



Submitted photo by Michael Poole

The Jackalope Saints are, from left, David Celis on trumpet, Steven Schob on drums, Jay Parshall on bass, Clinton Herrick on guitar and vocals, Lucas Welliver on keys, Sharon Cannon on fiddle, John Chap on mandolin/banjo/guitar/vocals.

Five Minutes With ... THE JACKALOPE SAINTS

Q&A by RYAN HUME

We spoke with Clinton Herrick, the singer/songwriter at the core of Portland-based folk pop band the Jackalope Saints, about mythical creatures, murder ballads and the Mystery Condition prior to the band's two-night engagement at the Adrift Hotel in Long Beach, Washington, at 9 p.m. Friday and Saturday, Jan. 23 and 24. Get a taste of the Jackalope Saints at www.jackalopsaints.com

I like the name Jackalope Saints. How does the spirit of the jackalope — that mythical horned rabbit of the American West and Midwest — present itself in your music?

Thanks! One of the stories of the jackalope is that it can mimic any sound it hears. Cowboys would sing songs around campfires and attribute their echoes to the jackalope, and in a way I feel like that is what we are doing, repeating what we have heard and mashing it all together to make the genre of music we play. That's why we have such a hard time putting a label to our music genre and resort to Americana or folk, two fairly vague musical descriptions that cover an array of possible sounds.

The name also eludes to the idea of reverence. As a musician or songwriter, who do you most

revere and why?

Bob Dylan and Paul Simon were the first two songwriters that had me obsessively listening to lyrics. I would (and still do) listen to their songs on repeat, dissecting every line of their lyrics.

Tom Waits and Townes Van Zandt both became huge influences once I started writing. Waits can paint a mental picture full of colors, sounds and smells in one line: "The road is out before me/the moon is shining bright/I want you to remember me/as I disappear tonight. But today is gray skies/tomorrow is tears/you'll have to wait/till yesterday is here." He's full of gold! Townes can break your heart with three well-placed words. His word choice with his lonely, desperate, honest voice cuts to the bone every time.

One thing that strikes

me about your lyrics, besides the strong Americana imagery, is your commitment to narrative storytelling within the tradition of the folk ballad. What types are stories are you trying to tell and to whom?

For the most part, unfortunately, we are telling sad stories to upbeat music. Heartbreak, loss of a loved one, disappointments in life that we have gone through and most likely will all go through again. Turmoil and/or unhappiness seems to be what cultivates inspiration for writing. It doesn't have to be a life-changing issue; one gloomy day can be enough inspiration to write a murder ballad. A sunny summer day in the park will never lead to a new Jackalope Saint's song. As far as who we are trying to tell the stories to, anyone who cares to listen and can relate in one way or another about what we are playing, be it musically or lyrically or both.

Last time I checked, you clocked in as a seven-piece ensemble. Is this the line-up one should expect during your two-night engagement at the Adrift Hotel?

We are a seven-piece group. There will be six of us for both of the shows at the Adrift.

Your last record, "Illuminations of the Mystery Tradition," came out in 2013 and saw the Saints exploring an expanded sound with some very intricate arrangements. What do you foresee for the Jackalope Saints in 2015?

"Illuminations of the Mystery Tradition" is where we really started messing around with actually composing music with the help of our friend Gabe Salo. He wrote out the intro, outro

and all of the interludes, and then we recorded them in hopes to have the album have a close-to-seamless sound from start to finish. Since then we have added some new members, Sharon Cannon on fiddle and David Celis on trumpet. These two have been a huge part in the evolution of our music over the past year.

When we started playing music as the Jackalope Saints a few years ago, we were wanting to be a rowdy bluegrass band with face-melting solos (we still are advocates of this). But we have expanded our sound to a point where most everything now sounds as if it has purpose and has been thought out, adding (we hope) textures and depth to our music that we had never had before — while still working in some face-melting solos provided by John Chap.

As far as what I foresee for the Jackalopes in 2015: I hope to mix the simplistic and direct songwriting style of say, Woody Guthrie, while blending in the full and rich sound of Ennio Morricone. In other words, we are going to aim for the stars and hope we at least hit the horizon.

word nerd

Dismal

[dɪz•məl]

adjective

1. dreary or woeful; of gloom, doom or melancholy in mood, condition, circumstance, sound or forecast

2. *obsolete*. Unlucky or calamitous; sinister or evil

noun

3. *informal*, U.S. South: local name for a tract of swampland, usually near the coast, esp. in North Carolina

4. *Dismal Nitch*: AKA Megler Cove, a natural recess and present day Washington State Rest Area on the north shore of the Columbia River within Lewis and Clark National Historical Park

Origin:

First recorded in English as meaning "gloomy" in 1593. Enters the language by way of the Anglo-Norman in 1256 through the Old French, *dismals*, from the Medieval Latin, *dies mali*, literally meaning "evil days." Medieval calendars marked two days each month as unlucky days, sometimes re-

ferred to as "Egyptian days" as these portentous dates were supposedly first noticed by Egyptian astrologers. DISMAL NITCH takes its name from a reference to the spot in Capt. William Clark's journal: "I had the canoes loaded in great haste and Set Out, from this dismal nitch where we have been confined for 6 days..." The rest area was officially renamed in 2005 from the Megler Rest Area.

"Based on recent research, NPS and the Washington Historical Society (WHS) believe the actual Dismal Nitch — so named because of miserable weather conditions the expedition experienced there for six days starting Nov. 10, 1805 — is located about a mile east of the rest area."

—"Dismal Nitch won't be quite so dismal after facelift," *The Daily Astorian*, Dec. 23, 2013

"[Rex] Ziak was the first writer to fully highlight the stay of Lewis and Clark on the Washington bank of the Columbia River before they overwintered at Fort Clatsop. His focus was on the 30 days between Nov. 7, 1805, and Dec. 7, 1805, a time when Clark's journal entries were vague and confusing. He researched the precise site of Dismal Nitch and other locations by going out in a canoe and checking on the locales."

—"Rex Ziak's story on national TV show tonight," *The Daily Astorian*, Dec. 24, 2009

Beat the Winter Blues

visit Mr. Doobees
your cannabis headquarters
-where the fun begins!

Only premium small batch special reserve cannabis from Washington's finest boutique growers.

On Hwy 101 between Raymond & South Bend mrdoobees@gmail.com
2870 Ocean Ave. Raymond WA 98577 360-875-8016

Find us on Facebook

OPEN DAILY 11AM-7 PM

This product has intoxicating effects and may be habit forming. Marijuana can impair concentration, coordination and judgment. Do not operate a vehicle or machinery under the influence of this drug. There may be health risks associated with consumption of this product. For use only by adults twenty-one and older. Keep out of reach of children.