

Mighty Mike Schermer Band
Next Set
Fine Dog 61036

By Genevieve Williams *Blues Revue* February/March 2006

With the title of guitarist Mike Schermer's second release, one begins to suspect a theme (his debut album was called *First Set*). But the offhand titling scheme highlights an unpretentious approach. Schermer has years of experience, a backup band with stellar credentials, and an enviable recording and touring resume. He steps out on his own here with a refreshing lack of affectation: *Next Set* has the same honest, workmanlike approach that distinguishes a number of the current generation of modern blues players, of whom Tommy Castro is probably the most obvious example.

This is vibrant, likable stuff with energy and bounce, whether Schermer's letting the world know that he's "Got My Love On" or expressing concerns that people are "Talkin' 'bout My Baby". He's a storyteller as well as a musician, as "That Same Door" and "Rediscovered" indicate. His senses of humor and affection are finely tuned: "Big Fine Girl" is downright adorable, while "It All Went Down the Drain" is a bitter piece of work, but a vivid and witty one.

Schermer's guitar work is prominent, but he leaves room for others to shine. Austin DeLone's piano on "Setting Sun" becomes something of a duet as Schermer bids farewell to an imagined audience as though finishing out a live show. It's potentially too neat a finish – will the next one be called *Encore*? – but it works. Overall, the album has the same currents of energy, the same rises and dips, as an actual live performance.