



LaSalle Post photo: Matt Weingarden

Sixteen-year-old LaSalle guitarist Christian Vegh, was invited down to Nashville to play at B.B. King's Blues Club. Vegh started taking his guitar playing seriously in 2009.

By Matt Weingarden
Staff Reporter

For Christian Vegh, the thrill has only just begun. Imagine at age 16 being invited to play the guitar live at B.B. King's Blues Club in Nashville.

"It was an awesome experience. I learned a lot and saw some fantastic players there," said Vegh. "Usually you have to audition to play at the club, but they checked out my playing on the YouTube channel and invited me to sit in."

Vegh traveled to Nashville to play the legendary blues club with the Third Coast Trio house band. Included in his repertoire—a solo version of the Jimmy Hendrix song "Little Wing". The entire performance streamed live on the Internet.

Then, it was on to Memphis where Vegh visited the famous Gibson guitar factory and

checked out several blues museums. Unfortunately, because he is so young, he was unable to get into many clubs to watch any other musicians play. In fact, he had to turn away offers to play because he is underage. He has the same challenges locally as well.

West Palm

Currently, Vegh sings and plays lead guitar in the blues-rock band West Palm. The group is the youngest band to ever win the recent Long and McQuade battle of the bands contest.

West Palm is a trio made up of Vegh and drummer Ryley Demers, 14, and bass player by Silvio Campanaro, 12. His newest band Red Legacy is made up of Mackenzie Burrows, 14, on drums and Logan Fletcher, 15, playing bass.

Vegh and West Palm are booked to play at a number of

upcoming festivals and venues this summer. On April 13, the band will open for Sonny Rhodes induction into the Canadian Blues Hall of Fame at the Oasis Pub at Place Concorde. Vegh has been asked to back to B.B. King's in Nashville and West Palm are booked to play this year's Blues Fest, Tecumseh Corn Festival, the Art of Wine and Art in the Park.

Vegh, a student in the International Baccalaureate program at Assumption College Catholic World School, began playing guitar in 2006, but didn't really start to play seriously until about three years ago.

"It turned into habit... I would play in front of the TV. It's like lifting weights—I could feel myself becoming a stronger player," said Vegh. "I began taking lessons, studying theory and learning the fret-

board. He currently studies with local instructors Lee Cochrane and Pete Palazzolo.

"Both teachers have helped me a lot. Pete helps me with vocals and maybe more styles. Lee teaches me theory and the more technical aspects of the guitar," said Vegh.

He also cites Eric Johnson, Stevie Ray Vaughn and Jeff Beck as major influences on his playing and also listens to bands Pink Floyd and Rush.

Vegh's goal is to study music at Julliard or Berkeley and to play on stage at Royal Albert Hall with his guitar hero, blues-rockers Joe Bonamassa. His schedule keeps him (and his parents Ken and Sherrilynn) busy with lessons and rehearsals seven days a week.

"We stay very busy," said his mother Sherrilynn Colley-Vegh. "Thank goodness he doesn't play sports too."