

ARSEN SHOMAKHOV

PRESS KIT

MAPLE BLUES AWARDS NOMINEE
(Toronto Blues Society)

BEST EMERGING ARTIST
(King Biscuit Blues Festival)



Arsen Shomakhov Biography

A Maple Blues Awards nominee, guitarist, songwriter and singer Arsen Shomakhov is an electric blues performer truly dedicated to the style's roots yet never hesitating to borrow means of expression from other genres.

He established himself as a blues-devoted virtuoso musician in his native Russia making it to the International Blues Challenge (IBC) in Memphis in 2005 and winning the new talent contest at the King Biscuit Blues Festival in Helena, AR in 2007.

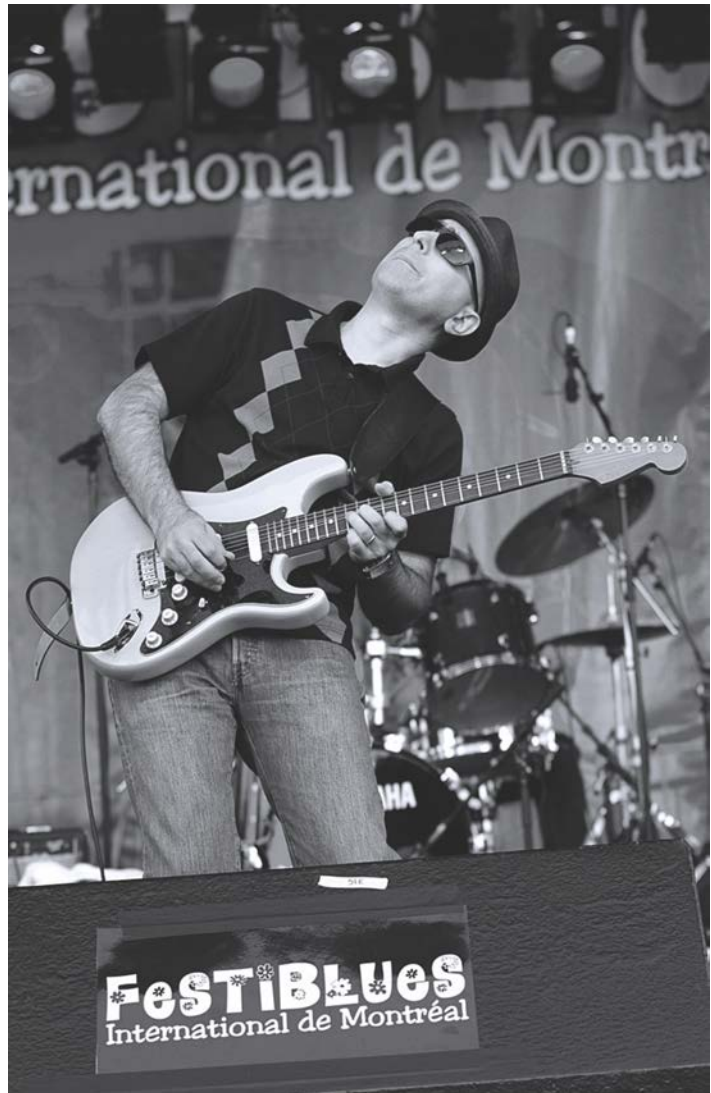
After moving to Vancouver, BC in 2008, Arsen formed the Arsen Shomakhov Trio that currently features Bruce O'Neill on bass and Chip Hart on drums. Working hard to make a name for himself, he has performed at a variety of festivals across the US and Canada including The King Biscuit Blues Festival, Waterfront Blues Festival, Edmonton International Blues Festival, Montreal International Blues Festival, and the Calgary International Blues Festival, to name a few.

Arsen's album "On the Move", released in the US in 2010 made Top 25 Blues Albums of the year worldwide according to Roots Music Report. In the same year Toronto Blues Society nominated Arsen for the Maple Blues Awards.

