

Powder Blues Band

- Tom Lavin (guitar, vocals)
- Jack Lavin (bass, vocals)
- Willie MacCalder (piano, organ, vocals)
- Duris Maxwell (drums)
- David Woodward (tenor sax, vocals)
- Mark Hasselbach (trumpet)
- Gord Bertram (baritone sax; 1979-1981)
- Wayne Kozak (tenor sax; 1979-1981)
- Bill Runge (baritone sax; 1981-2001)
- Don Cummings (bass; replaced Jack Lavin 1983)
- Bill Clarke (trumpet; 2001)
- Adam Drake (drums; 2001)

[**BIOGRAPHY** | **Discography** | **Links** | **Photos**]



In May of 1978 The Powder Blues band is formed by Chicago-born Tom Lavin as a house band in Vancouver's Gastown. All the members came from other groups: Tom Lavin with Prism; Jack Lavin with Teen Angel; MacCalder with Willie And The Walkers; Maxwell with Doucette and Skylark; Woodward with Downchild; Kozak with Cobra, Prism and Denise McCann; Bertram with Foreman Byrnes; and Hasselbach with Airbrush. They played the local Vancouver club scene for the next 18 months.

By 1979 the band had recorded their debut album, 'Uncut', and end up releasing it on their own Blue Wave label after being turned down by all the major record labels. But the band generated enough buzz on their own causing RCA to re-release the album and the band tours Canada and U.S. on strength of four Top-10 singles.

'eUncute was certified double platinum [200,000 copies] in February 1981. The band won eBest New Groupi at the Juno Awards. Album exports began helping 'Uncut' receive significant airplay on the BBC and elsewhere like Europe.

In June of 1981 The Powder Blues released their second album 'Thirsty Ears'. It shipped platinum and the first single reached Top 5 nationally. Their touring schedule continued at a pace of over 300 shows per year.

By May of 1982 work began on their third album eParty Linei. Following its release, the first single gets heavy national airplay. The band played 65 dates in the U.S. to promote the release.

April 1983 saw a European tour garnering spectacular reviews at the prestigious Montreux Jazz Festival in Switzerland (which is recorded for an upcoming live release) and North Sea Jazz Festival in Holland.

eRed Hot/ True Bluei, a double album with 18 tunes, cut live in the studio, is issued on RCA records in Canada in September 1983.

In September 1984 eLive At Montreuxi is released to critical acclaim and by December of that year CBC aired an hour-long national TV special, ePowder Blues Live at Montreuxi. Band played 112 dates that year

1985 saw The Powder Blues perform 175 dates in U.S. and Canada and in November 1986 they received the coveted W.C. Handy Award for Blues is presented to the band in Memphis, Tennessee for eBest Foreign Bandi.

In July of 1988 they celebrated their tenth Anniversary with continuous, non-stop touring of over 100 dates that year.

eFirst Decade/Greatest Hits', album number six, is released in August of 1990 featuring 19 cuts available for the first time ever on CD.

In November 1990 The Powder Blues performed 12 concerts in the Soviet Union and released product on Melodiya Records (the second Western act following The Dave Rave Conspiracy to do so).

Throughout 1991 and 1992 touring CONTINUED and the band began work on a new studio album.

In April of 1993 the band's seventh LP, eLetis Get Loosei, is released on WEA records. A steady tour ensued.

Throughout 1994-1996 a revitalized version of the band continued to tour by playing an average of 50 shows a year including major blues and jazz festivals in Vancouver, Victoria, Calgary, Edmonton, Saskatoon, Regina, Winnipeg, Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal and Quebec City.

In 1997 the band's much acclaimed eLive at Montreuxi LP is restored to its original concert length, re-mastered digitally and released worldwide on Peerless. Meanwhile, Powder Blues' eFirst Decade/Greatest Hitsi on WEA achieves egold recordi status [50,000 copies].

Through the late '90s The Powder Blues played another 100 live shows from the Atlantic to the Pacific. They began working on a new studio album 2000 which is called 'Swing Shift' and set for release in 2001.

Leader, Tom Lavin has written many of the band's best-known songs, including eDoini It Righti [eOn the Wrong Side of Towni] and eBoppini With the Bluesi. He moved to Vancouver in the late sixties to study filmmaking. By night he made his living working as a musician in the thriving downtown nightclub scene. This eventually lead to his career as a studio musician and subsequently, to his role as record producer and studio owner.

Tom has been singing and playing guitar for a living for over 30 years. At various times during this period he has been presented with a number of awards. These include B.C. Music Industry Association awards for eGuitarist, Singer, Songwriter and Producer of the Yeari, a Canadian Music Industry Association Juno award for eBest New Bandi and the American W.C. Handy award for eBest Foreign Blues Bandi. He has over a dozen eGold, Platinum and Double Platinumi record awards for playing in, writing for or producing such bands as Powder Blues, Prism, April Wine, Long John Baldry, Amos Garrett, Susan Jacks, The Good Brothers and P.J. Jackson.

