

CaNdleMaN

biography

It took the party atmosphere of guitarist Bevan Gauld's 21st to make four-piece alternate rock outfit CANDLEMAN realise that their 'messing around' with music had serious potential. That evening, doing three originals and one cover was enough to get all present bopping, weaving, head-banging and calling for more. A little light had begun to shine.

The song writing combination of Bevan and vocalist David Warby ensures that the cover version at the 21st was left bouncing between empty glasses. The two Durban musicians met through a previous band they were both a part of, and started working on a few little sounds together - sounds which grew to be quite big after the introduction of bassist Neil Munroe and drummer Glenn Andrews, also of Durban.

In fact, CANDLEMAN *are* big. In physical size that is (both Bevan and David have a healthy respect for the top of door frames!), as well as in their style, which has a big range of influences, (U2, Holy Soldier, Steve Taylor, Toto, Peter Gabriel, Stone Temple Pilots, Red Hot Chilli Peppers, Pearl Jam, Guns 'n Roses, Van Halen and Sting) and yet is still a sound that is all their own.

They call it hippy-punk. A mixture of the sixties and eighties? Probably, with quite a bit of the nineties thrown into the mix too.

David's searing vocals are echoed by Bevan's searing guitar work. Or maybe it is the other way around. Either way, they are sharp and bright, but at the same time able to burn down to ballads that purr and are ember-warm to the eyes and ears, but never go out. Similarly in the rhythm section, both Neil and Glenn know what it means to take the listener from the spark of an intricate bridge arrangement to a rocking and roaring fire that licks and leaps from band to audience and back.

Performing is not all that CANDLEMAN do. They have just finished recording their first album entitled "THRU THESE EYES", which has been produced by Gareth Frow, and will be released by Sarepta in October 1996. *VINEGAR STICK* is sharp and warlike, while *FREE* is exactly that, and a good one to dance (fly?) to. The ballad *COLOUR* builds throughout

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the journey of the song to become funk rock, and then slips back into a ballad with great ease and thought. In fact, all ten songs on the album are filled with the group's experience of a life of comparisons - disappointment and hope, desperation and relief, bondage and freedom, pain and healing, hatred and love, and of course dark and light and blindness and sight - and it is from the heart of these experiences that CANDLEMAN identifies and communicates with the listener.

Durban listeners have been ignited at a number of clubs, including The Firestation, Backstreet, The Basement, The Rift, The Station, Logos, The Berea Inn and Backline (a personal favourite of the band's), but in spite of this, CANDLEMAN put a high priority on touring, and plan to return to Gauteng before the end of this year, for the third time since they have been together.

After making it to the semi-finals of the SAMIX '95 Best Unsigned Bands Competition, the group spent time playing up and down the coastline of KwaZulu-Natal, as well as in Johannesburg, where enthusiastic crowds responded warmly at amongst other places, Wings Beat Bar and the Randburg Waterfront.

Like their name, warmth and light are what CANDLEMAN - lyrics, music, instruments, faces, bodies and lives - are about. Be warned. Make contact, and you may just go up in smoke ...

THE END