

11th Annual Blues Harmonica Summit

YOSHIS

JANUARY 13, 2002

GOT THE KEY TO THE HIGHWAY



Me and the Significant Other managed to score two tix for the 11th Annual Blues Harmonica Summit, hosted by Mark Hummel with the Blues Survivors and Hohner at Yoshis. All shows sold out a week in advance for this blowout that has acquired international notoriety. Featured this time were:

89 year old Snooky Pryor, veteran of the Chicago blues and the most probable inventor of the amplified harmonica technique whereby the musician cradles an acorn mike behind the instrument.

- Former Elmore James sideman Sam Myers
- Anson Funderburgh, guitar wizard
- W.C. Handy Acoustic Blues Award winners Annie Raines and Paul Rishell
- Canadian jazz artist Carlos del Junco.
- And of course, Mark Hummel himself with the Blues Survivors

To say that Carlos opened up and tore the roof off the place, followed by the Raines and Rishell duo who never let it come down would be an understatement. Some people have claimed that the blues harp is a dying artform, but you couldn't tell that on Friday night, for the musicians and crowd were romping and stomping from del Junco's extended version of "Rocket 88" to the diminutive Raines screaming a full 12-bar flutter at full volume before belting out the lyrics. Rishell, a long-time veteran of the blues-circuit who has accompanied Son House and Howlin Wolf offered a very tasty vocal of his own on "Nothing but the Devil", surprising the audience with a rich, powerful voice that shook the rafters while he accompanied himself on his National steel, switching to an electric Gibson later in the set.



Raines is a little wisp of a thing with surprising lung power, a required attribute for her previous bandmate was none other than teen powerhouse, Susan Tedeschi. When she stood up to blow her call was so intense it could make a good man get up drop his job, leave his good home abandon his wife and kids run off to ride the blinds begin following Raines and Rishell everywhere, get arrested for stalking a celebrity, turn to drink out of frustration, get his self thrown in jail and then be forced to live on the street making a sort of living singing the blues. Did I say they were good?

And with the evening not half over, Mark Hummel took over and calmly ripped away what was left of the rafters so that they are still mending and patching and hoping for good weather over at Yoshi's. Man,

I saw old ladies who musta seen Hubert Sumlin as a *young* unknown get up and do the cakewalk. Then he handed the mike over to Meyer who in turn handed the mike over to the randy old Snooky Pryor, who said, "We're gonna Shake That Thing now. That's the name of the tune, you people so don't you put your mind in the gutter." The local favorite, Rusty Zinn took over as guitar lead, Anson graciously giving up the floor during Meyer's set.

At the end of it, the crowd kept calling out, "One more! One more!", but the SRO 10:30 show already was into overtime, meaning the union boys would have to give it up for this one, incendiary night at Yoshi's, cause there was no way those guys were going to finish up so early as midnight running as hot as they were.