

“JOHNNY NICHOLAS IS ONE OF THE BEST BLUESMEN EVER, BLACK OR WHITE.” ~ STEPHEN BRUTON

When it comes to Americana Roots Music and especially the Blues, the late great Stephen Bruton knew what he was talking about. Those who knew him knew that he always got to the point. His description of his long time friend and musical comrade in arms is succinct and quite a heady compliment, but then, Johnny Nicholas is an amazing talent.

For four decades Johnny’s consummate musicianship and vocal skills have graced live music scenes across the country and abroad. He has toured, performed and recorded with many true blues and Americana Roots Music legends including: **Mississippi Fred McDowell, Robert Lockwood Jr., Johnny Shines, Big Walter Horton, Roosevelt Sykes, Nathan Abshire, Robert Pete Williams, Eddie Taylor, Billy Boy Arnold, Hound Dog Taylor, Johnny Young, Houston Stackhouse, and Boogie Woogie Red.**

He recorded and toured with **Johnny Shines** and **Snooky Pryor**, producing and playing guitar on their W.C. Handy Award-winning album *Back to the Country*. He was a lead vocalist and multi-instrumentalist with **Asleep at the Wheel** when they won their first of many Grammy Awards. He gave Blues Guitar Icon **Ronnie Earl** his first gig in the now legendary band **Guitar Johnny and the Rhythm Rockers**. He has also shared the stage and performed with the likes of **Howlin Wolf, BB King, Muddy Waters, Bonnie Rait, Eric Clapton, Pops and Mavis Staples, Delbert McClinton, Willie Nelson, Merle Haggard, and Jimmie Vaughan** among many others. He can wow a festival crowd of thousands or a small room of devotees. There are mysteries within this history, but remember that true history is written in the uncharted depths of a passionate spirit striving to fathom the mysteries, the pain and the joy of life and love. Here’s what you need to know about Johnny Nicholas—the rest and the best is all in his music. Johnny discovered the blues at an early age, grooving to the great R&B that was blasting from the airwaves in the late 50’s and early 60’s—Jimmy Reed, Lightnin Slim, Slim Harpo, Lloyd Price, Larry Williams, Little Walter, Ray Charles and The Howling Wolf were all Big Blips on this impressionable young man’s radar screen. Like fellow Greek-American Johnny Otis had a generation earlier, this Johnny easily made the leap into the soulful world of the Blues, a music very similar in feeling and expression to the Rembetika music he heard as a child in the Greek community.

In 1966, he hopped the train to New York City to see his idol the Wolf. He ended up hanging with Wolf’s band at the Albert Hotel by day (where Wolf’s band AND Muddy’s band and Otis Spann were all staying) and at Ungano’s nightclub by night where the Wolf was holding musical court while on a two week prowl of the Big Apple. This experience cemented his love of the blues while providing inspiration and a gateway to friendships and musical adventures that would help mold a successful career and still smolder in this talented and restless soul. The common thread between all these influences is that of a true storyteller and troubadour, a living connection to the roots of American music that started in the Mississippi Delta and continues to flow down the river of traditional and contemporary sounds that emanate from Johnny Nicholas.