

# Arts & Culture

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## From the Heart

**“POSSESSED” IS THE WORD THAT COMES TO MIND** whenever I see bluesman Jimmy Pailer play—which I do as often as possible, because he grabs me every time. With his captivating charisma and mastery of his craft, it’s no wonder the guitarist/vocalist has become a local legend in his 30 years on the Sacramento scene.

Now 62, Pailer began guitar at age 7 while growing up in St. Louis, Missouri, and knew right away this was “it.”

“There were a couple other things I enjoyed—I was pretty good at hockey—but there was never any question what I was going to do with my life,” he says.

He’s had his setbacks. A few years ago, bad knees made performing so painful Pailer faced the possibility of never playing

again. Two knee-replacement surgeries later, he’s back on stage, but not as often. Spending time with his 12-year-old son, Jacob, is now a priority; his older son, James, lives in Boston.

A Sacramento Blues Society Hall of Fame inductee, Pailer typically includes in shows his highly original takes on tunes by the likes of Jimi Hendrix and Stevie Ray Vaughan. Whatever he plays, he says, he plays from the heart.

“My playing is based on how I feel at the moment,” says Pailer, whose sidemen shift depending on the gig. “That’s why I have a lot of followers—because you never know what I’m gonna do.”

Pailer plays regularly at The Torch Club in Sacramento and the San Juan Club in Fair Oaks. Visit [torchclub.net](http://torchclub.net) and [sanjuanclub.net](http://sanjuanclub.net) for details.—CATHY CASSINOS-CARR