

SOUTHFIELDER SPOTLIGHT

*Written by David Graff
Photo Credit: Marc Posen*

Woodford Station



Woodford Station is a band that delivers a music mix of blues-based, rock, country and blues with influences of other music genres. Three of the band members were originally in the award-winning band *Moonshine Stew* before it was dissolved, which played one of their first concerts at the Southfield Pavilion. The band members have played at festivals and events all over Michigan. The new band, Woodford Station was formed shortly after and consists of four members. Norm McIntyre on lead guitar and vocals, Wayne Wilkins on bass and John Ciaravino on drums and vocals with solo country/delta blues player Leonardo Gianola on vocals, rhythm, and slide guitar. The band has over 25 years of experience performing at shows throughout Michigan. All members have studio and recording experiences individually to their credit.

Their performances utilize: harmony vocals; three lead singers; conventional and slide guitar; and an extensive song list. Woodford Station does not play top-40 music; instead, they play an eclectic mix of songs produced from relatively obscure artists in their own style, as well as a mix of exclusive content that they wrote the lyrics for and produced amongst themselves. Due to this unique variety, their musical sound is truly unique and original.

Woodford Station is very excited about their upcoming concert at the Southfield Public Library on April 12 at 6:30 p.m. The show will be unique and unlike any show that the audience is expecting. It will also be different from the shows they typically play at bars and nightclubs. It will feature some of the *Woodford Station's* greatest hits as well as some exclusive songs written directly by the band. This is a

special free edition of the Jazz and Blues @ Your Library series, however a \$5 donation to the *Friends of the Southfield Public Library* is appreciated.

Wayne plays bass. He started playing back in the 70's as a guitar player, forming his first band when he was in 7th grade. He later picked up the bass after a band told him they needed a bass player. Today, he has a home recording studio that the *Woodford Station* band utilizes to record and master their tracks. Wayne also works as an employee of the City of Southfield; he works as the chief building inspector and plans examiner for the building department.

John plays drums. He grew up listening to Motown, blues-infused bands like Cream, Jeff Beck and Jimmy Hendrix. He has been playing music since the 90's. John writes song lyrics for the band's originals. He also does the marketing and outreach for the band. In his professional career, John worked as a salesperson for the past 30 years and is also a graduate of *Specs Howard School of Media Arts* and has a background in radio.



Norm is the lead guitarist and vocalist. He has extensive experience performing songs and manages the stage, placing the gear and determining the levels of the amps and other equipment. Outside of Woodford Station, Norm has performed in many different award-winning bands. He has been featured in the Detroit Music Society, the Detroit Blues Society and has won competitions from Guitar Center. He also currently plays with Ava James and The Rumors, 2 Taylors and First Raitt, a Bonnie Raitt tribute band.

In his professional career, he works in the school system with children that are developmentally challenged by mental or physical issues.

Leonardo plays slide guitar and vocals. He started playing the guitar while working in a music store. A co-worker encouraged him to learn to play. He also received encouragement from Reverend Robert B. Jones. Leonardo is also a solo artist who has three other musical projects.

The *Southfielder Spotlight* sat down with three of the band members: Wayne, Leonardo, and John for an interview about their band *Woodford Station*.

What is the origin of the band name, Woodford Station?

Wayne: That was done by a vote. Everyone in the band submitted names and suggestions, and we settled on the name by vote.

Leonardo: Initially, the other band members looked at me to come up with the name. I didn't want it to be David Blues Band, because if you do that, half of the audience wouldn't show up. Blues bands seem to have a repertoire of the same 12 songs that everybody plays, some better than others. Anyway, I could only think of the word "Station," which has many different meanings. I told the other members I have a name, but it's only half. You guys have to come up with the other part. Norm came up with Knott Creek Station; he likes bourbon. I replied, "oh that sounds horrible." He then said, "How about Woodford Station?" I replied, "Oh that sounds great."

