

BluesCulture

Rocking Roots 'n' Rhythm

AbiWallenstein SteveBaker MartinRöttger

Charismatic, innovative and always compellingly authentic - with this unusual trio featuring his long-time musical partner Steve Baker on harmonica and Martin Röttger on cajon, Hamburg's blues legend Abi Wallenstein offers a new take on the blues, a boldly minimalist synthesis of archaic and modern forms.

BluesCulture present a unique stylistic fusion which integrates deep delta blues with funk and hip-hop beats and rough-cut rock with heart-rending ballads. The dynamic interplay between the three musicians is unpredictable and gripping. Their spontaneity and energy create a fascinating blend of diverse musical elements which defies definition and breaks the boundaries of conventional stylistic clichés. Forget about categories - this highly infectious mix is something for fans of good hand-made music everywhere!

Abi Wallenstein has always been a proponent of the stripped down approach, creating maximum impact with minimal means. The direct and open personal contact, the creative interaction with the audience which allows listeners and musicians to become one, is absolutely central to his music. "Then we musicians are like archaic shamans, using hypnotic grooves and sparse melodic elements to transport ourselves and the tribal community (or the audience in a club ...) into a collective trance." (A.W.)

With Steve Baker and Martin Roettger, Abi has found a formation dedicated to this spirit: BluesCulture! As well as performing all over Germany, BluesCulture have brought their unique brand of musical magic to audiences in Holland, Belgium, Austria, Switzerland, France, Poland, Hungary and most recently in Russia, where they performed before rapturous audiences at the Moscow Musicfest. BluesCulture are a truly international trio with their own vision of where the blues is going today.

The new CD „Blues Culture“

"Outstanding new album from Hamburg's "elder statesman of the blues"! Aply supported by percussionist Martin Rottger and harmonica ace Steve Baker, Abi delivers absolutely up-to-the-minute sounds which have more in common with Oxford, Mississippi than the urbane north German metropolis. Quite simply, this CD is happening! It grooves, rocks and moans and Abi sounds totally convincing. His vocals are mature and authentic, his guitar playing unmistakeably original and his short solos right on the money. Steve is a master of fat sound and tasty licks, the finest harp player in Europe. Together with Abi's bass lines, Martin's percussion lays the foundations of the sound and makes this trio sound like a full band. One of the greatest blues albums ever recorded in Germany, a must!" Might well become album of the year in this country. [Crosscut Records](#)



„Blues Culture“

In April 2007 the CD "Blues Culture" won the quarterly German Record Critics Award in the category of „blues & related styles.“
04/2007

28. Feb. 2007, Blue Moon Records
1315-1514-10, Distribution: New Music

"Absolutely stripped down and raw minimalist mix of roots, rock and blues, which in its best moments generates a truly archaic voodoo sound, pulsating with hypnotic melodies and loop-like grooves. A consistently great sounding record which breathes new life into the blues through the integration of different stylistic elements, a fresh cell cure with traditional means."

[Kieler Nachrichten](#)[Kieler Nachrichten](#)

"Their unique fusion of guitar, harmonica and percussion makes this album a real musical gem. BluesCulture conjure one blues pearl after another from their treasure trove. With the eponymous CD "Blues Culture", Abi Wallenstein, Steve Baker and Martin Rottger serve up a three star gourmet menu which melts in the mouth and is worth taking the time to enjoy at leisure." [Backstage NDZ](#)

"BluesCulture have enormous drive and surprise the listener again and again with songs that swing, rock and flow right past the usual hackneyed blues clichés. The album "Blues Culture" is a real eye-opener. Abi's vocals are intense and moving and he has a fantastic feel for minimalist, dirty but extremely musical guitar. Unbelievable! He is brilliantly supported by Martin Rottger, who is clearly on top form and provides an impressive demonstration of the range of rhythms and sounds you can conjure out of a cajon. This trio has succeeded in producing a real masterpiece!" [Stix Magazin](#)

"..... but instead of trying to recreate old hits from the library of blues classics, BluesCulture tinker around with the riffs, chop up the melodies, change the beats, put it back together again and turn it into something all of their own." [Bluesnews](#)

"Unconditionally recommended!" [Concerto Vienna](#)

AbiWallenstein

Whether he's stopping the traffic as a one man band on the street, or stealing the show from festival headliners, Abi Wallenstein always manages to fascinate listeners with his unique vocal and guitar style.

