



Band History

Founded in the Fall of 2003 by veteran West Michigan guitarist Dave Taalman, Tailshaker is a band that goes narrow and deep when it comes to playing the blues. Taalman, who has been in numerous blues bands over the years, was frustrated by the lack of focus he encountered in many of these bands.

According to Taalman, "I've been in too many bands that for one reason or another, drifted from our original objective of just playing the blues. I really wanted a band "sound," not just a showcase for any one lead instrument. After almost two years of practice, I believe we've finally achieved the sound I was after with this band."

Tailshaker is composed of veteran musicians Stan Greene on vocals, Dave Taalman on guitar, Dave "Rip" Miller on harmonica, Tom Emerson on bass, Kristie Emerson on drums, and Mike Rizzo on keyboards. They're a group of like-minded musicians playing the music they love. The blues. And only the blues. All the time.

Dave Taalman, Tailshaker founder and guitarist adds, "When we play, it's all about having a 'blues party'."

If you're looking for a rockin' juke joint jumpin', house partyin' band, check out Tailshaker. You'll get a good dose of Chicago and electric Delta-style blues, with a little jump and drag-it-through-the-mud swamp funk thrown in for good measure.

"Tailshaker puts its own stamp on a mix of down-home music from the Delta and Chicago blues traditions. You'll feel like you've stepped into a rocking roadhouse or maybe that house party you remember from back in the day."

Stan Greene

Vocals – Tailshaker

Tailshaker Bios

Stan Greene - Vocals

Stan Greene has been a singer for as long as he can remember. Although the story line is familiar enough to be a cliché, he really did get his start singing in church as a child. “Oh yeah, my grandmother was sure I was going to be a preacher,” he laughs. “I did all the youth choirs and male quartets at church and in school. Then there was the Boogie Band in college, where I got my first taste of performing R&B, rock and blues. I can remember the first time I told an audience to stand up and clap their hands – and they did it! I thought, ‘Whoa!’ I can look back and say that it was my first experience of mojo.”

After realizing that performing was “something I gave up on the way to other stuff I thought was important,” Stan began to reconnect with that performance buzz in 2002, hitting open mike nights, meeting musicians and jumping on every chance he could to find a live microphone. He’s simply “Stan from Michigan” when he hits Club 544 on Bourbon Street in New Orleans during Mardi Gras. “The All Purpose Blues Band has a standing gig there. I’ve sat in with them three years in a row, including taking the stage to close out Fat Tuesday this year.” Three days later Stan debuted with Tailshaker.

Stan notes that blues is about stories. “I tell people that the stories might be sad but the music isn’t. If you can sing about hugging your pillow where your baby used to lay, that means you came out the other side of pain with some attitude intact. My job as a blues singer is to pour that attitude into every lyric.”

Dave Taalman - Guitar

Dave Taalman is the founder and leader of Tailshaker. He is also the band’s guitarist. Dave has been playing guitar since the age of eight and credits his grandfather as a major musical influence in his life. His grandfather, who was born in the south, was a multi-instrumentalist, playing guitar, harmonica, and piano.

Dave was also influenced – and enlightened by - his mother’s 1965 Ventures album, “Knock Me Out.” Ask him about it when you have the chance.

Taalman has played country, blues, rock, metal, prog rock, and even some surf. Says Taalman, "I love all kinds of music, but the blues is my favorite!"

Mike Rizzo - Keyboards

When Mike was three years old, his mother saw him banging on a relative's piano and decided to get him piano lessons. Mike took lessons until the age of 12, focusing primarily on jazz. He formed a jazz trio and played locally in his hometown of Akron, Ohio, until he was 18. Mike attended college for a year, developed a love for R&B, and became a major part of the northeastern Ohio R&B circuit.

In 1970, Mike went on the road, touring with many lounge Top-40/Top-100 acts. He settled in Holland, Michigan, and quit playing for a while to raise a family. Mike's love for playing took over in 1993 when he was in New Orleans on vacation. He decided to sit in with some local New Orleans players and ended up playing the night in two Bourbon Street clubs. The rest, as they say, is history.

Mike has been playing and singing ever since and refuses to quit!

