

The Soul of the Blues in South America:



By Lorena Jastrebov,

The blues have a respected place outside the United States where they are loved, heard and where the blues is the soul of South America. On November 24, 25 and 26, 2016, along the train station in Caxias do Sul, Brazil, a new edition of the Mississippi Delta Blues Festival was held, one of the largest Blues festivals in Latin America.

The MDBF, started in 2008 from the idea of two friends who were inspired by the great Blues festivals of the United States. It is located in the old train station of the city and in its first edition to promote a fraternization among friends, clients and artists, it counted in its first edition with the participation of Magic Slim and had 5 stages, becoming one of the biggest festivals Of blues outside the United States. For this festival already passed musicians like Lassy Laster, Bilbo Walker, Larry McCray, Lurrie Bell, Junior Watson, Vasti Jakso, Tia Carroll, Jai Mailano, Rick Estrin & The Nighcates, Kenny Neal, Peter Madcat, Donny Nichilo, Billy Branch, Mr Zipp, Jerry Portnoy, Jhonny Nicholas, Terry “Harmonica” Bean, Chris Cain, Zora Young, Rip Lee Pryor, Sherman Lee Dillon, Super Chicken and more .

In this 9th edition called "Bottle Trees Edition", there was no central artist by the economic situation of the country, but I was surprised with the large number of people who were in each of the three days of Thursday 24, Friday 25 and Saturday, November 26, which exceeded 15,000, present in the seven stages and more than 90 shows, jams clinics, plastic arts and dance exhibitions, which integrated the proposal of this year. In the absence of a renowned artist as in Other years, there were a number of great first-rate artists as James “Boogaloo” Bolden (30 years trumpet with B.B.King) , Tail Dragger y Bob Stroger, JP Soars, and The Red Hots, Annika Chambers, Bex Marshall (Londres).

For more than 6 years I have traveled to Brazil, to cover the MDBF and to be able to photograph blues musicians who come from the United States to leave the blues in South America which many do not reach my country of origin, Argentina.

Bass player and Singer : Bob Stroger



He has more than 50 shows in South America, but the Front Porch in the MDBF, is still his favorite stage ... "Welcom to my house" Bob says when starting his shows here. He is always accompanied in Brazil by the band The Headcutters, who already have a name for the blues of Brazil and give strength to the shows of Bob Stroger

LJ: Bob, people love him a lot here and they all say he's the King of the South American blues, do you feel that way?

Bob: Noooooo (he laughs), I do not consider myself to be a blues king. I am a simple man and another thing do not make blues. I am happy with the blues and the blues is my life.

Lj: Bob, for more than 10 years he has been playing blues in South America and every year I see him better in his shows. What is your secret for being a bass player, singing and making love to people?

Bob: (he laughs) Traveling makes me very well ... and if I can come with my lady better we share together and know more cities to which I will play. Blues is my life and playing for people is just giving them what I am. That makes me very happy.

LJ: In each show, you play the bass with the full band and then put it aside to get off the stage and sing among the people. How does it feel when you sing to the audience looking into his eyes, holding his hand and sitting down next to him?

Bob: The blues is for sharing. Being with people, is to feel the blues from the soul itself and share it with others. I share my happiness with them ... and I never tire of doing it.

LJ: This year we saw him sing alongside Tail Dragger, with whom he shares shows in Chicago. What did he feel to be with him in the Front Porch?

Bob: The Front Porch I feel my house and share it with Tail, it makes me very happy. The blues unites us, the blues is our life and thanks to him we are here. Everyone lives in different ways, but we are both blues. I love Tail and I respect him.



Bob Stroger, also played on the "Bottle Stage" where he was cheered by more than 5000 people and also took place to step down and sing among the crowd. He is very dear and very respected in Brazil and that feels in every show.



