

THE FLAMING MUDCATS

The Flaming Mudcats have a distinctive and powerful sound, influenced by a diversity of musical backgrounds and experiences.

More than just a straight ahead blues band the Mudcats incorporate a mixture of a many different styles, as they band swing, shuffle and get low-down in their devotion to the sounds of the Blues, R&B and Rock 'n' Roll.

A firm favourite in Auckland's Blues scene, The Flaming Mudcats are a band that is well versed on what it takes to please a crowd, exhibiting levels of professionalism and musicianship that makes it easy to become a dedicated fan.

The sound of this band is thick and muscular, oozing and bloozing without overkill and ego. The pieces don't just fit together seamlessly, they belong together.

It's as distinctive as it is powerful, and has been influenced by a diversity of musical styles, which manifests itself into a unique musical hybrid as the band swings and shuffles taking you back to another time.

While their music may sound vintage, their attitude is definitely current.

Harmonica ricochets through the mix, incorporated with Jimmie Vaughan and Ike Turner-inspired guitar licks and backed by the band's hard working rhythm section (who are neither too loud or too showy), prove that the Mudcats are a band attentive to detail and which puts a premium on ensemble playing; a tradition that is rapidly becoming obscured and in a way which is rarely heard today.

They confidently move through different components of the blues — shuffles, soul, funk, four on the floor rock and roll and low down blues.

It's plain to see right away that these guys love the music they make together.

The Flaming Mudcats play the blues not just like they mean it, but like they have no choice in the matter.

Anyone who argues that good blues is getting hard to find has never heard of this band... chances are you couldn't find a tighter good time band.

Their mission is to smile in your face and then kick you in the ass, musically speaking. They succeed.

Audiences have bruises to prove it!

Everyone can identify with the Mudcat's brand of blues; it's just that not everyone knows it.

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Craig Bracken - Vocals & Harmonica

Craig has a harmonica style and grace that is the envy of other harp players.

Whether blowing that penetrating single whole note, hanging out back or tearing the roof off... any which way, you can't resist his feel and tone.

Hailed as "the equal of any top international player (past or present) that you would care to name", Craig is a master of the harmonica and sought-after session musician.

His musical career began as front man for Auckland band Guava Groove in the late 1980s with a love of Reggae, Ska, Blues and 60s Soul then in the 1990s a natural progression toward the Blues was made.

In 2006 Craig co-founded the independent record label "Roots Music Aotearoa" with Darcy Perry and Paul Merriot, and the release of Harmonica Masters of New Zealand in 2007 CD marked Craig's first effort as a producer.

Craig has performed at many high profile shows including the 2008 Bluesfest in Whitianga and the 50th Anniversary Mowtown concert at the Mission Estate winery in Napier in 2010.

With a never ending search for tone Craig is continuously experimenting with microphones & amplifiers to find that signature sound.

His influences include Little Walter, George "Harmonica" Smith and Otis Redding.

Craig says "Hey, if things aren't working out on the night... then just remember 'its only music'".



Doug Bygrave - Guitar

Influenced in particular by Johnny Guitar Watson, Magic Sam and the sounds of Louisiana swamp blues, Doug comes from the 'less is more' school of guitar.

If you come along to a Mudcats' gig hoping to hear screaming solos and hot licks processed through umpteen pedals, you're gonna be disappointed.

Doug's style is simple, raw and sparse.

The late 1980s is about the time that Doug found himself hosting a weekly 3 hour blues radio show, which forced him to delve deeper into blues history and all blues styles and he played in a number of blues bands oozing out of the Bay of Plenty in the late 80's/early 90's, including the Gurus of Groove, Sensational Gutter

brothers and Austin Texas.

After a lengthy break, he jumped at the opportunity to play with The Flaming Mudcats.

Doug says "It's great to playing some honest blues with a bunch of guys who share the same passion for the music."



Ian Thomson - Drums

Ian has always wanted to play in a blues band that not only plays great music but that also understands enough to play with space, taste and tone, and to let the song groove and breathe.

For Ian it's always been not just about playing the blues, but also about entertaining the audience, connecting with them, with the audience and band feeding off each other.

