



Drummer Michael Cherry, guitarist David Pruitt and bassist/lead vocalist Dick Pruitt of the Bel Airs

The Bel Airs Bio

Fronted by brothers Dick and Dave Pruitt on bass and electric guitars, with Michael Cherry on drums, the Bel Airs play a danceable mix with an authentic but eclectic bluesy-country-soul-and-rock-n-roll sound influenced by the likes of Wilson Picket, Slim Harpo, Howlin' Wolf and Johnny Cash.

Performing together for more than 20 years, the Pruitt brothers' harmony vocal style sets them apart in the contemporary music scene--leading one reviewer to refer to them as the "Everly Brothers of Blues". David's "big guitar" and Dick's howling vocals over soulful, right-on rhythm playing make this trio a powerhouse.

Longevity

It's unusual for a bar band to stay together so long with so few personnel changes. Formed in 1981, the original incarnation of the Bel Airs included the Pruitt brothers, harp player Michael Henderson and drummer Pat O'Connor. In those days, rumor has it that in addition to playing guitar behind his head, little David Pruitt occasionally rode on Henderson's shoulders at the end of an especially raucous set.

Back in the days of vinyl, the original four members of the band released the Bel Airs' first recording NEED ME A CAR on Blind Pig Records in 1984. Later, Henderson moved to Nashville and played with the Snakes and toured with Mark Knopfler.

In 1991, the Bel Airs released DANGEROUS CURVES, recorded at Lou Whitney's studio in Springfield, Missouri, as a trio. Later that year, when David moved temporarily to southern California, drummer Pat O'Connor left for Nashville as well, and in 1995, brothers Dick and David recruited Indianapolis native Michael Cherry, a veteran of the Paladins and the James Harman Band, to return to the midwest to take the helm of the rhythm section. The association has proven to be a fruitful one. The current line-up has been together over ten years, and has released two recordings. HOODOO PARTY (1999) was recorded in St. Louis and among the guest musicians featured is late-great pianist Johnnie

Johnson, who emerged from Chuck Berry's shadow during the 1990's and often joined the Bel Airs on stage at the legendary and now defunct *Off Broadway*.

Released July 12, 2005, their most recent disc is GOT LOVE on Hightone Records. Recorded at The Studio with Lou Whitney in Springfield, GOT LOVE features the intensity of the live shows that loyal fans know and love, with guests Jimmy Carpenter on horn and Joe Terry on hammond organ adding depth and polish in just the right places.

Collaborations and touring

Through the years, the Bel Airs have contributed their rock solid line to collaborations with numerous other artists on stage and in the studio, including Johnnie Johnson, harpist Mark Wenner of the legendary DC-based Nighthawks, southern California saxophonist Johnny Viau and French blues phenom Big Dez. Currently, the Bel Airs are touring with Brian Caps, the Domino Kings, and the Morells as part of the "Big Noise from Springfield".

Now based in Columbia, Missouri, the Bel Airs are easily one of the hardest working and most entertaining blues bands in the country. These veterans have delivered some of the hottest dates at legendary clubs, many of which the Bel Airs have outlasted, like JB Huttos and Roger Nabor's late great Grand Emporium, and they continue to win over audiences from Southern California to the DC Metro area and all parts in between. They are perennial favorites in the US and British Virgin Islands and recently began building a following in Europe with performances in France, Corsica, Belgium and the UK. Their musical approach and superbly crafted showmanship make for a more than memorable concert wherever they appear.

Bel Airs Discography

The Bel Airs have released four recordings. Their newest CD GOT LOVE was released on Hightone Records July 12, 2005. HOODOO PARTY was released on the Blueberry Hill label in the spring of 1999. DANGEROUS CURVES was released on Borrowed Records in 1991. Their first recording NEED ME A CAR was released on vinyl by Blind Pig in 1984.

What the reviewers are saying about the Bel Airs:

"One of the best undiscovered musical treasures in the country." *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*

"The BelAirs deliver killer dance grooves, seamless medleys, and a contagious, unpretentious party spirit." *Twin Cities Reader*

"Rollicking party blues." *Blues Revue*

"Kings of the modern juke-joint." *Madison Isthmus*

"The BelAirs' upbeat blues boogie makes for as fun a club night as it gets." *Toronto "NOW"*

"A knockout blend of excellent musicianship, solid vocals and pure showmanship whenever the BelAirs take the stage." *Kansas City Times*

"The blues at its best: blues drenched guitar riffs ride on a rhythm that is tight and soulful." *Spotlight Magazine*

"Ideal for the supposed renaissance in American roots music." *Boston Globe*

"The BelAirs work as a unit with tight chops and slick harmony-the very best." *San Antonio Express-News*

"Howlin' good time." *Wichita Eagle-Beacon*