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Opera Memphis | Photographer: Tierney Bamnick



Blues Foundation



New Ballet Ensemble | Photographer: Breana Moore



Stacy Middle Academy

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Kevin "B.F." Burt

2018 IBC SOLO/DUO WINNER
Central Iowa Blues Society



"Are you ready for this?" was the first question asked of me after I won Harmonica Player of the Year, the Cigar Box Guitar award, and the solo/duo category at the 2018 International Blues Challenge. A shrug and a resounding "I don't know what this is" was all I could say. I entered the IBC hoping to do well and make an impression, but the one thing that I failed to ask myself was "What if . . . ?" I didn't know what was next. I entered the competition with the intent of networking, meeting people in the industry, connecting with other artists from around the world, and representing my home state the best way I knew how. I can say "Mission accomplished" to all of those things, thanks to the organizers, staff, and volunteers at the IBC who made sure that all of those opportunities existed. My time spent offstage proved to be of great value, as I attended workshops and

panel sessions where career, business, and health information was shared. To an artist like myself who has been a one-soul operation for many years, this was some priceless information!

"What was your formula for figuring out the IBC?" is a question that has been very frequently asked. This is my answer . . . it is actually quite simple . . . are you paying attention? *I read the instructions.* There was absolutely no difference in my performance or presentation. It was *me* on that stage. I performed as I've done for the past 26 years, 325 shows per year, and simply followed the instructions.

The honor of being acknowledged as the top unsigned blues artist in the world is beyond cool. It is opening doors for me that I didn't even know existed. Most of my gigs were in the Midwest, but I am getting opportunities to perform at clubs in Rhode Island, Massachusetts, >>

PHOTOS BY ROGER STEPHENSON