

**Eric Steckel & CTB - Review by: Rick Grant**  
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My motivation to cover the Friday night schedule was to check out Eric Steckel and The Craig Thatcher Band. This seasoned group needed a frontman, so they joined forces with Eric, who is truly a phenomenon. Eric's contacts in Europe, having toured with John Mayall, give CTB a boost in exposure. Likewise, the veteran band gives Eric a solid foundation to showcase his monster talent. It's quid pro quo for Eric and CTB.

Eric looks so unassuming in person, but when he straps on his Stratocaster, and unleashes his mighty chops, every member of the audience's jaw drops into their laps. When I hear the word prodigy, I say "ho-hum." These days, it seems guitar prodigies are coming out of the woodwork. But when one uses the term "prodigy" to describe Eric it resonates as something special. The truth is, where ever Eric came from, now he can hold his own with any guitar idol on the planet.

For Eric, the future looks bright indeed. He will soon graduate from high school and plans to go to Flagler College, while continuing his busy touring schedule during the summers. When I witnessed him perform with CTB, I hadn't seen his act in over a year. Wow, his playing has ascended into the deep space of solo guitar since then. His solos with Craig Thatcher on a Les Paul were truly inspiring.

Overall, CTB has broadened Eric's musical horizons since this well established rock band blends Southern Rock with blues and originals. CTB has opened for Robin Trower and a legion of other rock legends. Frankly, I think Eric's advanced guitar technique has been greatly expanded under Craig Thatcher's influence. The two guitar slingers often trade off runs and play unison riffs. It was a wonder to behold.

*-Rick Grant* EU Jacksonville ([www.rickatnight.com](http://www.rickatnight.com))