



Jim Crozier is the founder of the Wednesday Night Lab Sessions at Bird's Aphrodisiac Oyster Shack. JESSICA GABOURY

# Experimental sessions

Musician  
Jim  
Crozier  
enjoys  
'wonderful  
ride' at  
Bird's

**Amanda  
Sieradzki**  
Council on  
Culture & Arts

In his own words, bassist and guitarist Jim Crozier states he "never couldn't sing a song." In fact, when asked why he's kept music as a part of his life for so many decades, he replies in lyrics: "Why don't you grow up? Quit playing music. Why don't you grow up? Quit playing rock and roll. Why don't you grow up and just die?"

Crozier is the founder of the Wednesday Night Lab Sessions at Bird's Aphrodisiac Oyster Shack.

After retiring from the Department of State in 2013, he agreed to take on the Happy Hour time slot. What began as a short four-week stint quickly morphed into a weekly series as he invited local musicians and friends to join him for the two-hour show. Crozier is looking forward to sharing the stage with a familiar friend in an upcoming session on Jan. 30.

"Jimi McKenzie was my first guest in February of 2014," says Crozier. "It's interesting, coming back full circle."

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Jim Crozier with Belmont and Jones at Bird's. Lab Sessions have become a blank canvas for musicians of all backgrounds and interests. JUDY STONE

## IF YOU GO

**What:** Jimi McKenzie with Jim Crozier in the Lab

**When:** 6-8 p.m., Wednesday Jan. 30

**Where:** Bird's Aphrodisiac Oyster Shack, 325 N Bronough St.

**Cost:** No cover

**Contact:** For more information, visit <https://jimcrozier.com/lab/>.

# Crozier

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Starting as a pilot project, the Lab Sessions have become a blank canvas for musicians of all backgrounds and interests. Crozier always wanted to keep the evening “loose” while getting the opportunity to play with new people in the community.

The guests span a variety of genres, which is particularly important to Crozier. He never wanted to be tied to just one category as a musician. Though he’s labeled some of his music as a singer-songwriter as “edgy blues and twisted Americana” he finds it hard to pigeon-hole his sound.

“I specifically wanted to play with people either that I had never played with before or that I had played with in a different situation,” elaborates Crozier. “It was always designed to challenge and push us out of our comfort zones, thus the concept of the laboratory. There’s always been an experimental aspect to it.”

Crozier was first introduced to the piano and received lessons from his aunt before moving to the trumpet in fifth grade. After seeing a friend’s ukulele and learning three chords on it, he wanted a similar stringed instrument and received a guitar for his birthday the following year. He was inspired after seeing The Beatles on the Ed Sullivan show in 1964, and took up performing in his school’s stage band.

It was a girl that got Crozier on the bass — after seeing that she wanted to play guitar in the band, he approached his music director and asked to switch. The ecstatic director took him to a room with all kinds of bass instruments, and two weeks later, Crozier was also performing with the school’s orchestra.

“I kept playing guitar in a rock and roll band,” says Crozier. “As a bass player though I got to do everything including playing in pit orchestras for musicals.”

While he was enrolled as a music major at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Crozier worked with a summer



Bird's Aphrodisiac Oyster Shack customers enjoy a performance. D.A. ROBIN/DEMOCRAT

stock theater company on breaks. He penned six songs for an original musical, “Touch” that sent him to New York City. As a 20-year-old music director, the show’s soundtrack was nominated for a Grammy award. Though they didn’t win, Crozier continued his tenure in New York City as a taxi driver and cutting his teeth as a musician before heading to Tallahassee in 1976.

He spent his first Florida summer biking around town and met a number of Tallahassee’s bluegrass and folk musicians including Butch Burns, Dave Langston, and the Kline Brothers. He also earned a spot in Florida State’s School of Music auditioning with two injured fingers on his double bass.

“By the end of the summer, I stuck a notice up on the bulletin board of the Leon County food co-op that I was a bass player and I got a call from Bill

Wharton,” says Crozier. “I joined his Wild Blue Yonders band as a bass player. That was my introduction to the Tallahassee music scene.”

To stay busy as a musician in Tallahassee, Crozier’s strategy was to play with as many people and bands as possible. He enjoyed learning and playing with Bill Kennedy, who started FSU’s jazz music program, and played in countless bands in between. In the mid-90s he founded Acme Rhythm and Blues and insisted on only performing one public date a month.

“That’s always been a rule that I’ve done,” says Crozier. “We played the Warehouse and packed it every month. Which is how we get to the Wednesday Night Lab Sessions and why the format is what it is.”

Every Wednesday audiences can gear up for a completely different expe-

rience that Crozier says largely depends on his guest. Though it started with him inviting past band mates and friends, Crozier says that the majority of guests are now musicians who have reached out to him. The rules remain open-ended — the musicians can do anything they want with the two hours and are encouraged to try out new and experimental genres.

“You can have anyone you want with you and you can do anything except fire me,” laughs Crozier, who accompanies on his bass or guitar. “It’s been a wonderful ride. I’ll keep playing as long as people keep coming and people want to play with me.”

*Amanda Sieradzki is the feature writer for the Council on Culture & Arts. COCA is the capital area’s umbrella agency for arts and culture ([www.tallahasseearts.org](http://www.tallahasseearts.org)).*