



photo by Mena Anderson

# CHRIS JAMES AND PATRICK RYNN

**2009 BLUES MUSIC AWARD NOMINEE - BEST NEW ARTIST DEBUT**

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**PUBLICIST:: [Betsie Brown / Blind Raccoon, LLC](mailto:Betsie Brown / Blind Raccoon, LLC)**

**P.O. Box 40045 - Memphis, TN 38174 - 901.278.6850 - [betsie@blindraccoon.com](mailto:betsie@blindraccoon.com)**

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## BLUES FANS ARE WELL AWARE OF VOCALIST AND LEAD GUITARIST CHRIS JAMES AND BASSIST PATRICK RYNN AS LONGTIME LEADERS OF THEIR OWN BAND, THE BLUE FOUR,

as well as for their stellar work with a dazzling array of blues legends. Now ***Stop and Think About It***, their debut album for Earwig Records, takes their shared musical feats to a whole new level.

The San Diego-based bluesmen inaugurated their musical partnership in 1990 when both were in Chicago for the first time. The sartorially splendiferous duo has been inseparable ever since, their telepathic onstage interplay in evidence whether they're digging deep into classic postwar blues or dishing up the meaty, satisfying originals so prominent on their new CD.

Born in North Carolina but raised in the warm and sunny climes of San Diego, Chris was hooked on blues as a child. "I started playing blues piano by the time I was 11. Chuck Berry was the first guy that was really a big influence on me," he says. Transfixed by anything having to do with blues, Chris snagged a gofer job at a local blues festival where he talked to Texas-bred guitarist Tomcat Courtney, San Diego's top bluesman then and now. Chris was skilled enough on harp at the age of 13 to join Courtney's band shortly thereafter their first encounter.

"I only played harmonica with him for maybe six months or something like that, and then the bass player quit. And then Tom just gave me a bass and said, 'Okay, boy, here's the bass. The bass player's quit. I need you to learn this by next week!'" laughs Chris. Soon he was alternating between bass and guitar with Courtney before switching over to guitar altogether.

In 1990, Chris made his first pilgrimage to Chicago. An impromptu jam with blues pianist Detroit Junior led to his first steady gig. In his free time, Chris made the rounds of local jam sessions. He first encountered Patrick while sitting in at B.L.U.E.S. Etc. "We did not hit it off when we first met each other," admits Chris. Fate decreed that the pair would cross paths again very soon at the Guitar Center, where Patrick worked. Chris came in and played a dazzling "Ter-raplane Blues." "We became instant friends," says Patrick. "He ended up coming down to the store just about every day." A new blues duo was permanently established then and there.

It wasn't like Patrick didn't have experience holding down the bottom in a blues band. Born in Toledo, Ohio, he was classically trained on bass before a buddy urged him to check out a high school jazz ensemble led by veteran saxist Floyd "Candy" Johnson, who invited the young bassist to play with the orchestra. "That's how I got introduced into blues," says Patrick, who had an epiphany while attending college when he heard Elmore James for the first time on tape. "My whole world just changed," he says. "It just blew me away." After serious woodshedding, Patrick hooked on as bassist with Toledo's leading blues band, the Griswolds, led by brothers Art and Roman Griswold. "I ended up playing with them for five years," he says.

Harmonica great Junior Wells invited Patrick to Chicago in the spring of 1990. That autumn he moved there. With both young bluesmen thus settled in the Windy City, Chris drilled Patrick on the traditional aspects of the blues. "He was teaching me the rudiments of everything," says Patrick. "I was exhausted. But over time, it started happening." The pair's first big break came at a tribute to harp immortal Little Walter at Rosa's Lounge. An all-star cast of Chicago blues giants was in attendance, including the legendary Louis and Dave Myers.

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“Louis and Dave and all these guys, they wanted a break,” says Chris. “They asked me, ‘Do you know Little Walter?’ I said, ‘Of course I know Walter’s stuff!’ So they put us up there, and we started playing. And there’s Willie Smith and Sam Lay and all these guys, looking at us.” It took a few months, but that performance paid off. “The phone rang, and Chris runs in the house, and he’s in there for about a half hour,” says Patrick. “And he comes running out. He says, ‘Get packed! We’re going to Atlanta!’ I’m like, ‘What do you mean?’ He said, ‘Sam Lay—we just got hired!’” The two anchored the powerhouse drummer’s band for five years and first recorded together as members of Sam’s band, the tapes debuting in 1994 on Appaloosa as **Sam Lay Blues Band Live**. Slide Guitar Blues, hailing from the same date, later came out on Icehouse and marked Chris’ first vocal outings on record. More recently, they backed Lay on Hightone’s live **Rhythm Room Blues** in 2001.

