

Reno Jones

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IS ALL ABOUT THE MUSIC

By LUANNE J. HUNT - Inland Living Magazine, July 2008

Great Music is more than catchy melodies and skillful playing, according to the founder of the R&B/blues band Reno Jones. A brilliant song has the ability to take listeners on a wonderful and unexpected journey.

“Blues is an energetic and emotional experience and that’s how we treat it,” K.O. Skinsnes said. “Everyone in the band is in it for the music, and whether we play for 10 people or 10,000, we always have the time of our lives.”

That philosophy has helped Reno Jones become one of the Southland’s most requested acts at fairs, festivals and city concerts. The band will perform July 21 during the Monday night concert series in Claremont.

Skinsnes gets a rush thinking about how far the group has come.

“Before Reno Jones, I was in a ‘70s cover band, which I got unjustly thrown out of,” Skinsnes said. “So I started Reno Jones out of spite, and it really took off. We decided we wanted to stay away from clubs and do more unique gigs. We’re definitely in it for the adventure.”

Since 1997, Reno Jones has been performing its diverse mix of cover tunes and original material at The Starlight Bowl, Los Angeles County Fair and the Inland Blues Festival, as well as other venues.

The band has opened for Ray Charles, Big Bad Voodoo Daddy and The Four Tops. It also won the top prize at the Monterey Blues Festival’s Battle of the Blues Bands in 2002 and 2003. Notably, the band performed four concerts in 2003 at the California Institution for Women in Chino. Getting into the facility wasn’t easy. It took nearly nine months to get clearance to entertain at the prison.

To mark the concerts, Reno Jones recorded one of the performances and released it on CD. “Live From Inside” features a variety of original and cover tunes, including “Baby, I Love You,” “Route 66,” “Standin’ On Shaky Ground” and “Since You’ve Been Gone.”

“It was amazing at the prison,” said Skinsnes, who plays trumpet. “The ladies were screaming, and we felt like the Beatles at Shea Stadium. They were so loud we couldn’t even hear ourselves play. These are the kind of gigs we love to do.”

Reno Jones also is featured in the documentary film “Channeling Herzog,” directed and edited by Sundance Film Festival award winner Harry Knapp (“The Eyes of Tammy Faye”). And the nine-member group recently released its own documentary, “10 Years — Live!” It celebrates a decade-long career, and includes footage from some of the band’s most memorable shows.