John: There were a lot of other names that were suggested, but none of them were as good as *Woodford Station*. Our logo is a bottle in the shape of the *Woodford Reserve* bourbon. Leonardo has been there several times; Norm has too. While there, Leonardo had custom labels made for each member of the band that says *Woodford Reserve* and the instrument we play. We also checked with *Woodford Reserve* for copyright issues, and they didn't have any problems.

Wayne: Well actually, Leonardo checked with them.

Leonardo: They were all for it.

John: From a marketing standpoint, it works well. I do a lot of the band's marketing, and in the future, we could work with *Woodford Reserve*; they're big on this idea.

It's also a unique name. There are so many bands that come up with similar names. Then later, they find out that there's a band playing in New York City or somewhere else with the same name. If we wanted to go national with this band and the name was registered somewhere else, we'd have to change the name (or at least part of it). But Leonardo checked with *Woodford Reserve*, and they were pretty excited.

Band background

Wayne: My background is that I'm the producer and engineer for the band. I have a small recording studio in my home that we utilize as a rehearsal space. Every rehearsal is recorded in a studio environment. Then I do all the mixing and mastering. You can hear some of the recordings that we've done at rehearsal if you go to our SoundCloud page. These are actual live recordings with minimal editing. We cleaned up a few things, but no overdubs. These are what we sound like when we play live.

I've been doing this for almost 20 years. I'm self-taught. I don't have a degree in engineering, but I know a lot about recording. I went digital in 2014. It was a big learning curve, to go to a computer-based recording versus either cassette or 8-track. I am still learning more about it every day. That keeps me motivated.

Leonardo: It's a big recording studio. I've never seen so much recording equipment in a private residence in my life. I've recorded in studios that are smaller than what he's got. He's being humble. The first time I went down there, I was shocked.

It's an incredible, tremendous asset for any band to have someone who, first of all, has a wife that puts up with this, but also has the resources to buy this stuff, and actually knows what to do with it. If Wayne could not do any of this, we'd have to rent a studio and that costs big money.

Wayne: That's the only reason they keep me in the band. It's not because I'm a great bass player. I don't sing. I have to concentrate on playing bass and keeping up with these guys because they are such great musicians. We also don't play anything simple. I have to be on my toes, and I have to make sure everything is correct. All three of the other members of the band are singers. They've got it covered. I'm perfectly happy just playing bass along with the hours I spend on mixing all the recordings and mastering the songs for publishing.

Tell us about the upcoming Jazz and blues @ Your Library event?

Wayne: We're all very excited about the upcoming Jazz and Blues event at the library. We are trying to get as many people to the event as we can. Cable 15 is going to be there and record it, and it will be a good show.

Leonardo: It will be the third time I played at the library. Last time was in 2019.

Wayne: Don McGee produces the Jazz and Blues series at the library. He's been doing it for over 18 years.

Leonardo: I was the 11th or the 13th performer back in 2006. It's a funny story. I went to work, and Don comes up to me and says, "Hey man, I saw you on the TV. I know you play." Then he said, "I want you to play at the library." I thought, "okay, library. There's going to be like 10 people there, maybe." I come in with my stuff, and the Southfield Library is big. It's really big. I see this big room, I walk in, and there's all this activity. I asked someone, "Does anybody know where the blues guy is supposed to play today?" They take me to this big room with a bunch of chairs, and there are 6 cameras. They turn off the lights. And I was like, "if I had known this, I would have practiced."

Wayne: We have a lot of history. This is not our first gig; you can see by the age of all of us that we're seasoned. John and I have been playing together for 25 years.

How was the *Woodford Station* Band formed?

John: Before this band, Wayne, Norm, and I had been playing together in another band. We played our first gig at the Southfield Pavilion.

Wayne: The band's name was *Moonshine Stew*. It was me and John and Norm plus Sam Leve, a keyboard player, and a female lead singer, Linda Hamilton. Our first gig for that band was September 2015 in the Southfield Pavilion.

John: *Moonshine Stew* was together seven years. One summer, we played at eight festivals. We played all over Royal Oak and Ferndale. We even did a gig in Grand Rapids right on the water, a big bourbon festival. We also played at the Michigan State Fair.

