

pokey lafarge

& the south city three



I am from Louisville, Kentucky, now based with my band, The South City Three, in St Louis, Missouri, although in recent times we have not awakened on many mornings to breathe in the air of The Gateway City.

Life, as we have grown to know and love it, is a shared experience hopping from town to town, city to city and state to state, sometimes involving a big overnight drive to get to the next gig.

I started out as a young man, hitching rides and jumping on freight trains, just making my way in the world and hauling my guitar along, to hopefully make a few bucks and maybe some new friends too.

When you stumble into good people who seem like kindred spirits, it's tough to move on and leave them behind, so when I met The Hackensaw Boys and they were needing someone to stand in with them for a while, I took the gig and had a helluva time.

But I was born with an extra dose of

wanderlust, intrigue and interest in what is around the next corner, so had to set off once more on my own to find out what was out there.

The songs began to appear as ideas and experiences filled my head and I recorded my first self-released solo album entitled *Marmalade*, in 2007.

My main musical influences stretch from a young man from North Carolina, called Woody Pines, whom I admire, to everyone from Sleepy John Estes, Lightnin' Hopkins, Clarence Williams, Earl Hines, Reverend Gary Davis, Mississippi Sheiks, Milton Brown and His Musical Brownies, Blind Willie McTell, to The Dixieland Jug Blowers and Blind Boy Fuller.

With so many songs coming along, I had to get another record out and in 2008, signed a one-album deal with Big Muddy Records who released *Beat, Move &*

Shake.

That was when I teamed up with Joey Glynn (vocals, upright bass) who was to become a good friend and constant companion once we formed the band. I liked the way things were shaping up, wanted to have a bigger sound, and was lucky to find Ryan "Churchmouse" Koenig (harmonica, washboard, vocals) and Adam Hoskins (guitar and vocals) who have now been on the road with me for over a year.

We have been busier than most – just the way we like it. We estimated that by the end of the first twelve months we'd have clocked up 60,000 miles in the tour bus, but actually, it's been a whole lot more than that.

I use and cherish a vintage (circa 1914) Washburn parlour guitar, play harmonica and kazoo and my first ever UK dates took place at Edinburgh Festival Fringe where I played solo showcases in August.

It was a great experience, but tough too as I just came off the road from touring constantly

with the band and was back up there on stage again all alone, feeling slightly disoriented. But the press quotes were great, some of them far too flattering by far and most said they could not wait to see the full band, which was great. Those reviews helped to establish a better profile in the UK and led us to get an invitation to come back over for appearances at the Celtic Connections Festival in Glasgow in January.

The timing could not be better as we have a brand new album, *Riverboat Soul* that will get its UK launch at our London show at Brooks Blues Bar on January 22 – the band's UK debut.

Reviewers have a difficult time sticking my music in the right pigeonhole. One said I was "sitting at a crossroads where Blind Blake, Bessie Smith, Lightnin' Hopkins and Townes Van Zandt intersect." Make what you will of that!

It's true that I have an old-style about everything I do – even down to how I like to dress to meet the world in the morning – but everything I write has a modern-day perspective, from my own personal journey.

The new material invites more vocals from my compadres, who all like to join in and make a joyful racket. Each gig's a celebration. We like it when the girls get up to twirl their skirts and the fellas stomp their feet and clap their hands.

In 2010, we have some interest from UK summer festivals which should see us back over again (Ireland too) in August/September, but in the meantime, we are making the most of this visit to get ourselves around as widely as possible and generally encourage everyone to come out and have a good time.

UK tour dates:

Fri Jan 22: Brooks Blues Bar at The Telegraph, London

Sat 23: The Globe Hotel, Topsham, Devon

Sun 24: The Prince Albert, Brighton

Wed 27: Celtic Connections Festival, Royal Concert Hall, Glasgow

Thurs 28: Celtic Connections Festival, City Halls, Glasgow

Fri 29: Jumpin Hot Club, at The Cluny, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne

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Riverboat Soul (Free Dirt Records DIRT-CD 0060) www.pokeylafarge.net