The two grew close to Dave Myers, co-founder of the Aces and a Chicago blues electric bass pioneer. “We used to go over to his house and spend all night just sitting in his kitchen playing. Chris on guitar, Dave on guitar, me playing Davey’s bass. I always knew I was doing okay if Dave was smiling,” says Patrick. “Dave Myers was a huge influence on me. Not only was he an influence, but he was a really dear, close friend.”

While playing in Colorado in 1994, Lay invited budding harp player Rob Stone to sit in with the band. Like Chris and Patrick, Rob felt a migrational pull to Chicago. The three teamed up as a unit there before Chris and Patrick returned to San Diego (they can be seen in action at the 2000 Chicago Blues Festival in **Godfathers and Sons**, part of Martin Scorsese’s PBS-TV blues documentary series). When Stone decided to make an album, he asked his friends to help. “Robbie wanted to start getting gigs in Chicago on his own, so he needed to have his own CD,” says Chris. “Then we said, ‘What are we going to call the band?’” They decided on the C-Notes, in honor of Rob’s spendthrift ways and Chris’ penchant for spending his last buck on CDs.

**No Worries**, Rob Stone & the C-Notes’ acclaimed 1998 debut album, was just the beginning. In addition to co-starring on the C-Notes’ potent 2003 Earwig release **Just My Luck**, Chris and Patrick recorded with pianist Dennis Binder (2007’s **Hole in That Jug** on Earwig) and Chicago guitarist Jody Williams’ second Evidence album in 2004, **You Left Me in the Dark** (Chris had the honor of playing alongside one of his heroes, Robert Jr. Lockwood, on the set). They’d begun playing with Jody near the beginning of his comeback and traveled the globe with him until 2004, when Chris contracted a stomach ailment in Italy that took him off the road.

Chris was well enough by July of ‘05 to travel to Europe as a member of Phoenix harpist Bob Corritore’s band. That led to his being asked to join Corritore’s Rhythm Room All Stars. “I was in the band for like six months, then Patrick came aboard,” says Chris. Their explosive exploits at the Rhythm Room can be heard on **House Rockin’ and Blues Shoutin’!**, a 2007 live disc on the Blue Witch label where they back Big Pete Pearson and Billy Boy Arnold. Now their own **Stop and Think About It** takes it one mighty step further.

“We’ll still go back and do some things with Jody and Sam. Now we’ve got the whole Tomcat thing going too,” says Chris. Indeed, Courtney’s long-overdue national debut CD **Downsville Blues**, produced by Corritore, was recently released on Blue Witch with Chris playing stunning duets with his mentor and Patrick contributing a sturdy bottom to the band cuts. “We’ve got this big roster of people now that we’re playing with, trying to keep ourselves busy.”

With the release of **Stop and Think About It**, a full itinerary is an absolute certainty for Chris James and Patrick Rynn.

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Chris and Patrick have had the distinct pleasure of playing and recording with many of their Blues heroes over the years.

Many of these legends influenced Chris and Patrick musically long before they ever shared a stage with them.

Here is a partial list of Blues luminaries Chris and Patrick have made music with, along with a short summary of the well-known Blues Venues and top Blues Festivals that they have played around the world.

### **CHRIS AND PATRICK HAVE PERFORMED WITH:**

SUNNYLAND SLIM  
ROBERT JR. LOCKWOOD  
HONEYBOY EDWARDS  
HOMESICK JAMES  
PINETOP PERKINS  
SNOOKY PRYOR  
JUNIOR WELLS  
DAVID MYERS OF THE ACES  
BILLY BOY ARNOLD  
JODY WILLIAMS  
HUBERT SUMLIN  
HENRY GRAY  
SAM LAY  
JAMES COTTON  
LOUISIANA RED  
WILLIE "BIG EYES" SMITH  
EDDIE KIRKLAND  
DENNIS BINDER  
EDDIE SHAW  
LONNIE BROOKS  
LITTLE SMOKEY SMOTHERS  
DETROIT JUNIOR  
LEFTY DIZZ  
CAREY BELL  
BYTHER SMITH  
MAGIC SLIM  
WILLIE KENT  
PHIL GUY  
BIG TIME SARAH  
LITTLE ARTHUR DUNCAN

### **EUROPEAN BLUES FESTIVALS:**

#### **2004 CHICAGO BLUES FESTIVAL TOUR**

with Jody Williams, Deitra Farr and Andrew "Junior Boy" Jones

**BAY-CAR BLUES FESTIVAL** — Bay-Car, France  
**BERLIN JAZZ FESTIVAL** — Berlin, Germany  
**BLUES ESTAFETTE** — Utrecht, The Netherlands  
**BLUES SUR SEINE** — Mantes La Jolie, France  
**BURNLEY NATIONAL BLUES FESTIVAL** — Burnley, England  
**LUCERNE BLUES FESTIVAL** — Lucerne, Switzerland  
**PARK TOWER BLUES FESTIVAL** — Tokyo, Japan  
**RAWA BLUES FESTIVAL** — Katowice, Poland  
**SOUTHERN BLUES NIGHT** — Heerlen, The Netherlands

