

Leonard Griffie

BIOGRAPHY



Leonard Griffie is an artist firmly grounded in the blues. An artist who is a prolific songwriter, blues guitar master, and a unique and engaging singer. Along with traditional blues you'll find a generous helping of Soul and old school Rhythm and Blues, even a bit of Jazz. All of which combine to create compelling recordings and powerful live shows. Leonard has played his blues at Festivals and Clubs all over the US, Canada, and Europe.

Leonard began playing guitar at the age of 11. His earliest musical influences were his older sister's Elvis records and his pro-guitarist father's Bakersfield-style, jazzy country playing. When soul and R&B became popular, it instantly became the music he most enjoyed. Early on, he wanted to play saxophone or drums, and one can only speculate as to where one of those choices may have led him.

When he was 11, his family moved east from Los Angeles, to California's San Gabriel Valley. It was this change that put him into the company of a group of young surfing enthusiasts (only one of which had actually surfed), which resulted in a brief interest in guitar-based surf music, and he still wanted to play the saxophone or the drums. Then, fate intervened in the form of a schoolmate who lived a couple of houses down from him. His friend was taking guitar lessons, and before he knew it, Leonard's parents had arranged for him to take lessons with his good friend's guitar teacher.

Leonard became a semi-pro by the age of 16, playing weekend dates all over southern California. By age 18, he was working full-time, playing 5 nights a week in Los Angeles area nightclubs. In the 1970s he began to seek out the original blues artists who'd influenced the rock greats, and the shift from blues-based rock to original blues began. In the decade that followed, Leonard's style underwent a period of massive growth and development as he absorbed the styles of a huge number of bluesmen: Freddie King, T-Bone Walker, Magic Sam, Otis Rush, Albert Collins and many more, including Jazz greats such as Grant Green. From this enormous lexicon of guitar greatness Leonard's own style was forged, and has continued to develop and expand to this day.

In the 1980s and 90s Leonard spearheaded blues bands specializing in lively, foot stompin' blues, where he was called upon to showcase his considerable guitar skills. In the early 21st century he, along with blues and R&B artist John Nelson Hauschild, formed Bluesdusters, recording an album of original blues which received worldwide critical acclaim. In 2010, Leonard began touring with blues singer and multiple Blues Music Award nominee Karen Lovely. In 2013 he produced his first solo release "Give It To Me" and in 2014 he co-wrote and recorded with 3 time Grammy winning producer Dennis Walker (Robert Cray/BB King, etc.). But the finest recording to date is the new 2017 release, "Better Late Than No Time Soon", which again features all new, original compositions.