TAIL DRAGGER "blues song and trance"

Always with his cowboy hat back on his head, his long-sleeved shirt with a black ribbon on his collar and his face resplendent with sweat, his wide smile next to his pipe make him a character from the very blues scene. Because particular, because it has a propensity to stroll through the crowd, singing with the voice of dog diffonic that astonishes who is in a show of the. For the first time, Tail Dragger will sing in the MDBF and will also sing in Argentina. This bluesman, it proved to be the blues. Each of his shows made them among the people and was very little on stage, being very rare to see him there with the band. The musicians who accompanied him (from Brazil and Argentina) followed him, since he proved to be the boss at all times. He got angry when they did not start their time or did not like it when someone was playing notes that he did not want. His long fingers pointed at people as he sang them on their faces and their lender, long legs moved to the beat of the blues, creating a burst in the crowd.



One of the nights Tail invites Bob Stroger to the stage, He enjoy every band boss drinking whisky, smoking his pipe and dancing with the present women who hugged him and kissed him. Also, I show his bald head when one of his dances sacked his Texan hat ... I do not leave a free minute at the festival without signing autographs, taking pictures with people, dancing and singing until the wee hours of the following morning. Yes ... he was up one night almost 6pm

(from 6pm to 1pm the next day) singing non-stop and drinking whisky ... an anecdote that will remain in the festival forever.





Tail, is a love man but can also be a critical . When a person does not like it, makes it clear and although his speech is not very clear, make it clear with his gestures that he is above all. He likes to talk a lot and count anegdotas, but he does not like much to be asked.

A great bluesman who leaves his blues where he walks.

"The blues is nothing more than a story about life," says Tail Dragger quite naturally. "You reflect on life and then sing about it." "It's everything I like, it's what I feel and I sing what I feel. When I sing blues I go into trance and forget everything else, nothing else matters to me, I am blues, I have the blues. " Words of Tail Dragger.



Tail Dragger in Cordoba, Argentina, 11/30/2016



The American bluesman Tail Dragger was protagonist of a night of the best blues of Chicago but in Cordoba. Everything developed in Quality Space where he was accompanied by the great harmonist Cesar Valdomir and his band The Blue Midnight (Fabricio Suarez on guitar, Nahuel Perez on bass). The band was played by Adrian Flores, producer and musician with 35 years in the diffusion of blues and who in the nineties began to produce international shows of great bluesman like James Cotton, Hubert Sumlin, Jimmy Rogers, Honeyboy Edwards and Magic Slim And the Teardrops with Lefty Dizz and Larry McCray. In 1995 he opened the Blues Special Club in front of Lezama Park in Buenos Aires city, a mythical place where great figures such as Eddie King, Raful Neal, Little Mack Simmons, John Primer, Lurrie Bell, Eddie C Campbell, Dave Myers, Billy Branch, Jimmy Dawkins, Eddie Kirkland and Phil Guy (brother of Buddy Guy), among others. Another invited musician was the great guitarist and exponent of the genre in Cordoba, Carlos Carranza who knew how to show his great knowledge in the genre, with great ease and feeling in each touch and in each theme.



Tail Dragger loves harmonica and plays harmonica but in the privacy of his house. In his bag there is always a harmonica and when he sings or dances, he does it to the sound of it. He places his hands as if "he" is playing. When Cesar Valdomir interpreted each theme with a high musical level product of its more than 20 years in the genre, Tail felt happy. "When I heard the harmonica, my belly fills with air and I feel it here ... in my chest the air that comes in and out through the harmonica."





Lorena Jastreba photography



Tail Dragger, is James Yancey Jones (as his mother called him) arrived in Chicago, USA, in the mid-60s when the great Howlin 'Wolf invited him to his shows and renamed him Tail Dragger ("Heavy Tail") because Always came to sing out of time. He lives in the west side of Chicago and tells me that there is almost no blues. The young people listen to Rap ... and he tells me that where he lives in his neighborhood, no one knows that he is a well-known bluesman of Chicago's history ... Tail is very sociable, when he comes into confidence, he does not stop telling history and The way they speak it makes it even more interesting ... you want to hear it ... and never pass the time.



