

BC & The Blues Crew - Biography

BC & The Blues Crew continue their adventure with festivals, music and fans. The band remains a staple for festivals and events, but no longer works the weekly club scene. Having years of maniacal success and having earned nearly every LVMA award for musicians individually and as a group, it's been a tremendous adventure. You can hear it in a cover or an original, it's their established sound that brings you right down to the Blues in every song, be it fused with rock, soul, gospel, folk, country, jazz, or R&B. BC & The Blues Crew has continued performing since 1992, based out of the Lehigh Valley, Pennsylvania. They are known for their diversity in vocals and instrumentation. With a band of lead singers, band leaders, teachers and the areas most borrowed musicians, the mix becomes very playful and refreshing. Their makeup includes vocals, saxophone, keyboards, guitar, bass and drums. Having shared stages with greats like Ray Charles, Lonnie Brooks, Son Seals, Koko Taylor, Eddie King, Saffire and so many, many more... it's always a treat to see them together having fun and creating new moments each time.

Bev Conklin (lead vocals)

The "BC" of The Blues Crew, has become the well respected Blues voice and Ambassador of her community and most assuredly the voice that continues to attract fans both old and new. Beverly doesn't just command an audience, she engages them. This New Orleans born Creole, Hip Shakin Mama exudes passion and her sultry and powerful voice is delivered in a broad range of styles and vocal ranges. She is the consummate hostess of this band or any group she performs with.

Mike Brandt (guitar)

Michael is the founding member of this group. A student of Berklee, Mike has a most unique style, very smooth, developed and tasteful. If you're into foreplay, Mike is the player to last to the finish line. When he decides to turn up the heat, it's a treasure to experience, especially for those who have experienced his interaction with interpretation. Latest observation is that he is lip singing. Hmmm... definitely worth the price of admission.

Wayne Smith (keyboards, guitar, drums, vocals)

Wayne should be hired by Senator Chuck Hagel no doubt. He is passionate about his politics as much as he about music. Wayne has done much of the producing and arranging over the years. He is the band leader and musically quite entertaining (controllably playful). While predominantly the group's keyboard player, he has been seen filling in for others in the group.

Nick Roberti (bass and vocals)

It only takes a show to learn why this man is so exceptional. If there is a theory that some of the most brilliant of musicians are eccentric and consumed with a broad library of music and lyrics, Nick delivers on both. A graduate in music from Moravian, Nick brings his own passion to the table and his sense of humor is fantastic to boot. Nick first performed as a substitute for the late Al Guerrero in the early nineties and has been an area icon since. He also performs with his other band, Analog Velvet who's lead singer is a talented and strong vocalist for the rock and folk fans.

Craig "CJ" Coyle (drums, vocals)

Coming to this band in 2000, CJ brings his wealth of humor, history and musical background into the mix. Perhaps teaching high school students for over 20 years has given him that funny bone. The voice of soul, CJ loves to get that smile from BC when he reaches the highest harmonizing note among the lot.

Tom Charles (sax, vocals)

Tom happened to come along one day last year and didn't know that once in BC's web, always in her web. A joy to work with, Tom spends 6 months in Florida and 6 months in the Lehigh Valley. A solo performer over the years who offers an amazing chemistry with this band.

Putting together all the influences and experiences in this award-winning band has created a melting pot of songs. Having a repertoire that draws newcomers in, they also provide a solid and refreshing newness and energy to standards and originals. Their roster of songs are a mix of classics, originals, and contemporaries such as "Chain of Fools" and "Mellow Down Easy", both of which are on their compact disc *Unfinished Business* (1997/2003). **Title song, "Unfinished Business" can be found on Blues Revue's CD sampler (Dec/Jan 2003) and "Women Be Wise" also on another Blues Revue sampler with Lea Gilmore & BC together (Dec./Jan. 2006).** *Creole Etouffee* (2002) is an all original offering reflecting the individual diversity among the band members. BC has shared her affinity towards Koko Taylor, Denise LaSalle, Etta James, Irma Thomas and Trudy Lynn throughout the years. Every once in a while she'll throw in some Sade and Melissa Etheridge for fun and flavor. Many great moments for this band were the performances at Blues festivals over the years throughout Maryland, Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, Delaware and Tennessee. A major highlight was winning the Billtown Blues Association (BBA) Talent Competition in 1998, which sent them to represent the BBA in Memphis, TN where they competed in the [Blues Foundation's International Blues Talent Competition \(IBTC\)](#) and ended as one of seven top finalist.

Since their debut CD in 1997, this band has been tremendously respected with continued nominations and awards by their peers, media and supporters of the Lehigh Valley Music Awards for:

- Best Blues Band – BC & The Blues Crew
- Best Female Vocalist – Bev Conklin
- Best Blues Vocalist – Bev Conklin
- Best Bass Player – Mitch Shelly
- Best Wind Instrument – Dave Smith
- Best Keyboardist – Wayne Smith
- Best CD - Unfinished Business & Creole Etouffee
- Best Musician Website – BC & The Blues Crew
- Best Live Performance – BC & The Blues Crew
- Best New Group – The Girls
- Best Acoustic Group – The Girls
- Community Recognition Award – Bev Conklin, LVBN President

BC & The Blues Crew has performed on stage with Lonnie Brooks, Koko Taylor, Carl Weathersby, Saffire, B'Noise King with Smokin' Joe Kubek, Eddie King and many more. The band has shared billing at festivals and opened for some of the world's top recording artists including Ray Charles, Buddy Guy, Shemekia Copeland, Son Seals, Kenny Neal, Pinetop Perkins, the Holmes Brothers, Ann Rabson, E.C. Scott, Sista Monica, Little Charlie & the Nightcats, Lil Ed & the Blues Imperials, Big Jack Johnson, Magic Slim, Sandra Hall, Jimmy Dawkins, [Eric Steckel](#) and more. It's been fifteen plus years and it just keeps getting better! Eric was six years old when he began sitting in on his harmonica with us and now, at age 16, he's a major national touring and recording artist.

Other BC ventures include:

[BLUZIN](#). The trio's first opener was for Saffire at the Sellersville Theatre in PA. Bluzin is an excellent forum for this trio's playful banter and a much wider range of musical genres. Bev Conklin (vocals); Wayne Smith (vocals; guitar; percussion; other), Nick Roberti (vocals; bass; sound)

Ending this year, what started with tremendous success, **[The Girls](#)**. **Bev Conklin, Lori Donovan** and **Sarah Ayers** committed to songwriting and vocal harmony that has been a force of nature. Synergy is the word used to describe all that is unique and all this is combined for these three precious voices. This is your last year to see them so don't miss out.

CD's and Recordings

- Unfinished Business (1997 and 2003 re-released, remixed & remastered)
- Creole Etouffee (2002)
- BC & The Blues Crew Live @ Godfrey Daniels (2004)
- BC & Lea Live @ Godfrey Daniels (2005)
- Bluzin Live @ Godfrey Daniels (2007 unpublished)
- The Girls (Bootleg sampler recording of New Year's Eve 2006)