Rolling Stone

"I've always loved to stretch the boundaries of the blues, to incorporate new stylistic elements which will take it beyond the same old rhythmic and chordal structures." (A.W.)

Abi Wallenstein (guitar & vocals) is one of the seminal figures of the European blues scene. For more than 30 years he has been winning the hearts of audiences all over Europe with his own charismatic brand of good rocking blues. Born in Jerusalem shortly after the end of the second world war, he moved to Hamburg, Germany in the mid 1960s and has become the closest thing to a genuine folk hero to be found in these parts. His unique open-tuned fingerpicking guitar style is a fascinating blend of delta blues and rock&roll elements, combining rhythmic bass lines with melody and chord parts in a manner sometimes reminiscent of Big Joe Williams, at other times of Keith Richards and sometimes even of David Lindley. His playing seems deceptively simple at first, but reveals itself as multi-layered and complex, with an effortless groove which has inspired a host of imitators. He is also one of the few guitarists to master the difficult art of playing in different modal positions on the open G tuning.

Abi is also a remarkable singer. His raw and powerful voice, steeled by years of playing on the streets, is totally convincing, whether delivering deep blues or definitive renditions of soulful ballads. When the weather is good and his busy touring schedule permits, he can still sometimes be seen in the Hamburg inner city today, trying out new material on the "toughest stage in the world". In addition to numerous radio and TV appearances Abi has performed on countless blues festivals including the Ascona Jazz Festival (CH), Lahnstein SWF Blues Festival (D), Unna Blues Festival (D), Eslöv Blues Festival (S) and many more. He has also opened for such prestigious acts as Joe Cocker, Daniel Lanois, Robben Ford, George Thorogood and Johnny Winter.

SteveBaker

Steve Baker coaxes full orchestral sounds out of his harmonica. At the same time he is a master of chamber musical nuances. He can make his instrument sound like a harmonium or a saxophone, a Hammond organ or a jaw harp, a foghorn or a train whistle. Especially in his grandiose solos, he shows just how far the blues harp has come today from the cotton fields in the South of the USA. Baker blows all of his competitors for the title of "Europe's best blues harmonica player" clean away!

Der Norddeutsche

Steve Baker (harmonica & backing vocals) was born and raised in London, England, and now lives near Hamburg, Germany. He took up the harp in 1969 and has been a full-time professional since 1975. Today he is considered one of the leading blues harmonica players in Europe, and indeed one of the finest exponents of this instrument in the world. Among

harmonica fans he has earned an international reputation for his outstanding and original playing as well as for his highly regarded books on the subject. Over the years Steve has become a kind of harmonica guru for numerous up and coming players. His unique style combines traditional blues elements with funky rhythmic drive and a strong melodic feel to create an exciting fusion which showcases his mastery of dynamics and tone.

In addition to frequent live appearances, Steve gives regular harmonica workshops and has made numerous recordings as a session musician. Since 1987 he has worked as a consultant for the Hohner harmonica company and has been closely involved in the development of several new models including the recently released Marine Band Deluxe. His first book "The Harp Handbook" (1990), acclaimed as the most comprehensive work on the diatonic harp published to date, is often referred to as the "harmonica player's bible" and now enjoys cult status amongst the new wave of harmonica players in Europe and the USA (distributed worldwide by Music Sales Corp.). His harmonica tuition CD-ROM "Interactive Blues Harp Workshop" (Voggenreiter) was the first of its kind in the world. As well as performing with BluesCulture, Steve has appeared on stage with several legendary blues artists including ex-Beatle Tony Sheridan, Alexis Korner and Champion Jack Dupree and released four CDs with the gifted guitarist and singer Chris Jones until the latter's untimely death in 2005.

