



Brett Waters will perform Nov. 27.

Brett Waters stepping back on stage with band

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Last summer, vocalist Brett Waters tentatively stepped onto the stage at Bird's Aphrodisiac Oyster Shack with husband and musician Clyde Ramsey for Jim Crozier's Lab Sessions. Ramsey has played a part in the Tallahassee music scene since he was young, but Waters says she was nervous to sing for the first time in years.

Shortly thereafter, Waters and Ramsey joined guitarist Neal Goree at the Bradfordville Blues Club for another gig. The trio started throwing around names to play under. Waters jokingly suggested Brett Waters & the Pool Boys, thinking it would only be for a single performance. One year later, the name has stuck, and the band grew to include Josiah Pye on bass, Tristan

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Brett Waters with husband, musician Clyde Ramsey. Waters and Ramsey joined guitarist Neal Goree and they came up with Brett Waters & the Pool Boys for the band name, thinking it would only be for a single performance. A year later, the name has stuck, and the band has grown to include Josiah Pye on bass, Tristan Shiver on guitar and Steve Howell on drums. BRETT WATERS

Waters

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Shiver on guitar and Steve Howell on drums. While the band has garnered many local fans, the COVID-19 pandemic put a halt to their momentum.

“We started playing under the name accidentally,” laughs Waters. “Last November we played at The Junction on Monroe, and that was really memorable for me because I couldn’t believe just three months after we started that we would be playing there.”

The Junction at Monroe (J@M) opened in late 2014 by Russ Pangratz, and quickly became a staple meeting ground for the Tallahassee music community. After closing for a short time during quarantine, J@M reopened with new safety measures including sanitization, reduced capacity, human distancing and the wearing of face masks in order to keep both bands and patrons safe.

As venues return to in-person programming, Waters says she and the band have continued to take precautions and have turned down many gigs in the past few months. Their upcoming post-Thanksgiving show at J@M on Friday, Nov. 27, will be the first time they take the stage since March.

“It felt like just as we were starting to come into our own as a band and practice more, the pandemic happened,” says Waters. “We’ve had a few socially distanced jams but for safety, we’re still trying to distance ourselves from friends. It’s been kind of a rollercoaster. There have been moments where it feels good to practice and learn new material, I also miss being able to play with my friends.”

Waters has loved music all her life. Her aunt gave her older brother an acoustic guitar when they were children. When no one was home, she would pick it up and play chords and songs on her own. She kept her guitar and singing skills under wraps for a long time but overcame her shyness after leaving home for college at Florida State University.

Waters played a few solo acoustic gigs and started going to funk and blues nights at the Warehouse on Gaines Street. That’s where she met local musicians, including her husband, Ramsey. They share an appreciation for funk and soul from musicians like The Band and Joe Cocker, which frequent Brett Waters & The Pool Boys setlists. Lately, Waters has been listening to a lot of the honky-tonk country music, as well as Eric Clapton and Freddie King.

“It’s important to practice singing and playing guitar, and for the band to perform together, but I think what people might not consider is how important it

If you go

What: Brett Waters & The Pool Boys

When: 8 p.m., Friday, Nov. 27

Where: J@M The Junction at Monroe, 2011 South Monroe St

Cost: \$10 cover at the door

Contact: For more information, visit junctionatmonroe.com

really is to take time and listen to music and think about what you like about a song,” says Waters. “I think of a band as more of a team than an individual person, so I really like the way these musicians like Freddie King and his band have a team effort and how everything plays together.”

Waters’ favorite part of the rehearsal process is hearing the band come together as one. Prior to practices, they will create a shared song list online to listen to so that they have the styles in mind when they get together. She’s appreciated the collective knowledge “The Boys” have passed along, and their continual care and encouragement.

“Everyone in the band has much more experience than me, but they’ve really encouraged and empowered me,” says Waters. “I think that’s cool that these super talented guys, who all deserve more than me to be up front, have been playing under my name. I view it as a team effort and they do as well.”

Waters said that in spite of rescheduling their original August date to Nov. 27 at J@M, she is hopeful that the performance will go smoothly. She and the band are keeping an eye on COVID numbers in Leon county, and are encouraging people who feel comfortable attending to follow all the venue’s guidelines.

She’s looking forward to seeing the music community in person again, as well as sharing the evening with friends and family coming together for the holiday season. Even though she misses giving fans hugs after a set, she hopes to bring a similarly warm feeling to everyone in J@M with her vocals.

“We encourage that if people feel comfortable to come out, wear a mask, distance from people and be respectful of those you see wearing a mask,” says Waters. “We hope people will leave with a smile and feel uplifted and hopeful. I know these are trying times, so hopefully it can be a time where we all forget for a little bit what’s happening and just enjoy ourselves.”

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).