



# BLUES FOR MOODY

Blues for Moody - Members of the "Manchurians," from left to right; Bob Orsi, Roger Reale and Jeremy Lichter perform at Cafe Nine during a benefit concert for the Travis Moody, Rory Moody and William Twyford, the three shoreline construction workers shocked during a roofing job recently. The event featured several musical bands and raffles to help with their medical bills and lost wages. Photos - Peter Casolino

## Benefit for construction accident victim a success

By Lisa Reisman  
Special to the Times

They say the blues is the language that expresses human suffering better than any other, but it's also about healing, about going on, about being reminded that we're not alone. One look at the smile on the face of seriously injured musician Travis Moody at New Haven's Café Nine on Sunday said it all.

It also explained why upwards of 14 local bands and hundreds of Moody's friends and blues lovers crammed what's known as "the musicians' living room" from 3 p.m. until 1 a.m., riffing, grooving, whooping, stomping, swaying, and, most importantly, supporting Moody, a longtime fixture on the blues scene in New Haven, after a construction accident that nearly took his life.



Music fans from left to right; Bob and Patti Warner of West Haven and Eve and Mel Richard of New Haven at Cafe 9 during a benefit concert for Travis Moody, Rory Moody and William Twyford. Photos -Peter Casolino.

In early January, Moody, 35, along with his brother Rory, 27, and All Aspects of Carpentry owner Billy Twyford, 57, got a high-voltage jolt when a mechanized ladder they were using to haul shingles up to the roof of a commercial building touched high-tension power lines 15 feet away. All three were hospitalized with severe burns. Moody had to have part of his foot amputated and has only two functioning fingers on his left hand. He's unable to work - or play his gigs. Meanwhile, his medical expenses continue to mount.

Sunday's benefit, produced as a labor of love by an ensemble of his closest friends, raised over \$5,000 to afford immediate help to Moody and his son while he recovers. As it happens, most of those close friends are his fellow musicians.

As Café Nine owner Paul Mayer put it, "when something like this happens, I think the music community comes together for their own." Moody, who led the long-running Café Nine blues jam prior to the accident, "is a big part of the music scene in greater New Haven," said Mayer.

Once word spread of the benefit for Moody, the event took on a life of its own, according to Mark Zaretsky, lead vocalist and harmonica player for The Cobalt Rhythm Kings and one of the organizers. "Everyone we asked said yes right away, even musicians who didn't know Travis," he said, as the space

shook to the train beat of famed Delta Blues guitarist Rocky Lawrence.

As the list of performers took the form of an all-star cast of the pre-eminent blues and roots rock musicians in Connecticut, some of whom rarely played locally, blues connoisseurs got excited - James and Janis Milam of Branford, for example. "When we read about who was coming, we weren't about to miss it," said Milam, as he ponied up a ten-dollar bill for some raffle tickets in the dimly lit bar. "And the fact that it's for a local guy," he said, gesturing at Moody surrounded by well-wishers at the next table - "that only makes it better."

In the spirit of the raucous no-holds-barred atmosphere, Milam, an engineer who is currently unemployed, then pledged to spend all his money at the benefit until it ran out.

See BLUES, Page 10



Blues fans listen to one of the many bands at Cafe 9 during a benefit concert for Travis Moody. The event featured several musical bands. Photos by Peter Casolino.



# Blues: Café Nine benefit for Travis Moody, a success

From page 13

"I've played here a long, long time and I never saw so many people," said guitarist Peter Blossom, who performs with Moody both in the Moody Blossom Band and in an acoustic duo. "So many good-hearted people."

True to the unpredictable nature of musicians' lives, a few surprise guests, like Grammy-Award winner Stacy Phillips, showed up as afternoon turned to night. As did Chris "Smokin' Opey"

D'Amato, a 2008 finalist at the International Blues Challenge, who borrowed a guitar and jammed with the Downshift Band.

Still, it was Travis Moody taking the stage with the Crown Street Orchestra, playing on a lap steel guitar with a slide that didn't require use of his injured fingers, that proved the highlight of the evening. "I'm still hurting," the soft-spoken Moody allowed earlier. "But I'm trying to take it

in stride, take it day by day."

With his bandaged hand, he motioned to the boisterous crowd and then to The Manchurians belting out their hit track "Deliverance." His face wore a look of amazement.

"And this is just overwhelming. I didn't know I had so many friends."

Editor's note: To donate funds to Travis Moody and his son, visit [www.bluesformoody.com](http://www.bluesformoody.com).