Norm and I have known each other for about eight years. We got that band together and became tight from playing at all these big festivals, plus time spent recording at Wayne's. Then Leonardo came in and

WOODFORD STATION



**APRIL
12TH**

**SOUTHFIELD PUBLIC LIBRARY
26300 EVERGREEN ROAD
SOUTHFIELD, MI 48076
MEETING ROOM**

6:30- 8:30 PM

added something that I always felt *Moonshine Stew* was lacking: a slide guitar *Woodford Station* was built from the ashes of *Moonshine Stew*.

Wayne: COVID was the downfall for *Moonshine Stew*. We had a plan. We had band meetings online, but we couldn't get together and rehearse. We decided to work on the originals. We had discussed it before, and John had been writing lyrics for years. Norm and John got together during COVID virtually and started sending lyrics and material back and forth. Then they would send it to me. Norm has a small recording studio, and he would give us a rough arrangement of an original song. Then we would work on it and go from there. Now that we can get back together, this band has taken those originals and made them our own. These original songs have a lot of promise.

John: From my marketing efforts, I was hearing from clubs and festivals that everything was changing due to the pandemic, and it may never be the way it used to be. I told these guys that we have to reinvent ourselves. We have to do something different and more innovative. Norm and I had discussed writing songs. Norm also has a background of writing original material. Norm was in a band called *Motor Honey* when I met him, and they've got two albums out.

Wayne: He is a remarkable, talented musician, vocalist, showman.

John: Norm and I hit it off right away. I met him at a jam eight years ago. He started playing Stevie Ray Vaughan's *Couldn't Stand the Weather*. I told him I had never played that song in my life. The next thing you know, we started getting together. I then told him about Wayne. That is how *Moonshine Stew* started.

Leonardo: Norm is a naturally talented guy. Sometimes you meet those guys you're envious of them since he just knows what to play instinctively. He's not only a good, experienced player, but he is also, well, I call him the stage manager. He can walk into any gig, know where to put the gear, know where to aim it, and know what volume the amp should be. He's done it hundreds of times.

Wayne: He's been in several award-winning bands. He has been featured in *the Detroit Music Society*, and the *Detroit Blues Society*. He's even won competitions from Guitar Center.

Leonardo: He's one of those guys who will get a call and it's like, "I need you for a gig on Saturday." He will just say, "send me the recording of your songs." And that is all he would need. No practice: he just shows up.

Wayne: Or just the set list. He's done that several times. "Just give me the set list and I'll be there."

Leonardo: I've known Norm for a while, but not as a musician. We were both avid cyclists and I met him while bike riding. My first memory of Norm was we were riding north on Inkster, making a left turn after a downhill, around Square Lake Road. Anyway, he went off the road and I talked to him a little bit. But I noticed his e-mail address and I asked him about the "guitar" part of that address, and he replied, "I play." I replied, "Oh really? Well, I play too." I tell him what I do. He replies by mentioning a bunch of gigs he has done under various bands. I didn't believe him at first, but it was true.

Wayne: Every time we get together, Norm has a new story about some band he was in. He goes all the way back to the early 80s, if not further. He's always been a musician. He plays all the time, every weekend, if not weeknights. He's one of those guys who can show up at a gig with minimal notice (or practice) and literally walk on stage and play flawlessly.

John: We work well together because our backgrounds are very similar but very different at the same time.

Wayne and I were also in another band years ago. That's when this whole journey started. He had a Roland recorder that had four tracks on it We started playing 25 years ago, back in the late 90s. We were playing at some really great places. We played every Friday and Saturday, every weekend. We gained a lot of stage experience together. Leonardo and Norm have played on a lot of stages too.

Leonardo: I'm also a solo artist. I have three musical projects. I'll sit in a chair with two acoustic guitars and tell the whole story of the blues from the end of the Civil War, slavery, all the way up to the 30s, like a narration and illustrate it with songs. Normally I do not play the whole thing, because that's too much material to go through. You play a snippet to give the people. Two mics, and nothing else. It's all acoustic, the way those songs originally were performed.

