



PEACH

PEACH to make first Northwest appearance at Untapped Blues Festival on May 10

PEACH and her Blues All-Stars band will make their first appearance in the Northwest on May 10 at the Untapped Blues Festival at the Benton County Fairgrounds in Kennewick.

Music has been a part of PEACH'S soul for as far back as she can remember.

"Music has always been in my life," she told the Herald in a recent phone interview. "I absolutely love to sing the blues, but I'm a very serious guitar player too."

She was born and raised in Indiana and grew up listening to the cool sounds of Ella Fitzgerald, Aretha Franklin and Billie Holiday, she said. And though she's been playing professionally since she was 16, she didn't really get in synch with her own voice until a few years ago.

"It was a little tougher for women to break into that man's world of guitar slinging," she said. "And it can be difficult to stay feminine but be one of the boys in the band too. But I found this great group of guys to play with now, and the sound is fabulous."

Her band is comprised of Tom Walsh on drums, Dell Atkins on bass and Jamie James on guitar and vocals.

"Tom is a heavy hitter from L.A. who's played with America," PEACH said. "He's also tall, dark, handsome and very married."

Atkins also plays with soul singer James Ingram and with the Pointer Sisters. James has been associated with The Stray Cats and has his own band, King Bees.

"It's exhilarating to play with Jamie," PEACH said. "I feed off his energy."

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Untapped's music coordinator, Dave Nichols, is a huge PEACH fan, he said.

"PEACH is a talented songwriter who pulls some of L.A.'s best musicians together ensuring a tight set," Nichols said. "Her music is very danceable."

PEACH loves most music styles but relates more to the blues, she said.

"There's nothing bad about singing the blues," she said. "But the best thing is that you can get into it because it's the kind of music that makes you happy."

PEACH started singing in her church choir and at age 11 got her first electric guitar.

"I don't think any other girl in Anderson, Ind., had an electric guitar," she said with a laugh. "I love it."

When she went off to the University of Denver in the 1970s to study music, her accompanist was Condoleeza Rice, the former national security adviser and secretary of state in the George W. Bush administration.

"Condoleeza was a wonderful pianist and that was long before she got into politics," PEACH said. "I quit college before earning my degree. I was that crazy girl who just didn't fit in at college."

She ended up in San Francisco, where she bummed around playing with funk and jazz musicians like Smith Dobson, Russell Ferrante, Davis Ramey and Jim Nichols. For a while, she toured Japan as a solo jazz musician, then returned to the states and played with Jim Messina for a time.

She recorded a duet (Real Thing) with Taj Mahal about 10 years ago, and five years ago she cowrote a song with Keb'Mo titled It Meant Nothing.

These days, she tours solo with her own band.

"I'm really looking forward to the Untapped gig," she said. "First time in the Northwest. Hopefully, not my last."

The performance is scheduled for 6 p.m. May 10. Gates open for the Untapped Blues Festival at 11:30 a.m. at the fairgrounds. Tickets cost \$25 in advance and \$30 at the gate, and are available at www.untappedblues.com.

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