

## KING MUDDFISH KINGS OF THE NEW ECLECTIC BLUES MOVEMENT

Thirty-five years ago, the seeds of King muDDfish had been planted—teenage saplings, Mike Edwards and Dan Newman were making waves on the South Florida music scene. Daring to stand tall against the pop music winds of the day, Mike and Dan helped lay the roots of



what would become the Jam Band scene of today. The boys honed their skills jamming to their own arrangements of classic blues

tunes like “Spoonful,” “Good Morning Little School Girl,” or “Who Do You Love?” while they also worked on perfecting their song writing craft.

Teaming up with Mike and Dan in 1973, percussionist Jerry Crepeau infused his Detroit influences into the mix and the band developed a loyal following by delivering powerful blues-based jams wherever they played. Three more decades of paying the dues and delivering the music they loved led to the cultivation of King muDDfish and their vision of the “new eclectic blues movement”.

What is the “new eclectic blues movement? It’s almost easier to describe what it is not. Most people who are not avid blues fans often think of B.B. King, the Blues Brothers or perhaps Stevie Ray Vaughn when someone mentions the blues—and this is not the “new eclectic blues movement”—this is simply great, but standard blues fare.

However, take a batch of music from Charley Patton, Son House, Robert Johnson, Muddy Waters, Howlin’ Wolf, John Lee Hooker, Sonny Boy Williamson, Willie Dixon, Albert King, James Brown, John Coltrane, Miles Davis, Dr. John, Curtis Salgado and Taj Mahal, cook it over a low heat until it simmers into a tasty blend. Season it up with hip, tight arrangements and extended opportunities for improvisation, pour it like gravy over veteran musicians who grew up together mixing their Texas, New Orleans, Detroit and Miami heritages, and you end up with something that typifies the “new eclectic blues movement.” It’s innovative and original, yet based on America’s musical form that others have worn thin, different from anything you’ve heard before today, yet you know it’s the blues. It spans across territory from the acoustic sensibility and raw howl of pre-war delta blues to the electrified performances of the Chicago blues era and beyond. It soaks up the per-

formance dynamism of soul and gospel tent revivals, then wraps it in the subtlety of bebop and serves with reverence for the great fathers of the blues. Oh yes, and it all comes with a big sidecar just dripping in joyous jams.

Like other jam bands, the King muDDfish studio recordings are snippets that set the tone for the live performances. Live performance tunes can run from under three minutes to over twenty minutes, depending on how the guys feel on any given night. Often, an impromptu instrumental call and response sets up the beginning of a song; one song may dramatically end and a sole guitar quietly sets up the next tune, or a simple kick drum pattern builds the suspense until the next song is allowed to unfold.

But don’t write off the King muDDfish CD’s as simply a collection of snippets to draw from and expand for live performances—both CD’s were nominated for the Blues Foundation IBC “Best Self-Produced Blues CD of the Year.”

Mike Edwards has become known as the “quadruple threat” in the blues community. While Mike has become one of the most dynamic blues singers of late, he is also gaining recognition as one of the greatest slide guitar players performing today. Throw in his artistry as a lead guitarist and his stand-alone blues harp talent into the mix, and you have a guy whose depth and breadth as a performer leave bigger name artists in awe.

Dan Newman is one of the top blues guitarists in the Southeastern United States. He is not only known for his signature style and phrasing, but also for his great guitar tone and dynamics. “Playing with Dan is amazing. So many groups and singers try to recruit him all the time because he is so great, but I’ve been lucky enough to play with him decade after decade.”

Mike and Dan write the original tunes for King muDDfish, but the effects of their combined talent does not end there. To see and hear the interplay between these two great guitarists is sheer wonderment. This is not a case of two great guitarists sharing the stage like Tab Benoit and Jimmy Thackery doing the Whiskey Store show, or whichever pair of guitarists you wish to choose from the Allman Brothers Band . . . when you see Mike and Dan together, you see that they were born to play guitar with each other. Whether it’s an improvised call and response, a rhythm groove under a solo, a shared solo over a progression, or a good-natured six-string shootout in the middle of a jam, you can see the joy that is created each time their

fingers touch the strings.

Bassist Joel Kobelin and drummer Jerry Crepeau make up one mountain of a rhythm section, laying the groundwork for Mike and Dan to freely negotiate and climb, all the while keeping the groove going, no matter how far "outside" Mike and Dan may get. Joel and Jerry will show you the meaning of "tight" each time they drop the volume down to a whisper at just the right moment, and play the intensity of the jam as it unfolds.

"It's like I've died and gone to heaven every time I play with the boys." Mike Edwards shares, "I don't know how they do it. I don't know if it's the tone of my voice, or how I pick a note, or maybe it's just my body language, but Joel and Jerry always seem to know exactly when to drop the dynamics or pop the dynamics. It's like they both read my mind."