There's a guy in town: Reverend Robert B. Jones. He is a national treasure. I bumped into him 30 years ago. One day I went up to Robert and asked him if he had time to give me lessons. He looked at me like, and then said, "alright, for you I'll do it."

The guy comes over to my house. I only know two songs. He's sitting across my dining room table. I finish and I'm thinking, "that wasn't too bad. I'm good" But then he says, "alright, you playing like a white boy." I was crushed. I was like, 'man, where do you go from there?' But then he told me why, and he showed me what I was doing wrong. Over the years I've gotten together with him maybe seven or eight times. He is a true Detroit Treasure, great guy.

He taught me to play old songs from the 20s and the 30s, old blues songs. The West Africans, the descendants; they had an incredible ability to play. To finish my story, another thing he did that was unique was the way that he would tune the guitar. There's an accepted standard tuning that classical guitarist will use, jazz guys, rock, everybody. But if you laid it on the table and strung the strings, it would make musical nonsense. It's a good compromise for whatever type of music you want to play. A lot of the old guys would tune the guitar to a chord called an open tuning. you strum it and you've got G. Or G, you've got E. Most guitar players don't do that, or if they do, they'll do it for a couple of songs. Keith Richards plays an open G a lot. He's got 60 Rolling Stone hits you're familiar with if you listen to him. And that comes right out of the Delta.

Norm will play conventionally. He does it really well, but it's a conventional style. If we go to a jam and he sits in, he's not going to sound different. He might sound better or worse, depending on who else is playing. But the type of guitar, the amp, the tuning, it's all conventional.

Wayne: The difference between being a solo artist and joining a band is getting four or five people on the same page and working together. One of the great things *about Woodford Station* is that there are no egos. Everyone can criticize each other in a positive way to make ourselves better.

Leonardo: I can verify that. We were playing a song and I was happy that I got as far on it as I did. However, other members told me to stop. I played the wrong note. They told me I have got to play it higher. I thought they were joking at first, but they were right. They worked me over quite a bit last year.

Wayne: Norm is a remarkable musician. He has an ear while we're playing and will stop us and tell us what we need to do to improve. For example, he told me before that I was playing the minor, and I needed to be playing the major. He puts it in the form of a suggestion. "Maybe you should try something different," and he would show me what he wanted me to try. He was always right. Norm is also very patient. In his job, he works in the school system with children that are developmentally challenged by mental or physical issues. For him, this like being at work; dealing with me requires the same amount of patience. For instance, yesterday, we spent three hours together and two of them were spent on just one song.

Leonardo: He told me if you made one more mistake, he was kicking you out of the band.

Wayne: Yeah, well, it wouldn't be the first time I got kicked out of a band, I can tell you that.

John: It's his eclectic taste in music.



Leonardo: I never thought I'd play guitar. I used to work at the Gus Zoppi music store as their first amp technician. One day, I went up front to take a break. There was a salesman there named Denny, and he came up to me and tells me I have to learn a particular song. I said, "Denny, I don't play guitar." He replies, "Oh, it's not that hard. You've got to learn it. It's the greatest song in the world."

I reply, "Denny, go away. Just go away." But he insists, "No, no, you have to learn it." So, I took the guitar from him. "Okay, what do you want me to do?" He goes, "well, you've got to turn it around." I started playing, thinking he'd go away. He shows me how to play. A guy across the counter goes, "look at that guy. He's got that guitar upside down and backwards and he's playing it. Isn't that cool?" Then I thought, 'yeah, that is cool.'

I never thought I would play guitar. But then I started singing. I was never really good at making music until I started tuning a guitar to a tune. That is when everything started to make sense to me. There are some things I can't play. But other songs, it's second nature. I don't use any picks. The strings are upside down. But it works. When I play with another good guitar player who can cover all that stuff and he allows me to do my stuff, it sounds great! It's not that Norm can't play it, but he doesn't have to because I've got it covered.

This band has a solid rhythm section, two electric guitar players, but they're playing completely different things in a different way. I just saw a band in Florida, they both had Fender Stratocasters. They both went through Fender amps and they both played exactly the same thing. Only one member needs to play the acoustic guitar. Do something different.

