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Happy Holidays

From all of us at the OCBS to all of you!

Who is Peach?

According to Wikipedia (who leaked no emails to reveal this info):

PEACH was born and raised in Anderson, Indiana. She grew up listening to the music of Ella Fitzgerald, Aretha Franklin, Billie Holiday, and Bessie Smith. At age 6 she started singing in her church choir, and at age 11 got her first electric guitar

By the age of 16, PEACH was playing professionally. She was an accomplished guitarist and toured throughout the Midwest, playing at universities and coffeehouses.

She attended the University of Denver music school (1969-1973) where she was the featured vocalist for the university's jazz band. As a voice major, she was accompanied by Condoleezza Rice, former national security advisor and secretary of state in the George W. Bush administration.

After college, PEACH moved to San Francisco and played with funk and jazz musicians Smith Dobson, Russell Ferrante (Yellowjackets), Davis Ramey (George Shearing), and Jim Nichols (Robben Ford). She later toured Japan as a solo jazz musician, then returned to the U.S. and played with Jim Messina of Loggins and Messina.

PEACH moved to Los Angeles and began recording under her own Blues Rock Records label. Her first release in 2001, *The Cure for You*, is an album featuring five of her own songs. The album and her live performances led to her being awarded the L.A. Music Awards Blues Artist of the Year 2001.

In 2002, PEACH followed up with the album, *Live From Riverside*, a 7-track album recorded live in Riverside, California during 'Concerts at the Courthouse' with special guest Joey Delgado (Delgado Brothers). The album and her live performances resulted in her winning two 2002 L.A. Music Awards: the Award of Excellence and Most Successful Independent Distribution.



PEACH continued performing and recording, releasing The Real Thing in 2004, a 13-track album featuring a title song duet with blues legend Taj Mahal and with James Gadson on drums throughout. As with her other releases, the album gained award recognition, this time as L.A. Music Awards Independent Blues Album of the Year (2004).

Her performances and popularity grew, yielding several awards over the next few years: South Bay Music Awards Artist of the Year (2006), Rockwired Best Female Artist (2007), and All-Access Best Blues Group / Artist (2007).

In 2009, PEACH co-wrote a song with Keb' Mo' titled It Meant Nothing. The song is yet to be released as an official audio recording, however, PEACH does perform it and video recordings of live performances exist online.

PEACH took to theater in 2011, performing as producer (Reasoner Productions) for the acclaimed show Hoboken to Hollywood. Her production was awarded the 32nd annual L.A. Weekly Theater Awards - Musical of the Year 2011.

In addition to her own work, PEACH has recorded with other artists including, Marty Grebb (The Buckingham), Reggie McBride (Elton John), Garth Hudson (The Band) and Paul Barrere (Little Feat).



In 2015, PEACH traveled to Copenhagen, Denmark and began performing there. She toured with The Almost Blues Band (DK) in October 2015, and returned in February 2016 and June 2016 for more concerts with the band. A live recording was made of their February 2016 Café Bartof performances and it was subsequently released as an 8-track audio cd, A Night in Copenhagen, August 9, 2016.

Our Exclusive Interview with Peach

What's a nice Indiana girl like you doing in California?

Well I kept moving west. I went to school in Colorado during my college years. I have a college friend who called me when I moved up to the mountains after college. I started getting really bored after about a year in paradise. My friend said she was in San Francisco. She told me one of her roommates had moved out and wanted to know if I wanted to move to the Haight Ashbury. At the time I had never been to California and I thought, sunny California, perfect. I was sick of being in cold weather anyway. Little did I know that San Francisco was very rarely sunny California. And in fact I would be socked in with the fog for the next 10 years. This was around 1973. But it was a good era for me for San Francisco in that there was a good creative movement there. For that I'm very thankful. I think it was quite good in a lot of ways and I could get a good drummer. In those years in Colorado, it was mostly guitar pickers and grinders. It was the Rocky Mountain High era. I really was not a country player. I wanted to play jazz. I did a lot of other kinds of music, you know, the music of the day which was James Taylor and Joni Mitchell, but I was also deeply into people like Billy Holiday and Bessie Smith. I didn't differentiate between jazz and blues. I don't know why because I had studied music and had a music education. I kind of wanted to go to the big city, being from Indiana. I wanted to be a sophisticated girl and I thought that meant moving to a city and playing jazz. I went there and I got very involved in the jazz scene which was the perfect size for me. Everybody kind of knew everybody else in those years. It was really great, it was a really good run. There was a very monetarily lucrative bar scene in those years. I played a lot of clubs, mostly gay bars back then. I played with a keyboard player who had played with a band called In Cold Blood, I played with Smith Dobson for a while, I played randomly with Russell Ferrante who moved to L.A. and was one of the founding members of the Yellowjackets. It was good times! Eventually I moved south, I wanted to head for some better weather.

