

SAM HOOPER/SAM HOOPER GROUP BIO

February 26, 2019

Sam Hooper is a captivating American musician from Cleveland, Ohio. His alluring blend of blues, rock, jazz and funk has **thrilled audiences in China, Switzerland, Finland, Japan and the USA**. His **soulful vocals** have been compared to Otis Redding, while critics have likened his **blistering guitar** playing to Jimi Hendrix and Carlos Santana.

WINNER of the 2018 Northeast Ohio Blues Association, (NEOBA) BLUES CHALLENGE, Sam Hooper Group were Semifinalist in the The International Blues Challenge (IBC) in Memphis, TN, January, 2019.

Hooper's love for the blues came through hearing the blues/rock that was popular in his high school years. His first listen to "Red House" on Jimi Hendrix's Smash Hits album was a turning point. It peaked his interest to dig deeper. He discovered the music's rich history through records by Lightnin' Hopkins, Lead Belly, Son House, John Lee Hooker and others that he borrowed from the library. He would slow them down to catch the phrasing. He'd also take empty liquor bottles to the hardware store and have the necks cut off so he could use them to play slide guitar.

A graduate of Florida's **University of Miami School of Music** and an alumni of **Berklee College of Music's Songwriting Program** in Boston, Hooper is also an **experienced educator**. Most recently, he joined **Roots of American Music (ROAM)** in Cleveland as a **Teaching Artist**. In this position, he lead classes of high school students in writing and performing songs together about diversity and intolerance. He has taught guitar privately for over 10 years in Cleveland, Boston, Los Angeles and Shanghai to students from five years old to adults. He also teaches beginning ukulele, piano and vocal lessons. In Beijing, China, he and his bandmates each conducted master classes at the contemporary music college, **Beijing Midi School**. Hooper served as a music teacher and staff assistant for the **Shaker Heights Youth Center's** summer program for elementary students in 2009. There, he taught the class songs that they sang together. In 2012, Hooper was a **music counselor at New York's Camp Jam** guiding youth 11-17 years old in writing, recording, and performing their own songs.

Hooper has also performed internationally for **Princess and P&O Cruise Lines**.

With **five CDs released** on the FBJoy Records label, **Hooper's songs have been heard by millions on the hot daytime TV Dramas "All My Children" and "The Young and the Restless."**

Hooper's **newest CD, "Sam Hooper and Mike Null - HOODOO BLUES,"** was the **WINNER for 2015 BEST SELF-PRODUCED CD** in the Cleveland Blues Society's annual International Blues Challenge competition. On the recording, Hooper and Null give fresh life to treasures by Junior Wells, Albert Collins, ZZ Top, and John Lee Hooker and introduce a new Sam Hooper original. Ted Drozdowski of Nashville Scene said of the CD, "Without eschewing the gritty soul of traditional blues, guitarists Hooper and Null break stereotypes by sidestepping standard shuffles and stomps for fresh takes on classic tunes that buoy their sweet molasses vocal performances with jazz informed chord changes, rhythms and melodies. And Hooper's original, "Itching To Be Your Man" has the hip, sophisticated vibe of a lost Mose Allison gem."

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Hooper and Null met in China in 2010 when Hooper was a special guest and Null led the house band celebrating the Fifteenth Anniversary of **Shanghai's legendary House of Blues and Jazz**. A perennial crowd favorite, Sam Hooper Group has **performed over 300 shows at the venue**.

Sam Hooper Group has opened for American blues greats Ronnie Earl, Curtis Salgado, Samantha Fish, Matthew Curry, Luther "Guitar Jr." Johnson, John Nemeth, and also for England's Number One Blues Guitarist, Matt Schofield.

The group has showcased at New York City's Soul of the Blues Festival and Alabama's W.C. Handy Music Festival. Sam Hooper Group was a finalist in Boston's "Battle of the Blues Bands." Hooper has toured as a featured performer in Chinese recording artist Zhu Ming Ying's "Dream of an Artist" tour, **playing in front of over 84,000 people in 14 cities in China**. In 2009, Hooper won the "King of the Blues" competition hosted by Guitar Center's Cerritos, CA store. A documentary of Hooper's musical journey was produced by a Boston area Cable TV provider and can now be enjoyed on youtube.com.

After years in Boston and Los Angeles, Hooper returned to his hometown roots in **Cleveland** four years ago. He and his new bandmates have been winning over new fans with performances at popular locations including Nighttown, Beachland Ballroom and Tavern, House of Blues, Bop Stop, Happy Dog at the Euclid Tavern, Hard Rock Rocksino, JACK Thistledown Racino, Music Box Supper Club, The Winchester Music Tavern, **internationally renowned, Tri-C JazzFest**, and on **TV's FOX 8 Morning Show**.

Watch for SAM HOOPER GROUP performing live and for the new CD, "Sam Hooper and Mike Null - HOODOO BLUES!"

"a soulful singer ...fiery, virtuoso guitar" - Joel Simches, The Noise

samhooper.com