John: I played with a guy back in the late 70s and we formed a band together. He worked with me at a record retailer. When we talked, we shared stories about music. He tells me he is a guitar player and wants to come over. He came over to the house I was renting at the time, and he brought his guitar

over. He set it up just like Hendrix. I started laughing because I didn't think this guy could play. All of a sudden, he started ripping into these Hendrix tunes and started playing behind his back and with his teeth and upside down, playing Robin Trower. My first thought was, where did this guy come from? At that point, the band was together. But, he moved to California so that band didn't last long.

What do you do for the city?

Wayne: I'm the Chief Building Inspector and Plans Examiner for the Building Department. I do all the commercial plan reviews for mechanical, electrical, plumbing, and residential for the Building Department.

What are you most looking forward to about the show at the library?

Wayne: I love planning these gigs. I've been over there twice and met with the team at the Southfield Library and talked about lighting and backdrops. We discussed how they set the room up in terms of capacity, chairs, running the sound system, and lighting needs. There is so much information that we need to get before we can walk in the door and do a quality show. I've seen a lot of the videos of other performers, and they just don't have the production. There is a big difference between a polished show and a garage band that just walks in, sets their amps down, and starts playing.

We want to put on a polished show and produce something more appealing. I also look forward to the opportunity to play in front of the fans that come out to see us. One thing that is really rewarding to me is how many people have supported us here at the city. Michael (Manion) has offered his support. Everyone in the Building Department has offered their support. They all say they are coming out to the show. Jim Hall at Cable 15 agreed to film it for us. These are all things that I look forward to. I get a chance to play with some great musicians at a quality venue.

Leonardo: Another thing. There are many really good bands, but they're never going to play anywhere because they don't want to do the marketing. They don't create a website. They don't have an email list. They aren't on SoundCloud. You have to do the other stuff that doesn't involve playing.

Wayne: Yeah, you have to market the band. You can't get anywhere without marketing. You have to have someone reaching out, asking to play gigs. John's been doing it for his whole career, and he's good at it. Leonardo's done it for his solo act; he knows how to get gigs. Norm's been playing in three different bands; he's getting gigs all the time. The hard part about being in a band is the marketing.

Leonardo: You need to have a high-quality video, not just someone holding up an iPhone. Many festivals and talent bookers, the first thing they ask for is a video. Wayne said that the local Southfield Cable 15 Channel would be happy to film us, but we'd need to find a place in Southfield to book us first. So, I called Don and I said, "Don, I'm sure that your Jazz and Blues series, which is kind of known around town, and it's known that it's not for entry level bands, and the jazz acts are really good. I've come to many of them. I'm sure your schedule's already full for the season. But as an Italian would be known to say from time to time, I've got a little favor I'd like you to do." He said, "what's that?" I replied, "well, I want my band to play at your place." And this is something to do if you ever really want to get a gig. This is what you have to know: "You don't have to pay us."

All of a sudden, 'ooh, you don't have to pay us.' And I explained to him that the Cable 15 channel would come and film it and they can keep all the money they want to charge. He said, "oh, well we will ask for donations, and we'll donate it to a blues cause." All of a sudden, he's all on board. It'll be a special concert. That's really the biggest deal out of this. We're going to walk out of there with a super professional video of the performance that we can edit down to three minutes for our marketing.

John: Yeah, the video part is what has really changed out there. Video requests is what event planners are asking for. It is nice to have a page like SoundCloud where we can put the music that Wayne records and mixes and masters. But times change and technology changes. Now event planners are asking for video.

It's just another step getting to the answer "yes." They ask "Do you have a video? I want to see the band. I want to see what you look like. I want to see the instruments playing. I want to see all of that."

Wayne: The other thing they want to see is a crowd. If you're playing for a bunch of waitresses and a bartender, that's not going to go over well. The whole point of bars having bands is to bring people into the bar. There are some bars with built-in crowds; they're going to be packed every weekend no matter what. But a lot of bars depend on the band to bring a crowd. If you don't do that, you're not going to get asked back. You also have to be careful how you book your band because if you overbook, you're not going to get people to follow you around every weekend. Many people only go out occasionally.