### **BLUES FESTIVALS IN THE UNITED STATES:**

**BIRMINGHAM JAM** — Birmingham, Alabama  
**BLUES ON THE FOX** — Aurora, Illinois  
**CHICAGO BLUES FESTIVAL** — Chicago, Illinois  
**COURT AVENUE BLUES FESTIVAL** — Des Moines, Iowa  
**KING BISCUIT BLUES FESTIVAL** — Helena, Arkansas  
**MISSISSIPPI VALLEY BLUES FESTIVAL** — Davenport, Iowa  
**POCONOS BLUES FESTIVAL** — Pocono, Pennsylvania  
**RUSSIAN RIVER BLUES FESTIVAL** — Guerneville, California  
**ROCK, RHYTHM AND BLUES FESTIVAL** — Toledo, Ohio  
**WINTHROP RHYTHM AND BLUES FESTIVAL** — Winthrop, Washington

### **BLUES CLUBS IN THE U.S. AND CANADA:**

**BELLY UP TAVERN** — Solana Beach, California  
**BLUES ON GRAND** — Des Moines, Iowa  
**CAFE CAMPUS** — Montreal, Canada  
**COZY'S** — Sherman Oaks, California  
**FAMOUS DAVE'S** — Minneapolis, Minnesota  
**FAT FISH BLUE** — Cleveland, Ohio  
**GRAND EMPORIUM** — Kansas City, Missouri  
**GROUND ZERO** — Clarksdale, Mississippi  
**ROCK 'N BOWL** — New Orleans, Louisiana  
**SILVER DOLLAR ROOM** — Toronto, Canada  
**SLIPPERY NOODLE** — Indianapolis, Indiana  
**ZOO BAR** — Lincoln, Nebraska

**FOR A COMPLETE LIST OF MUSICIANS, CLUBS AND FESTIVALS, PLEASE VISIT [THEBLUEFOUR.COM](http://THEBLUEFOUR.COM)**

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## HERE'S WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING ABOUT THE BLUE FOUR...

"Look through your collection of recent blues albums and you'll probably find the names Chris James and Patrick Rynn. Together, they've backed some of the most important names in the blues world. ... "Stop And Think About It" is a fine set of gritty Chicago blues." — **BLUES REVUE BY ART TIPALDI**

"Chicago Blues couldn't ask for better representation." — **BLUE NOTES / PITTSBURGH POST-GAZETTE BY JIM WHITE**

"...They have dedicated their lives to the blues they love, spending decades backing up true legends and learning from the masters. Patrick and Chris have made a career as sidemen and this CD "Stop And Think About It" should bring them the notice they so richly deserve."  
— **BIG CITY BLUES BY ROGER & MARGARET WHITE**

"Stop And Think About It features plenty of good, solid blues just like it was played in the Windy City years ago. These guys learned their lessons well and here's hoping there will be plenty more to come from them." — **BLUES BYTES BY GRAHAM CLARKE**

"James and Rynn have a knack for writing and performing songs as if they were living in the glory years of 50's Chicago blues."  
— **LIVING BLUES BY TIM HOLEK**

"When I saw James and Rynn backing Jody Williams, I could appreciate how good they were as musicians, but this stellar release shows even more, how good they are out in front. This was an unexpected blues delicacy and highly recommended." — **JAZZ & BLUES REPORT BY RON WEINSTOCK**

"Do yourself a favor. Go to your locally owned music store and pick up a copy of this excellent CD. If they don't have it on the shelf, ask the owner to order it for you. You ain't gonna be sorry." — **BLUES SOURCE BY MIKE LUCAS**

"It's in large part Earwig's best release of 2008 and one of the best traditional electric blues releases, too. These guys play with lots of guts and no bullshit. For any traditional fan, this is pure bliss. For the contemporary fan, this will be in education in the raw power of yesterday's blues."  
— **JUKE JOINT SOUL BY BEN THE HARPMAN**

"Stop And Think About It," twelve cuts of vintage blues which, from the first note, grabs you and makes you wanna boogie!!  
— **MUSIC CITY BLUES SOCIETY BY SHERYL AND DON CROW**

"In their careers, James and Rynn have worked with lots of blues legends. And now they deserve to be legends their own selves. Buy this album. You will play it often. It is incredible." — **WICHITA BLUES SOCIETY BY PAT JENNINGS**

"For their first time out in the limelight, James & Rynn have hit a home run. It's about time the rest of the blues world discovers their phenomenal talents." — **MAINE BLUES SOCIETY BY PHIL WHIPPLE**

"Chris James and Patrick Rynn have made a recording that once again show us there is no music quite like the blues when it's played with love and enthusiasm." — **BLOGCRITICS MAGAZINE BY RICHARD MARCUS**

