

southernpsychedelic

Local band Pearlene goes it alone, gets people out on the dance floor

RODNEY WILSON
CIN WEEKLY CONTRIBUTOR

"I think we do this for spiritual reasons," says Reuben Glaser, frontman for local band Pearlene. "The spirituality is the communication between us. It's something that I really value - I'm very close to these guys."

Given the band's Southern psychedelic sound - a swaggering mix of dirty blues, garage rock and other rough-and-tumble noises - you could be forgiven for being surprised at such a statement. After all, Pearlene's sound is firmly rooted in a musical legacy of debauchery, of bands who live for sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll. But speaking with Glaser is to understand his dedication to Pearlene's music, and you'll quickly realize that there's more going on here than just a party.

BRINGING THE PARTY

That's not to say that Pearlene can't bring the party - anybody who's been to a Pearlene show knows that the band can get people moving.

"Our last show, we just started stomping rhythmically, and it was just this big dance party that just kind of caught on," Glaser says. "I can remember in the '90s in Cincinnati, people were standing around doing nothing, looking awkward like, 'how should I stand' and 'should I look like I'm into this or not?' And now, people are just throwing down, not really giving a s—. There's a good, warm, sensual vibe going on with people losing themselves a little bit, which is my aim - you don't get too many chances to go out and forget everything."

JOURNEYMEN

Pearlene started in 1999, when Glaser (guitar, vocals) needed a place to stay and moved in with Jesse Ebaugh (bass, vocals), formerly of Heevahava. Roommates became bandmates, and the two began a musical journey that started with a step back in time.

"We were in a transitional period, starting to delve deeper into some

older styles of music and just trying to broaden our musical perspective a little bit," Glaser says. "Jesse was starting to play acoustic bass, and I was getting into ragtime - we were going in the opposite direction of electric music for a while."

The two made a go as an unplugged Delta blues and ragtime duo, but the experience was more wearisome than rewarding. After more musical experimentation, Pearlene settled on the bluesy, psychedelic rock the group plays now, adding members Andrew Jody (drums) and Andrew Higley (keyboards). "We weren't really sure what direction we were going in, then, for whatever reason, this band just kind of stuck," Glaser says.

ARTISTIC CONTROL

Pearlene's newest CD, *For Western Violence and Brief Sensuality*, represents the culmination of Pearlene's musical journey. The disc is Pearlene's first studio record and its first self-released album, as it is foregoing previous partnerships with labels such as Sympathy for the Record Industry and Dim Mak to start its own High and Dangerous Records.

"We've talked to some smaller labels but haven't been happy with what's out there right now. And we've been burned," he says. "The Dim Mak thing was a really bad experience for us - except for one of the songs off the record getting licensed (to a Nissan commercial) - but everything else, dealing with them, not being able to get things done and getting in the habit of expecting people do things for you the right way ... it's just not healthy."

The CD release show represents Pearlene taking control of its career, a move echoed by the album's artwork. "We're doing a limited run of four-color, silk screened artwork," Glaser says. "Our last record, the label really messed us up on the artwork - I mean, the name on the record was probably 10-point font or something like that. So we kind of went in the opposite direction and made the name big and bold - it almost looks like some kind of communist cereal box, but I like it."



DAVID SORCHER | CIN WEEKLY

Clockwise from the front: Jesse Ebaugh, Andrew Higley, Reuben Glaser and Andrew Jody are the band Pearlene. Pearlene plays on Saturday at the Northside Tavern.

JUST THE FACTS

WHAT: Pearlene CD release show for *Western Violence and Brief Sensuality*

WHEN: 10 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 30

WHERE: Northside Tavern, 4163 Hamilton Ave., Northside

PRICE: No cover

PARKING: On street or in Northside lot

across the street

CONTACT: 513-542-3603, northside-tavern.com or www.pearlenemusic.com

ETC: The singing duo of Beth Harris and Kristen Kreft, who first sang for the band during Pearlene's CEA performance with Kenny Smith, will be joining Pearlene for the CD release show.