Leonardo: And to your point, Wayne, if you play someplace and you play 30 songs, you can't keep playing those same 30 songs. You have to have 40 or 50 songs. That is one thing Norm is really good at. He puts the set lists together. In the first set, you're going to get a good overview of everything, just for the people that might only stay for one set. He'll sing, I'll sing, John will sing. But you want to mix it up because if someone comes to your next show you want them to hear something different.

Wayne: I leave the logistics for the set list up to the people that are singing. I just want to make sure I can give them the best performance I can.

Leonardo: What we will play at the Southfield Library isn't going to be what we would play at a rock bar. It's a special show for us. It's not a bar. It's a show. For one, everybody will be sitting in a chair looking at us. The other thing is everyone in the audience is going to be sober. It's one thing to play for a room full of drunk people at 2 o'clock in the morning but playing in front of a crowd of people that are sitting in a chair staring at you, that's a whole different ball game.

What advice do you have for up-and-coming musicians?

Wayne: I just watched a video from the Detroit School of Rock. It was pretty amazing; they pursued their dreams. If you love music and you're an up-and-coming musician, stay with it.

John: I get that question every once in a while, from young musicians. They ask me what I listen to. It goes back to that eclectic thing. I tell them to listen to as much music as they can and learn from it. Go see a rock drummer. Their styles are all different. Listen to as many different styles of music as you can. From a drummer's standpoint, I've learned many different processes just by watching and listening to people that know more about drums than I do.

Leonardo: To a young person, I would say, don't get discouraged if you can't do something. You might not be a trumpet player. You have to discover what kind of music you want to play. To John's point, listen to a lot of different music, but don't take any shortcuts. Music is a language. If you want to learn Italian, you can learn words like 'ciao 'or 'Arrivederci. 'But you don't necessarily know what you're doing. But if you learn the grammar and learn how the language is put together in syntax, then you can get quite proficient. So, my advice would be don't take any shortcuts. Learn how music goes together. Learn what modes are. Practice your scales. You can't just go out and play without doing the groundwork first.

You also have to have find your voice/sound. A lot of guitar players in town, they play and they're good, but they sound like everybody else. There is nothing unique about them. You have to have a unique sound, and you have to find it. Take local guitar player in town, Kenny Parker, for example. You'll hear him play and within ten seconds you know that's Kenny. He sounds like his own unique self. Even if he's playing the same notes as everyone else, he has a unique voice.

If you had to pick one song that you guys perform, which one's your favorite and why?

Wayne: There are several songs that I really enjoy playing for different reasons. Some because they're really simple. For example, I love playing three chord songs. Then some of the other songs I really like playing because I worked my tail off to learn them. They're complicated and there were so many changes that it feels like an accomplishment to play them. For me, there are a few songs. The Sean Costello song, *Can't Let Go* and Tab Benoit's, *Shelter Me*.

Leonardo: It is always a great tune. I never heard of Sean Costello before I started playing it. It has like 20 chords in it.

Wayne: It's a pretty complicated song, but we learned it years ago. We played it with *Moonshine Stew*. But it took me months to learn that song and figure out all the notes to play it. I get very proud when I can cover something by a bass player that is off the charts a remarkable player. That's rewarding for me.

Shelter Me is also a favorite because it has an old gospel feel. It's just a great tune and it tells a solid story. It's a song that Norm brought in and it's the only song that we do that is semi-gospel sounding. It's about God protecting someone. I also like the Joe Bonamassa song, "*One Less Cross to Bear*." The thing that's cool about that song is that there isn't a recording of it. It's not on any of his albums. Norm found it on YouTube. He picked it up and said, "I want to learn this song," That is what we did.