"...My friends couldn't tell whether it was a new CD or a slice of obscure late 50s Chicago Blues. Quite a compliment."  
— **THE SUNDAY NIGHT BLUES PROJECT BY BRUCE**

"Stop and Think About It is one of the most powerful collections of traditional blues tracks available and one no blues lover will want to miss."  
— **MISSISSIPPI HILL COUNTRY BLUES ASSOCIATION BY JOAN TURNER**

"This is a terrific debut from two of the finest performers out there today. If you like good old-fashioned Chicago Blues played with the perfect balance of finesse and grit then "Stop and Think About It" is an essential addition to your blues collection." — **ROB'S BLUES BLOG BY ROB LEHRMAN**

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## RADIO AIRPLAY FOR “STOP AND THINK ABOUT IT”

### LIVING BLUES RADIO CHART:

#08 - September 2008  
#06 - October 2008  
#11 - November 2008

### ROOTS MUSIC REPORT:

#06 Roots Blues Chart – November 14, 2008  
#10 Roots Blues Chart – November 7, 2008  
#03 Roots Blues Chart – October 24, 2008  
#08 Roots Blues Chart – October 17, 2008  
#08 Roots Blues Chart – October 9, 2008  
#08 Roots Blues Chart – October 3, 2008  
#06 Roots Blues Chart - September 26, 2008

### LE POWERBLUES FRENCH BLUES RADIO CHART:

#01 - November 2008

### SATELLITE / SYNDICATED:

Blues Deluxe **107 Radio Stations** - Syndicated Worldwide  
**B.B. King's Bluesville - XM Satellite Radio**

### UNITED STATES:

Blues Power **WOAB**-Dothan, Alabama  
The “LA” Blues Cruise **WNSI**-Atmore, Alabama  
Rollin’ With The Blues **KMXT**-Kodiak, Alaska  
Marty Kools Blues Review **KXCI**-Tucson, Arizona  
Every Shade Of Blue **KSDS**-San Diego, California  
The South Side **KHUM**-Humboldt, California  
Eight To The Bar With Tarr **KMFB**-Willits, California  
Mick Martin’s Blues Party **KXJZ**-Sacramento, California  
Strictly Blues **KRFX**-Denver, Colorado  
House Rent Party **KRFC**-Fort Collins, Colorado  
Out Of The Blues **WCNI**-New London, Connecticut  
Don’t Forget The Blues Hour **WPFW**-Washington, D.C.  
Smokestack Lightnin **WUCF**-Orlando, Florida  
Good Morning Blues II **WRFG**-Atlanta, Georgia  
Somethin’ Blue **KTUH**-Honolulu, Hawaii  
GLT Blues Radio **WGTL**-Normal, Illinois  
Sunday Morning Blues Podcast **WRTB**-Rockford, Illinois  
The Blues Revue **WVPE**-Elkhart, Indiana  
The Roadhouse Podcast Internet Radio-Iowa City, Iowa  
Kansas City Blues Show **KCFX**-Kansas City, Kansas  
Crossroads **KMUW**-Wichita, Kansas

Nothin’ But The Blues **WMKY**-Morehead, Kentucky  
The Blues Box **KRVS**-Lafayette, Louisiana  
The Blues Highway **WBOR**-Brunswick, Maine  
Bates College Radio **WRBC**-Lewiston, Maine  
True Blues **WBRS**-Waltham, Massachusetts  
Ultimate Blues **Live 365**-Boston, Massachusetts  
Bluestime **WHFR**-Dearborn, Michigan  
Hammered By The Blues **KOWZ**-Owatonna, Minnesota  
Down In The Alley **KDHX**-St. Louis, Missouri  
Edged In Blue **KKFI**-Kansas City, Missouri  
Blue Light Boogie **KEMC**-Billings, Montana  
Highway Blues **KZUM**-Lincoln, Nebraska  
Nothin’ But The Blues **KUNV**-Las Vegas, Nevada  
The Blues Summit **WMWV**-Conway, New Hampshire  
All Blues **KBAC**-Santa Fe, New Mexico  
Crossroads **WVBR**-Ithaca, New York  
Doc’s Juke Joint **WGMC**-Rochester, New York  
C.B. Roy’s Mostly Blues **WWCU**-Cullowhee, North Carolina  
Blues With Mike Olson **KFJM**-Grand Forks, North Dakota  
The Blues Breakfast **WBGU**-Bowling Green, Ohio  
Breakfast With The Blues **KRVM**-Eugene, Oregon  
Sunday Blues Brunch **WZXR**-Williamsport, Pennsylvania  
Friday Night Blues Attack **WDVX**-Knoxville, Tennessee  
Soul Stew **WEVL**-Memphis, Tennessee  
Blues At Sunrise **KVRX**-Austin, Texas  
Texas Blues Radio **KNON**-Dallas, Texas  
Red, White And Blues **KRCL**-Salt Lake City, Utah  
Blues And Beyond **WMRW**-Warren, Vermont  
Nothin’ But The Blues **WTJU**-Charlottesville, Virginia  
All Blues **KPLU**-Seattle, Washington  
Blues Therapy Show **KWCW**-Walla Walla, Washington  
The Blue Side **WPNE**-Green Bay, Wisconsin  
Blues Café 101 **WWSP**-Stevens Point, Wisconsin  
The Blues Blowout **WIVI**-St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands

