



Musician Bios



Singer/bandleader **Rustie Woods** is the founding member of Blusion®. Rustie studied voice with blues/jazz/pop singer Sarah Baker, with vocalist and educator Pablo Rodriguez, with conductor/writer/arranger Phil Mattson, and with jazz diva Suzanne Pittson. Before starting Blusion® in 1996 Rustie was a frequent participant in jazz vocal workshops and education retreats and would often sit in with blues and jazz artists at various North Bay venues. Early on she was drawn to singers like Billie Holiday, Carmen McRae and Nina

Simone. While you can still hear echoes of those influences in her performances (i.e. her Billie Holiday behind-the-beat phrasing or her sassy and conversational stylings reminiscent of Carmen McRae) Rustie has developed her own unique vocal style and brand of expressive stagecraft through more than fifteen years of performing in the Bay Area and North Coast. During the recording and production of Blusion's® latest CD, *Sign of the Times*, Rustie worked in close collaboration with phenomenal sound and recording engineer Jane Clark, whose credits include numerous platinum, gold and silver records (The Commodores, Lionel Richie, Jermaine Jackson, etc.) from her days at Motown L.A. This collaboration has led to Rustie's debut as a producer for other artists. The early returns are all positive, the girl has the ear, skill and temperament.

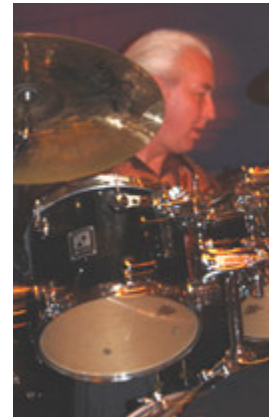
Bassist/composer/arranger and songwriter **Paul Dean** studied music at University of Miami and electric bass with Don Coffman. He holds a degree in jazz studies from Sonoma State University, where he studied with jazz/classical bassist and composer Mel Graves. Over the years, he has performed or recorded with notable players and folks such as Liberty Ellman, Paul McCandless, Bobby Shew, Steve Smith, Kitty Margolis, Chris Clark, Rob Hart, John Simon, and Chris Pimental. Paul has been the bassist with Blusion® for the past 11 years. He has written &/or arranged all of Blusion's® music and gratefully acknowledges the contributions on many of his compositions made by the fine players of Blusion® throughout the years. Paul has also played in bands as diverse as rock, salsa, punk, blues, New Orleans funk, big band swing, small combo jazz, reggae and jam-band rock. Currently, in collaboration with Blusion's® keyboardist Greg Schlaepfer and drummer Marc Smith, Paul plays with Musical Action Committee, a modern jazz trio whose repertoire consists of both standards and original works. Paul also does arranging and bass session work for other artists as well as teaching private lessons.





Keyboardist **Greg Schlaepfer** is an extraordinarily talented and gifted young musician. Now just 22 years old, he has been playing piano since the age of eight. While he began his study as many pianists do by learning the classical repertoire, he quickly became attracted to Ragtime and New Orleans blues, practicing these styles in addition to his usual lessons. With a change of piano teachers to facilitate his interest in composition and improvisational music, Greg began a systematic study of jazz and music theory when he was thirteen years old. He has been performing professionally with Blusion® and many other fine local jazz players since the age of seventeen. He is a recent graduate from the jazz studies program at Sonoma State University, under the direction of renowned bassist/composer Mel Graves. His skill and versatility, his uncanny ability to be a solid team player and then break out with his blazing phrasing for solos, his incredible ear (he has perfect pitch) and his ability to play a wide variety of styles with authority, make Greg a real menace to society and an integral component of Blusion®. When Greg is not playing piano, guitar, electric bass or practicing his tuvan throat singing, he is recording sound libraries for electronic music and composing music for computer games.

Drummer **Marc C. Smith** has been anchored in the Bay Area music scene for nineteen years (Tom Finch Group, The Jazz Iguanas, Pack of Wolves, Plethora, etc) following stints in Ann Arbor and the Boston region. Marc's level of dedication to music and his instrument is evident from his playing. But his high level of attainment is not an accident. He has studied the drum set privately with some of the finest drummers on the planet; Jack DeJohnette, Trilok Gurtu, David Garibaldi and Tony Williams. He has also studied music and drums at two of the best music schools anywhere; North Texas State and Berklee College of Music in Boston, where he holds a degree in performance. One would be hard-pressed to find a more qualified set of teachers or a more direct educational route to success as a jazz and pop drummer than the one Marc has taken. But the acutal synthesis of diverse styles and influences that takes place in the mind of the artist is an active process; it requires dedication and discipline. Marc possesses a restless desire to move forward, to improve his skills, to assimilate new music and to push the limits of the music already in his repertoire. His ability to shift effortlessly between diverse styles and groove through it all has quickly become an essential element of the Blusion® sound.



The newest member of Blusion® is saxophonist **Jordan Wardlaw**. Jordan (whose father is also a skilled saxophonist and jazz educator) holds a degree in jazz studies from the Thornton School of Music at USC. His performance resume should give you some idea of his impressive stylistic diversity. While in Los Angeles he performed with such artists as Peter Erskine, Ndugu Chanler, Bill Watrous, John Clayton, Barry Manilow and Toni Tennille. Jordan has performed with the Santa Rosa Symphony since 1997. In the North Bay he has appeared with fine players such as Howard Wiley, Erik Jekabson, John Allair, and Mel Graves. Jordan has been a member of the acclaimed San Francisco based swing group Lee Press-On and the Nails since

2003. In addition to his diverse performance schedule Jordan does regular studio soundtrack sessions. His work appears in the popular video game Sam and Max. Jordan is also a jazz educator. He is the current director of the jazz program at Santa Rosa High School as well as the director of instrumental music at the Santa Rosa Charter School for the Arts. Blusion® is excited and proud to add this versatile improviser and skilled musician to its regular lineup.