

## LADY "J" HUSTON - INTERVIEW - LAS VEGAS

<http://www.americanbluesblog.com/2010/04/lady-j-huston.html>

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-by Doctor Mojo

If any of you were lucky enough to be able to make it to the Sand Dollar's 20th anniversary party last week then you will understand just how difficult it is to decide where to start with writing a review of such a spectacular event. The line-up was incredible and showcased many unbelievably talented artists, some of which I have been lucky enough to be able to get interviews with to share with my readers. So instead of going on about how much fun that I had and how good the music was I will let the artists and their music speak for themselves.

It is my pleasure to bring to you the first interview in this series. The featured artist is Lady “J” Huston. If you have not seen or heard her then let me be the one to tell you, you are definitely missing out.

She is an internationally acclaimed Vocalist, Trumpeter, Songwriter, Recording Artist and Entertainer Extraordinaire. Possessing an amazing style of soul, blues and jazz whose vocal range (tenor to first soprano), songs, trumpet, percussion & arrangements are world renown. Many feature articles in magazines, newspapers, television, radio interviews and theatres have expounded on this class act lady with professional rave reviews and standing ovations -- over and over.

A performer with her own perfected dance arrangements, she holds an audience spellbound with her one-woman show or band “The Fireballs”, adorned with too many accolades to mention.

## American Blues Blog – Lady “J” Huston Interview



WINNER! Black Music Association (BMA) Entertainer's Award (Soul of the Strip) for "Best Blues Performer" at Cashman Theater, Las Vegas, with special band performance. Featured in Season 3 finale of NBC's "America's Got Talent" All Stars cast.

Trumpeter/Vocalist/Music Director for Blues Hall of Fame inductee Albert 'Blues Boy' King.

- On concerts with legends such as: B.B. King, Millie Jackson, John Lee Hooker, Muddy Waters, Albert Collins, Etta James, Rufus Thomas, a Dick Clark TV special, PBS' Maintenance Shop Blues, and more.
- Vocalist for Rock 'n Roll Hall of Famer, Johnnie Johnson, Father of Rock 'n Roll piano & pianist for Chuck Berry.
- Performed/on shows with: George Wallace, Clint Holmes, Bill Pinkney's Original Drifters, Lowell Fulson, Bobby Blue Band, Donald Byrd, Dizzy Gillespie, Lionel Hampton, Freddie Hubbard, Gary Lewis, Fabian, "The Music Man" w/Tony Randall at St. Louis Municipal Opera House, and more.

[Click here to watch Lady "J" Huston \(Down Home Blues\) August 30, 2008 Performance recorded at Sam's Town Live at the taping of the "Las Vegas Now" radio program.](#)

And now onto THE INTERVIEW:

*What attracted you to blues and roots music in the first place?*

I'm from St. Louis, MO which is where the iconic tune by W.C. Handy (Father of the Blues) was written "St. Louis Blues". My Aunt Joyce especially loved playing the blues and I loved watching her swoon over it. My mother is a singer who also sang blues and I used to dance on her shows to "Watermelon Man" a blues number that I still perform to this day on trumpet.

*Who were some of your early influences?*

My mother, Loyce Huston, Louis Armstrong, Sarah Vaughn, Ella Fitzgerald, Billie Holiday, Stevie Wonder, Aretha Franklin, Etta James, Lou Rawls, Ray Charles, just to name a few.

*Are there any young blues players today that you're listening to?*

Jonny Lang

*Did your career grow gradually, or was there a single event which really helped you get noticed?*

My mother took me to a club one night and encouraged me to sit in with the band. I had been playing classical trumpet, so I was a bit frightened. I played and they liked me and asked me to audition for a new jazz program at the Conservatory and School for the Arts (CASA). I got in, started learning more about improvisation, then was asked to replace a trumpeter in the Albert King Blues Band which propelled my music career.

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*Are there any individuals who helped you get recognition?*

My mother was quite influential in my childhood, David Hines (now deceased) is a legendary trumpeter in St. Louis who helped me get the gig with Albert King. And currently my manager for 10 years, Z. Lipsky, has provided me with outstanding coaching and leadership that has helped my career reach new pinnacles.

*What are some of the highlights of your career?*

Performing at the St. Louis Opera House in the Music Man with Tony Randall, recording with the Howard University Jazz Ensemble, touring as Music Director with Albert King where I was able to play on shows and meet blues legends such as Muddy Waters, John Lee Hooker, Willie Dixon, and more, and tape a TV special with Dick Clark; America's Got Talent Finale in Season 3 on NBC, winning the 2009 Best Blues Performer award by the Black Music Association – Las Vegas.

*Do you do anything differently if you're playing a really big place versus a small place? Is it just having the right P.A.?*

You know some clubs don't have PA's so that's not cool. You can have a great PA, but if you don't have the right person working it that can lead to some challenges. I just did a show where the sound system was so wonderful, I went and hugged the sound engineer. I try to connect to the audience, no matter the size of the place. You can get more intimate in a smaller venue and one on one interaction. A big place can give you such an adrenaline rush when you get the feedback from the audience that they're having a great time.

*Do you think it's better for the audience to see music performed in a smaller place?*

Music is for the ears first, so in that respect I don't think so. The performance part is more clearer to see in a smaller place, but with the advent of large screens, you can still get a good perspective of what the performers are doing in larger places.

*What is your opinion of the blues music scene today?*

I'm grateful that it does not require you to be young, thin and blonde to be able to succeed in the genre. It's purity is in the sound and the soul that can be expressed through the instrument or the voice. As an African American, I am saddened that my culture does not support it as much as in the past. It is a style of music in which we so greatly influenced. I hope that the blues music scene can be elevated from the underground and more opportunities be provided in America, thus not requiring artists to go overseas to get the recognition and appreciation that is so deserving.

