

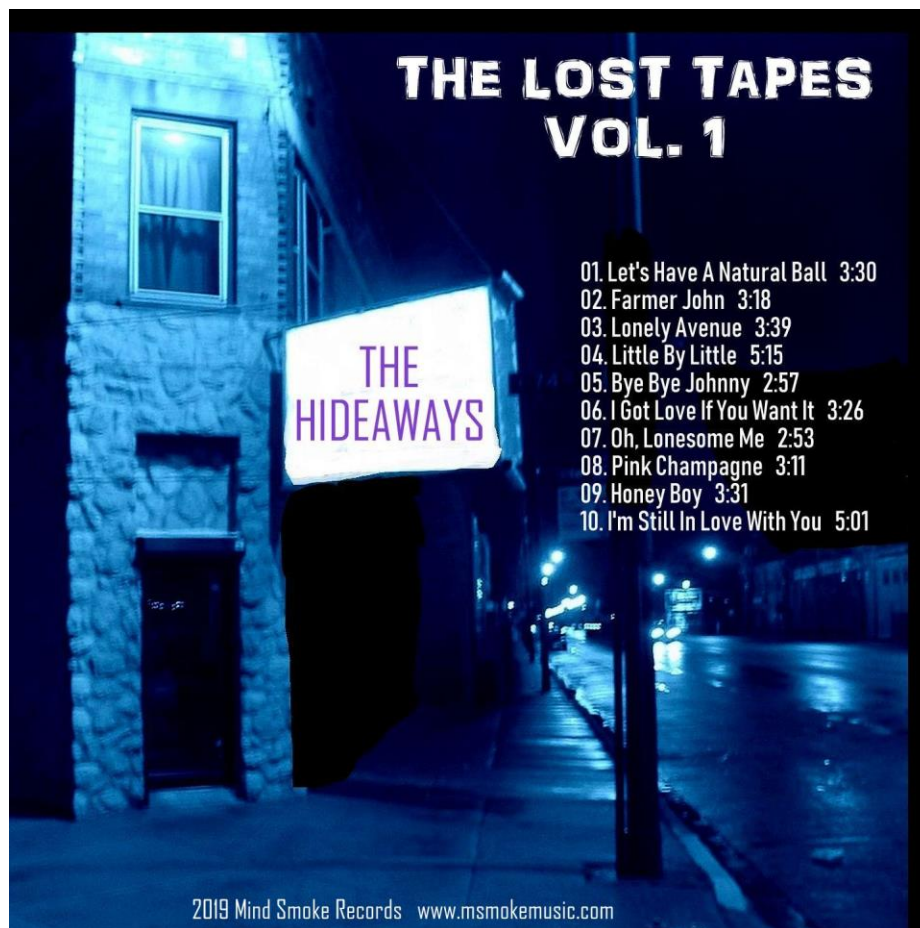


This album is dedicated with much love to "Boom Boom" Johnson

"Do the thing without trying to Be the thing"

Track List:

01. Let's Have A Natural Ball
02. Farmer John
03. Lonely Avenue
04. Little By Little
05. Bye Bye Johnny
06. I Got Love If You Want It
07. Oh, Lonesome Me
08. Pink Champagne
09. Honey Boy
10. I'm Still In Love With You



Album Credits:

Sean O'Neill (Bass)

Chris James (Lead Vocals / Guitar / Organ)

Boom Boom" Johnson (Drums)

Scotty Micciche (Blues Harp / Vocals)

Recorded September 2006 @ EKO Studio (Deer Park, NY)

Engineer 2006: Stephen Porcelli

Remastered 2019: The Mad Turk

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MIND SMOKE RECORDS INTERVIEW



20 Questions: Chris James
The Hideaways Lead Vocalist & Guitarist



Q: The Hideaways are starting to create a lot of buzz on the Long Island music scene, how did The Hideaways become a band?

A: The Hideaways were created as an offshoot of the Boom Boom Johnson Blues Band, which Scotty Micciche, Sean O'Neill and I were part of in 2004. Boom Boom was a great front-man/singer/guitarist, and he was also a drummer. One night in late 2004, a last-minute drummer cancellation made Boom Boom decide he was gonna play drums that night, and we had such a good time at that gig, we decided to keep playing with that lineup. Shortly after, it was decided to make this lineup a separate entity from the Boom Boom Johnson Band, and Sean and I began to take over the task of constructing a set that was independent from the Boom Boom Johnson Blues Band...and that's how The Hideaways came about.



"Boom Boom" Johnson (Drums)

Q: Who came up with the band's name?

A: "Boom Boom" Johnson coined "The Hideaways"; the band was partly named after the famous Freddie King instrumental. We all worshipped Freddie King, but there was also a literal connotation to the name as well, as we did not have any gigs.

