

Probable Cause adept at cover material, very capable of artistic, creative stimulus

By Lee Ward



Probable Cause (Photo by Ken Bratz)

As an avid listener and life-long student, this writer is always on the lookout for those few musical gems that exist. They are sometimes lost amongst the clamor and clanging of hype and creative marketing generated by agencies and bands that are competing for the well-paying venues and, ultimately, a dominant market share.

On a recent expedition to a great "hang" in Hillsboro, this writer discovered that Coyotes Bar and Grill was *the* place to be that night; a superior Portland cover band Probable Cause was one great reason why.

Now many are the reasons why folks leave the comfort and security of their homes in search of lively entertainment. Many go in search of artistic and creative stimulus, while others yearn for something more physical and sociable, like *dancing*. And dancing is precisely what Probable Cause is all about. While it's true that many cover bands routinely fall short of actually *covering* another artist's material appropriately, it's very obvious that these guys truly cover the songs that they choose to play. They are *very* capable of artistic, creative stimulus, while they rock you right out of your chair onto the dance floor.



Joe Casimir

The members of this tough-rocking, working class band are: Greg Dawson, lead vocals and guitar; Mark McDermott, lead guitar and vocals; Joe Casimir, bass and vocals and Ken Bratz, drums. Whether they're soloing, or just building up the overall arrangement, these boys are very proficient and capable with their instruments.

With the gritty edge of Dawson's on-key, heart-felt vocals, McDermott's searing, hot lead work moves fluidly between influences such as Jimmy Page, Jeff Beck, Van Halen, The Doobies, Pat Simmons, Duane Allman slide licks. McDermott demonstrates some Hendrix whammy bar magic. This great smorgasbord of sound is served up on the solid.

groove-happy rhythm section of Casimir and Bratz

It would certainly be amiss not to mention the guest female vocalist Trish O'Halloran, who sat in with the band this night as she occasionally does. Her hard driving, R&B-influenced vocals left the audience yelling for more.



Singer Trish O'Halloran

The power of Probable Cause was largely evident. The dance floor was well-packed through the majority of their performance. In fact, it should be noted here that the band's mission statement is "Dance-'til-ya-drop Rock'N'Roll," which is very appropriate. All four of these rockers didn't *look* like they were having a good time; they *were* having a good time! They played as if there were no tomorrow, which is the way a true artist reflects the moment.



Greg Dawson

This band is a Portland staple for over 20 years, with Dawson carrying it through years of improvements and upgrades.



Mark F. McDermott

McDermott, originally from New Jersey, joined the group approximately 10 years ago; they have worked closely together to build a successful, working show.

Casimir, originally from New York, joined about a year ago; the newest addition, native Idahoan Bratz, who has been a "sub" drummer with the group in the past, was recently hired as the full-time percussionist. You may have seen Dawson and McDermott working at various venues around town as an acoustic duo as well.

Leader Dawson gave a positive affirmation of the cohesiveness and potential of this newest personnel line up; when asked about recordings, he remarks that they are hoping to go into the studio soon.

When first visiting Coyotes Bar and Grill, this writer was pleasantly surprised. The restaurant/bar opened over a year ago and is nestled with a few other businesses in an upscale Hillsboro suburban area of condos, tract homes and some sparse, wooded areas.



Ken G. Bratz

Coyote's boasts a large bar and restaurant with a full menu; an open, upstairs pool and shuffleboard area; a patio dining and smoking area and a small, secluded area in the heart of the building for those who desire quieter, more intimate seating. The food is very good, the menu moderately priced and most importantly, the servers and other hired help are competent and very amiable, usually the decisive factor for winning return customers.

In general, a visit to Coyotes Bar and Grill, on the corner of 53rd and Baseline Rd. in Hillsboro, for lunch, dinner, or just "dance 'til you drop" social networking is highly recommended. It seems to be *the hang* on the west side. For more information about Coyotes Bar and Grill, visit their website at www.coyotesrestaurant.com.

For more information regarding the band Probable Cause including bookings, visit their website at www.probablecause.com. Also, see ads and listings in this issue.

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