You were definitely in the right place to play jazz in San Francisco.

Right, at one point I toddled off and went to Japan, cut my teeth on living and playing in a foreign country.

How was that?

Well, it was really fascinating. It was before the internet, before cell phones, so basically in those years if you went somewhere you were completely out of communication with anyone you knew. I got the gig from a guy who played piano in San Francisco and he knew this

really expensive club in Japan and he wanted to take some time off. He and the club owner flew to San Francisco and saw me. I was going to take his gig for six months so he could get it back. I went over there but no one had calculated the fact that I was female so I didn't have quite the same experience that he did. And I gave him a good talking to when I got back. The status of women over there at that time was, for me, rather lacking. You work six nights a week in Japan, thirty minutes on and thirty minutes off. I didn't really understand much of this at the beginning. You really work hard over there. Even though I had a contract but I didn't really understand much of this because I didn't really take the time to read my contract very well. So you really don't have much of a life while you're there. I did, however learn to speak Japanese, I made friends, I learned to love the culture in some ways. It would get pretty lonely because I only knew one or two people who spoke a lot of English. I only saw them once a week and sometimes only every other week. This was in Osaka. I generally had to play solo so I really played a lot of guitar in those years.

Were you part of a band when you were in San Francisco?

In the city the way I made a living was I would play solo at the hotels, like during cocktail hour, from 5-8. In fact, I felt like I might as well be hitting typewriter keys instead of playing requests for tourists. After a while it felt like it had drained all the musicality out of me, but that's how I made a living and I also taught guitar. I would also do a cabaret kind of an act with Smith Dobson and all those people, you know the Jazzists. Then from time to time I would be in a jazz trio. I was just constantly playing.

At that time when you played with a band were you one of the guitar players and one of the singers?

Generally not. A lot of the bands in those years felt that I should not play guitar, that I should be the chick singer. And they would take me off the instrument. At the time I was still doing all the solo gigs and everything and I didn't think much of it. I didn't like it but I was raised to be the sort of person who said thank you and please and so I just kind of went along with it when they wouldn't allow me to play guitar in the band. There was one band that I did play in, it was a really good band. We did a lot of Stevie Wonder and stuff like that.



Now I look back and think it was kind of unfortunate that I was made to be the “chick singer” because it took me off the instrument and I didn’t really get a chance to develop because I wasn’t taking solos. There was always a guy in the band playing and taking all the solos. I try not to have any regrets about the past but I suppose, in a way, the person I am today would tell all those people that actually it’s my band and that it’s my name on the marquee and I’m going to be playing guitar in the band thank you very much. But I was just kind of young and pretty innocent.

From that time until today would you say that the role of female musicians has drastically changed and if so, how? If it has, who would you say are the female musicians who paved the way for that?

First of all I would say I don’t think it’s drastically changed.

Really?

I don’t think it’s changed a lot. I think that a lot of bands might still have one female in them. If you look at a festival booking you’re lucky to find one female fronted band. We had the Pretenders and we had Chrissie Hynde and we had a lot of women fronted bands. We had Grace Slick, today we have Taylor. We had Norah Jones there for a while. So, yes, there are some women out there kind of getting along with it. Aretha Franklin played major league piano and had major league piano chops. But, I don’t think it’s terribly different now. I’m not seeing the numbers change. I see that sometimes a major artist will hire one female to be in his band. A lot of times I think they want the female to be window dressing, put a pretty sax player with long legs over on the side of the stage. I understand you want to have an image for your band, a vibe for your band. So I guess we should say well at least that’s progress, they want one female in the band. But if you a poll about how many male musicians there are and how many female musicians there are...

Well clearly the men outnumber the women. You’re right.

If you go to a jam session it’s pretty much guitar slinger guys all night long.

Right, you’re not going to get a lot of chicks who get up there and play the guitar.