Martin Röttger

"Heads nod and feet tap unconsciously to the irresistible beat of the expressive music. This is in no small measure due to percussionist Martin Röttger. Beating the Peruvian "cajon" like a man possessed, he drums, rolls, shakes and rattles like a rattlesnake ready to strike."
[Südthüringer Zeitung](#)

Martin Röttger migrated to Hamburg from his native Sweden as a child, where he began performing live with local jazz and blues bands in 1979 at the age of 12. He has played drums ever since and has appeared with such well-known artists as Chuck Berry and Louisiana Red. Today he is one of the European pioneers of the cajon, a fascinating percussion instrument originating from Peru. The cajon looks like a loudspeaker box and is played with the hands, while simultaneously serving as a seat for the player. Most commonly used as a percussion instrument in Flamenco, in the right hands it can sound astonishingly like a drum kit.

Martin appears to have been the first to discover how well-suited the cajon is for blues and boogie-woogie rhythms and has earned an excellent reputation in this scene within a comparatively short space of time. Without doubt he is now one of the most highly regarded artists on this increasingly popular instrument today. His minimalistic equipment and infectious enthusiasm perfectly complement the dynamic duo of Wallenstein and Baker and his driving beats play a vital role in propelling BluesCulture's gripping and eminently danceable music. Martin has also written three seminal instruction books on the cajon and gives numerous clinics in music stores and adult education institutes.

Concert Reviews

"Spellbound by their rockin' roots and rhythm: people dancing, pushing the chairs aside, singing and clapping their hands. After the long-delayed end of the concert, excited, wide-eyed people unable to stammer more than "amazing!" or "sensational" as they leave with their eyes shining and blissfull smiles on their faces"

[Suedthueringer Zeitung, Annett Wohler 30.07.2007](#)

"As the evening progresses, the musicians become creative magicians bubbling with the sheer joy of playing. A shared motif, a wordless agreement serves as the basis to invent ever changing tonal pictures in reciprocal improvisation. The audience is already part of the music. BluesCulture play with rather than for their listeners. The heartfelt applause is much more than mere praise, it's the energy which the players on stage transform into music".

[Lausitzer Rundschau, Siegfried Laumen 02.07.2007](#)

"This is all about unpretentious, honest music, which comes together perfectly even in the most improvised moments with a precision which keeps driving the audience to new heights of rapture".

[Hildesheimer Allgemeine Zeitung](#)

[André Mumot, 12.09.2005](#)

"Together they pursue the goal of enriching traditional roots music with high energy rhythms while managing to avoid the usual clichés. Wallenstein, Baker and Röttger celebrate the blues in a manner in which awareness of tradition doesn't become boring and yet possesses remarkable authenticity".

[Mainzer Rhein-Zeitung, Martin Stenger 23.07.2005](#)

"At the end of the encores the entire audience is on it's feet. Everybody is dancing and cheering. In itself this is no guarantee of quality, but in this case of BluesCulture there is no doubt. Artistic development does get rewarded".

[Kieler Nachrichten, Manuel Weber 23.11.2004](#)

"From rough-cut rock numbers they return to traditional blues before changing course completely to present beautiful renditions of heartfelt ballads. BluesCulture display an impressive degree of musical diversity...a band of fascinating universality and grandiose stylistic diversity".

[NeueWuerttembergische Zeitung, Kurt Lang 25.10.2004](#)

"After only a few minutes the square was filled with people, drawn by a world class band who literally electrified their listeners with totally convincing bluesbased music ranging from rocking boogie to melancholy ballads. Even after several numbers it was hard to believe that such a full, gripping sound was being produced by >only< these three master musicians. The audience loved every moment".

[Grenzecho Belgium, Jörg Weißhaupt 02.09.2003](#)

"Abi Wallenstein, Steve Baker and Martin Röttger delivered a memorable performance which will go down in the history of the Aachener open air concerts. Their unique combination of energy, virtuosity and conviction make this musical >trio infernale< one of the most exciting acts appearing in Europe today".

[Aachener Zeitung, Gerd Simons 19.08.2003](#)

Management: Nico Baker

Phone +49 (0) 5198 1219 Mail: nico@bluesculture.com

Further infos: <http://www.bluesculture.com>

Videos: <http://www.youtube.com/bluesculture>

Sounds: <http://www.myspace.com/bluesculture>