### CANADA:

Sunday Night Soul **CHKT**-Toronto, Ontario  
In A Mellow Tone **CKCU**-Ottawa, Ontario  
Friday Night Blues Party **CKUA**-Edmonton Alberta  
Blues In The Dark **CFRO**-Vancouver, British Columbia  
Emotion Blues **CFID**-Acton, Quebec  
Blue In The Face **KFFF**-Peterborough, Ontario  
Black Cat Alley **CHOM**-Montreal, Quebec  
The Blues Never Die **CHRW**-London, Ontario

### EUROPE:

Solo Blues **FM Barracas** - Buenos Aires, Argentina  
Boom Boom **Equinoxe Radio**-Beez, Belgium  
Rock Oko **Radio Krizevci**-Krizevci, Croatia  
Blue Soul **Radio Holstebro**-Holstebro, Denmark  
Nothing But The Blues Podcast-Loughborough, England  
Boomerang **Radio Canut**-Lyon, France  
Baker Street Radio **Radio Menergy**-Albi, France  
Crossroads Radio **Grille Ouverte**-Ales, France  
The Blues Riff **Radio Campus Anger**-Anger, France  
Maxwell Street **Internet Radio**-Echillais, France  
Surfin’ Bird **Couleurs FM**-L’Isle d’Abeau, France  
Sweet Home Chicago **Radio 666**-Herouville, Saint-Clair, Fr.  
All Blues **FCR Correze Ussel**-Ussel, France  
Blues Power **Radio Weser TV**-Bremerhaven, Germany  
Bernd’s Blues Corner **EVM Radio**-Lingen, Germany  
Pickin’ The Blues **NEAR 90 FM**-Dublin, Ireland  
Highway 61 **Radio Voce Spazio**-Allesandria, Italy  
Juke Joint **Radio ARA**-Luxemborg  
Bluesiana **Radio Purmerend**-Purmerend, NL  
Blues And Friends **Golfbreker Radio**-Baarn, NL  
Americana **Radio Lelystad**-Lelystad & Harlingen, NL  
Triple R Blues Radio **Live 365**-Panningen, NL  
Bluestimen **Radio Ung**-Kristiansand, Norway  
The Voice Of The Blues **Radio Sfera**-Torun, Poland  
Blues Power **Radio EM**-Katowice, Poland  
Black And White **Radio Carcoma**-Madrid, Spain  
Red Hot Blues **Radio Vilafant**-Vilafant, Spain

### AUSTRALIA:

Tecka’s Tracks **HOTFM**-Victoria  
Red, Hot and Cool **BayFM**-Byron Bay  
Headless Chickens **3 WAY FM**-Warrnambool, Victoria  
Movin’ And Groovin’ **BBB FM**-Tanunda, S. Australia  
Jumpin’ The Blues **PBS FM**-Victoria  
KK’s Blues Radio **2SER**-Sydney  
Blues With A Feeling **98.9 FM**-Brisbane  
South Australia Roots And Blues Podcast  
Redwood Park, S. Australia

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## **BLOGCRITICS MAGAZINE - ALBUM REVIEW: STOP AND THINK ABOUT IT** **BY RICHARD MARCUS / PUBLISHED AUGUST 07, 2008**

I like blues music, always have and always will. Yet I'm not blind to the fact that it's probably one of the most abused genres of popular music out there. Almost any idiot who picks up a guitar can play the twelve bars that form the basis for nearly every blues tune and blues-based rock song ever written. The problem is that most of them don't seem to know what to do beyond that. It's depressing the number of blues releases I listen to that I don't review simply because they sound just like twenty-five or thirty other discs that I've heard in the last year.

You can usually divide the guitar players into two different categories — the screamers and the plodders. The screamers are the guys who rip off guitar solos at every opportunity and play down at the high end of the fret board making lots of high-pitched noise that they think passes for music while the plodders plod through the music because they equate slow with sincerity. Sometimes if you're really unlucky you'll get somebody who combines the two and plods around making noise every so often.

After a steady diet of this you actually start to dread the arrival of blues discs by performers you've never heard of signed to labels that you didn't even know existed. Fortunately there are still some labels out there that you can usually count on, and even if you haven't heard of the band or individual on the disc, it will be at least worth a listen. Earwig Music out of Chicago are one of those labels and their recent release of Chris James' and Patrick Rynn's Stop And Think About It is a good example of the quality they tend to deliver.

