

John Lee Sanders Bio/Press Release, January 2010



John Lee Sanders can sit in front of a piano and bring the smoke from a Texas BBQ, A New Orleans Street Parade, and the Soul of the Mississippi Delta, all in one set. He's an Emmy nominated Composer, and winner of three 2009 Canadian Music Awards. His songs, voice and film scores have been heard on CBC Radio-Canada Live, Network Television, Commercials for giants of industry such as Apple Computer, Nissan & Wal-Mart. He is beginning to headline blues and Jazz festivals across Europe and Canada, his music is crossing over into mainstream pop culture.

His 2004 Hit, "Foreclose on the House of Love" was nominated for Blues song of the year, reached #9 on the charts, and helped acquire a Grammy nomination for Marcia Ball. His 2009 single, "Christmas with the King" about an imaginary meeting with Elvis, received 15,000 downloads in 2 days from a special promotion from the Vancouver Province Newspaper.

John Lee is a quadruple threat vocal/instrumentalist on Piano, saxophone and guitar. Since 1995, he's released 9 CDs, a live concert DVD, and over 120,000 hits on Youtube music videos. His recent 2009 New Years Eve Show was rated the #2 event across Canada by the Toronto Star!. The European press has credited John Lee for bringing the Blues into the 21st Century, with it's deep lyric content, and fusing the influence of the best in pop, jazz, country, gospel, New Orleans street rhythms, funk, soul, and Rhythm & Blues.

He spent his youth in the Mississippi Delta, the swamps of Louisiana, & the plains of Texas, immersed in the wealth of jazz, country, blues and gospel music that have become the DNA of North American pop music for over fifty years. The deeply intertwined roots in music of this gifted piano, sax and vocal performer/composer have found inspiration in some very interesting places. John Lee's grandmother played piano in the silent movie theaters of Memphis and lived a few short blocks from Stax Records, the birthplace of American soul music. His mother's first

cousin played trombone with W.C. Handy, “father of the blues”, and encouraged John’s music early on.

He met Elvis Presley and his folks in Memphis in 1957, when Presley bought his first house a few doors down from John Lee's Aunt and Uncle. Gladys and Vernon Presley took little John Lee in for a tour of the house, and sent him on his way, inspired that a boy could grow up to be President or a Rock star.

His childhood encounters with the likes of **Elvis and Dr. Martin Luther King** are part of the landscape that influenced this gifted performer and composer. At twelve years old, John Lee was billed as “Birmingham’s answer to Little Stevie Wonder”. He received a music scholarship and studied saxophone, guitar and piano, which led to a degree in composition from the prestigious North Texas State University. While abroad studying painting and music in Rome, he was introduced to Professor Longhair and Dr. John at the Montreux Jazz Festival, which awakened his passion for New Orleans piano.

In 1975, when John Lee’s equipment truck broke down on the way to a gig in Austin, Texas, an up and coming **Stevie Ray Vaughan** put John and the band up at his home, and re-energized his life long love of the blues. John has now incorporated the “Texas Stratocaster” sound into the show, and is bringing in a new generation of fans.

Acting on an invitation from the drummer from the Doobie Brothers, John Lee headed west in 1977 to the San Francisco Bay Area, where he signed a major label deal with Rod Stewart’s Riva Records, and a production contract with Narada Michael Walden, the most successful producer of the 80s & 90s, creating mega hits for Mariah Carey, Whitney Houston and Aretha Franklin. He became a top west coast session player, performing live and in the studio with icons such as Stevie Wonder, Willie Nelson, Jimmy Page of Led Zeppelin, Huey Lewis, Chuck Berry, just to name a few. John Lee was the music director for many years with Long John Baldry, holding down the keyboard spot formerly held by Elton John

The pianist/saxman combines elements of Dr. John with those of several of the best piano based artists of the last 20 years, like Elton John, Stevie Wonder, Billy Joel, and Leon Russell for example and holds his own with all of 'em. When their style comes out of John Lee Sanders he's transformed it into something I like a lot."

Blue Suede News Magazine"

"One of the hottest Bluesmen on the circuit"

Salmon Arm Roots & Blues Fest

David Ritz, the world's leading Blues Biographer wrote about Sanders

"Here's what I love about John Lee Sanders, His voice. Raw. Real. Sweet. Tart. An instrument of tremendous emotional and spiritual range. His writing. His hooks. His stories. His deep Louisiana roots. His powerful connection to the fertile soil..... His grit, his grooves..... His honesty. His haunting cry, his courageous assault on anything false. "I've never claimed to be something I'm not," he writes in "Handful. "I've got my flaws, but my heart is good." His music, his singing, his aesthetic vision are more than good;they're flat-out great. His songs, full-bodied and blood-washed, are rooted in reality. He reminds us that blues are concerned with neither nostalgia nor self-pity. John Lee Sanders' blues are about nothing less a renewal of strength, a resurrection of the human spirit, a projection of hard-earned hope and a declaration of extravagant love.

David Ritz has written biographies of, among others, Ray Charles, B.B. King, Marvin Gaye, Aretha Franklin and Etta James. He co-composed "Sexual Healing."

"Big congratulations on winning the trifecta BC blues awards. I can dig it as the records are all great. Bucket (full of blues) is slammin, I've been digging your albums so much..great arranging and horns too. Band is kickin...each and every one. "

Bonnie Raitt

"You did an amazing job and made my job so much easier. All the vocal complexities you added just really elevated the song. Really great work John. Bravo on Your work"

William Ross, Music Director, 2007 Academy Awards, Producer & Music director for Barbara Streisand, Josh Groban and David Foster

"I've been hearing Doc Goes Hollywood all along, and I think it's tremendous. Can't wait to hear the finished deal. Your work on it is spectacular." Great work John"

Huey Lewis

Headliner, Maple Ridge Jazz & Blues Fest, 2008 • Kaslo Jazz Fest 2009, Passau Germany Jazz Festival, 2009 • Brugnera Italy Jazz Festival, 2009. Salmon Arm Roots and Blues Fest 2008 • Calgary Blues Festival 2010. Back 2 the blues Fest, Chilliwack BC 2009, and many more

Johnleesanders.com • info@johnleesanders.com
• 250 448 0902 cell 250 864 5789 • fax 604 357 1035