

BSCP Supports Blues Education in France

By Kathryn Gregoire



Bobby Gentilo and Voice Students

Invited by the Stage et Rencontres Blues Camp 2023 organizers in Masquières, France, Bobby Gentilo (vocals and guitarist), Carlos Elliott (vocals and guitarist), Tony Ryder (bassist), Dale Wise (drummer) and Dave Groninger (guitarist) participated as teachers in the annual week-long blues music program on the campus of Lycée Professionnel L'Oustal from October 24 - 28, 2023.

Sixty French students, ranging in age from 8 - 87 years, came with a variety of instruments, including harmonicas, drums, keyboards, horns, basses and guitars. Their skill levels ranged from beginner to professional. The teachers, who hailed from France and several other countries such as Spain, Belgium, United Kingdom and the USA, worked with them to learn 14 songs to present on the last day at a Stage Music Blues Concert attended by over 500 people.

Following the student performances, the

teachers took the stage and performed songs that highlighted their individual talents. The headliner for the concert was Bobby Gentilo and The Cornlickers with guest Carlos Elliott. Gentilo described the Blues Camp faculty as exceptional and super talented. He was impressed with the strong community that developed among the students and teachers, with many returning every year.

BSCP contributed to support Bobby Gentilo and The Cornlickers band members with guest Carlos Elliott in serving as Master Teachers at the Blues Camp as part of our Blues Education Program. Gentilo noted that the teachers and students at the camp were very appreciative for their contributions. In turn, The Cornlickers were grateful for all they learned from their experience and the warm reception they received.

In addition to the time spent at the Blues Camp, Bobby Gentilo and The Cornlickers with Carlos Elliott spent two weeks traveling around France participating in various Blues Festivals. They spent 4-5 days in Switzerland playing at sold-out night clubs. Anthony "Big A" Sherrad joined them for the last week of performances, under the name The Juke Ambassadors.

During their touring and teaching time, the band members wore BSCP 25th Anniversary T-Shirts and gave out BSCP stickers and picks. They talked on stage about BSCP and the support they received.

Originally RL Boyce was scheduled to be part of The Juke Ambassadors, but a final decision was made shortly before the group went overseas that Boyce was too ill to travel. Right before they were to go on for the first show that he had been scheduled to appear in, they got the word that he had died. The loss of this man from Como, MS, who had mentored and taught them so much was profound.

The group immediately set about to raise money on the tour and online. As soon as Carlos Elliott returned to the US, he went to MS to host a covert / fundraiser at Reds Lounge, Clarksdale's famous Juke Joint. It included many of Mississippi's most famous artists, all of which were RL's friends.

RL Boyce played with The Cornlickers for the BSCP Mississippi Railroad show on July 9, 2023, at Champions in Highspire, PA. They also held a Master Class for guitarists before the show began. Warm and inviting, Boyce asked several musicians to join them to play on stage throughout the second set.



Blues Camp Faculty and Students

Alex Lee Warner Representing BSCP at IBC Youth Showcase

The Blues Society of Central PA is sponsoring 15 year-old local guitarist, Alex Lee Warner, from York, Pennsylvania, to represent the region at the International Blues Challenge (IBC) Youth Showcase on January 19, 2024, in Memphis, TN. He has also been invited to Ground Zero in Clarksdale, MS, to play on Jan 20.

Alex's passion for blues music and commitment to honing his craft have set him apart in the local music scene. He won his first Central PA Music Award from the Central PA Music Hall of Fame for 2022 Best Youth Instrumentalist and was recognized as one of Central PA's Top 10 youth artists in 2021. Alex is a member of the Central PA Youth All Star Band and a Twin Dix Guitar Artist.

With school on winter break, BSCP

invited Alex to participate in the January 11, 2024 Thursday Blues Jam at Champions. Underground Live, 1104 Carlisle Road, Camp Hill is hosting a benefit jam for Warner on Wednesday, January 10, at 7 pm.

His band, Alex Warner & Soul Sunrise, has performed at several local venues and events, such as the Rock Hill Music Festival.

The International Blues Challenge being held January 15-20 is hosted by The Blues Foundation. The event brings together the best emerging blues talents from around the world playing primarily on Beale Street.

Follow Alex Lee Warner's journey at the International Blues Challenge on social media through:



Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/AlexWarnerofficial>

Instagram - <https://www.instagram.com/alexleewarner/>

Website - <https://www.alexleewarnerofficial.com/>