Tail made songs us Lousie, She's Worryn' me, Keep I to Yourself, Ooh Baby Hold me, Blues With a Feeling that generated a bluesy atmosphere of the southside of Chicago that made the public cheer each one of them and above all, loved it every minute of the night.



Tail left in Cordoba, not only the blues ... also left us his life story and his soul. His 76 years are not such when he's on stage, he dances, he sings, and he's always with people ... and very little with the band ... he likes to share, to live. "Blues is life itself ... I am blues ... you are blues ... See you in Chicago and I invite you to my house ... tell me." I hope that if ... we can meet again there.





Lorena Jastreba photography

James "Boogaloo" Bolden (Musician of BB King, USA):

The highlight of the Festival, will be presented the great James "Boogaloo" Bolden, the brilliant trumpeter of BB King for more than 30 years, which will be presented for the first time in Form soloist in MDBF and Argentina.



He played the trumpet and sang along with the band that accompanied him from Argentina, "The Jump Club" who made him shine doing songs that same James does with his own R & B band The James Boogaloo Bolden Blues Band and before a crowd of People from Brazil and Argentina at the Bottle Stage



James "Boogaloo" Bolden, the legendary and virtuoso trumpet player who accompanied the legendary BB King in the last 40 years, performed in Chile, Mar del Plata and Buenos Aires before reaching the MDBF in Brazil.

In a conversation with him, he says "My dream since childhood, or the first desire I had as a musician, was to be a soloist. Since BB King died (May 14, 2015) I am no longer with him and started my solo career ... ", says the musician.

In addition, "Boogaloo," recalled Norberto Napolitano, alias Pappo (Argentine bluesman and BB King's friend, with whom he touched on several occasions: "My good friend Pappo ... what times we live. With him you could laugh, you could play, celebrate. I played the guitar very well. That he knew how to play very good blues. Then I remember we were going to the clubs to take and celebrate. We had a great time, Pappo was a lot of fun. "

The trumpeter and guitarist also confessed his excitement by playing with his band, "The Boogaloo Bolden Blues Band" for the first time in the country. "I love Argentina and Brasil, I have come many times, with BB we came 5 or 6 times, but this time I do it as a soloist and it is a precious responsibility." I love the people, the food, the atmosphere that lives in this place.



Lorena Jastrebo photography

Born on February 9, 1950 in Houston, Texas, James began playing the trumpet during his student years. In his first years of musical career he played with artists of the stature of Stevie Wonder, Issac Hayes, Temptations, Supremes and James Brown, then was discovered by the great BB King, who was the one who gave him the nickname "Boogaloo" Due to Bolden's restless feet.

A little more than a year after the death of the legendary King, Bolden's memory for him: "Playing with BB was like being in a family, he made us all happy, we were very close, like father and son. Of the other. In fact, he knew that I wanted to be a soloist and encouraged me to record my own records. It was like my second father, he protected me a lot in my career and I thank him "

When finishing the coverage in Brazil, I ask for a final photo. James sits down on a bench, takes off his glasses, looks at me and says 'Now if ...' and gives me his best picture, his soul is there, only her.



Lorena Jastreba photography

Annika Chambers : (USA)

From Houston, Texas, the big mama of the blues go ahead without fear and with much impetus. They dump a sexual discharge on the stage and take the public from their noses to where they want. They attract men and achieve the empathy of women with attitude, provocative movements and voices. The blues are what they feel and express it without shame. Annika Chambers is one of them. His body is comparable with the intensity of his singing. She is able to have the world in her hands.



Lorena Jastreby photography

And she enters with all the security that characterizes the big boobs. She is wearing a short, tight dress like the rhythm that the band marks her. Shake the braids with the first barnyard blues chords and when you start to sing, everyone is absorbed. Almost without cuts happens to Old man magnet and when it finishes it is noticed that it is already warm. It is the hour of a loaded and dense blues, like a good black coffee, and Annika intones the first stanzas of I'm in a dangerous mood, from BB King. It distils sensuality and there is a fluid back and forth with the audience. With Jelaous kind is when it reaches its best record. In their intonation they converge the gospel of their childhood and the southern soul of their adolescence. He goes up to the sound boxes and shakes people without amplification. Annika, jumps with her shoes with taco and moves her body with a lot of sensuality to the tempo of the guitar, piano and bass ... and lets time to dance with the drummer too. Annika and the band change the axis and the GPS takes them to New Orleans for the lively Pooky away and then to Chicago for I'm a woman, by Koko Taylor. The public did not let it go .. and they continue to spend midnight and with almost two hours of show!