*What advice do you have for aspiring blues artists?*

Learn the blues scale, study about its origin, sing or play with divine passion, help spread the word about this true American music style, stay healthy, attend to business – not just the music, have a second skill to help fill in the financial voids that most likely will occur along your journey.

*What do you think is the greatest blues album ever made?*

I'm not sure, I have my favorite singles by a multitude of artists so I guess if you put all of them on one album, that'll be the best one for me. Thank goodness for the iPod, I've got them all there at a touch of a scroll.

*Imagine your next project is to put together an album of five of your favorite songs by other artists. What are the songs and who are the artists?*

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I have the first cut completed, “Born Under a Bad Sign” by Albert King as a tribute to him, I’m working on a great arrangement of my guitarists’, Dana Barry, of “The Thrill is Gone” by B.B. King; “That’s Why I’m Crying” – KoKo Taylor; “Hound Dog” – Big Mama Thornton, “Watermelon Man” by Herbie Hancock.

*If you're writing songs or anything like that, do you have any kind of a home studio that you record song ideas on? Do you have a songwriting routine?*

I record the music into my sequencer and do a scratch vocal with my PC software. I have lost my discipline in having a songwriting routine. I keep a tape recorder handy and when an idea hits me, I sing into it.

*Before a performance do you warm up?*

Absolutely, because if I don’t, I will have a miserable performance. I must vocalize, practice the trumpet, and stretch the body for my dancing.

*Do you have any long-term goals?*

I’m looking forward to recording another album, performing at Carnegie Hall and a music tour through Paris. We’re currently in negotiations for a Russian tour.

*What would you say are the keys to a happy and successful life?*

Having love and respect for oneself, having a dream and pursuing it, making money doing what you love, having a spiritual connection & sharing life with others of your choosing.

Here are some links to a few more songs and videos that I know you will all love:

[Lady J Huston and Rockford People performing live](#)

[Lady "J" Huston live with Albert King - 1981 - Born Under A Bad Sign](#)

[Live from Sweden 1980 - Albert King interview and playing "as The years go passing by", a tribute to the one and only king of blues](#)

[Lady J performs in a short caricature of Respect.](#)

[Performing with Albert King - The Grass Ain't No Greener](#)

More info and CD downloads are available at: <http://www.msjoyce.com>



If you live in Vegas or are planning to visit soon you can catch Lady "J" Huston live at any of her upcoming shows. Here is her current schedule:

2010 Calendar of Events

\*shows with the Fireballs Band

\*(Wed) April 28, 8pm – 11pm, House of Blues Courtyard Restaurant at Mandalay Bay. 3950 S. Las Vegas Blvd. at Tropicana, \$ FREE.

(Fri) April 30, 10pm, Dinah in Color, BBQ & Blues Party. Event from 7pm – Midnight.

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Lucille’s BBQ, 2245 Village Walk Dr.; Blues Party, Green Valley Ranch Resort, 2300 Paseo Verde Pkwy, Henderson, \$49.

(Sat) May 1, 2:00pm, Las Vegas Annual Pride Festival, Government Center Amphitheater, 500 S. Grand Central Parkway. Event from Noon – 10pm. Cox Cable is the official cosponsor. Adults \$15, Youth \$10, Children 12 & Under \$ FREE.

\*(Sat) May 1, 6pm – 7pm, Blues Festival, Stars of the Lake Stage at Lake Las Vegas. Montelago Village Resort, 30 Strada Di Villagio, Henderson. 2nd Annual Gimme Shelter Benefitting Heaven Can Wait Animal Society, with bands playing `til 9pm. \$20, \$75-VIP

\*(Sat) May 8, 9pm – 1am, Sand Dollar. 3355 W. Spring Mountain Rd. at Polaris, \$5.

\*(Thu) May 13, 2pm, Dennis Bono “Las Vegas Now”, Sam's Town Live, Sam's Town Hotel, 5111 Boulder Highway, \$ FREE. Broadcasts’ (Fri), May 14, 104.3-FM KJUL, 7:00 pm.

\*(Sat) May 15, 7:30pm – 9pm, The Cabaret at The Liberace Museum Presents - The Blues Explosion to Jazz & Soul. 1775 E. Tropicana Ave. (at Spencer), \$20 / \$25 at door.

\*(Fri) May 21, 3:00pm – 7:00pm, “Mrs. Geez” Southern Home Cooking (Grand Opening, Ribbon Cutting Ceremony, (2) bands). 2605 S. Decatur Blvd., #122, s/w corner, \$ FREE.

\*(Sat) June 5 – December 4 (1st Saturdays), 9pm – 1am, Sand Dollar. 3355 W. Spring Mountain Rd. at Polaris. Alternating months “Lady J’s Blues Spotlight” featuring special guest artists, (6/5, 7/3, 8/7, 9/4, 10/2, 11/6, 12/4), \$5.

\*(Sat) June 12, 7:30pm – 9pm, The Cabaret at The Liberace Museum - The Blues Explosion to Jazz & Soul. 1775 E. Tropicana Ave. (at Spencer), \$20 / \$25 at door.

Now do yourself a favor and get out to see some live music and do your part to help keep the blues alive!

Don't forget to check back next week when I will be posting more reviews and **INTERVIEWS** with some more of the great bands that played the Sand Dollar Anniversary party and others.

-Doctor Mojo

Exclusive Las Vegas Correspondent for [The American Blues Blog](#)

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