



# THE MATTHEW SKOLLER BAND

**MATTHEW SKOLLER IS ONE OF CHICAGO'S MOST RESPECTED HARP BLOWERS** and blues bandleaders. For the past 20 years he has played in all of Chicago's heaviest showcase venues and toured much of the world with his super tight ensembles. Deeply rooted in the tradition of the Chicago blues elders with whom he worked and studied, Skoller has developed a unique style that conjures the past while being firmly planted in the present.

His blues wardrobe clothes a range of original songs whose subject matter comments on many of the issues and realities of life during this age of technology, information and upheaval. Skoller, known for his fiery and engaging performances, combines passionate harp playing and singing with original song writing and

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**“...we’d expect nothing less from an artist with such prodigious songwriting talents. *These Kind of Blues!* vaults Skoller to the upper echelon of the young lions of Chicago blues.” – JEFF JOHNSON, *CHICAGO SUN-TIMES***

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prodigious production skills. He has self produced four of his CDs and the critically acclaimed, award winning *Let’s Talk About Love* by **Lurrie Bell**.

Most recently Matthew collaborated with his brother **Larry Skoller** (producer and guitarist extraordinaire) on the Grammy nominated, historical project, *Chicago Blues A living History*. He lent his production experience, deep knowledge of Chicago Blues history, and his harmonica to this project that is now being hailed by critics as one of the greatest Chicago Blues events of our time. Matthew has emerged as one of Chicago’s most accomplished blues-based artists.

## HISTORY

As with many blues performers of his generation, Skoller has been influenced as much by Bob Dylan, Neil Young, Jimi Hendrix and the Allman Brothers as he has by Little Walter, Muddy Waters, Percy Mayfield and other legends of the 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**, recording and touring with the band throughout the U.S. and Canada.

Despite his success working with others, Skoller heard the crying of an 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. on Halsted St. in Chicago. Also in ‘96, the band was awarded an artist-in-residency position at the Disney Institute in Orlando, Florida.

## 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 released the fourth Matthew Skoller Band album, *These Kind Of Blues!*, in January 2005. This album was picked as one of *Mojo Magazine’s* Top ten blues albums of 2005. It received rave reviews from nearly every blues publication in the business.

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 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

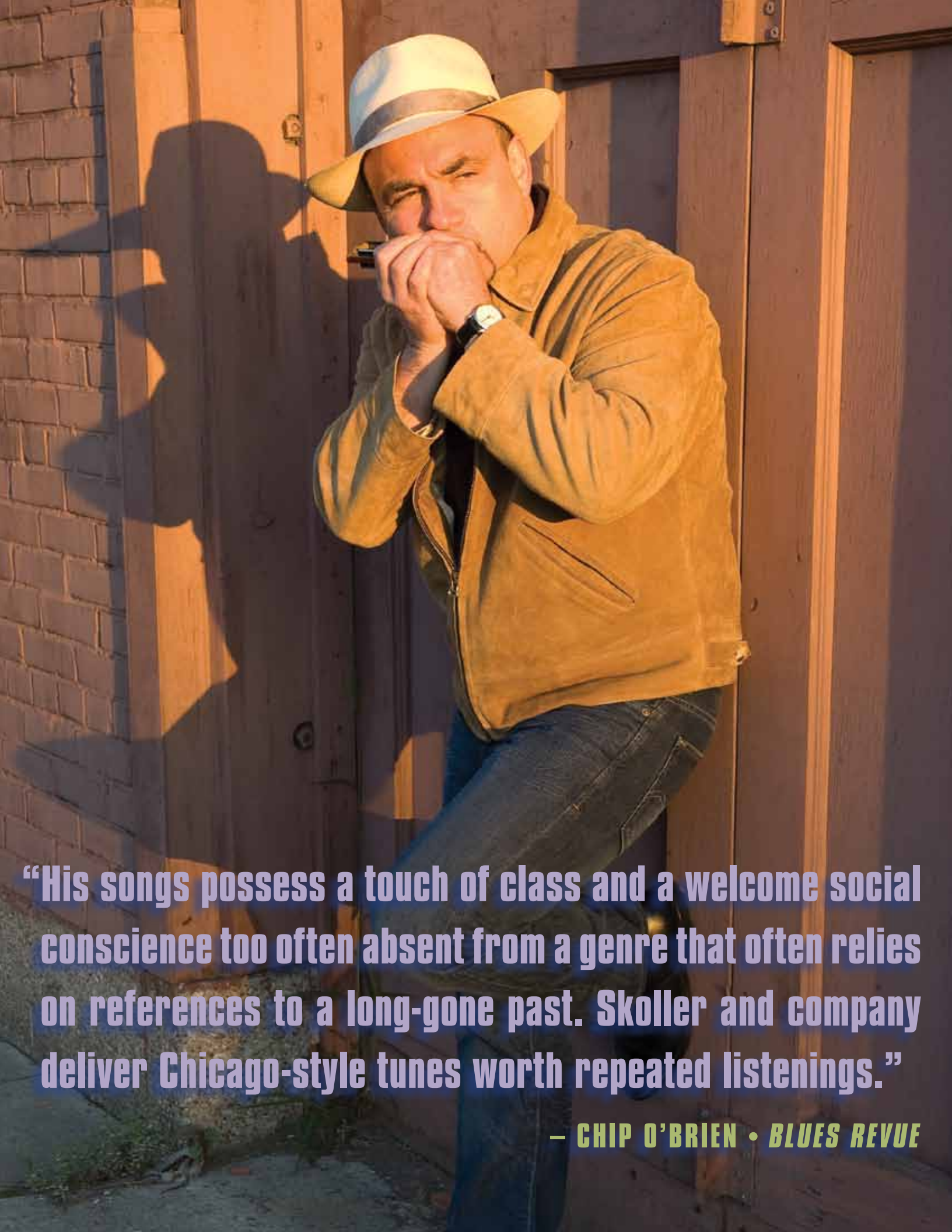
The Matthew Skoller Band is a highly skilled, highly professional organization with extensive regional touring experience, gigs at prestigious national venues, and national and international festival appearances. For the last 15 years, The Matthew Skoller Band held a regular gig at Buddy Guy’s Legends, 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 had an 8-year run every Sunday at the House of Blues in Chicago and still play the venue on an ongoing basis. Other highlights have been performances at the 2004 Lucerne Blues Festival. The Mawazine World Music Festival in Rabat Morocco in 2006 and again in 2008. Matthew also has performed at numerous festivals and club gigs in England, Italy, Norway, Belgium, Spain, Switzerland, Greece, Chile, Holland, France, Normandy, Germany, Finland and China.

