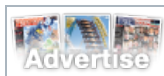


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Musicians unite for 1Matters concert

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Pat Lewandowski has served organization for the unhoused since 1990.

Toledo blues guitarist Pat Lewandowski is increasing his involvement with 1Matters with a performance Oct. 14 in the "Toledo Streets Birthday Benefit and Pub Party."

His love for the blues began in 1967 when he first heard the album "Raw Blues."

"It was all people out in Great Britain like Jimmy Page and Eric Clapton, back when they all used to play the blues still, and John Mayall," Lewandowski said. "I heard that and I really liked it. The stuff knocked me out the first day I heard it. I started looking at the credits on the record label. I started going back and looking for records from those guys. Everybody in my neighborhood played Beatles music, so if you wanted to play with cats in the neighborhood you had to play The Beatles. I shied away from that as much as possible. I wanted to play loud and played blues all through high school."

Lewandowski has spent much of his career bouncing between bands and performing solo, but in the '70s and '80s he played with his brother for a few years in the Snooz Blues Band.



"We had a ball," Lewandowski said. "My brother Jake played stand-up bass and Don Hayward played guitar and harmonica with us. We did that for quite some time. We used to play at the old Soup Kitchen Saloon in Detroit. We played together six or seven years. It was just fun. It was guys I liked whose musicianship I admired. That was basically it. We'd just show up, drink beer, flirt with girls and play the blues."

The highest-profile performance for the Snooz Blues Band came in 1980 when it played at the Republican National Convention in Detroit at Joe Louis Arena.

Pat Lewandowski

"We didn't really fit in, as you might suspect,"

Lewandowski said. "Never having been a registered Republican, I had some things to say from the stage that probably were not well-received. It was fun. As people do at conventions, they were drinking heavily and carrying on and eventually we pulled them over to our side, musically if not ideologically."

Lewandowski has also pulled the Black Swamp Blues Society over to his side musically, with six wins in the 14 years of the Black Swamp Battle of the Bands.

"It's good exposure for the Black Swamp Blues Society, and it's good for the musicians," Lewandowski said. "A lot of the musicians have, not a cutthroat attitude, but an attitude of, 'Hey, you're poaching my gig.' To bring them all together and play, have a group of independent judges mostly from out of town to judge people strictly on blues content and talent, it gives everybody a look at themselves that they wouldn't normally take. You look in the mirror and see a handsome guy. Somebody else doesn't see you as quite so handsome. It's good for the blues society and LaVonne Kujawa. She's been the president for the last few years. She just works her ass off for it. She does a great job."

The winner of the Black Swamp Battle of the Bands advances to represent Toledo in the International

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Blues Talent Competition in Memphis, Tenn.

"Going to Memphis is always fun," Lewandowski said. "I've never won in Memphis, but it's a paid vacation basically. It's kind of hard to go wrong. I don't do the networking and stuff like that. I'm not really concerned about my future as a money-making musician. Hell, I'm 58-years-old. I just go down there and have some fun and play what I like. I've gone down there and played all original music. I've gone down there and done slide work. It's whatever pops into my head at any given moment. I always tell people, 'I'm driving the bus. You can get on it, fine. If you don't want to get on it, that's OK, too.'"

Plenty of people have been getting on the bus including the Toledo Rock Rhythm and Blues Festival, which honored Lewandowski with the Little Walter Mitchell Award in 2000.

"That was truly special," Lewandowski said. "I met Walter years ago down at the old Peacock Café. I was sitting in with The Griswolds, and I was not doing well with them. They had their own idiosyncratic way of counting measures. I was getting pretty frustrated. Walter came up and said, 'Why don't you just back me up?' I did. He was a delightful little guy. He made me feel a whole lot better about my playing. To have the award named after him is an honor in itself because he was sweet. He said, 'Come on, let's go to South Carolina and make \$10 a night.' I was like, 'Sure, let's go.' It was very nice of the people who give out that award to consider me for it, let alone give it to me. I guess it mostly shows I've just been around a long time and I'm not going away."

Lewandowski is also not going away from 1Matters. He has served as the musical director for Tent City since 1990.

"I've been involved with them a long time," Lewandowski said. "It's something that I wish we didn't have to do. I keep telling [1Matters founder Ken Leslie] every year, 'Wouldn't it be nice if we didn't have to do Tent City again?' It's a grassroots organization. You certainly can't count on the government assistance for the people who need it. It's up to us to take care of each other and that's what 1Matters does. That's why I admire them."

"Toledo Streets Birthday Benefit and Pub Party" is Oct. 14 at The Blarney Bullpen from 6 p.m. to 1 a.m. and admission is \$5. The Blarney Bullpen is located at 601 Monroe St.

Musician Candice Coleman: '1Matters is an amazing organization.'

Candice Coleman has made a point of helping others with her music since leaving the second season of "American Idol" in 2003. In addition to her involvement with the 1Matters event Tent City, Coleman is performing Oct. 14 in the "Toledo Streets Birthday Benefit and Pub Party."

"1Matters is an amazing organization," Coleman said. "The thing about them that is really awesome is they are actually out there walking the walk. They aren't just talking the talk. Everything is volunteer. Anything that comes in goes to the actual program. It's not like they are paying people and nobody is pulling any money. Not too many nonprofits do that. They are truly a nonprofit."

Coleman auditioned in Detroit for the second season of "American Idol" after her friend Brookelynn Meyers talked her into going. The Start High School graduate advanced with her performance of "At Last" by Etta James and made it to the top 32.

"It was very stressful and also very fun," Coleman said. "It's a unique experience. You get to know who you're competing with. You build relationships and come to like them a lot because you are spending every waking moment with them."

After leaving "American Idol," Coleman returned home to her son and continued writing songs and playing

music.

"I play on average two or three times a week at local places with Chris Brown," Coleman said. "I'm also in a blues band here in town called Buck69. I do stuff at Tent City every year, usually playing on Friday or Saturday night. I lead my praise band at church. Incidentally, we also do the worship service on Sunday at Tent City every year."

Candice Coleman

Buck69 is a seven-piece blues rock band formed by the father and son duo of Tom and Alex Clawson. Coleman has been friends with the Clawson family since she was 15 years old. In 2008, the band's album "When She Whispers Your Name" was a Grammy finalist in the Best Contemporary Blues Album category. The band was also a nominee for the Texas Roots Music Association Entertainer of the Year in 2008.

Coleman is playing Oct. 14 with local musician Chris Brown. They will play what she described as an "eclectic mix" of blues, classic rock, New Orleans music and ballads, and the performance will be mostly cover songs.

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"The thing that's really cool about having the gift of music is there is so much you can do with it to help people," Coleman said. "You don't realize how impactful and how important it is until you see people get lost in it and sing along with it. Music really does encourage people, lifts people up and brings them to a better place, at least for the time being. That's the most powerful thing about it."

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