Q: How would you describe the band's sound?

A: I loosely call The Hideaways a blues band, but we're not interested in being staunch ultra-traditionalists. We love our Blues originators and innovators, but we're not trying to be Muddy Waters, and we're not fans of the weedyweedywee 20-minute solo bloozerock guitar-hero end of that spectrum either. We collectively decided to play the music we love, and to try to do it our way. Yes, it's based in tradition. But our goal is to be ourselves while we're doing the music. We like to "do the thing" without trying to "be the thing". This prevents any unnecessary posturing. We're just playing songs we like, our way. Some of our arrangements are closer to the original versions than others. And we enjoy the freedom that comes with that. I'm not interested in being some flag-bearer for one genre of music, just to please the purists. Purists come with too many rules. And we don't care what the "Blues Police" think. "Rockin' Blues. Not bloozerock." - That was something that Boom Boom Johnson said when we were getting started as The Hideaways. And I hashtag almost all Hideaways-related social media posts with that.

Q: I know that The Lost Tapes Vol. 1 is dedicated to the band's original drummer, "Boom Boom" Johnson. Can you tell us a little bit about what "Boom Boom" brought to the band?

A: Hmmm, where do i start? As I previously mentioned, The Hideaways were an offshoot of his band, which he fronted. He put the same full-blast energy into his drumming as he did as a front-man. "Boom Boom" Johnson was one of the most entertaining front-men I have

ever known; engaging, funny, loud, in your face. He played loud, fierce, and he played with tremendous pride. He loved the blues more than anyone I've known, and his style was unique and un-mistakeable. His confidence drove the band. I think people will hear that confidence thru his drumming on this soon-to-be-released recording. I'd like to think that he would be very proud that this recording is being released. It's a great testament to his love of the music we played. I wish he were here to see it happen.

Q: After “Boom Boom” left the band, how long did it take for The Hideaways to start making music again?

A: “Boom Boom” left the band in 2009. He decided that he wanted to go back to fronting his own band. After several months of no activity, The Hideaways recruited another drummer in early 2010 and resumed playing. We changed drummers again in early 2013. Sadly, Boom Boom passed away in October 2013.



Sean O'Neill (Bass)

Q: Who handles the arrangements of the band's material?

A: The Hideaways set list is mostly a collaborative effort between Sean O'Neill and myself. We don't have a catalog of original material...yet! Sean and I basically pick songs we really like, and we hash out an arrangement together, and then spring it on the band. We just periodically get together and bounce a lot of ideas back forth until we have an arrangement. Besides being one of the best bassists I know, Sean comes up with some great arrangements that are a reflection of his humor and the way his brilliant mind works. We don't want to religiously replicate recordings, but we're not trying to re-invent the wheel

either. Some tunes sound closer to the older versions than others. Sometimes there might be a drum part on a record that i really love, and would want to use it for our own purposes, little things like that. But you won't hear note-for-note, by-the-book reproductions of old recordings when you go see the Hideaways.



Q: What is the current lineup of The Hideaways?

A: I'm happy to say the current lineup consists of the same personnel as the Lost Tapes Vol. 1 lineup from 2006, just with a different drummer named Roger Murdock. We still have Sean O'Neill on bass and Scotty Miccicche on harp. Roger Murdock has been our drummer since 2013 and he is the perfect fit; one of the best drummers I've ever had the pleasure of working with. We went through a stretch of time without Scotty, and in his absence, we recruited Chris "Crispy Chicken" Laybourne on tenor and baritone saxophones in 2013. The decision to go in the saxophone direction was made because we loved Scotty's harp playing so much that we had no interest in bringing in another harp player. But then Scotty rejoined us in 2016 and we became a 5-piece. Chris Laybourne's baritone and tenor sax add a whole different dimension to The Hideaways; he is one of those incredible talents that make everyone around him play better. We also have one honorary member, named Memphis Mike Lafata, who joins us on washboard for a portion of our show whenever he can.



Q: The band's energy level on stage is amazing. How do you guys achieve that?

A: I was inspired by the way soul bands of the 60s used to approach their shows. Whether it's Otis Redding, Sam & Dave, James Brown or even the way B.B. King used to lead his band. The songs would come out rapid-fire, there was no dead air, and they kept it moving. It was a SHOW, and they were always conscious of that. We also take the same inspiration from the Ramones and the Clash in the "no-nonsense" way they would approach their live sets; again, no dead air, no fluff. I think there is a definite parallel between those two entities of punk rock and soul band influences. I am enamored with the notion that showtime is "go-time", and that's not the time to be futzing around with gear, or worse yet, onstage deliberating over what song to play next, or endlessly tuning in between songs. I will also admit that I do not possess the "gift of gab" so i'd rather just give people more music. We like to make the most of our opportunities to go out and play. And we're all well-conditioned to play at high-energy levels for prolonged periods of time. If the situation allows for it, The Hideaways are sometimes good for 2-hour (and even 3-hour) sets. If some people wind up remembering us for that, i can be happy with that.