He has produced albums for many international labels including RCA, WEA, Capitol, Columbia, EMI, BMG, Polygram and Stoney Plain Records and has produced albums or written songs for such notables as Long John Baldry, Amos Garrett, Lowell Fulson, Susan Jacks and Jim Byrnes. His four story, 20,000 square foot recording complex, Blue Wave Studios has not only produced Gold Records for Powder Blues and numerous other artists, it has recorded sound for film (including the Dennis Hopper film "Out Of The Blue"), TV and radio. It is also home to Teddy Bear Productions, an advertising company that Tom is partner in, which has produced themes, scores and jingles for countless movies, TV shows and international products including Ford, Toyota and Bell Telephone.

Founding member, Willie MacCalder, was born in Victoria and raised in Edmonton where he developed his craft by playing in a number of teen bands, until, in the mid sixties, he found great success with his own band, eWillie and the Walkersi. They signed with Capitol Records and enjoyed a number of pop hits on rock radio, touring extensively through out the U.S. and Canada. He and Tom met in Vancouver in the mid seventies where they discovered their mutual love of the blues. Willie's trademark piano stylings have won him a number of emusic poll awards and contribute greatly to the Powder Blues instantly identifiable sound. Currently, he has a solo album as well, entitled eBroken Down Pianoi on Jay-El Records.

Dave Woodward, tenor saxophone, was born and raised in Arlington, Virginia and joined the Powder Blues right at the band's outset in the spring of 1978. Previous to his involvement with Powder Blues, he found commercial success appearing and performing for many years with the Downchild Blues Band of Toronto. Tom first saw Dave play when Downchild came to Vancouver on a cross Canada tour and he made a mental note to ask Dave to play with him if the opportunity ever arose. Coincidentally, Dave left Downchild and migrated to the West Coast at about the same time that Powder Blues was being formed and looking for a horn section. Tom asked him to join the band on the very first night he ever played with them and he has been an indispensable member ever since.

Bassist, Bill Runge, born in Edmonton, joined the band in 1981. He has appeared on many Powder Blues albums playing baritone, tenor and alto saxophones and on some cuts, the electric bass. This gifted multi-instrumentalist has also written, arranged and performed with the Jim Byrnes Band and his been a jazz ensemble leader in his own right, winning the coveted eAlcan National Jazz Awardi. An exceptional recording musician and composer, he has played, written and arranged sessions for countless commercials, movie and television scores and albums over the past two decades. He is also on the governing board of directors of the Vancouver Musicians Union Local 145.

Bill Clark, trumpet, was born and raised in Surrey, B.C. and joined the Powder Blues in 1985, touring with the band at a pace of over 200 shows per year. A efirst calli session man, he has also lead jazz ensembles that have toured both across Canada and the U.S. and in Europe. For a number of years previous to his involvement with the band, he traveled the world as a well-known musician and bandleader for a number of popular cruise ship companies. At present he is finishing school in order to begin teaching music in the high schools as a full time occupation. He plans to continue to appear with the Powder Blues as often as his professional teaching schedule will permit.

Adam Drake, the big man behind the Powder Blues driving beat, was born in Los Angeles and raised in the Slocan Valley near Nelson, B.C. He first studied drums as a young boy with the famous L.A. session drummer, Nick Cirrolli, refining his technique with thousands of hours of egarage timei. Before long he was playing in a number of local bands, working hard at developing his unique percussion style. Previous to joining Powder Blues, he toured with such well-known International acts as Grapes of Wrath, Art Bergman and Holly McNarland and in 1997 won the prestigious Canadian Juno Award for 'Best Alternative Drummer'. When not on the road, he continues to be a much sought after recording session drummer.

With notes from Tom Lavin and Steve Wind

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Singles

1980 Doin' It Right (RCA)

1980 Boppin' With The Blues (RCA)

1980 What've I Been Drinking (RCA)

1981 Hear That Guitar Ring (RCA)

1981 Lovin' Kissin' & Huggin' (Liberty/Capitol-EMI)

1981 Thirsty Ears/Nothing But A Tease (Liberty/Capitol-EMI)

1983 Farmer John (RCA)

1985 I'm On The Road Again (Blue Wave)

Albums

1979 Uncut (Blue Wave)

1980 Uncut [re-issue] (RCA)

1981 Thirsty Ears (Liberty/Capitol-EMI)

1982 Party Line (Liberty/Capitol-EMI)

1983 Powder Blues (Liberty/Capitol-EMI)

1983 Red Hot/True Blue [2LPs] (RCA)

1983 Red Hot/True Blues [1 LP] (Flying Fish)

1984 Live At Montreux (Blue Wave)

1990 First Decade/Greatest Hits (WEA)

1993 Let's Get Loose (WEA)

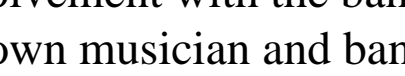
1997 Live At Montreux [CD re-issue] (Peerless)

1997 Lowell Fulson With The Powder Blues Band (Stony Plain)

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POWDER BLUES BAND

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