Looking at Chris (guitar and vocals) and Patrick (bass and occasional vocal), you might not immediately think blues musicians, but once you start listening there's no denying that these guys have talent. While their band, The Blue Four, has played with quite a few more experienced blues musicians and appeared on other people's recordings, this is Chris and Patrick's first solo recording. Of course it's not just bass and guitar as they're joined by friends like Sam Lay on drums, Bob Corritore on harmonica, and Johnny Rapp taking second guitar for a few tracks.

The disc is a good mix of original material and interesting covers. Of course it doesn't hurt that they share my affection for Elmore James, and four of the tracks on the disc are covers of his material. What I like about their covers is that while they show respect for the original material they do more than simply offer imitations. Their version of Elmore James' "Hawaiian Boogie" not only captures the song's original bounce, but introduces some nice swing elements that give it an almost jazzy feel.

What I like about their own material is that while they are consummate professionals, they aren't so full of themselves that they take everything too seriously. You can't write a blues song called "Mr. Coffee" without having a pretty good sense of humour. Hey, don't get me wrong, coffee is very serious business and I'm glad to see people are finally giving it more recognition in song. Of course they could also be auditioning for a certain coffee maker commercial now that Jolting Joe has gone. What I especially appreciated about it was that unlike a lot of so called humorous songs, this one has genuine wit and intelligence behind it and isn't just some juvenile throwaway.

Musically they play a mixture of 1950s style Chicago blues and more contemporary sounds. What that does is create an overall atmosphere that is both comfortable in its familiarity and interesting because of the new touches that they've added. Both Chris and Patrick have a really good feel for the sound of that era, which explains why they do such a good job with the Elmore James songs, and such a genuine appreciation for the blues in general that you can't help but be caught up by their enthusiasm for the music.

It's one thing to be talented, which they are, but it's another thing altogether to be able to convey your love of what you're doing while playing the music. It's under those circumstances that even familiar riffs are infused with new life and no matter how many times you may have heard a song before you can't help but enjoy it like you're hearing it for the first time all over again. Stop And Think About It doesn't break any new ground when it comes to the blues, but it's one of those recordings that reminds you that something doesn't have to be brand new to be exciting.

Chris James and Patrick Rynn have made a recording that once again show us there is no music quite like the blues when it's played with love and enthusiasm. Not only do they bring both to this disc by the bucket load, but they have the skill to channel it into tight arrangements of other people's material, and create originals with their own distinct flavour. Not bad for their first disc.

**FOR A COMPLETE LIST OF REVIEWS... PLEASE VISIT [THEBLUEFOUR.COM](http://THEBLUEFOUR.COM)**

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## **JAZZ & BLUES REPORT - ALBUM REVIEW: STOP AND THINK ABOUT IT BY RON WEINSTOCK / ISSUE 309 OCTOBER 2008**

Guitarist Chris James and bassist Patrick Rynn have been working together for quite some time, playing the clubs in Chicago, and touring with Sam Lay for several years as well. This writer saw them as part of Jody Williams' backing band at the 2007 Pocono Blues Festival and had a chance to chat with Chris, finding him as knowledgeable as he was a marvelous player.

Earwig has just issued a release by the duo, "Stop and Think About It," which is a terrific recording of old school Chicago-styled blues.

James fronts the recording with his powerful vocals and his terrific guitar (evoking the late Robert Lockwood and Williams). He and Rynn are joined by a variety of backing musicians including harmonica player Bob Corritore, with whom they have toured Europe, pianist Dave Maxwell, drummers Sam Lay and Willie Hayes and saxophonist Jonny Viau.

They mix in some wonderful originals that suggest John Brim and Little Walter along with covers of songs from Elmore James (four numbers, of which only "Hawaiian Boogie" may be well known), Jay McShann, Bo Diddley, and Snooky Pryor. Check out the title track, a strong shuffle taken a relaxed tempo; a remake of Jay McShann's "Confessin' the Blues," with a terrific tenor solo from Carla Brownlee and strong piano from Julien Brunetaud; and "Mister Coffee," an easy rocker with hints of Jimmy Rogers and John Brim as James sings about being man who grinds so fine," with Corritore adding harp. "Early in the Morning," is one of the Elmore James covers here with some nice slide along with horns using the "Fannie Mae" riff. While "Hawaiian Boogie" often is played with a manic tempo, the performance here benefits from James' restraint, which does not diminish the power of this rendition. "You Got to Move" is one of the songs Elmore recorded for legendary Harlem record man Bobby Robinson, and with Brownlee's baritone helping to give bottom to the performance, James lays down a first-rate vocal and takes a terrific solo. It's so refreshing to hear someone put his own stamp on Elmore's music, yet remain true to the music's essence. James perhaps is a bit out front with the vocal on Snooky Pryor's "Someone to Love Me," but it still is a solid performance. "Relaxing at the Clarendon" is a fine instrumental that displays more of James' strong slide style taken at a walking tempo. Mix in the fine rendition of "Bo Diddley's "Mona" and one has little to find fault with on this disc.

