

CYMANDE: PRESS RELEASE



CYMANDE, the British-based funk music pioneers, emerged as innovators of the funk music scene during the early 1970s. Influenced by their Caribbean heritage, the band combined reggae and Rastafarian rhythms with funk, soul, R&B, jazz and rock to create a new and exciting sound which captivated audiences throughout the United Kingdom, United States, Europe and the continent of Africa. The music of Cymande conveyed a true spirit of “togetherness”. This is reflected in the band’s emblem which incorporated a dove with the head of a Rastaman and symbolized peace and love.

Cymande was formed in 1971 by Patrick Patterson and Steve Scipio. The core members of the band comprised Patrick Patterson (guitar, vocals), Steve Scipio (bass, vocals), Sam Kelly (drums), Mike Rose (sax, flute, percussion), Pablo Gonsales (percussion, vocals) and Derrick Gibbs (alto sax). They were later joined by Ray King and Joey Dee (vocals) as well as Peter Serreo and Desmond Atwell (sax).

In 1971 the group met and began to work with record producer John Schroeder, and with his guidance, Cymande recorded their debut album called simply “Cymande”. The group defined their sound as “NYAH-ROCK” based on the fusion of Rastafarian rhythms with other musical styles, R&B, Soul, Jazz.

Cymande’s first album was released in the UK on the Alaska Record Label in 1972 and later in the same year, was released in the USA under Janus Records, a division of Chess Records. From that album, the group released two singles “The Message” followed by “Bra”. “The Message” ignited a wave of interest and generated a large following of fans in the U.K and the U.S.A. and was listed as no.20 on the U.S. pop charts. The Group began touring across America with the likes of R&B soul music super star “Al Green” and later went on to tour with Jerry Butler, Patti La Belle, Billy Preston, Ramsey Lewis, Edwin Starr, Albert King,

KC and the Sunshine Band, Kool and The Gang, and the Latin funk ensemble “Mandrill”. Cymande made history in 1973 by becoming the first British-based band to perform at the World-renowned Apollo Theater in Harlem, New York.

The Band’s debut album became the fastest selling album on the Janus record label. Cymande went on to record two further albums with producer John Schroeder, “Second Time Round” (1973) and “Promised Heights” (1974). Late in 1974 Jimmy Lindsay replaced Joey Dee on lead vocals when Joey left to pursue a solo career. Cymande stopped performing in 1975. In 1981 four of the original members Patrick Patterson, Steve Scipio, Mike ‘Bammi’ Rose and Sam Kelly returned to the Studio to work together on further projects.

Cymande’s legacy is made evident by both the Rare Groove/Deep House scene in the 1980s and the sampling of many of the band’s tracks including the single “BRA” by hip hop music artists in the 1990s. “BRA” was also included in the music soundtrack for Spike Lee’s motion picture “Crooklyn” and Dove was featured prominently in Lee’s “25th Hour”.

Cymande’s new album “A Simple Act of Faith” recorded with their original producer, John Schroeder, was released on 27th November 2015. This capped off a promotional year of Festival performances including Mostly Jazz, Funk & Soul, Camp Bestival and Bestival in the UK as well as a run of shows in London and across many parts of Europe. Cymande’s eagerly-awaited return to The States materialised in June 2016 with a tour of high profile sell-out shows in Los Angeles, San Francisco, SummerStage in New York, Brooklyn, DC Jazz Festival in Washington and Bonnaroo Festival in Tennessee. Cymande are looking forward to touring again across the UK, in Europe and the States during 2017.

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