

John Lee Sanders Bio/Press Release, June 2011



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 a WC Handy 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.

In December 2010, he was the special guest of the 75 voice Vancouver Good Noise Gospel Choir for 3 sold out concerts *"Along with being a fabulous musician, his captivating spirit brought the audiences to their feet at each of our three concerts."*

In 2010, John was invited to perform in a special concert honoring American Songwriters, Hosted by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Paul Williams. Performing with JD Souther, Tracy Chapman, Alan Bergman, Dion and others. R&B Music icon Bill Withers asked John Lee to close the show by sing lead on his mega-hit anthem, "Lean On Me".

Also in 2010, John Lee were some of the top spots on major Western Canada Music festivals, Including Calgary Blues Fest, Taste of Edmonton and the Salmon Arm Roots and blues Fest, drawing 25,000 people *"Taking the stage at the Bluesfest on Saturday afternoon was the John Lee Sanders Band, showing Calgary blues fans the heart and soul of the New Orleans Sound: blues-infused soul, jazz and gospel at its finest."*

On January 30th 2010, As the Headliner, along with some of the top musical acts in the Okanagan, BC; he helped raise \$35,000 in the concert, "Helping Hands for Haiti", after the devastation in Haiti last January.

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 a quarter million 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 Presley 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.

Acting on an production contract from the drummer for 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.

In the Summer of 2010, John Lee was the surprise hit of the Calgary Blues festival, the Salmon Arm Roots & Blues fest. In March 2010, he Performed for the first time Eastern Europe, with great response in Poland and the Czech Republic.

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, 2007-2011 Academy Awards, Producer & Music director for Barbara Streisand, Andrea Bocelli, Josh Groban, Michael Bublé and David Foster, Film Composer, Harry Potter.

"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

CD Review, "Bucket Full of Blues" Maple Blues Magazine, Toronto Blues Society

BC is now the home of **John Lee Sanders**, a music industry veteran who is a multiple talent on vocals, songwriting, keyboards, tenor sax & guitar. Sanders has some 9 CDs in his solo discography, but news of that treasure trove has been slow to trickle east. This disc could change that. Bucket Full Of Blues" is one of the better titles around and it's as good as it sounds, a tremendous opener. If you like New Orleans funk with a goodly helping of blues, this one's for you.

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Recent performances 2009-2010

ASCAP & The Library of Congress, Washington DC
"We Write the Songs" 2009, 2010, with JD Souther, Tracy Chapman, Hal David, Bill Withers, Jimmy Webb, Johnny Mandel, and many other legendary Songwriters
Kaslo Jazz Festival, 2009
Calgary International Blues Fest, 2010
Salmon Arm Roots and Blues fest, 2008, 2010
Blues in Villa Festival, Brugnera Italy, 2009 (Headliner_
Gateway Festival, Bengough Saskatchewan, 2010
Rybnik Blues Festival, Rybnik Poland, 2009
San Vito Blues & Soul Festival, Italy, 2009
Rotary Center for the Arts, Kelowna BC, Sold out concert, 2009
Maple Ridge Jazz & Blues Festival, Maple Ridge, BC Canada, 2008
Calgary International Blues Festival, 2010
Taste of Edmonton, 2010
Midnight in New Orleans" Kelowna BC New Years Eve Concert, 2009
the #2 rated event for NYE 2009 across Canada, from Lifestyle Magazine
Helping Hands for Haiti, Kelowna Community Theater, (Headliner) 2010
Concert raised \$35,000 for Haiti Earthquake relief
Back to the Blues Festival, Chilliwack, BC 2009-2010
Lloydminster, AB, Vic Juba Theater, concert series, October 2010
Spruce Grove, AB, Horizon Stage Concert Series, October 2010
Ft. Saskatchewan, Shell Theater Concert Series, October 2010
Westlock, AB, Westlock Cultural Arts Theater, concert series, November 2010
Athabasca, AB. Nancy Appleby Theater concert series, November 2010
Christ Cathedral, Vancouver, Good Noise Gospel Choir Guest Soloist,
3 sold out concerts, December 2010