Annika performed for the first time at the Buenos Aires International Festival and at the MDBF. She was joined by the great lefty guitarist and nominated for the Blues 2016 Awards, Igor Prado and his big band the award-winning Brazilian Blues guitarist Igor Prado, who was nominated this year at the prestigious Blues Awards in Memphis, USA., who sounded to the

point of perfection at the Magnolia Stage. They performed quite a few really good songs for us while we were there, including Hoochie Coochie Man, Lay Lady Lay, I'm woman and I Shot The Sheriff.



Californian J.P. Soars will shake the Mississippi Delta Blues Festival in Caxias

Playing was always something natural for Californian J.P. Soars, Mississippi Delta Blues Festival attraction on November 25 and 26. His childhood had a homemade soundtrack, with his ever present father's guitar. It was also at home that the boy learned the first chords. In adolescence, the interest of J.P. For music only increased and an unusual encounter would mark its trajectory forever.



He say me, - In 1988, I won a guitar in a raffle and two tickets to watch B.B. King. I got to meet him backstage after the show and he signed my guitar. See B.B. King on stage and meet him changed my life and put me on the way to try to play blues - reminds the guitarist and vocalist.

But the musician's natural eclecticism eventually led him down the road before deciding that the blues deserved exclusive dedication. Between these paths was the extreme metal, with which the guitarist was involved until 2005. Who sees J.P. On stage now, all lined up to show

off his laments on the guitar, not even imagining how long ago he was pounding head like a real headbanger to quite different audiences.

- Playing in metal bands helped me learn about recording in the studio, how to rehearse with a band, how to fight for perfection, and how to get a band together with other people. It also helped me write songs and try to create my own material - he explains.

This versatility of references, in fact, is one of those responsible for the tasty musical signature of J.P. Soars. His guitar and vocal timbre sounds like cauldrons boiling several strands.

- I'm eclectic and try to keep my mind open for good music. In my show, I like to mix different styles ... as I get bored easily, so I try to keep it interesting for me and the audience. I think my style is more of a root, but I also go to the other side again and again, "he says, which always takes the shows to a classic cigar box guitar (built by hand).



Lorena Jastreba photography

The rhythmic curiosity of the musician, in fact, makes him very excited to visit Brazil for the first time. Around here, he intends to check our music closely and try to absorb even more references.

- I know bossa nova, of course, and I adore. I am looking forward to being able to try and listen to some of these songs when we get to Brazil. I'm sure it will also be a learning experience for us, after all, what better way to find out about music than to see and hear for ourselves? - Cheers.

Fan of bands like ZZ Top, Beatles and LedZeppelin, J.P. Soars is also full of blues idols such as T Bone Walker, Muddy Waters, HowlinWolf, Guitar Slim, Johnny Guitar Watson, Jesse MaeHemphill, The Fabulous Thunderbirds and of course B.B. King. To understand what this sauce is all about, just by checking the performance of the guitarist live.

Their shows were an ix of influences with a lot of blues, some gypsy jazz and a bit of Latin influences with something of rock and roll. The sound of his guitars with drums and bass, were a tributary of notes that plunged the audience into mantic singing of excellent musical level.



After the interview with Annika and JP Soars, they gave me this beautiful photo together.



The friendship between musicians from different parts of the world, after an international festival, finds them in a friendly barbecue. Sharing among all to end another year of blues, makes the same blues generate union, love and above all friendship.

Igor Prado, Annika Chamber and Bob Stroger.



Alamo Leal (Brazilian guitar and Bob Stroger.



