

AR

Alternative Rhythms

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George Thorogood

The Second Year

The Stray Cats

Spanish Dogs Giveaway

Bill Yeager

Man Parrish

Michael Stearns

The Bobs ep

Larry Joe Miller

interview





"I want to be known for the most authentic rockabilly."

Larry Joe Miller

★ Larry Joe Miller

Larry Joe Miller, and band, had just returned from their East Coast 'tour' when this interview was conducted (9th of March). They had a month break before they were off again.

Larry Joe returned with a somewhat new/reduced band; with himself on acoustic guitar and vocal - Larry "Mad Dog" Smith on stand-up bass - and Jon Cecka on snare. We began by talking about Larry Joe(LJ)'s last guitarist, James Rowe...

LJ James didn't like being on the road, and we're gonna be on the road all the time, now.

AR IS HE GONE FOR GOOD?

LJ Yeah. He went with us up there; nothing drastic happened. We're still friends, he just couldn't handle the road; and that's where our direction is going now.

AR HOW LONG WERE YOU ON TOUR?

LJ Month and a half. The last week of January to the first of March.

AR WHERE DID YOU GO TO?

LJ Let's see...Started off in Chapel Hill, North Carolina; and went into Richmond, Virginia, for a Rockabilly festival they were having; We went up to New York City,

played five clubs in town; went to Rhode Island. Then came back down through Richmond and Chapel Hill.

AR WHAT WAS THE RESPONSE LIKE?

LJ It was Great! The whole month of April is already booked, up there. Everybody is wanting us back, and we are leaving the first of April; and we'll stay till the first of May - and might not come back then!

AR WHAT ARE YOU DOING DURING THIS MONTH, IN BETWEEN?

LJ We're trying to get a record together. We're working on it, and we've got a recording session set up. We're practicing, and writing new tunes. But we've no desire, really, to expand any more concerts here in town.

AR DO YOU KNOW WHEN YOU'LL BE RELEASING IT?

LJ Well, I plan on doing it within six weeks (April 20). Possibly, it will be out when we're gone.

AR WHAT WILL IT BE?

LJ Probably a single. One side of it is going to be a song called "Little Rock," an original. And the other side ...we've got three or four we want to try, and we don't know what the second side will be, yet. It will probably be one of my songs. We just don't know which one.

AR HOW OLD ARE YOU?

LJ 39.

AR HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN A MUSICIAN?

LJ 22 years.

AR AND HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN PLAYING ROCKABILLY?

LJ Well, I started out playing Rockabilly. And I suppose

“Here, you still have to tell people what rockabilly means.”

I've always played it -- because I've always incorporated some of the tunes into the bands. But...sometimes, during the 60's, I had to bend with the times, a little bit...

AR INTO WHAT?

LJ I wouldn't let them get me too far...(laugh). Ya' know, like PAUL REVERE AND THE RAIDERS, and some of the mainstream Top40 stuff of that time. Even though it wasn't anything I'd be ashamed of Right Now. At least I didn't start learning VAN HALEN songs and stuff like that (laughs).

AR HOW LONG HAVE YOU LIVED IN FORT LAUDERDALE?

LJ Since 1976.

AR WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS IN THE MUSIC FIELD?

LJ I want to record and produce. and play at all opportunities. That's why we have to travel: cause there is no place to play down here!

AR DO YOU PLAN ON USING FLORIDA AS YOUR HOME BASE?

LJ We don't know. We've talked about moving. If everything keeps developing so much up North...it's so hard getting down here to South Florida. The drive from N.Carolina, down, took 16 hours. And it is just so hard. We may end up getting a house up there; having bases in two cities.

AR DO YOU SEE ANY REAL REASON TO STAY DOWN HERE?

LJ No. Except we know people here and have friends. Some of the people in the band's roots are here forever, like Jon was born and raised here ...For me, I've got no roots here in Florida. I like it here, but I also like being in a place where I can play the type of music I want to,

all the time. And here, you still have to tell people what rockabilly means. It's unbelievable.

AR ARE YOU HAPPY BEING A MUSICIAN?

LJ Yeah -- most of the time. I'm always happy being a musician; sometimes I'm not so happy with what destiny throws in your face.

AR WHAT WAS THE HAPPIEST DAY OF YOUR MUSICAL CAREER?

LJ I don't know, I've had a lot of really good ones...I've had 12,000 people come, just to see me, before. In Austin Texas, during the 60's. And

“(In other areas, rockabilly) is still a valid/good kind of music that everybody likes.”

I think the happiest, recently, was the reception we recieved in Richmond, and that local area, on the last tour. It was like a dream come true, almost.

AR WHAT WAS THE WORST DAY?

LJ Probably going to the Virgin Islands. We wrecked our van, and almost got killed going to the airport. I flipped a U-Turn in the middle of the Turnpike, cause I missed an exit...and got broadsided.

AR WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE FUTURE OF ROCKABILLY MUSIC?

LJ Well, That's a question that ...CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE...

Larry Joe Miller (interview) continued.

could only be asked down here in Florida; because in most of the country, we found it (rockabilly) is just the music that's being played. It's not like it's a fad; up in those other areas - it is still a valid/good kind of music that everybody likes

So, I think that in some areas of the country, it might become a fad and ride with the STRAY CATS type thing - or if we make it big, ride with us for a year - in other parts of the country, it will be around for a long time.

AR WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE STRAY CATS?

LJ I think they're opening a lot of doors for us. For some reason, we were all the way up and down (the East Coast) side by side with them. I'm sure they've heard of us, now. Cause we did some good gigs on the way - and we heard a lot about them. I think they're doing a good job. It's not total rockabilly, to me; but I think they're doing a good job with what they're doing.

We were really liked in those other areas because of our realistic rockabilly sound. We've stripped down as far as we can go, just about. I think that's really neat - that's one of the main things the people were writing about: That they thought we were one of the most authentic rockabilly bands they've ever seen.

Jon plays the snare, and a washboard. Anything he can climb on and hit, really. That's what he does: he climbs all over everything and uses it for a drum. Then there's the acoustic guitar, and the stand-up bass.

I mean, you can't get more down home than that, really. I want to be known for the most authentic rockabilly. Because to me, it's an honor.

Words and Photo
By SAM ROSENTHAL.

