

# THE YOUNG BLUEBLOODS

*By Mike Stephenson*

***During his visits to the USA, B&R's Mike Stephenson always keeps his eye out for burgeoning new blues talent. Last year he spotted three new young blues acts playing in Mississippi, all of whom are keeping blues music alive! Mike interviewed the Peterson Brothers in Clarksdale in October, Trenton Ayres in Holly Springs, and Omar Gordon in Clarksdale in June.***



*Glen Peterson and Alex Peterson, Helena, Arkansas, 2012.*

## **PETERSON BROTHERS**

***Glen Peterson is sixteen years old and plays guitar, Alex Peterson is just thirteen and plays bass guitar and violin.***

**Glen:** We hail from Bastrop, which is thirty minutes outside of Austin in Texas. Like most kids I started to find out about music and playing guitar especially blues guitar. They start to find out about Stevie Ray Vaughan and then Albert King and Albert Collins but I don't remember exactly how I found out about B.B. King and Robert Cray.

Our parents, they got us to play piano and we played that for some months and for me they asked me to pick another instrument, so Alex picked violin and I picked guitar, and Alex started playing bass about three and a half years ago when we needed a bass player. We have very supportive parents. We have an older brother too who has just graduated college and he had found an old B.B. King record and I had just started playing guitar and I thought he was awesome. I think it was that B.B. King and Bobby Bland album.

I learned to play guitar by listening and then playing live and then jamming with people. We started in church, with me playing guitar and Alex playing violin, and this was a year before he started playing bass. The first song we learnt how to play was 'Amazing Grace' and we played at the church, Bastrop Chapel, where my dad's mum and all of his family meet, and then that went ok and we thought we would turn into a band and so we got a band together, and then that's when we started calling

ourselves The Peterson Brothers. There was this guy called Mr. Schafer; he builds guitars and he was a jazz guitarist and he was showing us stuff and that was the first lessons we had in reading chord charts and then we did a couple of gigs after that.

We started playing together almost instantly as we are brothers, as we thought we would do it together rather than separately and this was about five years ago. We started playing in a local coffee shop and local restaurant and it just kept on. We found ourselves a drummer and it developed from there, we had no idea it would take off like it has.

From those early days we have since played in California, Tennessee, Nashville, all over Mississippi, Arkansas and all over Texas and Chicago. We played with Michael Burks, we opened for B. B. King and played with Buddy Guy, Pinetop Perkins, Willie Smith.

Most young people, when they think about blues and bringing it to a new era, they think about rock but we think about what Johnny Guitar Watson did and we do funky R&B type of stuff. We love Luther and Bernard Allison. Right now I'm listening to Albert Collins, Michael Burks, Kenny Burrell and Wes Montgomery.

**Alex:** We are still in education and playing music and being in education is not a conflict if you don't let it. We are both in school bands. In Texas we have played Antones and for two years straight we played there, at least twice a month for about a year, and we opened for Hubert Sumlin there.

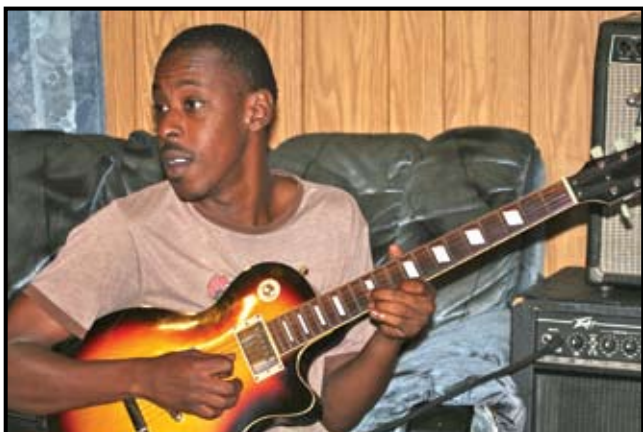
Right now we are doing the Continental club on Mondays. As for influences, Bob Stroger is one of my favourite blues bass players. I also listen to funk and jazz bass players, and other blues bass players I listen to are Calvin Jones and Willie Dixon.

Glen: In our band we hire different drummers, usually between these two drummers in Austin, and we have Popcorn, whose real name is Chuck Louden, on drums as well. He played with Michael Burks for many years. So we are a trio format. We have not really recorded as yet but we are planning on doing so with Mr. Freeman, who will produce us hopefully.

We write some of our own material and we do that together and we just debuted a new song. When Pinetop Perkins was alive he lived in Austin and Willie 'Big Eyes' Smith came there all of the time and they always had us on stage with him. Popcorn, the drummer, just moved to Dallas and we play with him. With drummers we use mature musicians, as not many kids can keep up with Alex and me.

Glen: Our older brother does not really play music he went to college and majored in business. We plan to stick with music and record and our parents are very supportive, like dad and mum are always getting gigs for us and they support us in everything we do, like getting us to the gigs, helping us unload and stuff.

**Many thanks go to Pete Evans and Michael Freeman for arranging the interview.**



Trenton Ayers, Holly Springs, 2012.