Or anything else. I don’t really understand why that is but it kinda is. If you look at High School Marching Bands, there’s plenty of women in those. I don’t want to sound like a person who’s angry about it, I’m just saying that if you look at who’s playing and you just do the numbers it’s fairly obvious.

You’re just stating a fact. I understand. You started playing guitar at a very early age and have been playing for quite some time. Did you play consistently throughout all that time or were there times when

you set it down for a while?

I played from the time I was 11 and I played electric but as they say I turned pro, I turned professional at 16 then I played until well into my 30's when I started getting discouraged. I got married and had a baby and I took on another career, to be able to make money. By then I had gotten so tired of gigs that were just taking the love of music right out of me. It's been so long since I've done a solo gig that I think I would like to do one now, it would be kind of interesting for

me to do and I would do that. I'd like to do an opening act solo or I would be willing to play solo. Generally speaking when you're doing five days a week solo, it's a grind. Somewhere along the line I felt that if that's all there is then I'm out. Of course I had a baby, my daughter and I was so extremely happy to have a baby that I really didn't care about much of anything else. So, I was going to be a stay at home mom and that plan was going pretty well. Then a girlfriend of mine was getting married and she wanted me to play for her wedding. I had even gotten rid of my amps but I had my guitars. So I went out and I got an amp and I somehow

met Paul Rivera of Rivera Amplifiers. So Paul gets me this great amp and I mean I was off again! So, now I'm playing everyday and supposedly for this wedding, Ella Fitzgerald was going to come. 30 days before the wedding she passed so I never did meet her but she was going to come and it was a very small wedding so I was practicing like crazy y'know? It was like oh my God, Ella Fitzgerald's coming. As a result of that I started kind of having people over to the house to play and I was a stay at home mom so I could goof around with my friends all day playing music. So before you know it, a couple years of that and I had a band. It was really a good thing because my husband thought it was kind of fun. I could go out and play once a week or so and he would stay home with my daughter and when she got older he would bring her and let her