Unlike many of his blues peers, Mr. Edwards doesn't dress up in a cheap suit, Blues Brothers type hat, or sunglasses. Nor does he show up in jam band garb consisting of torn blue jeans and faded t-shirts. You'll find Mike performing in custom tailored, hand-made lightweight Italian wool suits atop silk pullovers, often with matching stingray skin cowboy boots and belt. "People ask me about it all the time . . . the way I dress. First of all, I want to be comfortable, and you'd be surprised how well silk and lightweight wool keep you cool under hot lights. Second, if I'm going to make people feel good, I need to look good. I also need to be able to see you if I am performing for you, so I could never wear shades on stage. And as much as I move and switch instruments, any hat would be falling off my head, so I don't need it." Mike continues, "Look, I didn't grow up working the fields in Mississippi, nor did I migrate to the big city in search of fortune and fame like the great bluesmen did. I'm not going to disrespect them by trying to dress the part of some character people may think I am supposed to play . . . pretending to be some kind of great bluesman. Those guys used the blues to escape the harsh realities of poverty and oppression. It was their tool for liberation from a hard life and the blues brought them some level of wealth. I'm from a different world. Everything I work for, and everything I sacrifice everyday of my life happens so that I can play the music I love and deliver the best show I can. How I dress on stage is simply a reflection of who I really am."

If you see King muDDfish coming to your town, don't pass up a chance to catch the Kings of the New Eclectic Blues Movement in action.

## LOCAL BANDS & THEIR CONTACT INFO

| Bands                             | Info   |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Beautiful Bobby Blackmon          | <a href="http://www.cdbaby.com/cd/bbb">www.cdbaby.com/cd/bbb</a>   |
| Ben Prestage                      | <a href="http://www.benprestage.net">www.benprestage.net</a>   |
| Big Rick & The Troublemakers      | 407-417-0062 Rick  |
| Bill Wharton "Sauce Boss"         | <a href="http://www.sauceboss.com">www.sauceboss.com</a>   |
| Bird Dog Bobby & The Honey Hounds | <a href="http://www.birddogbobby.com">www.birddogbobby.com</a>   |
| Blues Busters                     | 407-320-9980 Bruce   |
| Blues Crew                        | <a href="http://www.myspace.com/bluescrewfl">www.myspace.com/bluescrewfl</a>                               |
| Brutha Niel & The Real Deal       | <a href="http://www.bruthaniel.com">www.bruthaniel.com</a>   |
| Catfish Charlie                   | <a href="http://www.catfishcharlie.com">www.catfishcharlie.com</a>   |
| Cats In The House                 | <a href="http://www.musicdeland.com">www.musicdeland.com</a>   |
| Cornucopia Jazz Project           | <a href="mailto:www.cornucopiazjazz@yahoo.com">www.cornucopiazjazz@yahoo.com</a>                           |
| Damon Fowler Group                | <a href="http://damonfowler.com">damonfowler.com</a>   |
| Deuces Wild                       | 407-617-7752 Selwyn  |
| Doc Williamson & The Healers      | <a href="http://www.docwilliamson.com">www.docwilliamson.com</a>   |
| Eddie & The S.O.B.'s              | 407-645-2294 Ed  |
| Eddie Wright                      | <a href="http://www.eddiwright.net">www.eddiwright.net</a>   |
| Eric Steckel Band                 | <a href="http://www.ericsteckel.com">www.ericsteckel.com</a>   |
| Funk Us                           | <a href="http://www.funkus.com">www.funkus.com</a>   |
| Gypsy Child                       | <a href="http://www.gypsychildmusic.com">www.gypsychildmusic.com</a>                                       |
| High Octane                       | <a href="http://www.myspace.com/highoctaneband">www.myspace.com/highoctaneband</a>                         |
| Joe "Survival" Caruso             | <a href="http://www.myspace.com/Joecarusoblues">www.myspace.com/Joecarusoblues</a>                         |
| King Muddfish                     | <a href="http://www.kingmuddfish.com">www.kingmuddfish.com</a>   |
| King Rockahula                    | <a href="http://www.myspace.com/kingrockahulaband">www.myspace.com/kingrockahulaband</a>                   |
| Mark Hodgson                      | <a href="mailto:www.muddyharp@aol.com">www.muddyharp@aol.com</a>   |
| Men of Blues                      | 407-547-7558 Steve   |
| Mike Dugan                        | <a href="http://www.mikedugan.com">www.mikedugan.com</a>   |
| Mohave                            | <a href="http://www.mohavemusic.com">www.mohavemusic.com</a>   |
| Rickey Dickens & The Revival      | <a href="http://www.myspace.com/rickeydickensandtherevival">www.myspace.com/rickeydickensandtherevival</a> |
| Sam Pacetti                       | <a href="http://www.sampacetti.com">www.sampacetti.com</a>   |
| Sarasota Slim                     | <a href="http://www.sarasotaslim.com">www.sarasotaslim.com</a>   |
| Shaun Rounds                      |  |
| Smokin' Torps.                    | <a href="http://www.smokintorps.com">www.smokintorps.com</a>   |
| Soul Cactus                       | <a href="http://www.myspace.com/SoulCactusBand">www.myspace.com/SoulCactusBand</a>                         |
| The Gary Ingber Band              | 386-232-7305 Joey D.   |
| The Legendary J.C.'s              | <a href="http://www.jointchiefs.com">www.jointchiefs.com</a>   |
| The Teague Stefan Band            | <a href="http://www.theteaguestefanband.com">www.theteaguestefanband.com</a>                               |
| Three Forks Road                  | <a href="http://www.threeforksroad.com">www.threeforksroad.com</a>   |
| Toni Brown Band                   | <a href="http://www.tonibrownband.com">www.tonibrownband.com</a>   |