Growing up listening to Little Richard, Louis Jordan, Bo Diddley and Chuck Berry set Ian off on a journey down that long highway playing with some amazing players and enjoying some incredible experiences on the way.

Two recent trips to the USA soaking up the roots of his influences, paying homage to his heroes and meeting the locals, have been fulfilling and inspiring to Ian.

Ian says "We all really love playing this stuff. The last few years have redefined and reshaped my playing for sure."



Sean McCarthy - Bass Guitar

Sean still remembers the first time he heard the Blues.

He was at home with his Dad who was playing some of his old 45s.

The first few bars of Tommy Tucker's High Heel Sneakers hit him like a ton of bricks and got him headed down the blues road forever.

He is talking blues the way it used to be played... Willie Dixon, Muddy Waters, Howlin' Wolf, Sonny Boy Williamson, Little Walter, Elmore James, Jimmy Reed and Hound Dog Taylor to name but a few.

He fell in love with Hubert Sumlin and his guitar playing, he shuddered at the sound of Little Walter's harp playing, but it was Willie Dixon, Calvin Jones, Dave Myers and Willie Kent that got him tapping his feet and

made him think..."Yeah, that's what I wanna do!"

"I'm a Blues bass player. I'm not a Jazz player. I'm definitely not a Rock player who doesn't know better...and I'm pretty sure there's a difference", says Sean.

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"The Flaming Mudcats performed at the 2011 Kia Motors Devonport Food, Wine & Music Festival, in front of an audience of 2,500. They grabbed the crowd and had them engaged, non-stop, the entire time. They had huge energy, awesome range, and are super talented! Working with professionals like them makes our job easier."

- *Gavin Busch, B3 Events Limited – March 2011*

"The Flaming Mudcats are a high energy power house blues band, aimed squarely at rocking the crowd. We enjoy engineering and providing quality sound that equals their punchy style and outstanding professional performance. We always look forward to conveying their rhythm and groove out to the audience, ensuring a combined show success."

- *Ray & Brenda Ward, NZ Sound Reinforcement – March 2011*

"The Flaming Mudcats played as part of the lineup for the 2011 Marchwood Blues Picnic. We only hire first class musicians and I have to say after their performance that The Flaming Mudcats are the best blues band in the country at present."

- *Peter Archer, Marchwood Blues Picnic Director – February 2011*

"The Flaming Mudcats are HOT! These guys performed for the first time at the 2011 Woollaston Nelson Jazz & Blues Festival. If you want pros then you have found them. On and off stage these guys are great to work with. The Venues they performed at loved them. Fans followed these guys from venue to venue! As the organiser of the festival The Flaming Mudcats are fantastic entertainers and performers. I would have these guys back in a flash!"

- *Rowena Richards, 2011 Woollaston Nelson Jazz & Blues Festival Organiser – January 2011*

"The Flaming Mudcats play authentic blues and have that kind of great energy on stage that the audience responds to and loves. I appreciate that both as a performer and festival director."

- *Billy TK Jnr, Samoa 2011 International Jazz and Blues Festival Director – January 2011*

"The Flaming Mudcats are infectious; the crowd could not stop themselves from dancing. Good, solid blues mixed with toe tapping rock, as an event manager I would never hesitate getting the guys back, and recommending them for any gig, the Flaming Mudcats are on fire."

- *Dave Sparks, Whitianga Scallop Festival – August 2010*

"It's always great to work with musicians who know what they're doing, what they want, and what they're about...what's special about working with The Flaming Mudcats is that they have passion, humour and humility: an awesome musical outfit, and a great bunch of guys. Rock on!"

- *Roger Jeffery, Allegro Music Studio (6 Mar, 2010)*

"The Flaming Mudcats are a blues band with the element of surprise, not just in their unique repertoire but in their spacious musicianship. Mouth harp and guitar that coexist without trespassing on the other, over a rhythm section that doesn't believe in flash. Long may the flame burn."

- *Glen Moffatt, Acclaimed New Zealand roots singer/songwriter (30 Jan, 2010)*

"The Flaming Mudcats debut show was attended by a full house who were treated to a brilliant performance. The Flaming Mudcats are a great energetic band and a band to follow with interest."

- *Dean Morris, Auckland Live Blues Club (18 Oct, 2009)*

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