blinding set, with Bullfrog Blues a perfect end to a cracking day in the main arena.



Band of Friends

The added bonus for Saturday night was '**The Jam**'. Down in the basement hotel bar. The host was Christian Sharpe and house band Redfish, with lots of input from the Cinelli Brothers. Going on until late into the night, fun was had by all.

Sunday

Opening on the Sunday afternoon were new to me **Dusk Brothers** from Bristol. They had their own distinctive style of swampy blues. As a duo, just playing guitars and kick drums, they had a good mix of guitar sounds, with gravelly vocals and good harmonies.



Dusk Brothers

The last time I saw **Martin Harley** was a solo set, so it was good to see and hear him with a band. Some excellent slide guitar in true rootsy style and the ability to work so closely with his excellent band. A refreshing performance, much enjoyed by all.



Martin Harley Band

There really are no words to say about this master of the art. **Ian Siegal** is certainly a blues legend in his own time and today was no exception. Performing a solo set with acoustic and electric guitar, he was certainly on form playing many of his familiar self-penned tunes. He finished the set with a dedication to the late Charlie Watts with Honky Tonk Woman. The standing ovation says it all really, just excellent.



Ian Siegal

This busy collective band, Ruf Records - **The Blues Caravan** from the US, had just arrived from Europe with very little sleep. This didn't deter them, and they gave a performance with energy. With three headliners, Whitney Shay, Jeremiah Johnson and Ryan Perry each flying their own flags with individual sets, they joined forces at the end of the show to the delight of the audience.



Blues Caravan

The last band, on what had been a fantastic festival, was the renowned US award winning saxophonist, maestro **Jimmy Carpenter**. Rhythm and blues at its best with a blast of soul in the mix. Jimmy even played guitar on a couple of numbers and was ably supported by his backing band, Blues Move. This was the last show in Jimmy's European tour so a fitting and fabulous finale for the festival.



Jimmy Carpenter and Blues Move

So that was it and hopefully we will do it all again next year. Rock on Carlisle Blues Rock Festival!

Rosy Greer – Lancashire Blues Archive