

# The Red Bank Blues Band



Paul Bracco, Kendall Scott, Alex D'Agnesse, Melissa Murray, P.J. Bracco and John MacDonald  
- The Red Bank Blues Band (also known as RB3)

Making  
music  
all over  
the  
triCities

The Red Bank Blues band has steadily become an audience favorite over the past year throughout the triCities, especially at their favorite haunts such as Jamian's in Red Bank, DIVE! In Sea Bright and most recently, appearances at the Wine Loft at Pier Village in Long Branch.

We got the sense that they coalesced as a group in a musically egalitarian and very organic way and that was borne out in an online 'Uncut' magazine-style interview with the band facilitated by member Paul Bracco.

Here's your opportunity to learn a little the group – but be sure to really get to know them at their next gig, which will be Saturday, May 12 at DIVE! (1072 Ocean Avenue, Sea Bright).

**TCN:** You started playing together at Jamian's in Red Bank; how did that come about? Did you practice together beforehand?

Many of the local musicians gather at Jamian's for the Open Mike Sunday Night Jam. The jam is like one big rehearsal, some people do play well rehearsed pieces, but others try new things out. Eventually, if you play there enough you start to find that the talents gravitate towards their natural niche. We sort of fell together that way, and moved forward from there. It was kind of a "This seems to work well, let's see how it goes" kind of thing.

**TCN:** What was your first gig together like?

Our first gig went really well. It was over at The Downtown. We had about 20 tunes rehearsed, and learned how to stretch them well. A week later we were at Jamian's. I guess you can say that Jamian's is our home base. The group was born there. It's always nice to play back at home.

**TCN:** How often do you play together?

We try to play out twice or more a month, getting together in between to polish stuff or bring in something new. Sometimes we bring in guest artists to mix it up a bit, always keeping it fresh and fun. Over the past year, we've played out about a couple dozen shows. We've become returning artists at several locations, and have recently been expanding our venues. It's exciting.

**TCN:** How would you describe your music/sound?

I would say that our sound is more of a Smooth and Jazzy Blues. You know, like Etta James and Albert King, with some Clapton, SRV, B.B. and so on. All of the music we play gets your hips moving and your body onto the dance floor.

**TCN:** What's your background in music and what about some of the other band members?

**Melissa Murray** is a small-town Jersey girl with crystal clear vocals and a blues-born bravada that brings the house down. Fearless and headstrong, Melissa first attracted the spotlight at age four and has run with it ever since. She earned a B.S. in Arts Administration with a concentration in Music, all the while studying voice and performing. Melissa has embraced her gift and trained to improve it. For the past seven years she has trained intensely with master voice teacher, Judy Hages in the classic Italian technique of Bel Canto. Melissa currently teaches a small cadre of students following the style of Bel Canto. Her motto is: Be so good you can't be ignored. From the small stages of her childhood to Carnegie Hall and the MTV Music Awards, Melissa's voice has taken her places she'd never dreamed. She's toured extensively with choirs and then her own bands, on the way learning the finer points of recording and production and independently releasing three albums.

These days Melissa performs mainly with her original band Saska, and the blues cover band RB3 (Red Bank Blues Band) in and around the New York/New Jersey area. She is available both for bookings and private lessons. ([www.melissamurraymusic.com](http://www.melissamurraymusic.com))

Two influences behind **Alex D'Agnesse** finding his talent for drumming were his father, who played trumpet in true "big band"-styled ensembles, and The Beatles performance on the Ed Sullivan Show in 1964. D'Agnesse has been playing and jamming with an eclectic mix of blues, jazz and rock bands in the Tri-State area through the years which has brought him to where he is today. Alex resides in Shrewsbury and is involved in a bustling music circle that frequents venues in Asbury Park, Sea Bright and beyond.

**Kendall Scott** has been playing both guitar and keyboards from the early age of seven. A steady diet of classical, jazz, rock and pop lead to strong interests in fusion, progressive rock, experimental electronic, and world music. Kendall received his training at Berklee College of Music under Richard Boulanger and David Mash, before relocating to New York for more session work and performances as well as a lengthy series of guitar studies with Bill Connors. A founding member of the funk rock group Cypha'z God'z, Kendall now spends some his time performing with various artists such as The Jennifer Jordan Band, and scoring indie films when he's not snowboarding or busy stealing licks from Adam Holzman. ([www.myspace.com/kendallscottmusic](http://www.myspace.com/kendallscottmusic))

**John MacDonald** grew up on the Beatles, Who, Yes, Allman Brothers, Eric Clapton's various bands, Elton John and countless other 60s and 70s bands. When John was a boy and couldn't sneak drums into the house without his mother noticing, he went out and bought a

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guitar. Figuring it would be easier to get forgiveness than permission, he was right and that's where it all began. In spite of wanting to play other instruments, he was always drawn to the bass parts in songs. A few years later he picked up a Sukop fretless bass and hasn't put it down since. John got into the blues during his years in the army, when he met an enthusiast friend from Chicago's South Side, started his first band, Stronger Than Dirt, in 1997 and played with them for 14 years. MacDonald has played with various other projects along the way, including Under New Ownership, Christine Martucci Band and helped form the Eryn Shewell Band. Having never taken formal lessons, John commands his section of the stage, sporting an electric fretless upright bass.

My son, **P.J. Bracco** grew up with his father's jazz band in the basement. Hanging out during the rehearsals and playing the rhythm sticks as a young boy was his first intro to music. P.J. started training in classical piano at the age of 11, but a true lover of the blues by the likes of Sonny Boy Williamson and Lightnin' Hopkins, he always fiddled on the side with the harmonica he bought at a local 5¢ and dime store. Staying involved in music at some level, P.J. ultimately moved on to follow his passion as an actor, receiving his BFA from Boston University's College of Fine Arts. Back in 1997, P.J. launched the production company Red Hook Films® right out of his living room in Red Hook, Brooklyn and has been producing, directing, acting in or involved as behind the scenes developmental support on film projects ever since. ([www.redhookfilms.com](http://www.redhookfilms.com))

And I, **Paul Bracco**, started playing at about eight years old. My dad had promised that I could take drum lessons, but instead had inherited a pawn ticket for a

guitar. So, "You're taking Guitar Lessons," and life goes on. I studied classical and jazz guitar for about 5 years in the sixties. Bands in the suburbs had "Garage" bands, but our group the "Moondogs" was a "Bedroom" band. We rehearsed in the drummer's mother's bedroom. It was in a brownstone in Brooklyn connected to, of all people, "Jimmy Iovine's" bedroom. From the seventies on I played in several groups, at a plethora of night clubs, subsequently forming a group called "Wisdom's Child". I've played more weddings, sweet sixteen's and Bar Mitzvah's than I care to admit. For a while I was in the Society orchestra "Joe Carroll Orchestras", and put my musical career on hold for a career as a Sales Trader on Wall Street until early 2000. Now I'm and pursuing the real passion in my life. The rest is history.

*Check out The Red Bank Blues Band's upcoming gigs on the internet at [www.theredbankbluesband.com](http://www.theredbankbluesband.com).*

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