

Big Rude Jake

Bio

For Bookings, contact:
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Singer/song-writer Big Rude Jake is a remarkable and distinguished figure on the Canadian music scene with a notable presence around the world. A true innovator, a deft craftsman of song and a powerful and compelling lyricist, he has been knocking audiences dead with his impassioned performances for some 20 years, in venues across Canada, the U.S. and Europe.

While most jazz devotees of his generation appreciated jazz from an academic point of view, Jake found that he was drawn to the Jazz tradition for its passion and sensuality. He lamented the rise of the stuffy “jazz intellectual,” and longed for a return to a time when jazz was, instead, rich in emotion, sensuality and desire. Thus was born his vision to bring Jazz back to its street-wise and rough-hewn roots. Part of the process was developing a stage persona that was evocative of strident passion and longing. In the first few years of his career, he actually avoided playing in jazz venues altogether. Instead, he performed his own jazz and swing compositions in rock venues and blues bars across Canada, where he hoped to find the kindred spirits who could appreciate his dream of a “Bawdy House Jazz” revival.

Originally billed as “alternative music,” Jake’s vision caught the attention of media across the country. He made a splash in magazines and newspapers in every major city in the land, on TV and on radio, and performed live for thousands of people. His independent records were sold in the “rock,” “punk” and “alternative” sections in record stores, and he proved that Jazz and Swing, with the right attitude, could have as much street credibility as any rock, soul or hip-hop act in the country.

Then came the rise of such U.S. bands as *Big Bad Voodoo Daddy* and *the Squirrel Nut Zippers*, and suddenly, Jake was swept up into the Neo-Swing movement that was all the rage across North America. Understanding that he needed to develop a more international profile, Jake moved to New York, where he marketed himself to American records companies.

There, he signed with *RoadRunner Records* and began touring Europe and the United States. More importantly, while living in New York, Jake had a chance to work with some of the finest jazz musicians in the world, further developing his craft as a singer and as a song-writer, and acquiring an deep affection for the Jazz

community. Eventually, he would grow beyond the “Bawdy House” Jazz that was his beginnings, and begin to pen tunes reminiscent of the smooth and sophisticated styles of New York Jazz artists from the 1950’s

Having thus sown his wild oats, Jake has returned to Toronto with a dream to make music, this time not for street urchins, but for the newly blossoming mainstream Jazz scene that has recently won the hearts of listeners of all ages across Canada.

Unfortunately, around this time, tragedy struck. Jake was hit by a taxicab while riding his bike home from a gig in the middle of the night. Due to his injuries, he was forced to cancel a national tour of an independent album that he had only just completed, and was left with few options but to take some time off, to heal and re-group. He went into semi-retirement.

The years away from the recording industry did Jake a world of good. He is actually in better physical shape than he has been since high school. He’s also more relaxed, having pursued his interest in Buddhism with vigor. And, he went back to his roots and took to performing as a solo guitar player again, which is something that he had given up in the hustle and bustle of touring with a 6-piece band. He became re-aquainted with his love of ragtime guitar, and started writing songs again with the purpose of creating a new CD that was more contemplative, more intimate and featuring more acoustic guitar than any of his previous recorded works. This was the birth of his latest CD Quicksand. Which has been embraced enthusiastically by the jazz community, the blue crowd and folk music lovers alike.

The positive response to Quicksand has garnished Jake more commercial air-play than any of his previous recordings, and has motivated him to get back on the road and tour his catalogue of powerful songs. The band, now called the Quicksand Combo, is red hot with cool licks and infectious energy. The sound is a clever mix of old and new, of jazz, swing, jump, cabaret, Americana and powerful lyrics Jake himself is as sharp-witted as ever and ready to entertain. Old fan will thrill to see Jake back in action and new listeners will marvel at the power and emotional range of this remarkable performer. It is a show not to be missed.

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