



They All Have Abandoned Their Hopes

George Clinton describes their music as “too black for white people, to white for black people,” and Circle Jerk singer Keith Morris says of their status, “If there’s twelve levels, they’re on the thirteenth level.”

Formed in 1979 by seven black teens from South Central, Fishbone erupted onto the L.A. music scene like a force of nature – a genre-defying group that alchemized elements of ska, soul, funk and rock into a burst of pure sonic joy. Fishbone became unlikely punk legends in the early ‘80s, joining a West Coast hardcore uprising fueled by the angst of white suburban youth and a wholesale rejection of exactly those musical roots Fishbone tapped with wild abandon.

Co-directed by Chris Metzler and Oregon native Lev Anderson, *Everyday Sunshine: The Story of Fishbone* takes the band’s topsy-turvy, 25-year career and shapes it into an artful narrative. The movie breaks tradition with standard music documentaries; the directors shun the lurch of straight chronology and cheeky hagiography, embracing instead the blisters and bruises along with the raw beauty of the band’s tangled history.

This excellent documentary, narrated by actor Laurence Fishburne and interspersed with sequences of *Fat Albert*-esque animation, places Fishbone in the context of time and place, creating a layered perspective that is socially and politically astute.

“They had everything, and when they hit, they hit really hard,” says No Doubt’s Tony Kanal. “When you put it all together, it was mind blowing.” Flea of the Red Hot Chili Peppers says that Fishbone “had a chemistry that was magic.” But then come scenes of lead singer Angelo Moore moving in with his mother after being evicted, and a bit of madness leading to legal action. Columbia Record’s David Kahne, who first signed Fishbone, says the band’s lack of commercial success is the “biggest disappointment of my career.”

A deep current of sadness runs through *Everyday Sunshine* – sadness for the timeless tale of youth, talent and energy run aground on the ragged shores of indifference and fickle fate. That Fishbone plays on, diminished, is a nod to guts and perseverance, but those things don’t pay the bills. Being a living legend looks a bitch, and being a dead one is all postage stamps and footnotes. When, just days after the Rodney King riots, former Fishbone guitarist Kendall Jones says, “happy niggas are dead,” you can feel the chill of dreams dying.

Everyday Sunshine opens Thursday, March 8, followed by a Skype Q&A with co-director Chris Metzler; bijoucinemas.com

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