Q: What is your favorite song to play live?

A: That has changed many times over the years, but my current personal favorite number to play live is "Junco Partner". I feel that our arrangement of that best exemplifies the mindset of the band. Also, it simultaneously serves as a salute to New Orleans music, (Professor Longhair in particular), and to the late great Joe Strummer (of The Clash).

Q: Can you tell us about your unique guitar style?

A: That's still a work in progress, but i am happy if some people hear it as "unique". I spent my high school years mostly locked away in a room with my turntable, trying to steal as much as i possibly could from every musician i admired. Learning from records was good practice, but i also knew (even then) that i would not be going out onstage and regurgitating their licks note-for-note. So i knew i had to do something else with them. Some players create individualistic styles by avoiding having any "heroes". But since i did have people i looked up to, i wanted to mix them all together in the best way i could, and make whatever i played into a "gumbo-like" conglomeration of everything i listened to and revered growing up. Also, everything changed for me when i stopped using a pick. That came about because as time went on, i started to notice that many of my favorite guitarists played with just their thumb, or their fingertips. So i adapted that approach for myself. In the late 90s, i slowly phased out the pick, and now I just use the tips of my index, middle, and the side of my thumb.



Jimmy Vaughn

Q: When you started to listen and appreciate music at a young age, who was the first musical artists that caught your attention?

A: Like so many others, The Beatles were the first thing that really grabbed me at a very young age, years before i began to play. Jimi Hendrix and The Who, soon after that. I started playing guitar just before turning 12 years old in 1979, and became a major Clash fan when London Calling was released. "Death or Glory" was the first song i learned to play from start to finish. The blues thing really kicked in during my high school years in the early 1980s. in my early teens, Eric Clapton, Stevie Ray Vaughan, and Jimmie Vaughan all helped me find my way to the artists that influenced them. I still love Jimmie Vaughan today.

Q: I know one of your main musical influences is the legendary UK band, The Clash. What are some of the other artists that influenced your music?

A: Yes. The Clash affected me as a person, which in turn affected the music. The biggest thing i learned from them, (and punk rock in general) was to go out and be myself. I spent a lot of my earlier years trying to "be the blues guy". A lot of posturing and "acting the part". It proved to be very unhealthy for me to play some sort of character that i thought represented the music I play. The valuable thing I got from the Clash was the realization that I needed to cut the bullshit posing, and be myself. Mike Bloomfield once said, "I'm not Son House. I'll never be Son House.". You can go play the blues and not be some blues caricature. It was an important lesson. My favorite blues player/singer is Magic Sam. Hearing him was like being struck by lightning. He made me want to be a singer, and not just a guitarist. Of course, I love BB, Albert, and Freddie King too. "Gatemouth" Brown, Albert Collins, Otis Rush, Memphis Slim, Otis Spann, Lightnin' Hopkins, Hound Dog Taylor, Elmore James, i could go on and on! I am equally affected by Pete Townshend, Chuck Berry, Bo

Diddley, Link Wray, the Ramones, Dick Dale, and some of the rockabilly guys past and present. (And Chuck Berry will always be my King.) The artists I admire the most musically are the jazz players from the bebop era thru the soul-jazz of the early to mid-60s. Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, Miles Davis, Sonny Stitt, and right down the entire Blue Note and Prestige roster. ALL the Hammond B3 players: Jimmy Smith and Jimmy McGriff, Jack McDuff, Groove Holmes, on and on. I always learn from the jazz giants, even if I take a phrase and play it wrong, it's still pushing me in a good direction. They also serve as a reminder of how much i don't know and to keep working and moving ahead.



Q: Who are the band members favorite blues artists?

A: I think the band members have a lot of common ground in our favorite blues artists. We can jump from Howlin' Wolf to Louis Jordan to Slim Harpo to Freddie King to Bill Doggett in the same playlist if we were to make one. We can spend equal time listening to Booker T & the MGs as well. Sean is also a major Motown/James Jamerson fan. Scotty Micciche is naturally a fan of all the major harp players thru history from Little Walter, thru Sonny Boy Williamson, right on down thru Butterfield, Kim Wilson, and William Clarke. His playing to me, evokes elements of all the names i just mentioned.



Q: What 5 albums would you have on hand if you were stranded on a desert island?

A: Off the top of my head... It might be totally different on another day: The Clash (1st album), Jimmy Smith - The Sermon, Bob Dylan - Highway 61 Revisited, The Who - Meaty Beaty Big and Bouncy, Jimi Hendrix Experience - Live at Monterey.



