

Mark Schatz – Bio

Mark Schatz was born on April 23rd 1955. His was a musical family, and at the age of ten he began taking lessons on cello, later moving to string bass. Aged sixteen, Mark made his performing debut in a high school rock band playing electric bass. Schatz went on to become an accomplished mandolin player and guitarist. Following graduation from high school Schatz enrolled at Haverford College in Pennsylvania as a Music Theory and Composition major [1973 - 1978], and he also studied at Boston's prestigious Berklee School of Music. At the same time as he picked up the banjo, Mark learned to clog dance while working with Mandala, a Boston based folk-dance group. It's a skill he still puts to use, these days, as musical director [and road manager] of the dance ensemble Footworks [formerly called The Fiddle Puppet Dancers]. Schatz first worked with Footworks during 1993.

During 1977, Schatz met and befriended Bela Fleck and they have collaborated on a number of projects over the ensuing decades, including Tasty Licks and Spectrum. In 1983 Schatz made Nashville his base, and he lived there for many years. Over the next two years Mark played electric bass on numerous Nashville recording sessions, but switched back to upright bass in 1985 when he joined the Tony Rice Unit. Schatz toured and recorded with Mollie and Tim O'Brien for most of the nineteen-nineties, as a member of the O'Boys. During that decade Mark cut his, Bela Fleck produced, solo debut album "**Brand New Old Tyme Way**," which was released by Rounder Records. As a musical vehicle it displayed Schatz's clawhammer banjo skills, and the collection also featured his original compositions.

On two consecutive occasions – 1994 and 1995 - the International Bluegrass Music Association voted Schatz, Bass Player of the Year. In addition, Mark was winner of "Frets" Readers Poll in the category Bluegrass Bass Player back in 1986 and 1987. Schatz has contributed to recordings by Emmylou Harris, Jerry Douglas, Maura O'Connell, Mark O'Connor, Linda Ronstadt and the late John Hartford. In addition to touring as a solo artist [with his Friends], and his work with Footworks, since April 2003 Mark has worked and toured with the young bluegrass band Nickel Creek as their bass player. His sophomore solo recording credited to Mark Schatz and Friends, and titled "**Steppin In The Boiler House**," co-produced by Fleck and Schatz, was issued by Rounder Records in the Spring of 2006. Those Friends included Missy Raines and Jim Hurst from the revived Claire Lynch Band, and fiddle player Casey Driessen.

In addition to his solo recordings, Schatz has made two instructional bass videos for Homespun Tapes and Videos, and taught bass at festivals schools such as Rocky Grass Academy, Augusta Heritage Arts Festival and Telluride Bluegrass Academy. As an album producer Schatz has worked with Footworks Percussive Dance Ensemble, and helmed Juno nominated recordings by Canadian roots bands Scruj McDuhk [**"The Road to Canso"**] and The Duhks [**"Your Daughters and Your Sons"**].

Discography : "**Brand New Old Tyme Way**" [1995] ; "**Steppin In The Boiler House**" [2006] :

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