

# Regular Guys are better than average

**Definitely a Live Band  
Interview and Impressionistic Record  
Review of: The Regular Guys**

by Mac Hislop

"We are not a traditional R&B band by any means." So began Roy Furchspan of The Regular Guys, a seven member R&B band from L.A. The Regular Guys got into the R&B thing about five years ago playing colleges and have yet to let up. Roy explained that the band began its career playing covers of '60's R&B songs as: "when we started we were kinda green and we really couldn't write songs worth a damn... but, we liked performing so we waited until our writing caught up with us."

From such beginnings, crawling about the myriad of L.A. clubs and California campi, the band members were able to develop their collective skills and harness the energy inherent in the Rhythm and Blues form to create their own R&B sound. Working off a roots blues-rock base, The Regular Guys have blended, when so inspired, jazz, calypso-reggae, and straight blues with great effect. In fact, the band's sound reflects its amalgam of talent. "The varied musical interests of the seven guys in the band bring to it a lot of different influences... (the band's music) is a whole mish-mash that comes together and is blended into a cohesive whole." It works.

While very much a live band, The Regular Guys recorded in the spring of 1986, their debut album titled, *Distressed*. The album is a good, solid first album. On first play, one notes the quality of production, the tightness of the band's sound (perhaps too tight for R&B — it could be a bit overly contrived), and picks up on familiar R&B licks, especially with the requisite cover of *Framed*. The lyrics are clever, perhaps witty. On second listen, the band's performance is much more captivating. The R&B score tugs at you while the lyrics splash about in your mind. If you continue to give rein to the music and yourself, you are drawn into a timeless netherworld of blues and left to wander... soon, a misty New Orleans sound drifts in obscuring the blues and leads you pleasantly in its grasp, out of your new blues consciousness to drop you languidly somewhere in the Carribean where the calypso, the reggae, and the



The Regular Guys: working off a roots blues-rock base.

blues congregate in preparation for some ethereal reckoning. Raw R&B then crashes through your plastic inner sanctum snapping you into a new awareness of your living room and the harsh realities of daily existence in our negative age.

At times funny and at times introspective, on this album the band's musical imagination, talent, and diversity emerge, but one gets the sense that something is missing. There is, namely, a live audience. The best attempts at capturing the fullest feeling of R&B are live albums, but even then they too suffer from the same weakness — they fail to foster a sense of real participation. R&B is very definitely a social musical form. Arguably, R&B can only be truly appreciated in a small crowded venue. (Anyone familiar with Marty's in Calgary can relate.) Good R&B demands

sweating horn players, a lead with a cigarette, a terribly mellow bassist, and a terribly beat drummer. If the sax blasts do not knock you back a step, you are not listening to R&B. Roy acknowledges the weakness of the album in this respect. While noting that the band is generally happy with the album, all things considered, their sound "did not come across as well as we feel we do live." The band's second album, for which they are getting material ready now, will be much more of a live album than a studio production.

The Regular Guys see doing more recording, according to Roy, in order, "to gain more visibility, we like to perform live... our main impetus is to be able to perform anywhere — the more people the better." Therefore, the tour in support of *Distressed*, which includes gigs in Montana

Edmonton, Grande Prairie (of all places), Vancouver, and all over the U.S. West Coast, is to lay the foundation for the band's future projects both in the production room and on the road.

So, what about Saturday night? If you are at all conscious in the course of your travels about campus, you will have noted that The Regular Guys are playing Dinwoodie's Saturday night. What is in store for you? Roy has promised a "good party." The band "likes to be entertaining" and their track record indicates that the band is very much so. This band, which has dedicated itself to performing live and has made a name for itself on the colleges of California as a great live act, is probably well worth taking in.

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