

KIRK FLETCHER – Biography

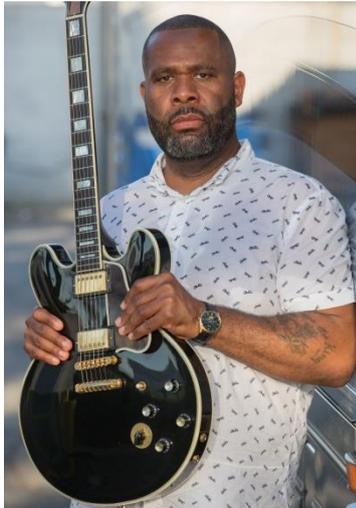


Photo by Rick Gould

Kirk Fletcher has a reputation as a bonafide can't-miss performer. His soulful playing and singing never fails to elicit chills, and his unique approach to Rhythm & Blues music is both refreshingly modern and completely authentic.

Widely considered one of the best blues guitarists in the world, he has commanded the respect and acclaim of critics, peers and fans across the globe. He is a four-time Blues Music Award and a 2015 British Blues Award nominee and has played with a variety of popular artists, including Joe Bonamassa and a three-year role as lead guitarist of The Fabulous Thunderbirds.

He released three studio albums and a live album. His new CD will be released in October 2018.

Early years

Kirk first picked up a guitar at age eight, playing alongside his older brother Walter in their father's church.

One day with his older brother, Kirk visited a small L.A. guitar shop, Music Works, which ultimately became his second home after meeting Jeff Rivera, Robben Ford's guitar tech. "We started hanging out and I would help load gear, change strings and just be a fly on the wall to some of the most amazing music I've ever heard," Kirk remembers.

Kirk's blues

It was in the next few years that Kirk's full introduction to traditional blues occurred. He started seeking out other musicians who shared this same understanding – enter Al Blake, lead singer and harp player for the Hollywood Fats Band. After hosting dinner every Sunday, Al would offer Kirk early 20th Century blues records as dessert. He also helped establish connections to other famous West Coast blues artists like Junior Watson and Richard "Lynwood Slim" Duran. So followed Kirk's first gigs as a blues guitarist and eventually the recording of his first album I'm Here & I'm Gone for the JSP label out of England.

Al Blake would also introduce Kirk to Kim Wilson of The Fabulous Thunderbirds. Wilson brought Fletcher further into the blues family from California to Texas and then out touring the world. One highlight during this time was at Antone's Night Club 25th Anniversary Week in Austin, Texas, which gave Kirk the opportunity to perform with his blues heroes Pinetop Perkins, James Cotton and Hubert Sumlin. Wilson also tapped Kirk to play on his Grammy-nominated Smokin' Joint live album. Shortly thereafter a call to collaborate came from blues legend Charlie Musselwhite, confirming that Kirk was becoming one of the most in-demand blues guitarists on the scene.

His turn

So began three years on the road with the Thunderbirds. Kirk contributed to the Thunderbirds' Paint It On album and time spent with many famous blues artists along the way, including a brief stint with the late Doyle Bramhall Sr. and a few guest appearances playing for Cindi Lauper, Michelle Branch and a world tour with Italian mega-star Eros Ramazzotti. Kirk more recently has been part of two projects with close friend Joe Bonamassa Muddy Wolf at Redrocks and the Grammy nominated Live at the Greek Theatre.

PRESS QUOTES

Kirk fires off soulful, straight-from-the-heart solos that dazzle on big stages. ..Fletcher also blows people's minds when he's playing *rhythm* guitar.”

Guitar Player Magazine

Kirk is hands-down one of the best blues guitarists in the world.”

Joe Bonamassa

Fletcher's playing is a synthesis of the best qualities of contemporary electric blues, but he isn't confined by it. He displays a limitless flow of concepts in a slow-blues context.”

Vintage Guitar Magazine

Fletcher favors toothy Strat tones, stinging bends, and flurries of tight, staccato riffs that seem to pop from his fretboard like little firecrackers”

Guitar Player Magazine

Fletcher clearly has ensemble dynamics down, suggesting that his years as a sideman have been fruitful. But he's also unabashed as a bandleader, and his guitar work earns its prominence.”

Blues Revue Magazine

Kirk Fletcher is a young man with a big reputation...he exudes class and style, knows all the classic licks but never resorts to mere copying, always with his own take in his trick bag.”

Blues & Rhythm Magazine

...it's one hell of a ride, and proof that Fletcher is ready to make a big splash on his own.”

Living Blues Magazine

...Fletcher sounds like he is coming into his own on his terms.”

All Music Guide

There is no doubt about it – Fletcher is a “monster guitarist” – a huge talent capable of scaling the heights of blues stardom”

Blues In Britain Magazine