Arsen Shomakhov Band went to Memphis to represent the White Rock Blues Society at the IBC twice in 2014 and 2016 and both times advanced to the semi-finals. The third Arsen's North American album entitled "Dynamic" was released in August 2014.

Arsen's new album "Rain City Blues" produced and recorded by Kid Andersen at the Greaseland Studios, in San Jose, CA was released on September 6, 2019. The album includes 10 original tracks covering a stylistic range from rocking blues and funky boogaloo to r&b and 50's rock and roll with jump blues in between. The album made Top 25 Living Blues Magazine radio report for September 2019, reached #1 in Canada and #12 worldwide (RMR blues charts wk. of Sep 21), #2 in Canada (RMR, wk of Sep 14 and wk. of Oct 12), #17 in the list of top 40 most played albums in UK (IBBA) in September 2019.

As a truly international blues artist Arsen currently continues to perform at blues festivals in Europe, USA and Canada.



“Rain City Blues” – September 2019 - PRESS

“Arsen Shomakhov’s last album, *Dynamic*, got him a nomination for New Artist in the Maple Blues Awards. For his new one, this Russian-born Vancouver resident went to one of the hottest studios in blues today, Kid Andersen’s Greaseland in San Jose CA. Andersen is the superb lead guitar player for Rick Estrin & The Nightcats but here he wisely leaves the guitar playing to Shomakhov. Instead, he handles bass, keyboards and background vocals. While sticking close to traditional blues themes, Shomakhov has come up with some attractive ways of expressing them. The toe-tapping opener, “Full Time Lover”, departs from the usual in that our narrator has too many women in his life, he wants just one. Guesting on harp is Aki Kumar, who hails from India but plays pure Chicago. Much faster is “No More!”, a slice of bluesabilly promising to party less hard - he may even mean it. Andersen tears it up on piano. “Rain City Blues” channels Elmore James’ “Dust my Broom” in fine fashion. He’s fallen for a woman who’s taken everything he has. “Sitting on the Fence” is a tuneful song on the advantages of not making a decision with some useful examples to prove the point. His guitar skills get shown off in four instrumentals, of which the concluding slide workout “Hello, Little Bird” is the best”.

- *John Valenteyn, Toronto Blues Society*



“According to Wikipedia, “Rain City” refers to several places on the map: Rasht, India; Seattle, Washington; Keelung, Taiwan; Bogor, Indonesia; and Taiping and Perak in Malaysia. Arsen Shomakhov, a native Russian, is now based in the sixth item on the list: Vancouver, Canada. He presents *Rain City Blues*, a crisp collection of ten original tracks that’ll drive wet-weather woes away in no time flat. Even on slower numbers such as “Sunset Beach,” he ignites his guitar. His style’s a bit SRV, a dash of Too Slim and the Taildraggers, and all-explosive. Steve Miller would be proud of his laconic, sardonic vocals. Witness them on “Full-Time Lover,” where dry humor runs deep. Where Arsen really shines, though, is on instrumentals. More on those later. For now, no wonder he has been a semifinalist at the International Blues Challenge twice (’14 and ’16).

Although the album was only released in September, it’s garnered a lot of prestige. *Living Blues* awarded it with a spot in its Top 25 radio report for last month. It also reached #1 in Canada and #12 worldwide on the RMR blues charts for the week of September 21st, and #17 in the list of Top 40 most-played albums in the UK for the whole month. In addition to the IBC, he has also performed at blues festivals in Canada and worldwide, including the King Biscuit Blues Festival, Waterfront Blues Festival, Edmonton International Blues Festival, Montreal International Blues Festival, and the Calgary International Blues Festival. Shomakhov works tirelessly to make his way and name in the global blues arena, and mightily succeeding.

