



# *Sugar Queen* **LIVE**

---

**Michele Denise, Vocals**  
**Andy Aerts, guitar;**  
**Jean Raven, guitar;**  
**Erwin Huigen, bass; Thierry Stievenart, drums.**

**Album:** Sugar Queen LIVE  
**Release Date:** March 25, 2019  
**Genre:** Blues  
**Record Label:** Sugar Queen Blues  
**Catalog:** SQ2-2019

## **TRACK LISTING:**

1. Give Sugar
2. Wanna Take My Man
3. Big Mama Told Me
4. Bullock Blues
5. Twos and Fews
6. Nothings Gonna Hold Me Back
7. Travelling Man
8. I Can't Wait
9. Big Leg Girl
10. Hold Your Drank

## **RADIO AND ARTIST CONTACT:**

**Radio Promotion:** Leen Velthuis  
[www.facebook.com/ABIKradiopromotions](http://www.facebook.com/ABIKradiopromotions)

**Booking:** King Bee Music Agency  
[info@kingbeemusic.nl](mailto:info@kingbeemusic.nl)

**Sugar Queen:** [music@sugarqueenblues.com](mailto:music@sugarqueenblues.com)  
[www.sugarqueenblues.com](http://www.sugarqueenblues.com)  
[www.facebook.com/SugarQueenStraightBluesBand](http://www.facebook.com/SugarQueenStraightBluesBand)

*“To those who came before me...”*

**Roots** of family are the inspiration for **Sugar Queen LIVE**. The backwaters of Alabama, Big Mama, moon shining and the history of my family were the sources of my inspiration. Exposed dark history was brought forth while love of family and determination lightened the way to song. The known beginning started in 1818 with James and Lucretia (Creasy) who were taken and settled in Alabama. James and Creasy were married but not lawfully. It was illegal for slaves to marry and they could be separated at their owners’ whim. They lived as neighbors until after the emancipation and legally married in 1865. Unfortunately, James would die within 1870-1880. The National archives shows Lucretia, along with her adult children, petitioned to receive funds as ex-slaves in 1909. Sadly it was fraudulent. Creasy died in 1920. She survived slavery, freedom and the death of many of her children as well as her beloved husband. **Sugar Queen LIVE** does not dwell on the hardships and struggles. It celebrates the cultural aspects that were handed down from generation to generation. James and Creasy started the pathway in Bullock, Alabama toward **Sugar Queen LIVE**.

*“Give Sugar”*, which is the live version from our debut album, sets the tone. Whenever family enters into a southern home, someone always asks for a little “sugar”... a kiss. So I wanted to invite you into our music; our home. *“Come on, give Sug a little Sugah”*. Jean Raven wrote the music. With the West Coast and Gospel mix, it really does swing! Southern hospitality is not a catchphrase; it is a way of life.



Bullock, Alabama (Greenwood)

Another song from our debut album, “**Wanna Take My Man**”, is oh so sassy and it is one of my favorites. This woman is telling all the people that yes, she knows someone is after her man but does it really matter because maybe she just wanted to get rid of him anyway. Or does she? Within the singing, there is a sound of misery and heartbreak. When I did more research into the historical time of my ancestors, it became clear how the role of the women in my family became more dominate.

Because women were a strong foundation, “Big Mama” or the matriarch of the family was born. Willie Mae “Big Mama” Thornton was born on the rural outskirts of Montgomery, Alabama. These women were loved and often feared as they had lived and survived troubling and challenging times. “**Big Mama Told Me**” was born out of the thoughts of my own Big Mama. She was the real Queen. Of course in all traditions of southern family, food is important and literally made a difference when securing a husband. If a woman could not cook, most likely she would end up a spinster. It was said when a man picked a woman who looked better than she cooked; he would regret it later. “*You may smile, and have a real good look. But that don’t mean thang girl if you just can’t cook.*” Men during those days worked hard and therefore food was a way to nourish not only their body but their soul.

My grandfather worked the railroad from Alabama to Florida. Conditions were harsh in Alabama but as they travelled they took with them their love of community and music. “**Bullock Blues**” describes the scenes of the time when people sat on the porch at night. All the family would sit outside after dinner and often a man would come and play some tunes for money, whiskey, food or whatever the family could spare. Written by Andy Aerts, when I first heard the music, I immediately thought of a time sitting on the porch eating fruit as a young girl and watching the people pass by.

Women of that time understood the men’s need to travel and make money so they kept the home life intact. The women had their main jobs while they had a bit of a “side hustle” to make extra cash. Fannie, wife of Emanuel, born in 1883, was the mid-wife for the community. Additionally she sold eggs, produces from the garden and baked goods. They called this money their “**Twos and Fews**”. This song honors the sacrifices these women made to keep their families and communities thriving. As my mama used to say, “Pennies can grow into dollars!”