Tom Emerson - Bass

Tom's interest in music started at a young age. Tom's father was a music instructor and his mother is a piano teacher. He loves all types of music, but blues is one of his favorites. Tom started out playing trumpet, but after hearing the high school jazz band, he fell in love with the bass guitar. "I bought my first bass guitar from "Kick and Ass" when it was still on Leonard Street," recalls Tom.

Emerson has played in numerous bands throughout his life, including Pure Country Band, The Fabulous Rhythm Rats, Nick Washburn and the Chaperons, Harry Lucas and the Lowdowns, and Roberta Bradley with Kelpie Blue.

Kristie Emerson - Drums

Kristie started playing drums in the school band in 4th grade and continued on through 12th grade. When asked where her musical inspiration comes from, Kristie replied, "I guess I get my musical abilities from my Grandmother, who played the sax." In high school, Kristie took private lessons for 3 years. Her goal was to be better than all the men drummers. Kristie won't claim to have accomplished that, but she has worked steadily for many years behind a kit.

The first paying gig Kristie had was with a country band called Music Depot. She has played in a number of bands over the years, including Sweet Water, Real Country, The Fabulous Rhythm Rats, Kelpie Blue, and The Tree Frogs.

What's her favorite music? Don't pigeonhole her. Kristie says, "I love all kinds of music from classical to funk AND - as long as I am able - I will be drumming, singing, and dancing!"

Dave "Rip" Miller - Harmonica

Dave "Rip" Miller is the newest member of Tailshaker, joining in January of 2007. He credits his early interest in the harmonica to friend and teacher Dave Borgman. "Borgie" introduced Rip to a number of musicians (there are stories that can't be told here) and an eventual date with his musical destiny.

In the summer of 2000, Rip heard Billy Rider play with the Mighty Little John Band on a stage in downtown Grand Rapids. He was hooked. Rip asked Billy if he would teach him his craft. Rider, who had toured with "Shakey" Walter Horton, Carey Bell, James Cotton, and the Paul Butterfield Blues Band, took Rip under his wing. For the next four months, all they did was play. Rip learned. And he learned well.

It didn't take long for Billy to tell Rip to "get his ass on stage." Rip laughs as he tells the story. "Rider actually told me 'he wouldn't teach me no more.' I started looking for a band." Soon thereafter, Rip joined his first band, Blues Stew, followed by stints with Straight Up and Bluz Dawg.

Rip is grateful to Billy Rider for his influence and teaching, and to this day refers to Rider as "The Prophet."

"Thanks to Billy, I got to share some of the best talent in the world of blues." says Miller. "If you ride a bus with as many musicians as he has, some of it is rubs off on you."

You'll see a lot of that talent come through when Rip blows his harp with Tailshaker.

What They Say About Tailshaker....

"Club owners beware. Tailshaker will tear the house down! Beyond a doubt, this is one of the most superlative acts to come out of West Michigan in ages."

Felix Ybarra

President

West Michigan Blues Society

<http://www.wmbs.org>

"Tailshaker never disappoints! We love these guys at WYCE."

Pete Bruinsma

Music Director

88.1 FM WYCE

<http://www.wyce.org>

"With strong vocals and a solid rhythm section, Tailshaker is a very good bet to get the audience up and out on the dance floor. A good time will be had by all."

Junior Valentine

Junior Valentine & The All Stars

<http://www.juniorvalentine.com>

"True traditional electric blues the way it should be played."

James Reeser

James Reeser & His Hot Blues Quartet

<http://www.jamesreeser.com>

"Tailshaker is a band with feeling that makes a true blues statement whenever they play."

Tomas Esparza

Tomas Esparza & The Blues Experience

<http://www.tomasesparza.com>

"Caught their set last night at The 750 Grill. Wow! The place was packed and the house was rockin'! James Reeser stopped in and so did Tomas Esparza, who both sat in for a set of ear-shredding harp work! It got so damn hot in there, I had to keep going outside for a cigarette break just to cool down! I highly recommend you check out Tailshaker live!"

Vincent Hayes

The Vincent Hayes Project

<http://www.vincenthayes.com>

"Wherever they play, Tailshaker is the music-maker."

Greg Blueben

Host

WGVU Blues Radio

<http://www.wgvu.org/radio>



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