Accompanying Arsen (guitar and vocals) are Kid Andersen on electric and upright bass, Hammond B3 organ, piano, vibraphone and background vox; Alexander Pettersen on drums for tracks one through five; June Core on drums for tracks six through ten; and Aki Kumar on harp.

“Full Time Lover” starts things off, with our narrator ticking off an extensive list of part-time paramours. Each one covers a different sphere of his life, from laundry (Rosie) to chauffeur duty (Betsy) to alcohol purchases (Linda). One has to wonder: do all these women know each other? Next up is a ‘50s-style boogie and a promise not to party, broken several times over: “No More!” Of the ten, it’s the funniest. “I feel so nauseous. Someone help me, please. I looked in the mirror and I screamed, ‘OH, JEEZ!’ Who is the stranger with his eyes glowing red? I want a cold drink of water and to go back to bed.” Ironically, you’ll want to break this vow just like our hero does and dance till you drop. Funky “Sunset Beach” lowers your tempo afterward, with terrific Hammond organ by Kid Andersen. Fourth comes a

wry warning about "Women and Whiskey," the most traditional of the five tunes. When your hangover's done, go "Strolling in San Jose," an instrumental meant for powerwalking due to its energizing tempo. Santana fans will love it.

The title track showcases Shomakhov's rip-roaring riffs, "Boogaloo" his 1970's sensibilities, "Three Arrows" his band's mastery of trance-inducing bass, and "Sitting on a Fence" their good-natured sense of letting the good times roll. Here's a little word about "Hello, Little Bird," the album's closer: phenomenal. It brings such a creature to mind, the instrumentation exquisitely balanced between the chaotic fluttering of its wings (Arsen's shredder work) and the steady thumping of its heart (June Core's drums).

Rain City Blues is short, sweet, and impossible to beat!"

- Rainey Wetnight, *Blues Blast Magazine*

"The set opens on a Chicago note, as our hero has "a girl to take care of my bills," and "one to ride me around in her Coupe de Ville," yet he longs for that "Full Time Lover!" Aki Kumar shows his stuff on the harp here, too. "No More!" is a stone shot of Sun-splashed rockabilly fire, with the honky tonk piano from Kid, while that good-time groove keeps rollin' with the swingin' "Sitting On A Fence!" Arsen gets into a cool West Side groove on the story of using alcohol to help one forget that one you wish "was never in my bed." For, sho' nuff, "Women And Whiskey don't mix!"

We had two favorites, too. An excellent foray into funk is the highly-danceable strut of "Boogaloo!" The set closes with a curiously-unique amalgam of what sounds like a guitar from Arsen's native land mixed in with the North Mississippi Hill Country trance-grooves of Junior Kimbrough. It is waaay too short, for us, but is entitled, "Hello, Little Bird."

Arsen Shomakov is an exciting, versatile artist who definitely has his finger on the pulse of all styles of blues, rock, and roots music. Have some fun digging these "Rain City Blues!"

- Don Crow, *The Nashville Blues And Roots Alliance*

"Overall an enjoyable album that provides a good showcase for Arsen's vocal and instrumental range".

- John Mitchell, *Crossroads Blues Society*

"Throughout the album, his style covers the wide circle that has the blues at its centre, from 50's rock and roll to r&b and the jump blues. This is a fine album overall, varied and unique to make for good listening".

- Jon Persson, *Sound Wave*

"A delightful introduction to a Canadian Artist, Shomakhov, who recorded this CD in Kid Andersen's Greaseland Studio. Shomakhov handles the guitars and vocals while Andersen takes on the upright and electric bass as well as keys and background vocals. Alexander Pettersen and June Core split the drumming duties and Aki Kumar adds his stellar harp to one song. All original compositions, Rain City Blues features three instrumentals and several songs worthy of airplay. A good investment, and a good artist to watch!"

- Professor Johnny P's *Juke Joint*

"Named for the city he now calls home, this disc actually does feel like Vancouver. The more I listen, the more I like; that's always good".

