



# Musicians of the Midnight Sun

Thank you for visiting the Musicians of the Midnight Sun website. Even though these blogs are being posted many weeks after the launch of the Musicians of the Midnight Sun website, my hope is that they will remain as a document along with the website itself with the intention to give a little bit more of a personal story of my relationships with these featured artists.

## Jim Lawrance

In the mid 1980s, I was working a straight job, playing some but no band or big projects on the burner. I heard about a guitar who had just moved to town, I think he might have heard about me as I vaguely remember meeting him in the store where I worked. I was working with a country singer at the time and we brought Jim in to make up a trio for an upcoming gig. I don't think we even rehearsed, we told him what songs we were playing and the key signatures and we met at the sound check and ran them down. So, from the first downbeat, I was impressed! I was walking out of the hall after sound check, Jim stayed on the stage with a borrowed acoustic guitar and I had to stop in my tracks when he started singing one of the standards, like "Blue Eyes Crying in the Rain" and I swear to God, it was like Willie Nelson was up there singing that song. He killed it!



'The Imperials' 1964, Jim Lawrance, Tony George, Lou Walsh, Teddy Bryant. (photo courtesy Jim Lawrance)

Later on, drummer Norman Glowach and I were asked to play at an event at the NACC, so we called up Jim to put some tunes together for this short set. I don't think we rehearsed for this one either. Jim called up a set of blues songs, some very classy but kind of obscure from the normal blues jam fare. The impromptu trio rocked the set that night and we resolved to keep it going. We went on to call the trio "The Red Devil Rockin' Blues Band" and played many a packed house at the local "Floatbase" bar for a good many years.

The band came alive on the stage, Jim laying down a solid, grinding riff, Norman and I would climb on board and take each song into some new and uncharted territory. I loved it because it was mostly spontaneous improvisation over these infectious blues grooves that got so big and so loud and went on forever. Jim was a master of weaving his irreverent yet entertaining stream of consciousness lyrical element over these outrageous blues/rock jams, no one was safe from this poignant and cutting narrative.



L-R Jim Lawrance, Norman Glowach, Pat Braden. Yellowknife, NT, 2014

Jim had spent much of the 1970s living and playing music in Inuvik, NT with his band "Jellyroll". Those were the boom years in Inuvik when the oil and gas industry brought insane money into the region. Jellyroll played extended house gigs at the local taverns every night and Jim taught at the school during the day.



'Jelly Roll' L-R Derek Briggs, (bass) Danny Thomas (drums) Jim Lawrance (guitar and vocals) Inuvik, NT 1979.

Once again, it was so good to sit down with Jim to do this interview and to learn of his early years as a young musician before he came north. His lifetime of experience, living and playing through generations and new born genres of popular music is worthy for that reason alone.