“**Nothing’s Gonna Hold Me Back**” was written in honor of James and Creasy. I had finished doing some new census research. And that night I could not sleep thinking how their lives must have been; what they endured. Creasy lived past 100 years. Born a slave and died a free woman. We decided to start with the bass; a heartbeat as an embodiment of their souls. “*The rain pours in and it floods my soul.*” The night I wrote this song, I grabbed my phone and sang the song with lyrics around 2 am. I felt the song should touch the heart as a spiritual. Had “blues music” existed in their lifetime, I am sure this song would have been their blues. “*But I believe, nothings gonna hold me back.*”

The reality of time was the separation of men from their families to work and make money. Often while travelling they found temporary love. Sometimes men had two families but in different cities. “**Travelling Man**” which was composed by Andy Aerts describes such a relationship. “*Told me*

*when he met me, he aint gonna stay, I cannot blame him that is just his way.*” In order to avoid being forced into a life as a sharecropper, (Men required to pay annual rent on the land by giving a portion of their crops to the landowner. Refusals could lead to arrest or being “hired out” to work) some men worked as a “travelling man”.

The remaining songs on **Sugar Queen LIVE** are dedicated to my Daddy. After a day of hard work, Daddy would first get a big glass of sweet tea. Then later on, he would have a “drank of bourbon” or a Falls City Beer. And in remembering Daddy after work, *“I Can’t Wait”* was written for our debut CD and it was really a joy to do the song again live.

As a young girl, my Daddy drove a Cadillac. During a family reunion, one of the cousins, the “Beyonce” of our family, needed a ride. She wore a fitted dress and heels so high that every part of her body jiggled to the beat of those heels. And she had big brown smooth legs! No man liked skinny legs. They said, only dogs wanted bones. Mama said she must have used butter on her legs because they looked so soft and smooth. Miss Dorothy was her name. She made a big impression on everyone. One of the uncles offered her a ride in his small junky car. Miss Dorothy gave him a ‘side’ look and said, “You know I have big legs, I can’t ride in your car.” So Daddy told us, “Git in the back!” I had to squeeze in the back seat so she could ride in the front of Daddy’s Cadillac. I wasn’t happy about that! Yes, *“Big Leg Girl”* was born.

The last song on **Sugar Queen LIVE** is in honor of Daddy making drank. *“Hold Your Drank”* means don’t get drunk. Daddy made ‘moonshine’. He called it wine but it was strong enough to strip paint. Mama was a Christian woman and she didn’t like it one bit. True story, he made his ‘drank’ in a big jerry can down in the basement. While it was working its magic, he left the top screwed on tight. That jerry can was plastic and it started to swell up...and swell up...and swell up. It was about to blow up, take the house and us with it!! Mama went downstairs and saw that swollen jerry can...she had a hissy fit! From then on, the entire ‘drank’ making happened in the smokehouse. At some point, this drank he made was called the “recipe”. I wanted this song to be a boogie because Daddy loved John Lee Hooker. He loved to play John Lee over and over and it really got on my Mama’s nerves.

*Daddy this one is for you.*

Thank y’all for coming into my musical house so I can share a part of my family history with you.

Much Love to you all,

*Sugar Queen*

*It takes a village to make a CD. And so many helped and gave their love and energy. For everything you said or did, thank you from my heart. You are so loved! ~ Queenie*



*Leo Gabriels, what an amazing photographer! His pictures set the tone for the Sugar Queen LIVE CD and our Sugar Queen Tour t-shirts. Leo, thank you soooo very much!*



## *Love and thanks:*

*To Jelle de Potter who came so very far to take fabulous pictures. He has an incredible talent. Lola Reynaerts and Paul Jehasse, travelled from Liege and always supporting Sugar Queen. Fat Harry Dorth and Ton Kok who travelled from Holland to support us...we love you. Guy Cuypers and Freddy Celis, Rootstime was my first interview in Belgium and you guys have been with us all the way. Els and Dirk Lekenne who do a fabulous job with artists in Fandango Studio! Michel Daems, who is one badass sound engineer. Dirk Peeters thank you for your balance and sound.*

*DC3 Graphic Design, Fabienne, who created both **340 Blues** and **Sugar Queen Live CD** design.*

*Leen Velthuis, who promoted Sugar Queen for the airwaves, thank you.*

*Rob Koning, King Bee Music Agency, has done a tremendous job booking/touring Sugar Queen.*

*My family who supports me every step of the way regardless where I am and how long I am gone,  
I love you.*

*Blues lovers young and old who attended and support Sugar Queen... please keep the blues alive!*

*And I want to especially want to thank my band. No words can say what I feel...*

*We took the past and made it into the present and press on towards the future.*

*Thank you for helping me tell the story.*



*Sugar Queen*