John: There's a story behind that one. When Norm mentioned it to me, I had never heard of it either. He told me to go to YouTube and watch the video. The drummer was doing so much stuff because there's a drum solo at one point in the song. When he gets to it, he's doing all sorts of crazy stuff. At first, I told Norm, "This is nuts. I'm not going to learn this. It's not that I don't like it; it's just I'm not going to be able to cover what this guy's doing. He's amazing." He says, "you don't have to. Just write your own piece." So that's what I did.

Wayne: Most of the songs we play are songs that we've made our own by changing the arrangement or changing something to make it original. A lot of the songs we play were done by obscure artists. It may be is a famous song, but it's done in a completely different tempo or a different arrangement than the

original. It also has a completely different feel, sound, and tempo. We make those songs our own. *Shelter Me* is my pick. I like *Shelter Me* because it is the only song that we do that genre.

John: From a creative standpoint, I enjoy doing the originals because it gives me the opportunity to create something that's going to be ours. We're not just learning a song and changing it, we're producing original material. I send lyrics to Norm, and he creates the music around the lyrics. He records the music in his studio at home and sends it to Wayne. Then he explains to me what he wanted for the drums, but suggested I could change things around a little bit, since he's not a drummer.

Wayne: Original songs are always a work in progress. You find something that sounds better or realize your music choice didn't work and you make changes. It's a creative session when you're working on original material. It's completely different from learning covers.

Most covers that you hear are top-40 songs. A lot of bands are doing top-40. You go to any wedding reception, that is what you hear. We don't do any of that because, it's already ingrained in everyone's DNA. People have been listening to those songs for 40 years, 50 years, since the 70s. Bob Seger's old-time rock and roll, AC DC, all that kind of stuff. This is what makes this band so unique; we don't do any of the top-40 music. We did all that 25, 30 years ago where we were in cover bands. But, again, there are a lot of other bands out there just doing top-40.

Leonardo: In the context of pleasing the audience, my pick would be Blind Willie McTell's *Statesboro Blues*. I've never played that song where the crowd didn't enjoy it. When it starts off, the Allman Brothers version of it, you come over that slide. If it doesn't move you, you don't need to be listening to music. You need to be washing the car or doing something else. Everybody likes that song. There are other songs I enjoy playing more, because to me, it's an easy song to play. However, the audience loves it.

Getting back to something I said earlier, there's a couple of Allman Brother tribute bands in town. The lead guitar player won't tune his guitar to an open E tuning. He plays it in standard, and you CANNOT play that song in standard tune! I've only seen one guy do it, Warren Haynes, with the Allman Brother's Band in New York City when they played at the Beacon. He can do it. I've never seen anybody else do it where it sounded good.

What should the audience expect from the show on the 12th?

Wayne: They should expect a good entertaining performance. Hopefully, they'll be happy when they leave. They'll say they saw a good show.

Leonardo: But they're not going to hear what they normally hear. They're not going to hear what they expected. They're going to hear songs that people don't normally play.

Wayne: Some songs they will recognize. Some they won't.

Which artist would you like to collaborate with in the future?

Leonardo: Thornetta Davis or Tosha Owens.

Wayne: Thornetta's been around. She's the queen of the blues in Detroit, as per the Detroit Blues Society. Tosha's like that only younger.

What are some upcoming band projects?

Leonardo: Well one that I have not mentioned to these guys yet is, because we have plenty of songs, we should take six that everybody likes best, and we should record it. Double track the lead vocals, put in hand claps, a tambourine, polish them up, and put that out on SoundCloud. If somebody goes to listen to it, it is going to sound like a CD instead of us practicing.

Wayne: I strongly encourage you to go to our SoundCloud page and listen to what we have. You can find it as a link on our web page: <https://www.woodfordstation.com/>. You'll get an idea of the type of music we're playing. It's a mix of blues-based, rock, and country music. There is a whole blend of styles in there that we cover that are all toe-tappers that, hopefully, people will enjoy.

John: If someone was to Google the band name, *Woodford Station*, the first 3-5 links are all ours. They are links to our website, the SoundCloud page, and our Facebook page.

What are some of your biggest musical inspirations?

