



Although he's never stopped listening to rock, Blues became his focus: Dylan Bishop

ON A LAZY SUNDAY AFTERNOON IN April, when the weather was already warmer than most places in the world are in the depth of summer, I met with blues guitarist and vocalist Dylan Bishop. Coincidentally, we met in a café across the street from the building that used to house the infamous Dallas Blues club Schooners. Fitting since, although too young to have attended any shows there, he is carrying on the traditional and classic blues sound that made the hangout was known for.

Dylan Bishop was born in Pennsylvania and moved to Ohio before he was a year old. His family moved to Keller, Texas when he was 5 where he continued to live until recently. A musically inclined uncle in Ohio got Dylan, age 7 and his older brother their first guitars. Their Dad joined in playing with them, but after a couple of years, only Dylan continued his interest in the instrument.

### Formative years

NOT SURPRISING FOR SOMEONE of his generation, playing the video game "Rock Band" increased his appetite to learn more. For six years he took formal guitar lessons. His first performance came early, at a recital, at the ripe old age of ten. "It was nerve-racking"—terrifying!" states Dylan. "But I loved it!" He was hooked. The experience cultivated a desire to find more and

### Starting gigs

AROUND THE AGE OF 14 HE joined up with a friend on bass, and the duo started playing small gigs—restaurants mostly. The gigs came easy enough, but soon he became discouraged. Amongst friends his age he says,—"No one else cared about Blues. No one else knew about Blues. I was kinda in this little bubble. I had no one to appreciate this music with." Hearing about a jam in

more opportunities to play live.

At that time, he was playing rock songs—Black Sabbath, AC/DC, The Rolling Stones. But the Stones led him to Muddy Waters and Muddy to Otis Spann and a love for the Blues was born. At that point, his teacher admitted Dylan knew more about blues than he did, so he stopped formal lessons and began a more self-taught journey.

When he was 12, one song in particular was a turning point. "I was always on You Tube. One day I

came across this Elmore James recording: 'Blues At Sunrise,'" says Bishop. "I just never heard anything like that. It was the way he sang. I was like: What is this? It moved me more than I had ever been moved before."

Although he's never stopped listening to rock, Blues became his focus. And, uniquely for a musician his age, the classic style he was drawn to became his style. "I'm sure the rock I listen to is somewhere in my style, but it's not a conscious influence"

McKinney, Texas, Dylan showed up and it was there he met Reo Casey. They hit it off and realized they had similar influences. Although Casey was slightly older, they were close enough in age to feel like kindred spirits.

The two formed a band and began performing together. When the bass player they had been using couldn't make a gig, fellow Bluesman Brian "Hash Brown" Calway suggested they call Cadillac Johnson. "The first night, he [Johnson] shows up and right away I'm like: This dude's so cool," says Dylan. "He's like talking about playing with Lightning Hopkins and I'm just drooling." Cadillac Johnson's experience, influence and classic blues chops helped Bishop solidify his own style further.

When their regular drummer couldn't make a gig, Johnson suggested calling Dirk Cordes. His rock solid beat was a perfect fit. They had found their lineup.

The band began playing gigs across the Dallas/Forth Worth/Metroplex area, and recorded together in Casey's home studio. They released the CD *Look Out* in November of 2015. Reo and Dylan eventually split off into separate bands. But Bishop kept the Johnson/Cordes rhythm section and The Dylan Bishop Band was born.

In addition to an increasing number of shows in the DFW area, the band began traveling to Austin to play shows, and, graduating a year early from high school, Dylan made the decision to move to make the move south. "Dirk and Cadillac still play with me here, but the Austin [version of the] band fluctuates because everyone there has their own projects going on," says Bishop. But it often includes Bill Horton on stand up bass.

### Recording

"I KNEW BILL PLAYED WITH Jimmie (Vaughan), but the first time I saw him, he was playing with the Horton Brothers at a show at Antones." Getting to know Horton eventually led to the band recording their CD

# Carrying on the tradition

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by Blue Lisa

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—DYLAN BISHOP

"The Exciting Sounds of the Dylan Bishop Band" at Fort Horton Studios. When the band got in the studio, the initial plan was to record the covers that made up their live show. But Horton advised them it would be better a smarter move if they recorded some original material. So Bishop wrote nine songs for the CD in the studio and then included four covers. In contrast to the blues-rock of many young artists, Bishop's blues have a cool, retro vibe to them.

Through Horton's association, Vaughan ended up playing on 2 tracks of the project. And when Bishop moved to Austin, Horton also began gigging with him.

Austin has opened up a whole new influence of musicians and new places to play. "I play a lot more gigs during the week living in Austin than I did in Fort Worth," states Bishop. "But I've been lucky to play some great gigs, including multiple dates at C-Boys. There are more places for me to play in Austin than there are in Fort Worth."

With an abundance of world-class blues musicians in residence, Austin is a notoriously hard scene to break into. But that hasn't been Dylan's experience. "The local guys have been totally open to teaching me things and sharing with me," says Bishop. "I'm lucky because I got that in

Dallas as well."

Unfortunately in every Blues scene there are always a few older players that are put off by a new, younger musician making their mark. "Mike Morgan told me: Just wait. There'll be a new little punk that comes along soon," Dylan laughs. At 18, he is certainly the young gun at the moment. But so were those established guys once upon a time in the early days of their careers. Bishop takes it all in stride.

Making the trip back and forth I35 is rapidly becoming a way of life, and now that he's graduated to playing full-time, Bishop's plans include increasing his live performances to other areas as well. Right now he's concentrating on promoting the new CD. But he's already started writing more material. Looking to the future, he is preparing for a tour next year of South America as well as releasing a new CD in 2018.

Bishop hopes to introduce audiences his age to the music he loves so much. Throughout its history, popular resurgences of Blues music have come from a young artist igniting their peers interest by taking the genre and making it their own. Dylan Bishop is enthusiastic about being the next one to make that happen. The Blues couldn't be in more capable and enthusiastic hands. ■