



THE MATTHEW SKOLLER BAND BIOGRAPHY

One of the hardest working harmonica-based blues groups in Chicago, The Matthew Skoller Band rocks with a fierceness not felt since the likes of blues harp icons Little Walter and Sonny Boy Williamson II. Skoller and his band of veteran musicians are at the forefront of a new generation who've come up schooled in Chicago's world-renowned and highly competitive blues scene.

The Skoller Band's latest CD is *These Kind of Blues!*, produced by Matthew and Larry Skoller and Vincent Bucher for Skoller's own Tongue 'N Groove label. The album features seven new original songs, plus covers of songs by Junior Parker, James Cotton and Jimmy Reed. Niles Frantz, host of Comin' Home on WBEZ 91.5 FM, Chicago writes,

These Kind of Blues! is a powerful album that needs to be heard. It is full of top-notch, yet understated playing by great, experienced, young Chicago bluesmen. They dazzle with feel, precision and succinctness, not flash.

But what sets this album apart is Skoller's songwriting. Not since the old days have I heard such passionate, straight-from-the-heart expression in blues lyrics.

The French blues magazine *Soul Bag* adds,

“Matthew Skoller does not hide his admiration for Sonny Boy Williamson or Walter Horton -- both major influences -- but he adds his own personal touch wrought with lyricism, a sense of melody and an advanced technique.”

HISTORY

As with many blues performers of his generation, Skoller's been influenced as much by Bob Dylan, Neil Young, Jimi Hendrix and the Allman Brothers as by the legends of blues. Skoller's take on the blues tradition is about letting his own voice come through -- his culture, his experience.

Skoller moved to Chicago in January 1987. His already mature harmonica playing led a number of musicians to take him under their wings. He paid his dues backing up a “who's who” of creative and passionate musicians, including the legendary Jimmy Rogers, Big Time Sarah, and Deitra Farr. Skoller's emotional, high-energy style caught the ear of veteran bassist/vocalist J.W. Williams who invited Skoller to join his band, the Chi-Town Hustlers. The next year, Skoller became a member of Big Daddy Kinsey and The Kinsey Report, touring with the band throughout the U.S., Canada and Europe.



Despite his success working with others, Skoller heard a gnawing inner voice and since 1992 has led his own band. Like a tornado, he's blown through the Chicago blues scene. During the 1996 Democratic convention, Tom Brokaw's NBC Nightly News In-Depth Report featured the Matthew Skoller Band performing live at B.L.U.E.S. Also in '96, the band was awarded an artist-in-residency position at the Disney Institute in Orlando, Florida.

In October 1996, the band was a prizewinner at the International Blues Talent Competition held by the Blues Foundation in Memphis. That same year, Hohner Harmonicas installed Skoller as an endorsee.

RECORDINGS

1996 also saw the release of the first Matthew Skoller Band CD, Bone to Pick with You, which Vintage Guitar Magazine called "a strong debut." In 1999, the band released Shoulder to the Wind, for which French Blues magazine Soul Bag noted Skoller's "excellence as an instrumentalist, but also as a composer." TapRoot followed in 2003.

Tongue 'N Groove Records has just released the fourth Matthew Skoller Band album, These Kind Of Blues!, in January 2005.

Skoller's harmonica sound continues to be much in demand. In February 2000, Alligator Records employed him to play harmonica on Koko Taylor's CD, Royal Blue. Skoller's harmonica is featured on 11 songs on the new CD, Knocking At Your Door, from guitarist John Primer. He's also played on albums by Bernard Allison, Larry Garner, Big Daddy Kinsey, Big Time Sarah, Michael Coleman, Harvey Mandel, among others and has recorded a number of television jingles.

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL APPEARANCES

The Matthew Skoller Band is a highly skilled, highly professional organization, with extensive regional touring experience, gigs at prestigious national venues, and national and international festival appearances. For several years, The Matthew Skoller Band held a regular gig at Buddy Guy's Legends, perhaps the world's best-known blues club. This helped them build a large and enthusiastic following throughout Chicago and the midwest. Skoller and crew just ended an 8 year run every Sunday at the House of Blues in Chicago. A recent highlight was the band's performance at the 2004 Lucerne Festival.



The band has performed in Greece almost every year since 1997. Matthew also has performed at numerous festivals and club gigs in England, Italy, Norway, Belgium, Spain, Switzerland and France.

WEB SITE

Check out The Matthew Skoller Band's new "Cyber Crib" at www.matthewskoller.com. The site includes:

- * Mp3 audio from both Matthew Skoller Band CDs.
- * Photos of Skoller performing with Buddy Guy, Lonnie Brooks, Larry Garner, Big Smokey Smothers and Hubert Sumlin; jamming with Keb' Mo'; and hanging out with Albert Collins and Big Daddy Kinsey.
- * A complete schedule of events.