### TRENTON AYERS

*Trenton is a son of blues player Little Joe Ayers.*

I'm 26 years old and my dad bought me my first guitar when we were living in the projects and that was when I was about three or four and I had seen him playing around the house all the time. I have a brother that plays also, his name is Tracy Davis. Back then before he raised his own family, he was having his own band and playing, and I thought I wanted a piece of that action as it was cool to me. I was around the house and I saw this cat playing bass on TV and he was funky and I thought I wanted to do that when I get older.

So between that and my dad and my brother and all the music around here, like Junior Kimbrough and R. L. Burnside who I saw, all of this got me into music. I did play with R. L. once at his house. I started playing bass and guitar at the same time and I am self-taught and by watching my father and Tracy and my daddy's guitar was always out and I would go and steal his and play, and a couple of strings would get broken at times, but now I can replace them.

I play with Cedric Burnside and his Project from about a year or so. I'm out on the road with him playing lead guitar. I have travelled all over with him and we have been to Poland and Louisiana, we play blues festivals and I have my passport. This last October 2011, I went on the Blues Cruise that was out of San Diego going to Mexico, and it was real fun and I had a chance to meet some other blues musicians and hear them play.

I was just about the youngest musician on that boat other than Samantha Fish. She was playing guitar. Before I hooked up with Cedric Burnside I was playing with The Electric Mud. It's a band out of the Delta that got started about 2000 but others say it started in 1995. The drummer Jason Boyles, he's the last of the original guys from the original line up. Jack McWilliams plays percussion and I played with them from time to time in 2008 and 2009.

In 2003 I used to play with a guy named Slick Ballinger and I used to travel on the road with him when I was about seventeen. Kent Kimbrough,

I used to play with him, and I've played with Leon Junior Baker who is a phenomenal drummer, and he used to have a harmonica player named Blind Mississippi Morris and I've played with him and toured with him.

I've done some recordings with Cedric Burnside and we are hoping to have a CD out. I've played with the Mauldin Brothers, they are a country group so I do country too. They sing some good country.

My musical influences are my father and my brother and Jimi Hendrix on guitar and I like classical music. I can play other forms of blues like jam band music, hill country music and when I sit by myself I play anything under the sun, play jazz and I try to as be versatile as I can. I will always play the blues, as that's where I started. I also play in the church band we call it The Corner, which is the area of the church where the musicians play, and I play lead and bass guitar and this is at my uncle's church in Rest Street, Holly Springs, and it's called Davis Temple. It's a regular thing for me, if I am here and not on the road playing.



Omar Gordon, Clarksdale, 2012.

### OMAR GORDON

I'm 21 and I started playing music when I was sixteen. My dad put me in music and I was on drums first, then later I moved to the keyboard, then later I moved to the bass and finally I moved to the guitar and I stayed on the guitar. My father really encouraged me. When I was playing in a band I was playing the saxophone and this girl was patting on her leg, and I asked her if she could play drums and she told me she could. I asked her how she learnt and she told me she was learning through the blues thing and she was the prettiest girl in school, and she asked me if I wanted to come to the blues thing with her so I did and she picked up the guitar and she played and she was just amazing. So that also helped me get into music and the blues. My father wasn't a musician, he just wanted me to do something.

I also got into blues music by going to the Delta Blues Museum and they were playing blues music. They had classes to teach young musicians. I then started playing in bands and the first group I started playing with was called Minor Blues, and that was kids playing the blues and we played at Ground Zero club.

After that I started playing guitar with Josh Razorblade the singer, and after that I created my own band, although I still play with Razorblade when he needs me. I created my own band this year and it is called Omar And The Blues Experience. I play both electric and acoustic, and I play blues like Albert King numbers.

I write some of my material, although I haven't had any of them published as yet. I'm currently doing a workshop in Clarksdale and Bob Margolin has been helping teach us. He helps us learn guitar techniques. I have been playing with Heavy Sugar And The Sweet Tones here locally and they play blues and r&b.

I have a day job as a groundsman. I'm from Clarksdale, born and raised here. There are other young blues players around here such as Phillip Carter, Jacqueline Nassar, Chris Kingfish who plays guitar and bass and drums, Lee Williams, Walt Busby and others.

I'm hoping on developing my own musical career when I get some money. I play locally at the Blueberry Café, Ground Zero, Lady At The Levee, Red's, Peacocks. I sometimes back up other blues musicians such as Razorblade and Big T.

I teach myself guitar now and I now teach students how to play guitar. They come to me and I teach them blues and gospel. I used to play gospel myself at Bell Grove and Union Grove, which are two different churches.

I have played at Chicago at the Chicago blues festival, I played with the Delta Blues Museum kids and I've also played with B.B. King in Indianola at a convention or workshop and I got a standing ovation, this was in 2006 or 2008. I've played the Sunflower Blues Festival playing with Razorblade as well.

I'm the only member of my family that plays. I'm planning on doing some recordings when I get some money. I'm featured on You Tube under Omar Gordon featuring me playing.