

THE ROCKIN' JOHNNY BAND

BIOGRAPHY

The Rockin' Johnny Band has been one of Chicago's most loved blues bands since 1995. Their music has been played on WXRT's "Local Anaesthetic" and "Blues Breakers" radio shows, the band has often been featured at The Chicago Blues Festival, and they regularly work in Chicagoland's best blues clubs such as Buddy Guy's Legends. Their CDs and live performances have drawn great reviews in *Living Blues*, *The Chicago Sun Times*, *Pioneer Press*, and National Public Radio's "848".

Guitarist Johnny Burgin came to Chicago from South Carolina to attend the University of Chicago, and earned the name "Rockin' Johnny" as a DJ at the college radio station WHPK. Rockin' Johnny began playing in the ghetto clubs of Chicago's West Side with blues singer Taildragger, and then began touring nationally as a sideman with former Howlin' Wolf drummer Sam Lay and blues piano legend Pinetop Perkins.

After learning from the masters, he put his own band together. Things started happening for the Rockin Johnny Band after they took a Monday night residency at The Smoke Daddy in Chicago's Wicker Park neighborhood. Their original, energetic approach soon made them a strong local draw week after week and year after year, bringing in blues aficionados, every musician in town, and a younger crowd that normally didn't go to hear blues bands.

The atmosphere the band generated was so electric, their Delmark recording contract was offered by the label after hearing just one set. Since those days, they've toured Europe twice, played festivals and headlined clubs all over the Midwest. The Rockin' Johnny Band has released three studio CDs and a live CD, recorded at BLUES on Halsted. Rockin Johnny has also gone on to become one of Chicago's most in-demand session men, contributing his incisive playing to over a dozen CDs.

The Rockin' Johnny Band plays modern Chicago blues, but is also known for a wide repertoire which ventures into funk, rock, and swing. Their playing shows a spontaneous sense of fun, and always showcases fantastic guitar playing. *Living Blues* states: "top notch ensemble work, with power, drive, and a keen sense of dynamics". They are equally at home whether playing full tilt at a rowdy blues club, playing at a convention of professionals such as the American Architecture Institute at The Blackstone Hotel; from an intimate restaurant setting to a wedding party where everyone wants to dance and have a good time. The band consists of true veterans: Rick Kreher, rhythm guitar, former rhythm guitarist with Muddy Waters for four years; John Sefner, bass, formerly with Studebaker John and Eddie Kirkland; and Rob Lorenz, drums, formerly with Chicago blues legends Dave Meyers and Little Mack Simmons.

Here's what some of Chicago's most in the know critics and music business figures have to say about Rockin' Johnny and The Rockin Johnny Band:

Bruce Iglauer, Alligator Records: "Rockin Johnny delivers the raw, rough-edged spirit of real Chicago blues".

Dick Shurman, writer for *Living Blues*, blues producer: "Rockin' Johnny has brought a refreshing jolt of talent, feeling and affirmation of the Windy City's guitar tradition. Johnny has always been known as a crowd pleaser with rawness, drive, a tight band and a scholarly and musical mastery of the local blues repertoire and vocabulary. He's extra interesting and distinctive because, instead of the overdone warhorses sometimes called "the set list from hell," Johnny mines more obscure building blocks like Little Smokey Smothers, Hip Linkchain or Willie James Lyons, adding to his appeal to hard core purists as well as more casual lovers of powerful Chicago blues. It adds up to a winning combination of depth, a bite like the winter wind, tradition and an up-to-the minute wallop, and offers a guaranteed winner for all who see or book the band."

Quotes:

"Rockin' Johnny plays great guitar in the style of Earl Hooker or a young Buddy Guy" Bruce Stovall, The Yardbird Suite, Edmonton, CA

"His take on early 60's Chicago blues is in the pocket." James Porter, Time Out Chicago

"Rockin Johnny shows a sixth sense for building irresistible tension in his leads.", Jack Oudiz, Blues Access

Rockin' Johnny has that "West Side" Chicago sound down cold and fronts one of the hottest young blues bands anywhere! Hawaii Blues Society

"The great thing about Rockin' Johnny is that his sound is fully rooted in the old style Chicago Blues sound, but his approach is original and contemporary." Karen Hansen, Today's Chicago Blues blog.



Rockin' Johnny

Delmark Recording Artist