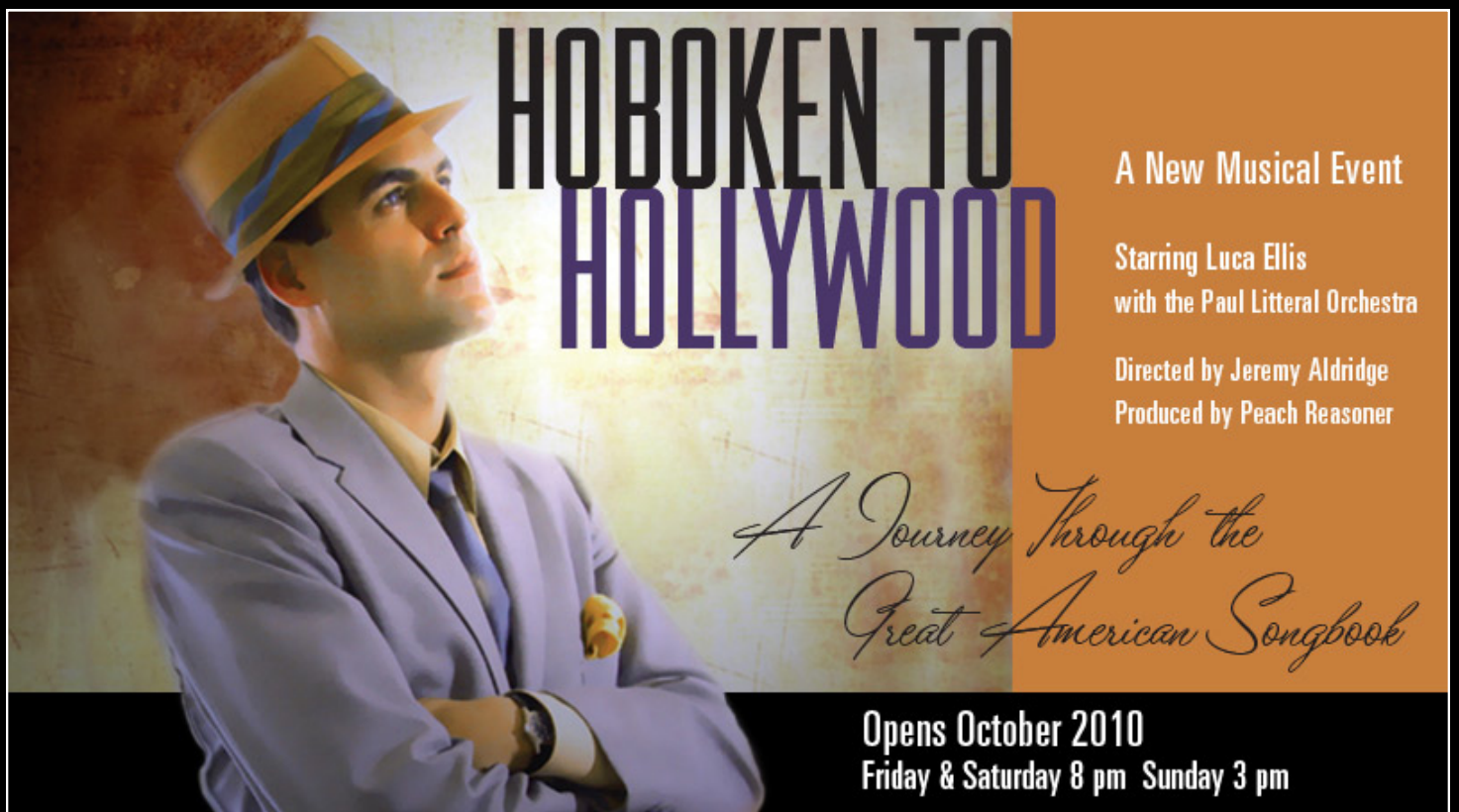


see the first set. Sometimes she would actually sit in with the band at a really young age, that will be part of her Mommy Dearest book. She would sit in on drums and she was a really good drummer and really funky. An absolutely fantastic little drummer. James Gadson was drumming with me in those years. She could hardly reach up because he is a tall man and she was quite small. Eventually we quit doing that because she would get mad at the audience. They would laugh hysterically. They were laughing because she was a little girl, she was very feminine with long brown curly hair to her waist. She would get up there and just play funky, funky drums. It was pretty cool but it made her mad that people would laugh and she just never understood why they were laughing at all. She thought they were laughing at her and I would explain that they're not used to seeing a young girl play and they're not used to seeing women play. She'd also grown up around a woman I'd played with for about ten years named Maria Martinez who's a drummer. My daughter knew Maria and my daughter just thought it was normal for a girl to play drums so she wasn't buying my explanation but that's the way it was. After that band I just kept playing. And that's kind of how I got back in to it.

Where did the transition take place from Loggins and Messina, Joni Mitchell and Jazz to the Blues?

I went through a lot of my heroes if you will when I was pretty young. The Joni Mitchell phase was in my twenties, then there was the Carole King phase and the Billy Holiday phase and I just kept going through people I admired and I would learn their whole repertoire. The result of that was I sort of developed my own thing. When I came back to playing in my 40's I no longer wanted to play anything unless I really wanted it. I noticed that all of those were either songs that were Blues or R & B. I got into this thing, when I came back to it, I came back with a vengeance. I just wanted to play, I wanted to play balls to the walls, I wanted to play with a kick ass band. I wanted a take no prisoners band. I put together this band with Paulie Cerra on saxophone when Paulie Cerra had first moved to L.A., he's now off on that Joe Bonamassa tour but it was Paulie and some other L.A. people. That was the band I had and that was the band I played with for many years. It was Blues and here's the funny thing, I played for this concert series in Riverside and we did this live recording. I recorded my set and that CD became this underground hit and got Blues CD of the year for the L.A. Blues Awards in 2002. That kind of put a label on me which had never been there before. It was around that time, so hilariously late in life, that I realized I was a Blues musician. So I made the transition rather late. I was late to the party.

Where did the producer role come in? You did "From Hoboken to Hollywood" Was that a series of things that you did or was that just one time?



It was a play but it got Play of the Year that year.

You got great reviews.

