

Kevin Hayes Bio

Kevin Hayes was born on February 14, 1959 in San Diego, CA., the fourth of seven children. His father, a navy doctor, also played classical and jazz piano in his spare time. Hayes and all his siblings took piano lessons from an early age, and after his older brother Chris received a guitar for his birthday, Kevin was rewarded on his eighth birthday with his first drumset. The Hayes house would never know another quiet moment.

When Hayes was eleven, his parents divorced and his mother moved with the children to San Francisco. At thirteen, he began taking lessons at Blue Bear School of Music, and at fourteen, along with sister Bonnie (keyboards) and brother Chris (guitar), formed a jazz-rock ensemble called Sweetmeat. When he was sixteen, he joined jazz singer Michele Hendricks' group Chelsea, and at eighteen toured with her father, scat singing legend Jon Hendricks of Lambert, Hendricks, and Ross fame.

In 1980-81, he played drums in the house band on a local TV show on the NBC affiliate in San Francisco led by cabaret piano player Billy Philadelphia. Around this time, he joined up with sister Bonnie's band, The Punts, an energetic four piece punk-new wave outfit. They released a record in 1982 on the Slash label, and toured dingy clubs all over America.

When at home, Hayes began playing with the house band at Berkeley blues club Larry Blakes. The band consisted of a rotating crop of seasoned R&B and blues players, led by guitarist Tim Kaihatsu, who would later join the Robert Cray Band on rhythm guitar. Future Cray bandmates Jim Pugh (keyboards) and Karl Sevareid (bass) also played in the band. They often backed R&B heavyweights like Etta James, Tracy Nelson, Allen Toussaint, Lee Dorsey and many others.

In 1987, Hayes recorded another album with sister Bonnie's band, who had signed with Chrysalis Records. The band toured in support of the record, opening for Huey Lewis and the News, where brother Chris was lead guitarist and songwriter.

One night at Larry Blakes, Hayes met the Robert Cray band at one of their shows. When Cray decided to make a change in the drum chair in 1989, Hayes got the call. In his eighteen years with the Robert Cray Band, he has played on all ten of Cray's albums from Midnight Stroll on, toured extensively worldwide, and played on records by B.B. King, John Lee Hooker, and Van Morrison.

