



William Phoenix
LA Music Examiner
✉ [Subscribe](#) | Follow: [8+](#)

Bill Grisolia: 3 quick questions



Bill Grisolia/New Blues Revolution

Courtesy of Doug Deutsch Publicity Services, used with permission

[3 quick questions . . .](#)

with Bill Grisolia

New Blues Revolution is a Los Angeles-based band founded by Bill Grisolia (lead vocals and piano) and Chap Cooper (guitars). While the band roster may have varied somewhat since its beginnings, the current band roster boasts co-founders Grisolia and Cooper, of course, along with Roger Beall (drums and vocals) and Bob Byrnes (bass and vocals).

Grisolia and his bandmates have some exciting plans for the near future. He took a moment out of his busy schedule to briefly discuss not only his past but those future plans as well in this edition of 3 quick questions.

Here are the three questions asked of Grisolia:



Question 1 Courtesy of Doug Deutsch Publicity Services, used with permission

Question 1

1. We've had drinks and talked before but I don't think you've ever answered this question--nor do I recall asking. DO you remember your first paid gig and what was it like when you first decided you wanted to be a professional musician?

Grisolia: I remember 2 gigs when I was 18, first out of high school in Kansas City: Aggieville, in Manhattan, Kansas by KSU (it has the distinction of having the most concentration of bars per square mile in the US). My band was sadly named Ocean Wizard (sigh) and had the same instrumentation as Dave Matthew's band used decades latter – prominent sax and violin (violinist was in the symphony; Pointdexter was on Sax). A couple of months later in Valencia, Spain I played Tres Triste Tigres (a Spanish tongue-twister meaning 3 sad tigers). I was accompanied on flute by Steve Richter fresh off his gig with the Young Americans.

It was the top bar in Valencia, the third largest city in Spain, and in the roughest part of town at the time, the Barrio Del Carmen. It proved I could do my originals in English in front of a Spanish audience – and they loved it – we learned how to drink a famous local firewater “Valencian Water” – the stuff is like rocket fuel; like mimosas on steroids. It was like the standing ovation I got at Hoke Hall on the campus of Kansas University at 17 playing and singing my stuff – I've been chasing the dragon ever since. Now, I just invite him in!

I am not smart enough yet to figure out how to be a professional musician – but I do believe in the power of prayer! Finally, at 27, I had a record on KROC with my deceased partner, John Thomas, who I still adore. That was it. I knew I had it. But I had the Belushi disease and didn't know how to channel my emotions.

I read Billy Crystal didn't start doing comedy seriously until 27. Thank God (he saw fit) and I didn't enter the Club of 27- because I could have easily done so - but for Grace. It was a sober realization that maybe I could do this for real; maybe I still had a chance to pursue my creative muse and my performance art. It's a gradual dawning and humbling.

For anyone who is reading this, it is never too late. You can always do something. As the Glimmer Twins (Stones) said: “Lose your Dreams and You Will Lose Your Mind...!” What is my mindset now – how does it feel? As Pablo Casals, the famous Spanish Cellist said when asked why he still practiced at 96, he replied, “I think I might be getting good at it!” How do I do it? Pulitzer-prize winner, Malcolm Gladwell, talks about getting 10,000 hours to become an expert – let's go!



Question 2. Courtesy of Doug Deutsch Publicity Services, used with permission

Question 2

2. This one is just for fun. You're visited by the ghost of George Carlin who gives you a special "2 Minute Warning" for entertainers. You are granted just enough time to do one final project. There are no limits or restrictions--not even Death. What is your final project and with whom do you work?

Grisolia: Carlin is one of my favorites. So was Steinberg and I got to see him at Hoke Hall at KU. Greg Clevenger, my chaperon (also from my High School, Shawnee Mission North) and I waited at the Stage door to say hello and press the flesh. Little did I realize I'd play that same hall in a few years (see above)!

For the Final Project, "GIG, International", I'd ask Phil Ramone and Roger Nichols to come down from heaven and help Producers Barry Fasman, George Martin (and his son!) to help me and my band, the **New Blues Revolution**, record our next CD and do a world tour of the Ancient Wonders of the World all to benefit UNICEF and Gigi with performances by the original members of **the Fab Four**, the **Stones**, the **Who** and **Led Zep** (For Chap) with segments for my favorite pianists **Elton** and **Billy Joel**, Nicky Hopkins, Billy Preston, the two Ians, McLagan and Stewart, and Chuck Leavell. As a finale, I'd pray that God grants me the longevity of Methuselah to share his love...and I'd think about learning how to read music.

Question 3

3. What's next?

Grisolia: We are reviving **the blues festival** scene in Long Beach. There were two long running festivals there coinciding for ten years. The first one went for 35 years and grew to be the 2nd largest blues festival on the entire West Coast. It was the third largest public event in Long Beach after the Grand Prix and Gay Pride.

Last year, Bob Barr and I started a live blues festival called **the New Blues Festival** and are doing our third festival – we did one in Adelanto, CA over Memorial Day - and our 2nd annual in Long Beach will take place on Saturday and Sunday, September 5th & 6th. This year we have expanded to a second day! We have over 30 acts on two stages!

Los Angeles and Orange Counties have responded very well to the concept and Long Beach turned out big time last year – we definitely hit on a pent-up demand for a long running inter-generational tradition and we are so excited to share all this great music with the public. The founder of both the original festivals, Bernie Pearl, will perform again this year. Sean Lane from San Pedro moves from the 2nd stage to the Main Stage this year in recognition of his great talent and appeal.



Question 3 Courtesy of Doug Deutsch Publicity Services, used with permission

International stars like the full James Harman Band, Barbara Morrison, the 44's with (Long Beach Blues Festival Veteran) Kid Ramos, Laurie Morvan and - all the way from Oakland California - the Caravan of All Stars will take this New Blues to the next level. Veteran teen acts like Ray Goren and **Chase Walker** - who can hold their own with any of the stars - will start us off. All races, creeds, ethnicities, and preferences - you name it – we are as inclusive as Long Beach is diverse. And that is our strength – our diversity and our commitment to honoring the past and promoting the future of the blues, the New Blues. And, of course, my band, **the New Blues Revolution**, with my partner, Chap Cooper, will tear it up on Sunday!

By the way, this is done by a team of volunteers or this would never happen and is led by people like Elisa McConneha and David Howard and Sandy Fischler. International rocker, Debi Dagger, and Jazz chanteuse, Debra Taren, are hosting the VIPs! My daughter, Gigi, handles the dough because I'm working at becoming a professional musician. We can't say enough about Lucille's, our title sponsor, (have you tried their brisket?!), and the City Fathers and Mothers (Long Beach Convention and Visitor's Bureau too!) who have welcomed this effort with open arms, minds and hearts. Growing the New Blues Festival in the major regional park called El Dorado along the 605 Freeway for the next 34 years – that's what's next! The common denominator is fun and great music!

So there you have it, boys and girls, 3 quick answers from Bill Grisolia. Hopefully, you found these 3 quick questions entertaining and interesting.



"Let Me Go" live at the Whisky-a-Go-Go

http://www.examiner.com/list/bill-grisolia-3-quick-questions?cid=db_articles