

The Cash Box Kings OSCAR'S MOTEL

"Fearless, full-tilt Chicago blues...fervent vocals and soaring harmonica." –Chicago Tribune

"Singer Oscar Wilson and singer-harpist Joe Nosek are experts in classic Chicago grooves—perfectly evoking Muddy and Little Walter—but they also enchant with original songs both funny and pointed." –MOJO (UK)

"Oscar Wilson's powerful and deep voice harkens back to the golden age of Chicago blues. Nosek blows spirited, muscular harp. The Cash Box Kings serve up undeniable proof that they remain one of the top blues bands of this era." –Blues Music Magazine

The Cash Box Kings, according to *Living Blues* magazine, "are one of the best blues bands in the land." The group, co-led by real-deal Chicago blues vocalist and songwriter Oscar "Mr. 43rd Street" Wilson, and Madison, Wisconsin-based songwriter, harmonica giant and singer Joe Nosek, plays masterfully raw, unvarnished, old-school ensemble blues. Wilson's huge, emotive vocals and Nosek's blistering harmonica fuel their razor-sharp original songs and always incisive reinvention of obscure blues classics. *AllMusic* says The Cash Box Kings offer up "an enthusiastic celebration of Chicago blues in all of its electric forms... funny and smart...slow grooves and hyper-charged shuffles. The Cash Box Kings don't merely pay homage to the past, they bring tradition into the present [and deliver] a rollicking good time."

On their new Alligator Records album, *Oscar's Motel* (their third for the label and 11th overall), The Cash Box Kings bring contemporary authority and old-school authenticity to each of the album's 11 tracks.



The band—featuring guitarist Billy Flynn, drummer Kenny "Beedy Eyes" Smith, bassist John W. Lauler, and keyboardist Lee Kanehira—opens a door into the intoxicating spirit and sounds of 1950s and 1960s Chicago-based blues, and then they bring it all right up to the minute with Wilson and Nosek's original, instantly memorable songs.

For *Oscar's Motel*, recorded in Chicago and produced by Nosek, The Cash Box Kings made some significant decisions going into the studio. According to Nosek, "While we are never afraid to tackle any subject, we decided to put aside everyday problems and have a bit more fun. So, no songs about COVID and this time nothing too political. Our goal was to have *Oscar's Motel* be a celebration, an open invitation to leave your troubles behind and have a carefree, down-home, good time." One listen and it's clear the band succeeded. The opening two songs—the driving, cinematic title track (with lyrics so vivid you can just about smell the barbeque) and the funky *Down On The South Side*, are filled with real life characters ripped straight from Wilson's colorful past. Wilson says, "Such a glorious time. Growing up, there was a tavern on every corner with a band playing and music coming from front porches on every block."

From the wickedly good-natured *I Can't Stand You* (featuring sparring partners Wilson and vocalist Deitra Farr) to the pleading slow blues *Trying So Hard* to the rollicking *Hot Little Mess*, Wilson, Nosek and company break out one gloriously jubilant performance after another. In the funny-but-true tale, *I Want What Chaz Has*, famed bluesman John Nemeth (who's released 11 albums of his own) adds his soulful vocals. On the gospel-inflected, deeply moving *Nobody Called It The Blues*, the band digs deep in an uplifting performance memorializing and celebrating the long history and healing power of blues music. On the closing *Ride Santa Ride*, The Cash Box Kings give Chuck Berry and his reindeer a run for their Christmas money.

The history of The Cash Box Kings begins in Madison, Wisconsin where Nosek founded the band in 2001. Since 2007, his co-leader has been the charismatic, larger-than-life Chicago blues vocalist

Oscar Wilson. Over 20 years apart in age and coming from vastly different backgrounds, the two form an unlikely pair, combining Wilson's indisputably authentic South Side Chicago blues vocals and gritty, street-smart songwriting chops with Nosek's storytelling vocals, dynamic harmonica and witty tunesmithing. According to Wilson, "The Cash Box Kings are a throwback to the golden age of blues with some kickin' fresh young blood. Joe is my best friend in the music world—the band is a marriage made in heaven for both of us." Says Nosek, "We have each other's backs. We're family."

