

## **CURTIS SALGADO CELEBRATES “CLEAN GETAWAY” AND NEW LEASE ON LIFE**

Curtis Salgado has a lot to celebrate. In March of 2006 he was diagnosed with liver cancer and told he had eight months to live, unless he got a liver transplant which would generate medical bills upwards of half a million dollars. With no health insurance and few funds, the man who is one of America's finest blues/soul singers needed a little help from his friends. When your friends and admirers include the likes of Steve Miller, Robert Cray, Bonnie Raitt and Taj Mahal, you've got a fighting chance. Numerous benefits were held in multiple cities including a benefit concert featuring Miller, Cray, Taj Mahal, The Phantom Blues Band, Everclear and Little Charlie & The Nightcats. Through the generosity of Curtis's friends, fellow musicians, the Legendary Blues Cruise and thousands of fans who supported Curtis by attending benefits and auctions or by making private donations, upwards of half a million dollars were raised and Curtis got his transplant, though there were a few twists and turns in the road before that happened. A little less than two years after his initial diagnosis, Curtis was able to record *Clean Getaway*, an album whose title has an obvious double meaning. With its release on July 8, 2008, *Clean Getaway* was a triumph in more ways than one, nominated for four BMA's at the 30<sup>th</sup> annual Blues Music Awards including Album of the Year, Song of the Year for “20 Years of B.B. King,” Soul/Blues Album of the Year and Soul Blues Male Vocalist of the Year. Curtis won the award for Soul Blues Male Artist of the Year in 2010.

Curtis Salgado's musical journey began with his birth in Everett, Washington, in 1954. His family moved to Eugene, Oregon when he was one and he grew up there listening to jazz, and to his father, an aspiring singer of classical music. His ambitions coalesced when, at age 12, he saw Count Basie's band perform in Eugene. Curtis became a part of the burgeoning Northwest blues scene starting in 1972 with a band called Three-Fingered Jack. Eventually he hooked up with up-and-coming guitarist/vocalist Robert Cray, and recorded the album “Who's Been Talking.” In six years with Robert, the higher level of visibility enabled Salgado to sit in with the likes of Muddy Waters, Bobby “Blue” Bland, Albert Collins and Bonnie Raitt. Aside from being a tremendous vocalist, Curtis is one of the finest blues harmonica players in the country. In 1979, when John Belushi was in Eugene filming *Animal House*, he caught Curtis' act and liked what he heard and saw. Curtis took the actor under his wing and schooled him on blues and R & B history, which Belushi soaked up like a sponge, and used a good portion of Curtis' show as the basis for the Blues Brothers act he and Dan Akroyd put together. The first Blues Brothers album was dedicated to Curtis.

He left the Cray band before it broke through nationally and from 1984 – 1986 he fronted Boston's Grammy- Winning Roomful Of Blues before returning to Portland where he formed The Stilettoes, who toured nationally with such acts as Steve Miller and The Doobie Brothers. He even did a stint as lead vocalist with Santana in the 1990's. Curtis released three albums (the first with The Stilettoes, followed by one with his own band and the third, an acoustic gem, featuring guitarist Terry Robb) prior to the release of the four critically-acclaimed solo albums released by Shanachie Entertainment. *Clean Getaway* was the breakthrough that Curtis has been working toward but the experiences of the past few years have given him a new perspective.

“I'm playing music with the most incredible people, he says. I've got everything to be grateful for. To me, I've won the lottery, I've won all the Grammys. It makes me humble. So I'm just trying to stick to my guns, perfect my craft and make great music!”

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