

## BLUES NIGHT (July 15 , 7:30pm) ARTIST BIOS

### **NORMAN SYLVESTER BAND**

**Friday, July 15, 7:30pm: Blues Night**

Norman “Boogie Cat” Sylvester was born in the farmlands of Bonita Louisiana in 1945, his earliest musical influence came from gospel singing in church and hearing the blues on the back street of town where he wasn’t allowed to go. His family moved to Portland Oregon in 1957 in the “great migration” when he was in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade. Norman’s learned to play in church from high school friend, “King of Seattle Blues” Isaac Scott & had his first professional gig in 1963. While working in the Trucking Industry through the 60’s & 70’s he played in local Soul bands but his love for the Blues was always calling for him. He went to a concert of Buddy Guy and talked his way on stage. After his performance, Buddy encouraged him to



devote himself to a career in music and then he was hooked! He continued in the 80’s as a Teamster working to support his growing family but also formed the Norman Sylvester band with his Bass player of over 35 years, Rob Shoemaker. After they played the first Waterfront Blues Festival in 1987, BB King invited them to open for him twice. They have since played with James Cotton, Mavis Staples, Little Ed and the Blues Imperials, Tower of Power, the Five Blind Boys, Peter Frampton and many others. Norman has been *inducted into the Oregon Music Hall of Fame*, awarded Cascade Blues Association’s *Life Time Achievement Award* and the Norman Sylvester band was named *Hall of Fame best R&B band* for their multiple honors. Norman has balanced a strong family of 7 children, 9 grandchildren & 1 great-grand child. While the Norman Sylvester band have become a popular NW blues staple playing clubs, festivals & special events. The band also works in local schools teaching Blues History & mentoring future artists.



**[www.normansylvester.com](http://www.normansylvester.com)**

### **LaRHONDA STEELE AND**

**Friday, July 15, 7:30pm: Blues Night**



LaRhonda Steele, a Blues and gospel singer and songwriter, is recognized as one of the region’s best rhythm and blues vocalists. She has been dubbed “The First Lady of Portland Blues” — a title of leadership that she lives up to as she shares songs that carry forth directly from her soul and spiritual life-force. She current fronts the LaRhonda Steele Band, is music director of the non-profit Portland Interfaith Gospel Choir, music director of Portland Center for Spiritual Living.

Honors include:

- \* 2021 Recipient of Oregon Folklife Networks Traditional Arts Apprenticeship Program Award
- \* 2020 Inductee into the Oregon Music Hall of Fame (ceremony delayed by COVID-19)
- \* 2018 Cascade Blues Association Hall of Fame
- \* 2016 - 2018 Cascae Blues Association Best Female Vocalist Muddy Award

LaRhonda's voice can be enjoyed on recordings of national and international artists: Gino Vanelli, Curtis Salgado, Lloyd Jones, Mary Flower, and Norman Sylvester, to name a few.

LaRhonda's Discography: Artistic Differences; My Soul's Song; Rock Me Baby; Yes Please; Songs of Freedom