When I saw James and Rynn backing Jody Williams, I could appreciate how good they were as musicians, but this stellar release shows even more, how good they are out in front. This was an unexpected blues delicacy and highly recommended.

## **THE BLUEGRASS SPECIAL - ALBUM REVIEW: STOP AND THINK ABOUT IT BY DAVID MCGEE / NOVEMBER 2008**

Veterans of the Blue Four and Rob Stone and the C Notes, and in-demand session players as well, hotshot guitarist/vocalist Chris James and his stellar bass playing buddy Patrick Rynn consolidate nearly two years' of immersion in the blues, Chicago style, into this, their impressive duo debut on record. Working with a dazzling supporting cast of bandmates, James and Rynn blend five of their own well-turned original tunes with seven impeccably chosen covers, four of which are by one of their mutual heroes, Elmore James, which in and of itself says you need to check this out. They tear into James's "Early One Morning" two cuts into this exercise, with Chris James doing his best Elmore James emulation via a howling slide guitar attack, to which he adds a righteously growling vocal as the band stomps thunderously behind him, with piano player David Maxwell giving the 88s a thorough going over, especially with some right hand trills and a rush of cascading notes during his second solo. As ferocious as that James cover is, it's hardly a match for the gale-like force the band unleashes on the man's "Hawaiian Boogie," steered by James's roaring guitar and another driving piano assault, this time by Julien Brunetaud, whose exuberant rocking and rolling is the perfect complement to James's wildly angular, sputtering soloing during the song's heated last minute. The fellows also pay homage to Bo Diddley with a primeval, pulsating foray into "Mona" and time travel even further back for an easygoing romp through the Jay McShann-Walter Brown Kansas City blues classic, "Confessin' the Blues," which features not only a hearty, Clapton-like vocal from James but the added pleasure of rich tenor sax caresses from Carla Brownlee and an easy rolling, evocative piano solo from Brunetaud. All this talk of the great covers isn't meant to discount the strength of the original material here, though-James and Rynn percolate with tongue in cheek on an amiable double-entendre shuffle, "Mister Coffee," an homage to the man "that grinds so fine," with Bob Corritore adding extra flavor with his shimmering harp solos. More impressive still, "Stop and Think About It," one of five tunes featuring Sam Lay (James and Rynn's former employer) on drums, gets away from traditional blues themes in favor of advancing some sound advice to consider one's words before spewing them thoughtlessly. "Won't somebody tell me what is wrong with people these days/well they can't follow good advice/they won't listen to a word you say," James moans with barely disguised impatience before tearing into a screaming solo that mirrors his fevered annoyance with numbnut behavior, as the band stomps behind him, with Corritore rising out of the tumult for another fervent harmonica solo. The closest the duo gets to mellow is on the relatively gentle stomp of Elmore James's "Got to Move," but there's nothing gentle either in Chris's forthright grievance against his unfaithful gal or in the band's ominous pounding behind him. Pedal to the metal and don't let up-it's a winning formula for James and Rynn, who have made a very good year for the blues that much better.

**FOR A COMPLETE LIST OF REVIEWS... PLEASE VISIT [THEBLUEFOUR.COM](http://THEBLUEFOUR.COM)**

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## **BIG CITY BLUES - ALBUM REVIEW: STOP AND THINK ABOUT IT BY ROGER & MARGARET WHITE / OCTOBER - NOVEMBER 2008**

The CD "Stop And Think About It" makes you do just that. It's got the sound, it's got the feel and these young white guys are the real deal. Chris James on Guitar / Vocals and Patrick Rynn on Bass have played together for 18 years and they have paid their dues.

Growing up on the West Coast, James was playing blues piano at 11 and joining guitarist Tomcat Courtney's band on harp by 13. Rynn of Toledo Ohio was classically trained on Bass and played with the Griswolds. In 1990 they moved to Chicago in search of the blues and within six months were working as members of Sam Lay's band. They've been playing together ever since and have backed up such legends as Dennis Binder, Jody Williams, Robert Lockwood Jr., Honeyboy Edwards, Billy Boy Arnold and Junior Wells.

Currently they are members of Bob Corritore's Rhythm Room All Stars and the Blue Four. Most of this CD was recorded in two sessions in Tempe Arizona. The Oct. 30 2006 dates features Bob Corritore on harp, Johnny Rapp second guitar, Julien Brunetaud playing piano and Eddie Kobek or Frabrice Bessouat on drums. The second session on Oct. 17 2007 has David Maxwell on piano, Sam Lay on drums and adds the horns of Jonny Viau, Allen Ortiz and Carla Brownlee.

