

# WISHBONE ASH

*Andy Powell, original member of Wishbone Ash will be at The Winchester in Lakewood on May 1. The band will be performing songs from the archives as well as selections from their new CD, Elegant Stealth.*

Andy Powell has enjoyed a career of over 45 years as the remaining original member of Wishbone Ash. Hailing from across the pond in England, the band has always had a history for its twin lead guitars. Andy has enjoyed a career that has taken him all over the world and it continues to this day.

"I started playing guitar when I was about 11 years old," said Andy. "I really liked the guitar playing of Hank Marvin who was in a group called, The Shadows which was really England's version of The Ventures. I always loved Booker T & The MGs and Motown."

"I was always obsessed with music. I would play guitar six hours a day when I was growing up. Earning a living by playing music was always a forbidden fruit. I had made the connection when I was around 14 that you can actually sing for supper," remembers Andy.

"There was always this thing about traveling around in old vans, hanging out with other musicians and having fun which became my whole social life. My life was built around that and it's something that just sticks with you. I tried to go into other careers such as retail but always went back to music. Eventually music won out because I couldn't avoid it any longer."

Wishbone Ash had hit albums over the years but did not have any hit singles on the charts, which in hind sight may be a good thing, according to Andy. "I used to be upset by the fact that we did not have any hit singles but looking back on it now, we stayed under the radar and weren't held within the confines of the music industry. It seemed once bands had a hit single, it became an albatross around their neck. We are still able to do as we like and on our own terms."

Elegant Stealth is the latest CD release by Wishbone Ash, which has a variety of songs about love, life (Reason to Believe) and even the weather (Heavy Weather). Mud-Slick is a catchy instrumental piece. "Some of the best songs are emotion or relationship based," said Andy. "You never stop thinking about love in some way. There are love songs and relationship songs on the album."

"The song, Heavy Weather is a metaphor for what has been happening with all of the tornadoes, storms and floods that have been in the news. It's about the grief and what people go through. As a traveling musician, you do come across many things going on all over the world."

Elegant Stealth was a collective effort for the band. "We wanted to do something with all of our experiences coming together," said

Andy. "We work together and also independently. We are still basking in the release of this album but there are always things we are thinking about doing next. We're talking about working with an orchestra at some point. There are always things to think about and explore."

The current lineup of Wishbone Ash consists of Andy Powell, Muddy Manninen, Bob Skeat and Joe Crabtree. "There is chemistry with all of us. You have to work at it as you would anything else," said Andy. "You have to keep things focused and goal oriented. It's important to not allow anything to fester. It's like a management skill and you learn it along the way with years of experience. I am the band's leader by default and I try to keep it that way. Our current lineup has been solid for a number of years. It's natural sometimes for things not to work the way we want them to but all of us are long enough in the tooth to be able to spot dissatisfaction,

address things and keep upbeat. I think that's also why our music stays fresh."

Andy takes some additional time to reflect back on his career, "I could have never predicted that my career would have lasted as long as it has. I am a creature of habit. I always like to move from one thing to the next and build upon it. The roots that I laid down for myself and for Wishbone Ash were strong and deep. Being in the band during the early 70s was a great time because things just exploded for music. Each band that emerged from that era had their own sound. It was eclectic and experimental. We were able to branch out from those roots we put down in the beginning. It's up to you to do a good job and keep entertaining people. People think of Wishbone Ash as primarily a live band and I think so, too. It's great to produce records but the thrill is always there when you play for a live audience."

Andy enjoys meeting fans all over the world and appreciates those who have followed his career since the beginning. "What we have created is a community and it's a good thing. Through the years, many of our fans have become our friends and associates. We stop in cities and towns all over the world



every year and we meet up with people we have met before. It's a time to catch up and see how things are going. It's not just about music; it's about connecting with people, which is very humbling. It's a great time to be alive."

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