

LJ Lawrence

Our good friend LJ has suffered a senseless death. She was one of our closest friends for over 10 years. We miss her everyday.

LJ Lawrence had been bringing great blues to the Bay Area, Reno and Lake Tahoe, for well over a decade. One of the hottest female bass players on the scene today, she was a wonderful singer and front person, bringing energy and enthusiasm to the stage.

Her first recording, a collection of songs she wrote and recorded with acclaimed guitarist and long time music partner, Don Evans, was entitled "Heart Of The Tribe." Ranging from full-force funky to hauntingly introspective, their CD embraced open-souled expression while showcasing her unique talents.

Originally from the East Coast, LJ came to Reno from the San Francisco Bay area where she'd been the bass player for the Bay Area Blues Society out of Oakland, CA, backing up artists such as the late greats Bobby Day and Cool Papa, as well as playing with what was to evolve into the Caravan Of All Stars. Previously a guitar player and more of a rocker, she'd always enjoyed the blues, but developed a deep appreciation of the blues audiences and tradition in the Bay area. LJ studied privately and majored in music at Laney Community College and the Contra Costa System where she studied with D'Amante and pianist Ed Kelly and received an Associate Degree. She toured Japan, Korea, Canada and the Western United States playing a wide range of music with various bands before landing in Reno.

In 1991 her band initiated the original jam sessions at the old Hacienda in Reno before she left to tour Alaska. Seasoned guitarist Don Evans wound up in the Hacienda's house band while she was gone. Upon returning, she and Don teamed up, and together reformed a group which evolved into the Sierra Blues Tribe. The two also formed the duo X- Factor and we met them in Wendover, Nevada at this point. During this time period, Don and LJ were inseparable, working six and seven days per week, and offstage, working up harmonies, exchanging music, going to shows, stockpiling equipment, backing up other artists, and both were very involved with different aspects of the music community. In addition to playing countless clubs, festivals, casinos and concerts, the Sierra Blues Tribe continued to host one of the most successful jam sessions in the region.

Considered by many, one of the most sought after and respected female bassists in the area, LJ's recent and victorious battle with thyroid cancer, makes her untimely death, all the more tragic. Her voice had returned, and her bass playing was better than ever. LJ's heart, and the warmth she displayed both on stage and off, was a rare commodity in today's music world.

Her death sadly, is another in a long line of senseless crimes. The person responsible for her death is serving a double life sentence with no parole.

LJ was a beautiful person, a true friend, and a fantastic bassist. We will miss her forever.