

# MARK HUMMEL

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The past decade has seen the emergence of young harmonica-led blues bands. In California, groups that draw their inspiration from the Chicago school but add elements of jump blues and rock'n roll into the mix have come up with an exciting new style of West Coast blues. In Oakland, the northern capital of California blues, resides the incredibly powerful harmonica player and vocalist Mark Hummel, leader of The Blues Survivors, who has been a major force in shaping and defining this musical genre.

Born in New Haven, Connecticut and raised in Los Angeles, California, Mark absorbed the music of such Chicago based harp blowers as Little Walter, James Cotton, and Sonny Boy Williamson, before settling in Berkeley, California in 1972. There he played with local bluesmen such as Cool Papa, Boogie Jake, Mississippi Johnny Waters and Sonny Lane. In 1980, he took the helm to lead the popular Blues Survivors Band.



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In 1985, the Blues Survivors released *Playing in Your Town*, on Rockinitus Records, and immediately went out on the road. Earning their name, they toured virtually non-stop throughout the United States, Canada and Europe often playing alongside such blues greats as Charlie Musselwhite, Brownie McGhee, Lowell Fulson and Eddie Taylor. While on tour with his band in 1988, Mark was introduced to Canadian guitarist and vocalist Sue Foley. After several tours that year, Mark and Sue released *Up & Jumpin'*, which also features piano legend Charles Brown. Eager to revive the Blues Survivors, though, Mark hit the road again in 1990, before releasing *Hard Lovin'* in 1992 on Double Trouble Records. He has been on the road constantly since then, stopping only to record *Feel Like Rockin'* in 1994 and *Married to the Blues* in 1995 on Flying Fish Records. He has performed at numerous festivals across the country, including the San Francisco Blues Festival and the Chicago Blues Festival, and has performed and judged at the Hohner Harmonica World Championship, held in Germany. For *Heart of Chicago*, Mark's sixth release and first on Tone-Cool, Mark traveled to the Windy City to record with some of the city's most legendary players and pay tribute to his Chicago blues influences. Featuring former Muddy Waters sidemen Willie "Big Eyes" Smith and Bob Stroger on drums and bass, guitarist Dave Myers from Little Walter's band, and others, *Heart of Chicago* is Mark's first real Chicago blues record and his rawest and bluesiest to date. Mark Hummel is a road warrior - a true Blues Survivor. Along the way, he has crafted his own trademark harmonica sound - a subtle combination of tone, phrasing and attack combined with a strong sense of swing. While Mark is new to Tone-Cool Records, his earlier albums, constant touring and appearances at the major blues festivals have firmly established his solid reputation around the US and Europe.

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