

## Travelin' Band: Creedence Clearwater Revisited, August 21 at River Roots Live

Written by Mike Schulz

Thursday, 12 August 2010 06:00

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The idea, says former Creedence Clearwater Revival bassist Stu Cook, began simply enough.

"Back in the mid-'90s, I relocated from southern California up to Lake Tahoe in northern Nevada, and Doug [Clifford, Creedence's former percussionist] had been living there with his family for 15, 20 years. We hadn't lived in the same area for decades, and we started hanging out every day, and playing music, and just talking about how much *fun* it was, and how it felt to play together again.

"So we were *bound* to get into trouble," says Cook with a laugh. "And goodness, look what happened."

Indeed. Twenty-plus years after the break-up of the band commonly known as CCR - the Rock & Roll Hall of Famers responsible for such indelible hits as "Bad Moon Rising," "Down on the Corner," "Travelin' Band," and "Lookin' Out My Back Door" - Cook and Clifford joined forces in 1994 to form Creedence Clearwater Revisited, a group dedicated to performing songs from the original CCR catalog.

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And 16 years after *that*, the members of Creedence Clearwater Revisited find themselves, as they have for years, headlining tours and music festivals in North and South America, Europe, and Asia - including this year's River Root Live in Davenport's LeClaire Park. (The band plays the Main Stage at 9 p.m. on Saturday, August 21.) Not bad for a couple of musicians who hoped merely to perform CCR hits at a few private parties.

"We thought if we could find some guys to play with," says Cook of his and Clifford's initial plan to reunite professionally, "we could get away with being able to play a couple times a month. But it wasn't gonna work out that way. In 1996 we played over 100 concerts. And *none* of them at private parties."

It was in early 1995 that Cook and Clifford, after jamming together for several months, realized that their musings about a CCR revival might turn into a reality. "We wound up talking to a fellow who was a prominent music-business professional," says Cook during our recent phone interview, "and he said, 'Why don't you guys put a band together? I'll find you some work.' And we took the challenge."



Their first phone call was to CCR's original lead guitarist, vocalist, and chief songwriter, John Fogerty. (CCR's fourth original member, John's brother Tom Fogerty, passed away in 1990.) "We did ask John if he wanted to join us," says Cook, "and he declined. Which was fine. I mean, we were just guys lookin' to have some fun, you know? To this *day*, that's why we do it." (Fogerty, however, may have seen things differently; in 1996, he was granted an injunction to have Creedence Clearwater Revisited's band name changed, which the Ninth Court of Appeals lifted in 1997.)

Cook says that he and Clifford had no trouble finding additional bandmates in Steve Gunner, John Tristao, and Elliot Easton. "Gunner was recommended by a friend of mine. Tristao was recommended by a friend. *All* these guys were recommended. We didn't have to do auditioning. I mean, we *auditioned*, but we didn't have to advertise and beat the bush. I would just call friends and say, 'Here's what we're trying to do, and Doug and I need *winners* . If you can think of anybody that'll really get the job done ... .'"

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From the start, Cook and Clifford decided that Creedence Clearwater Revisited wouldn't devote its time and energies to original compositions. "By the time we got the band together, and we saw how well we played as a team, we thought, 'Well, yeah, we can do just about anything we *want*

,'" says Cook. "But doing songs of the original quartet was always the premise, and we felt that to add to the catalog would be to dilute it." And Cook has a simple, three-word answer for why Creedence Clearwater Revival's music has now endured for more than four decades: "They're good songs," he says with a laugh.

"Honestly, you have to start with the song," Cook continues, "the way you start with a screenplay, or start with any good idea. And these songs were well-crafted, and the recordings were honest, direct, accessible. You know, that's why the music has survived all the different changes of taste, and fads, and directions. It's sort of in a class by itself."

Creedence Clearwater Revisited made its first public appearance in Richland, Washington, in 1995, at a concert arranged by a friend of guitarist and harmonica player Tristao. "It went great," says Cook. "A great response. But honestly, the idea was just to go out and have some fun. We just wanted to play the music."

And as that one concert turned into many, many more - with Tal Morris replacing Easton on lead guitar in 2004 - Cook says that he's developed a better of sense of, and deeper appreciation for, Creedence Clearwater Revival's place in music history.



"Once you record it, it's up to the fans. It's *their* music then. So we're thrilled to be able to play concerts for people who still have a love and interest in the music. Our [band] name is totally appropriate, I think, because we're revisiting our legacy with our fans. And now we have three generations of them. We see the original fans, folks my age," says the 65-year-old musician, "we see their kids, and we see *their* kids, all together and all enjoying the music."

Creedence Clearwater Revisited's demographic-defying audience base, continues Cook,

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"definitely adds to the amazement. To *our* amazement at how Creedence music has impacted people. I mean, you never really know, even after talking to people, what it really means to them. But when we see so many young faces in the audience, it's inspiring. To be able to know we're not just appealing to a narrow age group who are *reminiscing*

. We're playing to kids who can listen to whatever they want. And they do. And we're one of 'em."

Unlike the original CCR, with its relentless touring schedule, Cook says, "we now do about 75 shows a year, on average. That's enough, I think. It leaves us time to have family and other interests. Some years we've played more, and one year we played less, but right now we think 75 is a workable number."

And Cook adds that, unlike the original CCR, his and Clifford's latest outfit allows them to travel to American sites - such as Davenport - that they couldn't in the late '60s and early '70s. "We only could go to the big cities, and if our fans couldn't *get* there ... . Now, though, we get to go to places where our fans are, and we find that there's

*way*

more of those places than there are big cities.

"Not to sound New Age or corny," says Cook of Creedence Clearwater Revisited's trajectory since its 1994 beginnings, "but it's all been organic. Everything we've done has been sort of, 'Well, how does this *feel*?' So we've just sort of let the band go on its own, and try to nurture it. And that's sort of how we got here. Sixteen years later. *Amazing.*"

*Creedence Clearwater Revisited plays River Roots Live's Main Stage at 9 p.m. on Saturday, August 21. Admission to the LeClaire Park music festival is free, and more information is available by visiting [RiverRootsLive.com](http://RiverRootsLive.com).*

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### **River Roots Live Band Schedule**

#### **Friday, August 20**

##### **Main Stage**

Lojo Russo: 5:30-6:20 p.m.

The Right Now: 7:30-8:20 p.m.

The Marshall Tucker Band: 9:30-10:45 p.m.

##### **B Stage**

500 Miles to Memphis: 6:30-7:20 p.m.

Cory Chisel & the Wandering Sons: 8:30-9:20 p.m.

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Backyard Tire Fire: 10:50 p.m.-midnight

### **Saturday, August 21**

#### **Main Stage**

Milltown: 1-1:50 p.m.

Mondo Drag: 3-3:50 p.m.

Buffalo Clover: 5-5:50 p.m.

The Diplomats of Solid Sound: 7-7:50 p.m.

Creedence Clearwater Revisited: 9-10:20 p.m.

#### **B Stage**

Jimmy Riches: noon-12:50 p.m.

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Bumper Crop: 2-2:50 p.m.

Tim Stop Trio: 4-4:50 p.m.

56 Hope Road: 6-6:50 p.m.

Jonathan Tyler & the Northern Lights: 8-8:50 p.m.

Grace Potter & the Nocturnals: 10:30 p.m.-midnight