In their first six years, The Cash Box Kings' top-notch musicianship and deep blues feeling won the band a large and loyal audience across the Midwest. Wilson joined the group in 2007, bringing with him an instantly commanding stage presence and an authoritative vocal style that gives fire-breathing power to the music. A captivating singer, born in Chicago with the blues in his blood and with an encyclopedic knowledge of almost every blues song known to man, Wilson is a natural-born entertainer and a perfect foil for Nosek and the band. Born in 1953 on Chicago's 43rd Street (aka "Muddy Waters Drive"), Wilson grew up in the company of many famous blues artists. Junior Wells, Elmore James, Big Smokey Smothers and close family friend David "Honeyboy" Edwards were all regulars at weekly Friday night fish fries/jam sessions at the Wilson home. Throughout his adulthood, Wilson held regular jobs but was always welcome sitting in with Chicago blues mainstays like Melvin Taylor and Johnny B. Moore. His vocal inspirations range from Muddy Waters, B.B. King and Albert King to Jimmy Reed, Jimmy Rogers and Little Walter, but he mostly sings like Oscar Wilson. When he performs, *The Chicago Tribune* says, "Oscar Wilson brings a dominant, magisterial presence."

A self-described blues fanatic, Nosek, born in Wisconsin in 1974 and raised in the Chicago suburbs, spent his youth soaking up as much blues music as he could hear, both live and on record. In his teens, he began sneaking into blues clubs to watch Junior Wells, James Cotton, Otis Rush, Jimmy Rogers, Sunnyland Slim and others. Nosek recalls, "Seeing those guys made a huge impression on me and propelled me into wanting to learn how to play the blues." He took up harmonica, quickly cultivating his own aggressive, fluid style. After moving to Madison in the early 1990s, he began sitting in with artists such as Clyde Stubblefield and Luther Allison. Finding like-minded musicians hell-bent on playing raw, rough-edged, hard-charging blues, Nosek

formed The Cash Box Kings. They released their first album, *Live! At The King Club*, in 2003, instantly earning praise from critics and fans, and gaining a reputation as one of the hottest live bands on the circuit.

With ten previous releases to their credit and hundreds of live performances under their belts, The Cash Box Kings have won widespread acclaim throughout the blues world. Their Alligator Records debut, 2017's *Royal Mint*, was named among the Top Ten Blues Albums of the Year by *MOJO* magazine. 2019's *Hail To The Kings!* continued the trend, with the band receiving three Blues Music Award nominations, praise from media including NPR, *The Chicago Tribune*, *AllMusic.com*, UK's *MOJO* and *Blues & Rhythm*, and radio airplay around the world. *Living Blues* said, "The Cash Box Kings will brighten any party and keep the dance floor crowded. The stand-out vocals of Oscar Wilson and revved-up harmonica of Joe Nosek prime the pump for the band."

The Cash Box Kings continue to play major festivals across the U.S. and Europe. They've blown away audiences at the Chicago Blues Festival, the Tampa Bay Blues Festival, the Doheny Blues Festival, the Mississippi Valley Blues Festival, the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival, the Cincinnati Blues Festival, the Cambridge Folk Festival (UK), the Moulin Blues Festival (Netherlands), the Lucerne Blues Festival (Switzerland), the Baltic Blues Festival (Germany) and the Edmonton Blues Festival (Canada). They have also performed in Belgium, France, Spain and Uruguay, building their worldwide audience one jaw-dropping show at a time.

No matter where The Cash Box Kings perform, they bring the music to fuel the party. Between Wilson's natural blues vocal power and Nosek's talent at wringing every last drop of emotion from his harmonica, The Cash Box Kings never fail to wow their longtime fans while earning new ones at every gig. Now, with tour dates scheduled throughout the year, The Cash Box Kings invite everyone to leave their worries at home and check into *Oscar's Motel*, where the music is always just getting started.



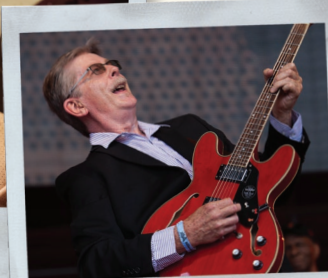
Oscar
Wilson



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