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 Cash and Prizes

Sat. Oct. 30: Halloween Party
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 Cash and Prizes

Sat. Nov. 6: Allies

Sat. Nov. 13: Phil In The Blanks

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By Helen Marketti

"I grew up in the Bronx, right by Yankee Stadium and every Sunday night my family would sit down and watch The Ed Sullivan Show," recalls Ricky. "I remember watching the Rolling Stones and all the British Invasion bands and I felt something click. There was something very cool about the Stones; they did it for me even more so than The Beatles. The Stones reminded me of me, skinny and kind of ragged looking. (laughs) The girls were screaming for them and of course, that was a good thing. What I really liked was that Ed Sullivan looked horrified and I was sold! There was something nasty about the Stones and that's what I liked."

Ricky continues, "My parents were divorced by the time I was nine. My mom worked in a handbag company and someone who worked with her gave me my first acoustic guitar. I knew that playing guitar is what I wanted to do after I saw Keith Richards and Brian Jones (Rolling Stones) on TV. I had no steady, fatherly figure type influence around so I kind of learned my own way through. I never really thought of doing anything else other than playing guitar. I found that I could figure songs out by ear. I never really took any kind of lessons - maybe a small handful. I usually learn to play a song by ear. I don't read music."

While growing up, Ricky did the typical playing gigs at church dances and school dances. "Once you get a buck in your hand then you think you're a professional. That's what I thought," he laughs.

With a move to Queens from Bronx, keeping the music scene close and an eye open for opportunities, Ricky found himself in the right place at the right time. "As I got older, a band from Boston called Susan was now in New York City. They were a Raspberries sounding group. They started playing gigs at a popular club, Max's Kansas City. I'm 15 or 16 years old at the time and dressed to the max like one of the members of The Faces," remembers Ricky. "I answered an ad in The Village Voice. If you were a musician, you looked in The Village Voice to see if bands needed anyone."

Ricky toured with the band, Susan, for a while and things seemed to slow down for

RICKY BYRD
 Former lead guitarist for Joan Jett & The Blackhearts, Ricky Byrd's musical talent has peppered collaborations with many artists as well as finding his own sound for his solo projects.

them after their first record. He began playing with other musicians and started hanging out with Steve Marriott (Humble Pie, The Small Faces). Then one day, Ricky got a call that this girl named Joan Jett was looking for a guitar player. "I had been asked by Steve to join Humble Pie plus John Waite and I were doing some work together but when I went to audition for Joan, I picked that gig," said Ricky. "I joined The Blackhearts, played on "I Love Rock n Roll" and that's how it all got started. I was with Joan Jett for about 13 years. I had also worked with Roger Daltrey and went on tour with him. There were other publishing deals that have kept me busy. I was tired of the road and wanted to find my own sound. What does Ricky Byrd sound like instead of being just a guitar player? That is what I wanted to work on. I'm working on my own record now and that's where we are."

Ricky's new CD is set for release during the fall of this year. Inspirations for music can come in a variety of forms and from any direction. "I can pick up a guitar and depending on what guitar it is, what you play on it will take you down a different highway. I write different kinds of songs depending on what type of guitar I'm using. Unless a title comes to my mind, I usually think about ideas while walking the streets of Manhattan. I work on the riff, then melody and then the lyrics, that's the way I do it. I've written songs by myself and with others," explains Ricky. "The songs are ready for my CD and it should be ready by the fall. There will be around 14 tracks or so, we'll see. On this album, I am doing exactly what I want. I have no one looking over my shoulder. It's a rock and roll, blues and soul sound because that's who I am. There's a lot of great guitar on this record."

Playing the guitar since age nine, Ricky shares his thoughts about what it is about the guitar that he likes. "It keeps you happy when you're sad. It keeps you company when you're lonely. It's my tool. I'll pick up a guitar and play some blues or create new material. It depends on what mood I'm in at the time. It's my thing."

A music career that has spanned several decades, artists and experiences, Ricky knows that things change in this business and you

have to change with them. "We used to have a saying... "I'll meet you at the coffee shop at the corner of Bitch and Moan"... and what that means is once there was a steady thing like gigs and interviews and those were the things we sometimes would complain about and then all of a sudden, it's gone. I'm



What is in the immediate future for Ricky Byrd? "I hope to tour with this CD. We'll see how things go. I'm itching to play. I love being on stage. I love being the front guy. I'm unhappy when I don't play. It's what I love to do. It's part of my soul."

For more information on Ricky Byrd including sound clips of his music, please visit: www.myspace.com/rickybyrd

You can also find out what Ricky Byrd is up to by visiting his Face book page!

always appreciative of everything that comes along. I've been fortunate that I have played with many of my idols. You have to come to grips with the fact that things change. I was in a big rock and roll band for 13 years and even at the time when I was with Joan Jett & The Blackhearts, things started to wane a little bit. Times change, tastes change and things change. Your career then changes and you have to adapt."

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