

Conversation with Nicko Christiansen, frontier of Livin'Blues Xperience a propos of their appearance in Budapest, on the XI. Bluespatika Festival, November 2008.



In the middle of the 60's the British Blues boom had a big effect on the musical life of the old continent. The Dutch blues bands who was formed that time obtained international fame. From among them only the heritage of Livin' Blues Band is carried on by Nicko Christiansen and the Livin' Blues Xperience.

Your career as a vocalist started when you were 15. What made you play blues in that early age?

In the first place I was a rock and roll fan, and I liked the black music the best. Like little Richard and Chuck Berry since about 1960, when I was 10 years old, When I heard Blues from Chicago on the radio, It totally blew my mind. Howlin' Wolf, Sonny Boy Williamson, Buddy Guy, BB King, Muddy Waters Willie Dixon, etc.

You and the harmonica player John la Grand joined Livin' Blues when you were 17. You spent almost 8 years in the band, and recorded such classical albums like Hell session, Wang Dang Doodle, Bamboozle , and Ram Jam Josey, what recordings are well known by Hungarian collectors as well. What are your most impressive memories from this period? Who did you play together, what are you mostly proud of?

With John Lagrand I started as a duo, and we joined the band in 1966, en 1967 we became professionals, touring in Germany, Switzerland, England, Belgium, and Italy. We played as a support act with Muddy Waters, in Belgium, and we recorded 2 albums with Mike Vernon in England, the producer of Fleetwood Mac, John Mayall and BB King.

I'm proud of meeting Rory Gallagher in Germany, and shook hands and played together with Peter Green and Fleetwood Mac, the first big kick was during our successful English tour, and so many thing happened during that wild period of the sixties and seventies, it was heaven and hell , but I look back on it with pleasure, I'm glad I don't have to drink so much and I feel better nowadays ,without drugs and alcohol. But you have to learn the hard way, when you are on the road.

After recording Ram Jam Josey in 1973 you left the band. What was the reason of your decision?

I didn't leave the band, we had arguments with the so called leader and the manager, who were not in for critics, and they decided to form another band, which was an imitation of the original one.

You were playing in the band Himalaya for several years, what's happened to the band, and made you find your way back to Livin' Blues?

Himalaya was in fact another Blues rock band, which sounded like living blues, After that period I played as a saxophone player in about 20 bands, sometimes 5 or 8 at the same time, I learned a lot then, but the sound of my voice together with harmonica, is mainly the sound of Livin' Blues, that's why I had to form another Livin' Blues Band.

Livin' Blues Xperience was established in 2005. What is the current lineup? Why did you change the name of the band?

The rights of the old band are sold to a German record company by the first management. and the name *xperience* as an extra, gives us also the freedom to play in our own way, with everything we picked up in those years, so we don't have to be a cover band of our own first material, although we love to play the old songs, but never twice in the same way. For instance the solo's and vocals are mainly improvised.

What style do you play? Do you still play the classical Livin' Blues set, or do you have a totally new repertoire?

We play the old songs as well as new material, in the style of Blues and rock, but sometimes we like to make it funky or even a bit jazzy.

Your new studio album „THIS IS THE TIME" came out this year. Could you please introduce the album?! As I know, you won an award with it...

Thank you, the title 'this is the time, means that it is time for the world to change, And I hope soon we will stop fighting each others, it is about time, and also time for my band, cause too long we are stuck with meaningless music which is an insult for intelligent people who are able to listen and feel good music, This Is The Time.

What are your plans for the future?

The future is a mystery, the past an old book to learn from, we only have the present, here and now. You never know what happens. Keep thinking positive and love life.

We've been listening to your music for 30 years, without meeting you live, what or who made it happen to see you live on stage in Hungary this year?

Maybe our concerts in Moscow and Poland, I don't know, but it is really nice to be there, Hungary is a beautiful country with many very nice people.

What is your message to your fans? What shall they expect for on the festival?

We are planning to make our show a musical happening, and my message is:

*We are all family, don't forget,
We all have earned our place in the world, so please make your life color the world with goodness,
Heaven is a place inside, but there is hell as well,
Making a wise choice, will make the world a better place,
Music is the voice of nature,
Be part of it,
Just let it happen,
Let the sun come through,
When it happens to me,
It can happen to you,*

Love
Nicko C