Q: Music has been and still is a constant and important element in your life; how much has your relationship with music changed or simply developed?

A: It's not something I think about much, but 20 years ago, i was just doing one thing: one band, one style. My relationship with music has gotten much deeper thru the years. Taking up the Hammond B3 organ and other instruments has certainly broadened my scope quite a bit. The various styles and genres of projects I've been involved with in recent years probably reflect those changes. The goal is to never stop evolving.



Which artists have, in your opinion, revolutionized the blues and the rock genres?

That could turn into a pretty expansive list. But I think Muddy Waters, Howlin' Wolf, BB King, Elmore James affected great change in what people think of as Blues. I suppose it could be argued that Jimi Hendrix revolutionized both genres. As far as Rock goes, I think of Chuck Berry, Bo Diddley, Beatles, Bob Dylan, The Who, MC5, Stooges, Ramones, Sex Pistols, The Clash. Of course, I'm answering this with all the artists I'm biased towards which, in turn, makes me realize that much has been left out here.



Q: Tell us about the recording session that generated the tracks on The Lost Tapes Vol. 1. What was it like to record live in the studio?

A: The live recording approach was crucial to us. All of our favorite blues, jazz, early R&B and rock & roll records were cut live in a studio, usually in one night. So, we figured "why would we want to do it any differently?". I know there is a time and place for more layered

methods of recording, but for the style of music we're doing, i strongly feel the necessity to record that way. Basically, we marched into EKO Studios on September 28, 2006, set up as if it were a show, threw some mics up, and away we went. 3 hours later, we had 26 tunes on tape, and we left.

Q: Did you realize at the time that The Hideaways were in the studio recording these Lost Tapes tracks that you were making something special?

A: That's a 2-part answer for me. 1) While it was all happening, i felt there was some magic going on. We were flowing from one song to the next, and many songs were done in 1 take. Some in 2 takes. I don't think we did anything a 3rd time. I remember we were having fun, laughing a lot, and things were sounding good. 2) At the same time, in my mind, I was quietly being a very harsh critic of my own contributions. But I was not about to start doing stuff over and over again just because I didn't feel I was playing up to my own silly expectations. It was sounding good as a BAND, and that's more important. I even remember calling my wife on the way home, expressing disappointment in myself for the way I played. But a few days later when I heard the playbacks, I quickly changed my mind about all that. I feel proud of this recording, warts and all. "The Lost Tapes" is an earned name for this record. We did everything except press it! And 13 years later, here 'tis!





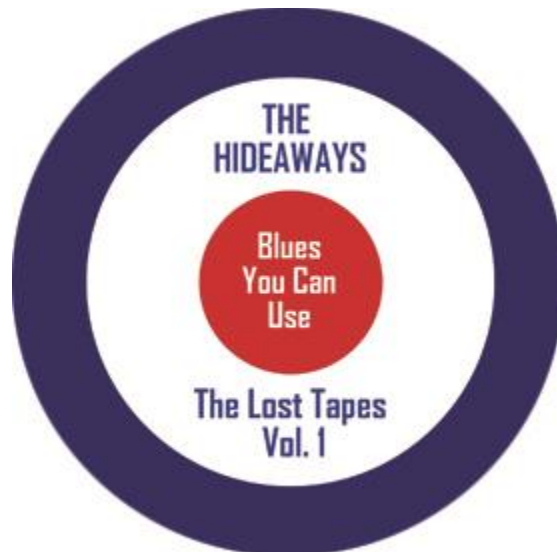
Q: What is your overall musical philosophy?

A: For me, it's important to NEVER be complacent. Complacency has a sound, and i don't like that sound. I can sum up better with a favorite quote from Bob Dylan: "An artist must be careful to never think he has arrived somewhere; he must always be in a constant state of becoming". I'm more interested in being moved, as opposed to being impressed. And i want to play music that moves people, whether it's an internal emotional reaction, or if it simply makes people want to get up and dance. Sure, i want to be a better player and expand my musical vocabulary and phraseology, but not in a competitive way. I try to get better for myself, not because it'll make someone go "wow!". Music is not the Olympics. And i don't know anything about "who's better, who's the best", and blah blah blah like all those idiotic Top 100 lists that Rolling Stone magazine puts out every other month. Who's the best? Who cares? I can tell you who my favorites are.



Q: I know there are plans to release The Lost Tapes Vol. 2. Along with that project, what are the future plans for The Hideaways?

A: I am excited that Mind Smoke Records is releasing The Lost Tapes Vol. 1, and Yes, I certainly look forward to releasing Vol. 2 as well. We are looking to make a new record with the band's current lineup and I expect we will make that happen sooner than later. The time is now. So, a new "current" album, doing more shows, reaching more music fans, and just improving on what we do. I love doing this music and I can't think of a group of better guys to do this with.





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