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**FOR BOOKING INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT MATTHEW AT:**

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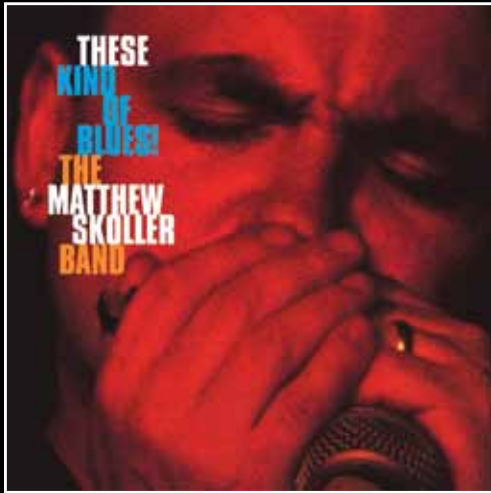
*Matthew Skoller plays Hohner Harmonicas*



**“His songs possess a touch of class and a welcome social conscience too often absent from a genre that often relies on references to a long-gone past. Skoller and company deliver Chicago-style tunes worth repeated listenings.”**

**– CHIP O'BRIEN • *BLUES REVUE***

# PRAISE FOR Matthew Skoller AND These Kind of Blues!



## NAMED ONE OF THE TOP 10 BLUES ALBUMS OF 2005 - MOJO MAGAZINE

“This release has a huge impact on its first play it fairly drips with all the best in Chicago Blues—grooves, beat, strong lyrics, musicianship and urban grind.”

— *BLUES MATTERS* (U.K.)

“Matthew Skoller is one of today’s top harmonica players clearly influenced by artists such as Sonny Boy Williamson. He’s a good singer who can be a gritty vocalist. He is an even better songwriter, taking Blues traditions into modern times with contemporary themes beyond the sexuality and heartbreak of too many Blues songs.”

— JAMES WALKER • CONTRIBUTING EDITOR, *BLUESWAX*

“*These Kind of Blues!* is a powerful album that needs to be heard... Not since the old days have I heard such passionate, straight-from-the-heart expression in blues lyrics... The songs project a seasoned maturity, a wisdom; they move way beyond the adolescent sexuality and tired heartbreak of too many modern blues songs. You definitely need these kind of blues.”

— NILES FRANTZ, *WBEZ, CHICAGO PUBLIC RADIO*

“His throaty singing and his harmonica playing are true-blue in the idiom, but this is no conventional travelogue from the Chicago of 40 years ago: his songs are either set firmly in the present, like *Wired World*, or choose traditional motifs only to transform them, as in *Down At Your Buryin’*.”

— TONY RUSSELL, *MOJO MAGAZINE* (U.K.)

“The Matthew Skoller Band is an outstanding group that expresses blues in the urban or Chicago blues idiom. *These Kind of Blues!* offer Matthew Skoller as a brilliant and significant songwriter, arranger, harpist, vocalist and bandleader. He presents contemporary blues with silhouettes of Junior Parker, James Cotton and Jimmy Reed. ...living and breathing the pathos of tradition and history.”

— STERLING PLUMPP, *BIG CITY BLUES*

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# MATTHEW SKOLLER AS PRODUCER

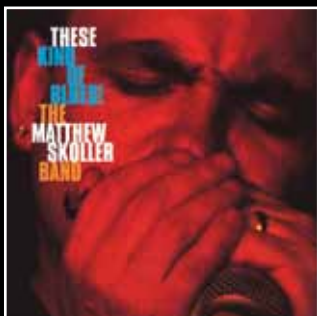
Matthew has self produced four of his own cd's and the critically acclaimed and award winning *Let's Talk About Love* by **Lurrie Bell**. As well as having been the main production consultant behind the also critically acclaimed and Grammy nominated *Chicago Blues: A Living History*, making him one Chicago's most accomplished blues-based producers. He is currently producing another album for Lurrie Bell.



Lurrie Bell • Let's Talk About Love  
**BEST TRADITIONAL BLUES RECORDING**  
**2008 BLUES BLAST MUSIC AWARDS**



Chicago Blues: A Living History  
**BEST TRADITIONAL BLUES RECORDING**  
**2009 BLUES BLAST MUSIC AWARDS**



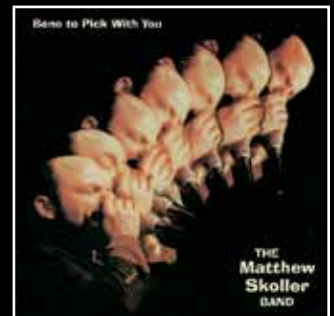
These Kind of Blues



Shoulder to the Wind



Tap Root



Bone to Pick with You

