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## Steve Miller Band still rockin'

By James Grant of The News-Sentinel  
Thursday, July 9, 2015 - 12:01 am

Steve Miller and the Steve Miller Band, who'll appear in concert at Sunday night at Foellinger Outdoor Theatre, have been making music since the late 1960s when they released their first album for Capitol Records, 1968's "Children of the Future."

Since that time, the band has managed to amass a string of hits, including "The Joker" (a No. 1 hit from 1973), "Take the Money and Run," "Rock'n Me" (a No.1 hit from 1976), "Fly Like an Eagle," "Jet Airliner," "Jungle Love," "Swingtown" and "Abracadabra" (a No. 1 hit from 1982). The band also has sold more than 60 million records.

In fact, the Steve Miller Band's album "Greatest Hits 1974-1978" is one of the best-selling albums of all time in the United States with more than 13 million copies sold since its release in November 1978.

Steve Miller, from whom the band takes its name, was into music from a very young age, according to a biography on the band website, [www.stevemillerband.com](http://www.stevemillerband.com).

Miller, who was born in Wisconsin, was encouraged to play guitar by his parents, who were both music fans, the biography said. His mother was a jazz singer whose brother played in the Paul Whiteman Orchestra, and his father was a jazz and blues fan and amateur recording enthusiast.

Miller's father recorded some famous musicians who passed through Milwaukee. As a result, a young Steve Miller ended up playing with and being encouraged by none other than guitar legend and recording innovator Les Paul, the biography said.

Miller also learned some guitar techniques from legendary blues guitarist T-Bone Walker after his family moved from Wisconsin to Texas, the biography said.

"Next thing I knew, we moved to Texas and I was 9 years old, and T-Bone Walker came over to the house to play a party," Miller told Graham Reid of the online music and arts magazine Elsewhere in 2013.

"I had stayed home from school sick that day because my parents had rented a piano, and I wanted to play it," Miller told Elsewhere. "T-Bone came over and played from 6 p.m. to 5 a.m., and he and my dad became good friends.

"He came over again and again, so I have all these memories, and he taught me how to play guitar behind my head and how to play single note leads," Miller said in the article. "That was just amazing."

Miller further solidified his love of the blues when he moved to Chicago and became immersed in the blues music there, where he met and played with legends such as Howlin' Wolf and Muddy Waters.

Miller's career really didn't take off until he moved to San Francisco and became a part of its music scene, which included groups like the Jefferson Airplane, the Grateful Dead and, later, Journey.

The Steve Miller Band's first few albums all were drawn from the music scene in San Francisco in the late 1960s, and the songs were laced with the psychedelic influence that was happening at the time.

Future hit-maker Boz Scaggs ("Lowdown," "Lido Shuffle," "Look What You've Done to Me") was also a member of the Steve Miller Band and was a featured player on its first two albums.

Success kicked into overdrive for the band in 1973 with the release of the massive hit album "The Joker" and marked a change to a smoother rock sound, which ended up being very commercial for the band.

From 1973 to 1982, the Steve Miller Band reached its career apex with a series of best-selling albums that enabled band members to create one of the more successful careers in rock music.

Miller did get to return to the blues on the Steve Miller Band's 2010 album "Bingo!," which featured covers of blues classics that Miller loves.

Miller and the Steve Miller Band continue to record and tour, and, because of the success of "Greatest Hits 1974-1978," the band has been fortunate to sustain a career in music while also being able to try new things musically.



### More Information

#### 'Fly Like an Eagle'

**WHAT:** The Steve Miller Band will perform live in concert.

**WHEN:** 7:30 p.m. Sunday

**WHERE:** Foellinger Outdoor Theatre, 3411 Sherman Blvd.

**COST:** \$49, \$79 and \$99, plus a \$5 per ticket processing fee. Tickets are available in advance by calling 427-6000 or going to the Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation Department office, 8 a.m.-5 p.m. weekdays; visiting [www.fortwayneparks.org](http://www.fortwayneparks.org); at Wooden Nickel Records stores; and in person or at 427-6715 at the Foellinger Theatre box office from 6 to 10 p.m. on concert days.

"We do about 60 cities a year and have done for the last many years, except for a few breaks, and our audience really wants to hear 'The Joker' ... . There's about 14 songs they really want to hear," Miller told Elsewhere.

"But that leaves nine or 10 pieces for the set, so whatever we're working on gets in," he said. "Sometimes it's acoustic stuff, sometimes it's jazz, sometimes blues. That brings it full circle."