- John A. Kereiff, *Music Reviews by the Rock Doctor*

"Rain City Blues" by Arsen Shomakhov is a varied, versatile blues album for a wide audience that will certainly appreciate his vocal and guitar qualities."

- Eric Schuurmans, *Rootstime.be, Belgium*

"Arsen appears as a competitive, elegant, imaginative guitar player, who knows how to give a powerful sound to all songs, as well as an economical appealing phrasing he accurately uses. He also gives free rein to a variety of musical resources in a simple but very effective way. This is an album that deserves a very good rating. GREAT."

- La Hora Del Blues, *Spain*

Arsen Shomakhov – Press Clippings

“Shomakhov's strengths are his formidable guitar playing across the spectrum of blues and R&B styles, his songwriting and his knack for finding good obscure material to cover...”

- ***Downbeat***

“*Rain City Blues* is short, sweet, and impossible to beat!”

- ***Rainey Wetnight, Blues Blast Magazine***

“Call it a blues variety-show. Rock’n’roll, boogaloo, shuffles, R’n’B, ska, reggae and—best of all—a particularly virulent form of bad-ass jump-blues accosts the ear like a Russian nuclear bomb. And, in this case, that’s a good thing!”

- ***Mike Greenblatt, Goldmine (The Music Collector's Magazine)***

“His excellent guitar work pays rare attention to tonal variety and to creating strong rhythms as well as fleet-fingered, inventive solos”

- ***Tom Hyslop, Blues Review***

“He can coax an impressive array of sounds and styles from his Fender Stratocaster”

- ***Sean McDavitt, Guitar One Magazine***

“Dynamic is a guitar-lover's delight of an album, one that stayed in the CD player of the Toronto Blues Society for a week.”

- ***John Valenteyn, Toronto Blues Society***

“His approach is not flashy guitar overkill but an economic restraint in which feel and tone count for more than dexterity...”

- ***Tom Harrison, The Province***

“Mr. Shomakhov so wowed the audience and our judges with his version of the Delta Blues that he took home to Russia the coveted bragging rights of being the 2007 Emerging Artist Top Performer and proved to us that you do not have to be from the Delta to sing or know about the blues.”

- ***King Biscuit Blues Festival***

“From swing to shuffle to dirty funk, Arsen Shomakhov & his band have all bases covered. I predict that folks further afield will soon begin to experience Mr. Shomakhov's soulful delivery.”

- ***Charlie Gray, bluesfreepress.org***

“You can't deny his controlled guitar work is full of feeling. This Russian doesn't impress with muscle, but rather with substance”

- ***Tim Holek, Blues Beat – Canada***

Music Samples:

<http://www.arsenshomakhov.ca/music.html>

Video:

<http://www.arsenshomakhov.ca/video.html>

Select Festival Appearances:

King Biscuit Blues Festival, Portland Waterfront Blues Festival, Edmonton International Blues Festival, Calgary International Blues Festival, Montreal Blues Festival (FestiBlues), Mt. Baker Rhythm & Blues Festival, Sunbanks Blues Festival, Mont Tremblant International Blues Festival, Donnacona Blues Festival, Kaslo Jazz Festival, Lefortovo International Blues Festival (Russia), Dark Season Blues Festival (Norway)

Discography:

- Rain City Blues, 2019 (Independent)
- Dynamic, 2014 (Blues Leaf Records)
- On The Move, 2010 (Blues Leaf Records)
- Dangerous, 2006 (Blues Leaf Records)
- Troublemaker, 2003 (Drugaya Muzika)
- Heavy Steppin', 2002 (Dialogue Music)

Social Media:

Website: www.ArsenShomakhov.ca

Facebook: www.facebook.com/arsenguitar

Instagram: www.instagram.com/arsen_shomakhov

Twitter: www.twitter.com/Arsen_07

Spotify: <https://open.spotify.com/album/3VWECuvEU9wNkWqrpLODai>

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