Kicking off things with the original "You're Gone," this ain't no tender ballad as they declare "I'm so glad to be done with you... what money couldn't buy was getting rid of you." Alternating classics with their own tunes, they follow with Elmore James' "Early One Morning" and Chris James could be channeling "Elmo" with his dead-on slide guitar, greasy vocals, chanting horns and the playful piano of Dave Maxwell. The boys also cover Elmore's "Hawaiian Boogie," "Got To Move" and "My Kind Of Woman." Elmore is such an influence that their original instrumental "Ralaxin' At The Clarendon" (a hotel in Phoenix) brings back that slide for another workout with Dave and the horns. Their "Mister Coffee" features the harmonica of Bob Corritore and the playful boasting of his fine grind that's good to the last drop. "Confessin' The Blues" shows off Chris' vocal prowess, with his smooth baritone sliding and growling, while the piano of Brunetaud and the sax drives this piece with an easy elegant swing. Chris' guitar brings it down in the alley. The jumping swing of "Hawaiian Boogie" is a jet propelled romp to the island of Elmore. Bo Diddley's "Mona" was recorded in Chicago and strips the band back to guitar, bass, drums and maracas for this reverb drenched recreation. The dirge of "Got To Move" is brought to life by the screaming slide and the heartfelt pleading vocals. After putting the women out of his life in "Got To Move" and "You're Gone" it's good to see Chris and Pat are still looking for "Someone To Love," and they do find "My Kind Of Woman" for the final song.

This is a record for real blues lovers. The liner notes states "We're staying very traditional, but with a modern edge, because we play very aggressive. We don't hold back. We like the real stuff." and they are the real stuff. They aren't some rockers rediscovering the blues, they have dedicated their lives to the blues they love, spending decades backing up true legends and learning from the masters. Patrick and Chris have made a career as sidemen and this CD "Stop And Think About It" should bring them the notice they so richly deserve.

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**FOR A COMPLETE LIST OF REVIEWS... PLEASE VISIT [THEBLUEFOUR.COM](http://THEBLUEFOUR.COM)**

# CHRIS JAMES AND PATRICK RYNN

## STOP AND THINK ABOUT IT



### TRACK LIST:

1. You're Gone
2. Early One Morning
3. Mister Coffee
4. Confessin' The Blues
5. I'd Like To Write A Letter
6. Hawaiian Boogie
7. Stop And Think About It
8. Mona
9. Got To Move
10. I Want Someone To Love Me
11. Relaxin' At The Clarendon
12. My Kind Of Woman

### KEY SELLING POINTS:

- National Press Mailing of 1000 CDs – including blues, roots, Americana and folk print, radio and web media worldwide, and others such as *Alternative Press*, *Magnet*, *Spin.com*, *Rollingstone.com*, *Billboard*, and more.
- College & Specialty Radio handled by Blind Raccoon LLC
- In-store play copies / P.O.P. available
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RELEASE DATE: 06/17/08

FORMAT: CD

WHOLESALE PRICE: \$9.90

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CATALOG #: EARWIG CD 4957

FILE UNDER: BLUES

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**B**LUES FANS KNOW vocalist and lead guitarist **Chris James** and bassist **Patrick Rynn** as the leaders of their own band, the **Blue Four**, as well as for their stellar work with a dazzling array of blues legends. Now they're stepping out on their own in *Stop And Think About It*, their new release on the Earwig Music label.

Over the last 18 years...the duo has honed their onstage interplay to ESP-like levels. They're proud traditionalists who delight in digging deep into a postwar Chicago vein, yet this debut album boasts a plethora of satisfying originals. And their rollicking energy level instantly grabs young audiences who may not even be familiar with Muddy Waters and Howlin' Wolf.

Loving revivals of vintage numbers on this disc, such as Elmore James's crashing "Hawaiian Boogie" and Bo Diddley's "Confessin' The Blues" mesh seamlessly with their invigorating fresh material such as "You're Gone" and "Mister Coffee."

EARWIG MUSIC COMPANY, INC.  
Chicago, IL • [www.earwigmusic.com](http://www.earwigmusic.com)



PUBLICITY: Betsie Brown, Blind Raccoon LLC, P.O. Box 40045, Memphis, TN 38174  
TEL: 901-278-6850 FAX: 901-276-6149 [betsie@blindraccoon.com](mailto:betsie@blindraccoon.com)

DISTRIBUTED BY: Burnside Distribution Corp., 6635 N. Baltimore Ave., suite 285, Portland, OR 97203  
TEL: 503-231-0876 FAX: 503-231-0420 [Order@bdcdistribution.com](mailto:Order@bdcdistribution.com)