Wayne: Some of the original things that I first started getting into. I started with guitar. I was going to be the next Jimi Hendrix. You name any great guitar player, Stevie Ray Vaughan, Jimi Hendrix, I was going to be a guitar player. That didn't work out, so I joined the workforce and didn't play an instrument for eight or ten years. One day, I picked up a bass and was given an opportunity to play. Somebody said to me, if you play bass, we need a bass player. I immediately found a bass online for about \$100, and I bought it and started learning to play the bass.

There are a lot of influences out there. Geddy Lee from Rush. Paul McCartney. Most of these guys have two or three brains, so they are really doing a lot of stuff I can't do.

Leonardo: Keith Richards said that about Robert Johnson. Is that where you stole that line from? About having three brains?

Wayne: Oh, no, I've been saying that for years. I don't know where that came from. But it's true.

But, again, there are a lot of influences out there. My philosophy is that there's no bad music. It's just a matter of opinion. There are styles of music like gangster rap that I don't care for. Still, I respect the fact that it's music and that it's appealing to, apparently, a lot of people and it has value. My idea of what I think is good, somebody right here at this table could totally disagree with. I'm a hard rock guy. When I grew up, I listened to Black Sabbath, Deep Purple, Grand Funk, Aerosmith, and other heavy rock bands in the early 70s. That's where I got my bases.

I started playing when I was in the 7th grade. We were jamming with some old buddies of mine. John came and sat in with us, and we started to get together. It was coined *Boys' Night Out* (Later Vantage Point). Once a month we would all come together and play old rock tunes. A couple of my buddies Serge and Dave also joined. I've known Dave and Serge since 7th grade. That's when Sam got brought in, the keyboard player. We got some great recordings of that band doing Led Zeppelin and Aerosmith and other cool stuff. We only played out a handful of times, but it was a blast, and we all became very good friends. I'm fortunate to have friends like John and Norm and Leonardo, and we all happen to have music in common. It's a bonus that we can all get together. Some guys get together and play cards,

some guys get together and go bowling. We get together and play music. That's the highlight for me. I love nothing more than hosting my friends in my studio.

Leonardo: I like music played by human beings on instruments. You can go to the Detroit Symphony and the oboe player will make a small mistake or be a little late. I was in a studio one time and the guy who owned it said, hey man, check this out, and he opened the door. It was a room half this size, and all it contained was computers. He makes rap backing tracks on his computer. He copyrights them and sells them. There are no instruments, there's no human beings, but it could be a big hit.

The Great American Songbook, back in the 20s and 30s. That's where great lyrics came from. Those songs were written for adults as they were the only ones with money. Then the Beatles came out. All of a sudden, my generation had money from their paper routes. Music was written for us. Today, music is written for children. That I don't like. But other music I can handle. It's all great... well maybe not opera.

Wayne: But still, it's an art form that you can't deny.

Leonardo: I can't relate to it.

John: You know, honestly, I'm with Wayne. I grew up listening to rock.

But the blues guys really inspired me to listen to more. Then when I got older, I started experimenting and listening to other things. I really enjoy listening to jazz. When I tell people that, they think it's kind of strange coming from me because I can listen to Grand Funk, and I can listen to Molly Hatchet and I can listen to Nazareth and then in a moment's notice I can go grab a Miles Davis album and put it on. Miles Davis, in my opinion, is probably the greatest jazz player that ever lived. I love listening to John Coltrane, Charlie Parker, and one guy that really blew my mind was a guy named Michel Petrucciani. He passed away but I saw him at the Detroit Jazz Festival. He was this little guy and they had to help him go up the ramp to the stage. I was standing nearby, behind his drummer, because I wanted to see what he was doing. They picked Michel Petrucciani up and they put him on the stool near his piano. He was an amazing piano player. That's the kind of stuff I like to listen to. But, they all go hand in hand. Bill Evans, all those guys played music together back in the 30s and 40s and 50s.

To learn more about Woodford Station or hear their music:

- [Woodford Station website](#)
- [Woodford Station Facebook Page](#)
- [Woodford Station YouTube Channel](#)
- [Woodford Station Soundcloud](#)

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