

On Sept. 28 world renowned blues guitarist Carvin Jones will be performing at the historic El Morro Theatre. I had the pleasure of interviewing him by telephone during his tour of Lithuania. Carvin, a musician of whom Eric Clapton said, ”I think he is the next up-and-coming blues player” is also highly regarded by both B.B. King and Buddy Guy. Jones has opened for the likes of Jeff Beck, Gary Moore, Carlos Santana, and John Mayall. He enjoys a huge following in Europe as well as the U. S.

Rhonda Quintana: How did you get started in the business?

Carvin Jones: How did I get started in the business (giggles) I was a little boy and my grandfather would play B.B. King records 24 hours a day, and ya know you couldn’t get away from it (laughs) and then I saw him on television and thought this guy is incredible and he’s who inspired me to start playing the blues.

RQ: I love BB King one of the great’s for sure! Are you originally from Arizona?

CJ: No no I am from a tiny town called Lufkin, Texas.

RQ: Oh wow, I was sure you were from Arizona I'll make sure I get the spelling right Lufkin, Texas. Being that you're over in Lithuania, and you've played many other European countries, how do their audiences compare to the ones in the States?

CJ: You know I tell everybody this and it's the flat out truth. I don't care who you are. You can be Carvin Jones or the Rolling Stones, or you can be Madonna. Everyone is more famous in Europe than they are in America. That's just the way it goes because in America [it's] the greatest country on the face of the earth… I tell everybody that! In America there's so much to do, you can go to the Arizona Cardinals game. You can go to the Phoenix Sun's game. You can go to a Diamondbacks game. But over here in Lithuania there's not that much to do as far as entertainment, and so they are really into their music and that's true like all over Europe and the Eastern world. That's just the flat out truth.

RQ: Wow that's something. I didn't realize that, Well I guess we are very blessed to live in the United States, aren't we?

CJ:Oh my God.. The best country on the face of the earth. I tell everybody that, really.

RQ: So I read somewhere that you went to the Middle East to entertain our troops. Is that true?

CJ: Yes I did. That was the highlight of my career. I was there for two weeks; performed around Iraq, and Kuwait, a little bit around Afghanistgan. It was the most incredible thing and the troops absolutely love[d] it and they still send me facebook messages and emails now.

RQ: That is fantastic. I am sure it was very important to a lot of them to stay connected with you for that little piece of being home again ya know. So, on another topic what do you think about the music industry today? It's really changed over that last 10 years what are your thoughts on that?

CJ: You know what, Rhonda I am going to tell you something that is going to shock you, just shock the daylights out of you. Did you know that, Carvin Jones here, I literally book my own tours and concerts worldwide, literally.

RQ: That is really smart I know that a ton of artist[s] started handling their own affairs like 10 years ago. They started realizing how much more control they would have over their own careers.

CJ: Well yes, I always handle my own tours because man, that's what I do. I am dedicated. I never drink or smoke[d] a cigarette a day in my life. That's the truth.

RQ: I have to ask this question because my husband and I own Quintana's Music Center. What is your favorite guitar to play?

CJ: Fender Stratocaster. That's the one I have been using pretty much my whole career.

RQ: How many years have you been playing and who taught you to play?

CJ: Well, I am a self taught musician and I have been playing going on 46 years now.

RQ: Has it been that long? I didn't realize. What blues song do you consider the most influential?

CJ: I would have to say B.B. King's rendition of "The Thrill is Gone."

RQ: Who would you say is your new favorite blues artist?

CJ: Honestly, I don't really have one. Really I don't even listen to music because, I am either booking my tours, I am playing my guitar, and that's a[n] all day job. Right now, I perform in 35 countries all over the world, and I do outreach programs for schools to help spread the message for kids to stay off alcohol and drugs. I also do a lot of show[s] for the cancer society. My family has been hit hard with cancer and my concerts are a way for me to give back. Plus I am in the gym six days a week when I am back in Phoenix.

RQ: Good for you! Well, you have to say fit. I mean you're like an athlete.

CJ: You really have to stay active to perform at this level and travel as much. I'll give you an example: I will arrive Friday night the 27th late. Get up, do sound check, then the meet and greet/live performance at Quintana's music at 1:00 pm, perform at the El Morro Theatre at 8 pm till late. Then I have to drive back to Arizona where I am performing Sunday morning at 10 am! (laughter)...And then the next day I have to catch a flight to Copenhagen, Denmark.

RQ: WOW! That sounds exhausting! You know what! You are really living the life of a rock star. You are doing what other people just talk about doing..

CJ: You know what Rhonda I love it. I really do I love it.

RQ: You would have to love it. That's what keeps you going and you know it's obvious when I watch your promo videos for the different towns you're playing in. You really look like you're looking forward to playing there and interacting with your fans. It's refreshing to see. Because some artist[s] get backed up and burned out by being on the road and I don't get that from you. It's just pure joy.

15 years ago my husband Ryan Quintana brought you to Gallup for a show and people absolutely loved it! How does it feel coming back to Gallup after all these years?

CJ: I am very, very excited about this because you know that [was] actually the reason why I

agreed to come back. I was talking to my friend as I was ‘like hey man, do you remember that little town we played called Gallup’ and he was like, ‘ya man. We had a really good response. I want to go there again.’ That’s when I reached out to book a show and we started talking about it and now it[‘s] all happening..

RQ: It’s funny because right before that my husband and I were talking and saying it would be great to have Carvin Jones back in Gallup to perform, and like they say sometimes the universe just works out for everyone and it just clicks.

Where do you see yourself in the next 10 years?

CJ: Just continuing doing what I am currently doin’, because you know I see guys like Rick Springfield who’s 70 years old, Mick Jagger 70-something years old, Buddy Guy, 85 years old. That lets me know that Carvin Jones has another solid 25 years left in him. (Laughs)

RQ: That’s Awesome! Exactly! Thank you so much for the interview and just to remind everyone. Carvin Jones will be doing a free live in-store performance/meet and greet at Quintana’s Music from 1 pm - 2:30 pm and a live show at the El Morro Theatre. Doors [open] at 8 pm on Sept. 28. Get your tickets now at Eventbrite.com or at the door. But I wouldn’t wait. Tthis is going to be an amazing show from an awesome man and it’s sure to sell out.

By Rhonda Quintana
Guest Submission