It was a big production. We had a twelve piece band and a cast and I produced it. I blame my buddy Paul for making that happen. I have a friend, Paul Literal who used to live in New York. His nickname was Hollywood Paul. He played and recorded with everybody from James Brown to the Rolling Stones. He moved to L.A. and lived at my house for a while when I was married. We were good friends then you fast forward to ten or fifteen years later and Paul had written this play about Frank Sinatra. I had a studio by then and they were using the studio to rehearse. One day I said to Paul, are you guys all coming back next Wednesday because they used to rehearse on Wednesday nights. He said yeah, I gotta call them all and I said why don't you just email them all? He said well yeah I don't know and I said you want me to just email everybody and say hey next Wednesday, same time, same station? He said, yeah that would be great. That was like the first drink into theatrical production. Before you knew it I was organizing this whole thing. They were going to get a real producer, you know, like someone who had done it before. And nothing was happening and nothing kept happening. I'm not a naturally patient person so I went off and rented some little local theater and put the thing up and it was hugely successful. It was really fun. I wasn't playing in the band from that era, it was a period piece about Frank Sinatra. In that era the only woman who really played in those bands was a piano player.

Or the female singer

Of course. We didn't have a guitar chair in that band anyway. We had a small version of the band so we only had twelve people in the band, piano, bass, drums and a nice horn section. I had my hands full as a

producer. It was really, really fun. I really enjoyed it but then all of a sudden after the run was over, which was a year getting into it, a year that it played and a year getting out of it; kind of like a relationship. Easier to get into then out of. After that ended, time kept passing by and I kept getting older and I said, well, what do I really want to do? It was flattering at the time that people kept coming to me saying we want you to produce this and that, you did such a good job. I thought, I'm producing something that someone else created and I'm just spending all my time literally on creating a performance space for other people. I thought I've got to stop doing this cause I need to get back to playing.

Do you find you constantly need something new to keep you interested and fresh?

Yes.

What's the newest thing you're looking at doing?

There's two things I'm doing. The newest thing is that I've been playing in Europe. I put together a band over there. That involves new players and new venues and a new language. New problems like, travel, jet lag, where do I stay, and how am I gonna pull this one off. I found a band that was playing, they found me really. They are a trio. I met this bass player and he was in this blues band that he played with called the Almost Blues Band. They all were listening to some videos that I had made and they thought it would be fun if I would come do a few gigs with them. Without meeting any of them I said if you book it I will do it. They all had really good reputations, the bass player was quite highly regarded not only in Denmark but Scandinavia and Europe as well. So once I started playing with this band they kind of adopted me. I started going over to Europe nine years ago, it will be ten years this summer. I have a lot of fun over there.

Could you share your songwriting process with our readers?

Either I just hear a melody and start singing it then sit down and try to find the chords that go with it or I'll hear a rhythm, or a chord progression then I'll play that and repeat it and repeat it and repeat it and just start making up words to it. I'll either record those words on my cell phone or write them down very quickly so I don't forget them. Then extract the ones that aren't very good and then go with that. Ironically on this new recording there aren't a lot of my songs. It's because we did a lot of songs that night and the other guitar player in the band is the sound man and he mixed the CD. It's completely live in that it's direct to disk. He was looking for the best live performances.

Do you have any other projects coming up?

There are several projects I've been thinking about. One is working

on an idea to get a couple of other women Blues guitar players together. I have talked to them loosely. One is a woman named Susan Scheller and another woman, Diana Rein. I'd like to do some sort of a show. I don't know if we would play together or each one of us play and use the same backing band. I'd like to organize that very much. I currently have a working band with a guitarist named Jamie James who was in a band called Jamie James and the King Bees. Jamie and I are in the process of putting together a bunch of songs. I'm also thinking of doing a small ensemble of musicians in my apartment here in Venice and videoing it. Videos seem to go such a long way. I know when I'm on Facebook I gravitate toward videos, something to click on and watch. Facebook is really helpful locally as it allows me to post the location of gigs and a lot of relevant information but Facebook is also very important because It allows me to touch base with the fans overseas.

Do you ever co-write with anyone?

I co-wrote a song with Keb'Mo a long time ago, about ten years ago. He still lived in L.A. when we did that. I still have to get that song on a recording. It is on YouTube, it's called It Meant Nothing. It has done really well on YouTube. I just haven't got it recorded yet. I sometimes get stuck on a song and I'll go over it with someone and I need a bridge, once someone helps me with the bridge then we're co-writers.

Peach, where can our readers find you?

On my website, peachmusic.com and on my Facebook page. I should be playing locally around January, February and March. In L.A., Long Beach or somewhere like that.

Any parting words?

I want to thank Doug Deutsch for putting us together, he's my publicist and he works hard. I'd like to thank you , the Orange County Blues Society and all the guys down in Orange County, it seems to have a very healthy and happy Blues scene. I appreciate you doing this because it helps us stay out there.

