

MUSIC



JUBAL KANE

Yozette “Yogi” Collins

Judging by the beards most of the members sport (think ZZ Top) you’d think the band Jubal Kane played hard rock rather than the blues. It’s just a technicality, though. Jubal Kane may be a blues band, but they do rock, figuratively and literally.

In fact, the band prides themselves on their rock-y shows. After all, says lead singer and harmonica player Ace Anderson, “Blues is really the grandfather of rock-n-roll and all popular music. It has soul and such a beat that you can’t sit still. Too many blues bands today think about playing slow music and crying in your beer. [But], blues is a happy, up-tempo kind of music.”

It wasn’t the kind of music Anderson listened to growing up in his native Sweden, but then he defaulted into playing harmonica 15 years ago. “I sort of fell ass backwards into it. I was a metal freak in the 90s. All my friends played guitar and I couldn’t do that, so I saw a friend’s harmonica and thought ‘Damn, it has 10 holes. It can’t be that hard.’”

Maybe not, but the harmonica drew Anderson toward the blues. His dedication became evident when he moved to the States in ‘96. “I decided,” he says, “that if you’re gonna play the blues, you have to put your foot in the South at some point.” So, he played in New Orleans, Mississippi (where he met his wife), Memphis, and even Nashville, gleaning from people and playing historic venues along the way. “The most fun I ever had playing in the South [was when] I got to play the Subway Lounge in Jackson, Mississippi. It was a really old hotel -- Martin Luther King, Jr. stayed there. In the basement they had a juke joint.”



For a five-year old band, Jubal Kane – made up of Anderson, Buckwheat Carrigan, Otis Thomas and Richy Payce – has made good use of their time. They are releasing their fourth CD, a 2-CD set, this month and while it’s a live album like their others, it’s the first time they’ve released an entire CD of original songs (the second CD in the set includes originals as well as seven cover songs). While that is something for a band to be proud of, the fact that Jubal Kane doesn’t ‘overproduce’ their sound is something really worth crowing about in this era of ‘singers’ who need a studio to sound good.

“We pride ourselves,” says Anderson, “that we don’t over-dub anything. Nothing is ever altered from the [live] recording. Levels will be corrected, but we never edit anything out or add anything [in the] post process. We print it the way it is and there are surprisingly few mistakes, but the few clinkers we have, we stand by those because it makes it feel alive and real.”

In fact, they are so real that the band never rehearses prior to a show. “We have some kind of ESP,” says Anderson, “and we know what the other person is going to do before they do it. Especially me and Otis. If we’re gonna [perform] a cover, we’ll listen to it in the van on the way to the show and we wing it onstage.”



But don't mistake their 'winging' it as lack of interest. In fact, it's completely the opposite, says Anderson. "Blues is inspirational music, so as long as you have a beat and know what the code progression is for the set, the rest is by feel. It's a living, breathing organism."

That's the appeal of this band – they are alive, really *real*. From playing a four-hour straight set to encouraging their fans to burn and share copies of their CDs, it's all about the music. "We also allow people to record and videotape our shows, because once you play it, if no one records it, it's gone forever. The Grateful Dead did that and we think it's brilliant to spread your music around."

For more information about Jubal Kane, log on to www.jubal-kane.com.