

EDEN BRENT, ***Getaway Blues***, release date June 21 2024

“I like music that can be made even if the power goes out!”

Eden Brent laughs at her quip, a hot take on pop hitmaking that also serves as a calling card for the Mississippi pianist and songwriter, one who remains devoted to the time-honored form of the blues.

If anything, her latest album, the Yellow Dog Records release ***Getaway Blues***, is the culmination of that love, an album at once authentically steeped in the blues and authentically Eden.

“The first half of my life I was trying to figure out who I was going to be when I grew up,” she says. “With this album, I just wanted to be myself. I know who I am, and I’m happy with the woman I turned out to be.” To get there, Eden embraced what she calls “the honesty and humanity” of her art, the blues laid out unadorned and direct and made more powerful for it.

Fans old and new are sure to be pleased. ***Getaway Blues*** continues the success that has earned Brent a loyal following plus awards and accolades galore, including three Blues Music Award wins, a prestigious Mississippi Arts Commission Folk Arts Fellowship, winner of the International Blues Challenge, a featured performer on NPR’s Weekend Edition, and a million streams for her classic-in-the-making original, “Better This Way.”

Born and raised in Greenville, Miss., Brent grew up the daughter of a family of riverboat captains, notably father and “River Legend” awardee, Howard Brent, and her grandfather, a key figure in the development of the region’s waterways and namesake of the Jesse Brent Memorial Bridge, which spans the Mississippi River into Arkansas.

A precocious child, Eden took to the piano before preschool. That fascination led to a degree in music theory at the University of North Texas, yet back in the heart of the Delta, Eden also immersed herself in the area’s revered blues scene. In clubs and at the town’s venerable Mississippi Delta Blues & Heritage Festival, she got to hear one legend after another, from Koko Taylor, Albert King, and Bobby Bland to Memphis Slim, B.B. King, and James “Son Ford” Thomas.

No single artist informed Eden more, however, than local piano master, Abie “Boogaloo” Ames, her mentor on the 88s and “the only person I really ever tried to mimic.” They teamed frequently on stage for nearly twenty years until Ames’ passing in 2002 and can be seen in the 1999 documentary *Boogaloo & Eden: Sustaining the Sound*. “He made me want to preserve the style,” says Eden. “He taught me to play the piano, and I taught him to sing! We kind of encouraged each other.”

Take in the boogie-woogie prowess on her new album, particularly the titular opening track, "Getaway Blues," and it's clear Eden still draws inspiration from Ames, not to mention the other Delta voices that remain her true vine. Yet **Getaway Blues**, her first studio album of new material since 2014's **Jigsaw Heart**, was made, curiously, in London, utilizing that city's session pros such as guitarist Rob Updegraff (Jamie Cullum, Jeb Loy Nichols, Zigaboo Modeliste).

While the locale may seem a far cry from the Delta, England was the perfect choice for Eden, who got the idea when she and her husband – British jazz trombonist/arranger Bob Dowell – attended a party in London, his hometown.

"Bob lived there all his life till he moved to Mississippi with me," says Eden. "And he knows some of the finest musicians who live in London. I thought, 'Well let's make a record while we're there.'" Produced and largely co-written by Dowell, **Getaway Blues** also symbolizes for Eden the musical union she and her husband have forged from countries across the pond, so to speak.

The recording facility they found for the project, Fish Factory Studio, was suitably funky and led to some of the quickest tracking Eden has ever done. "They say cleanliness is next to Godliness," says Eden. "And I'm no saint! Most of the studios that I've felt comfortable in were like Piety Street in New Orleans [where she made *Ain't Got No Troubles*]. Real lived in. That's the way this place was. It used to be a fish factory! It felt real cozy...We knocked it out in two days!"

Back in the States, Grammy-winning engineer Matt Ross-Spang gave the record a Memphis mix, one as down to earth as the sessions. "We did something that you can easily take on the road," says Eden with pride. "What you hear is what you're gonna get."

A masterly set of nine songs, **Getaway Blues** plays to all of Eden's strengths: driving blues and double entendre tunes with plenty of ear candy piano riffing balanced by introspective ballads and heart-on-sleeve triumphs such as "You on My Mind," all sung with the natural phrasing of a true Southern siren. Great performances abound, with songs as evocative of her Delta upbringing as Jesse Winchester's once were but with the added sass and insouciant humor of Memphis Minnie and vocal persuasion of Debbie Davies or Angela Strehli combined with the phrase-worthy finesse of Bonnie Raitt.

"Blues to me is just another way of saying the people's music," says Eden. "To me, it's a music for everybody." That honesty will be front and center when Eden tours this year behind **Getaway Blues**, a record that will remind fans just who Eden Brent has been and continues to be, forging a career rooted in the Delta soil and yet universal in appeal. "I honor Mississippi in my playing without trying because that's the sound I've played all these years – it is my sound. I like to take a little piece of it with me wherever I go, then I like to bring it on home."