

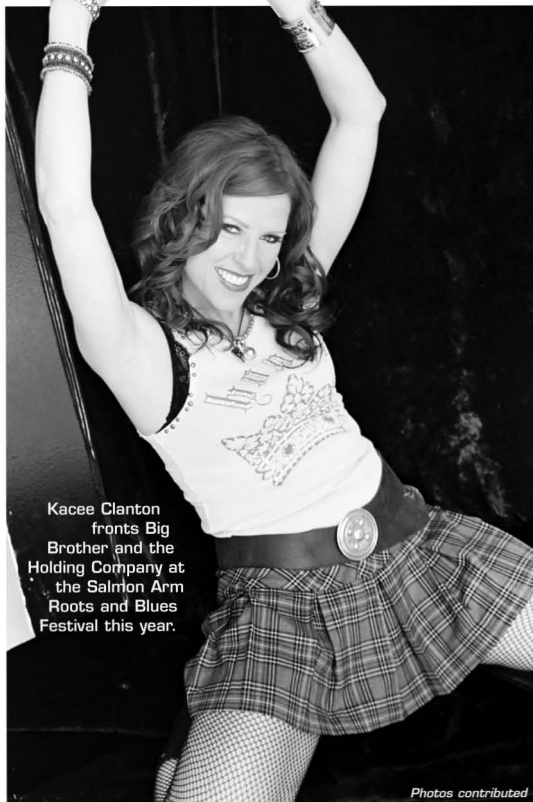
the main event



Big Brother and the Holding Company, with Janis Joplin, foreground, in the late '60s.



The original members of Big Brother and the Holding Company include, from left: Peter Albin, Sam Andrew and David Getz.



Kacey Clanton fronts Big Brother and the Holding Company at the Salmon Arm Roots and Blues Festival this year.

Photos contributed

A part time Joplin

Big Brother's lead singer stays busy touring, modeling acting and recording

By Andre Wetjen

Kacey Clanton moves like Janis Joplin. When her rough 'n' tumble vocals work through classics like *Summertime* or *Ball 'n' Chain*, you'd swear it was the legendary blues lady singing.

In other words, Clanton is a perfect fit to front Joplin's original band, Big Brother and the Holding Company, as well as play the lead in the off-Broadway musical, *Love, Janis*.

Despite her natural gifts, however, getting the Joplin role in the musical back in 2001 intimidated her.

"I had moments of almost panic because I didn't realize at the time how huge this role was," she said. "I thought, 'I can't believe I'm doing this — these are such huge shoes to fill!'"

A good friend, Beth Hart, who played the role before her, insisted Clanton try out for the part.

"She dragged me into it kicking and screaming," she said.

Despite a career that includes modeling and commercial work, Clanton was wary of tackling the-atre.

"I was very intimidated about the thought of doing stage."

It didn't take long, however, for Clanton to get over her fears.

"It became addictive so quickly; there's just nothing like the stage."

People often compared Clanton to Joplin, but she never knew why.

"I didn't

understand how much we were alike until I got that role and began studying footage of her," she said. "Then I began to see what the director was talking about. He told me, 'Do me a favour, don't ever take any acting lessons because what you do, you do naturally.'"

Sam Andrew, Big Brother's original lead guitarist, happened to be the musical director of *Love, Janis*. In 2002, he asked Clanton to front Big Brother, and she has toured with the band off and on ever since.

Big Brother, in fact, with Clanton fronting, will perform at the 16th annual Salmon Arm Roots and Blues Festival, held Aug. 15-17 at the Salmon Arm Fair Grounds. The band headlines Saturday, Aug. 16.

Clanton has performed in the B.C. Interior before. Joe

Cocker recognized her talents and used her for his last few tours, one of which was a concert at Kelowna's Prospera Place a few years ago.

"Yeah, that would have been me up there," she said laughing, when asked if she was backing Cocker for his last Kelowna date.

Between Cocker and Big Brother tours, Clanton still manages to find time to produce her own music.

Her last album, *Mama Came to Sing*, was recorded over a number of years.

"I'd go out on the road for about three months, and then I'd be home for maybe two or three weeks and we'd squeeze in as much recording as we could," she said.

Clanton, touring with Cocker at the time, wasn't even there when the recording was being mixed. It was finished — artwork and all — while she was in Australia. "It was shipped to me while I was down there — I hadn't even seen or heard the final product until then."

She is setting time aside for her latest recording, though. She's staying put in Los Angeles for now, not only recording, but also teaching at the L.A. Music Academy and looking at some TV projects.

"I just want to stay home awhile."

Clanton is pretty excited about her upcoming CD.

"I still haven't done the record that I want to do, and that's the one I'm doing right now."

Some of the songs slated for the CD have a "swampy feel", she explained, with plenty of slide guitar — an album that's taking her back to her roots.

"I just want to do a record where I'm not screaming all the time," she said. "With this new record, I finally have the luxury of doing the stuff live and working it all out live before I go in and record."



quick hit

What: Salmon Arm Roots and Blues Festival
When: Aug. 15-17
Who: Big Brother & the Holding Company, David Wilcox, Spirit of the West, the Neville Brothers and many more.
Where: Salmon Arm Fair Grounds
Tickets: Available by mail: Box 21, Salmon Arm, BC V1E 4N2; by phone: (250) 833-4096; or on website, www.rootsandblues.ca

