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[www.rustykeyrecords.com](http://www.rustykeyrecords.com)

For Information & Booking  
415.905.4567  
[booking@rustykeyrecords.com](mailto:booking@rustykeyrecords.com)

# Sheldon Bermont

**"By applying the street version of genetic engineering to blues, funk, and jazz, Sheldon Bermont and the Blues Alliance have conjured up a new mix that fills a long standing need for deep urban sounds that combine raw passion with delicate sophistication. With his full, sultry baritone vocals and his personal arsenal of horns, Bermont gives time-honored styles a new twist." - Mack Lincoln**

Mr. Bermont says that Mr. Lincoln's review has pretty well nailed the description of his music style. But that was just one band in Nashville in the late 90's. Over the years, in 6 major cities, and on the road this dedicated performer has also played trombone in full 12-piece Salsa orchestras, written over 250 songs covering everything from blues, to country, to soul, and back to jazz, recorded as a vocalist, horn-player, and as a



percussionist, and played trombone as a side man in nightclubs in countless R&B and Soul bands. He freely admits to blues being his first and greatest love but some of his best writing has strayed pretty far from the 1-4-5.

His first professional experiences were playing trombone in the active nightclub scene of Washington D.C. in the late 60's. At that time he was the youngest member of any horn section and learned the ropes, playing the urban soul and Motown radio hits. A new song would be aired on the radio on a Monday and the 8 or 10-piece band would be playing it, fully arranged and rehearsed, by that weekend.

In 1969 Sheldon Bermont started his life-long pattern of travel to find the right sounds and music surroundings. He migrated 3,000 miles to land in San Francisco's Bay Area. While in college, he performed regularly with countless Latin and Soul bands from Marin County down

to San Jose. Then it was south to Los Angeles to hook up with a hard-edged, horn-driven jazz/rock band called Max. 1975 found him back in the Bay Area, immersed in the Latin/Rock scene. Coke Escovedo, world-renowned percussionist, chose him to head up his horn section in several band concepts. That was followed by a little road work with Pete Escovedo's Azteca and a brief stint with Malo, George Santana's group. He then went back to his R&B roots, performing with the disco/soul hit-maker Sylvester. In 1977 Lenny Williams, the former lead singer of Tower of Power invited him to be part of his new band for an extensive touring schedule, hitting major cities in the U.S. and in England. Soul/Jazz Guitar legend, Eric Gale, noticed his playing while Lenny's Band was opening for him for a week at New York's Bottom Line. He commented that Sheldon Bermont was the strongest trombone player he had ever heard.

# Sheldon Bermont

The late 70's brought a halt to large budget touring. As full horn sections were being replaced with synthesizers, Bermont continued to work steadily based on his ability to add vocals and percussion to his heart-felt horn solos. Back in San Francisco, Bermont played with The Larry Van Band, Stu Blank and his Nasty Habits, The Hoodoo Rhythm Devils, and many others.

Always in search of hot music centers, he moved to Houston, Texas in 1982. There he played with Combo Dynamita, an authentic salsa group, five sets a night, five nights a week. He also performed with an 11-piece R&B review called The Sultans of Soul, featuring Big Eugene Ross, the original guitar player from Jr. Walker and the All-Stars. And then back in Los Angeles, once again, he became the musical director for traditional blues guitar player/singer J.J. Jones's group, the Bad Boys.

Throughout the 80's Bermont continued to write and soon had a catalog of hundreds of blues, country, soul, and pop tunes. He took that collection to Nashville in 1990. He pitched country tunes during the day and dove into Music City's Blues scene at night. He sang and played horns with Tulsa Blues master, Jr. Markham, working the club scene, bringing the blues into venues previously "off-limits" to the blues sound. It was then that he put together his quartet, The Blues Alliance, for the express purpose of showcasing the tunes he had written in a format that he says was "extremely different from any blues Nashville was getting exposed to at the time." The sound featured the arch-top guitar wizardry of now-New Mexico-based Dan Dowling. Bermont sang lead and featured his entire collection of horns; tenor trombone, bass trombone, flugelhorn, and pocket trumpet. The Blues Alliance was paid to perform original music in a town where musicians were frequently paying the club-owners for the chance to display their writing efforts. He describes his blues interpretation this way: "I never wanted my music to be a competition for who could play the most notes. I just want to tell a story and have the groove be raw and undeniable."

Blues, R&B, Soul, Jazz, Country, Latin, Americana...Sheldon Bermont has dedicated his recent efforts to record the backlog of tunes filed away. When asked about the immediate future, he offered, "*As any profitable nightclub scene literally fades into part of American history, I would love to stay in the studio, get a reputation for writing across pre-conceived boundary lines, and still hit the people where they live*".



# Herman Eberitzsch



A native of San Francisco, Herman has earned a reputation as one of the Bay Area's premiere keyboardists. Herman has performed and recorded with a multitude of artists, including *Greg Errico of Sly and the Family Stone*, *Lee Osker* from the group, *War*, members of the band *Malo*, blues artist *Little Milton* and the *Sy Klopps Band* under manager *Herbie Herbert*.

An arranger and composer, his music has been recorded by such artists as *Little Ester Phillips* and *Coke Escovedo*. Versed in many styles of music and all keyboards, Herman currently appears regularly throughout the San Francisco Bay Area.

