

DARREN WATSON

Darren Watson gained Aotearoa-wide fame in the late eighties as the fresh-faced principal songwriter and front-man for rhythm and blues outfit Chicago Smoke Shop. The group of blues-mad Hutt Valley teenagers made two albums, had several bona-fide radio hits, and with a few years of hard touring won a secure place in the hearts of Kiwi music fans. Before they imploded Smoke Shop earned multiple NZ Music Award nominations, and shared stages on NZ tours with international artists like Koko Taylor, The Robert Cray Band, George Thorogood, and The Fabulous Thunderbirds.



Since leaving Smoke Shop in the early 90's Watson has cemented his reputation as the nation's most original, contemporary blues-based voice. He's released six albums to date including 2002's King Size (which was nominated for a NZ Music Award), 2005's South Pacific Soul, 2010's internationally acclaimed Saint Hilda's Faithless Boy, Introducing Darren Watson from 2014. 2018's Too Many Millionaires represented a major shift in direction for the veteran musician. Recorded 'live-to-tape' at Wellington's Surgery Studios by award-winning engineer Lee Prebble (Black Seeds, Phoenix Foundation, Dave Dobbyn) the record features

all acoustic performances and has received rave reviews in local and international media, including in the prestigious Downbeat (USA), and Blues Matters (UK) magazines.

Too Many Millionaires debuted at number three on the Official NZ Top 20 Album Chart and stayed in the charts for five weeks. It is by far Darren Watson's most successful album to date.

The new album **Getting Sober For The End Of The World**, mines similar territory to Millionaires and will be released on Thursday 1 October, 2020 and Darren will be touring to promote the record from Auckland to Dunedin and points in between - all October long. The album features seven new Watson-penned tracks, a song by local Wellington stalwart Matt Hay, and a cover of a classic Robert Johnson tune. Joining Watson on the album is a supporting cast of great musicians including **Steve Moodie** on double bass, **Terry Casey** on harmonica, **Delia Shanly** on percussion, **Dayle Jellyman** on piano, **Craig Denham** on accordion. Longtime Watson fan, and **Mavis Staples** musical director, **Rick Holmstrom** even joins for a track with his inimitable Pops Staples-influenced guitar style.

www.darrenwatson.com