

Everyday Sunshine: The Story Of Fishbone-Detroit Screening

[youtube]ChXk4R0mGNw[/youtube]

“Everyday Sunshine: The Story Of Fishbone” will screen in Detroit starting this Thursday December 15th through the 18th at the [Cass City Cinema](#). Chris Metzler, one of the directors of the documentary, will be on hand for Q & A sessions after the screenings on the 15th and 16th.

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Film Review: Everyday Sunshine The Story Of Fishbone



Chris Metzler and Lev Anderson’s almost two-hour documentary on Afro-Punk godfathers Fishbone is an interior look at the band’s origins, their internal battles and external battles with an industry that never had a prominent place for swarthy genre-crossing rockers. Fishbone became rare Black punk rockers who melded funk, ska, reggae and R&B into a lone sound that had a minor flirtation with mainstream audiences in the mid 90’s. Laurence Fishburne narrates the story of how Angelo Moore, Norwood Fisher, Kendall Jones, Walter A. Kibby II, Phillip Fisher and Christopher Dowd got together as a band while attending junior high school in South Central Los

Angeles. They happily declared a musical outsiderism passed down from Arthur Lee, Jimi Hendrix and Bad Brains where their version of Blackness could only resonate with mostly white audiences. Despite the influence of Sly Stone, George Clinton and Prince their confrontational and unapologetic depth of references never cracked the level of popularity those artists achieved. As young musical insurrectionists, the band became a guiding light for groups like Jane's Addiction, No Doubt and The Red Hot Chili Peppers as they became legendary on the punk scene for their kinetic showmanship.

Their originality became a blessing and a curse once they entered the segregated music industry that failed to find a commercially viable place for them. David Kahne, who signed them to their first recording contract with Columbia, recants the way the company's Black music division looked at Fishbone with scorn and immediately categorized them as a rock/ white band. The only problem was that the industry had never made a Black rock star save for Jimi Hendrix. Little Richard, Chuck Berry, Fats Domino, Ike Turner and Bo Diddley were successful but never had the major spotlight of a Pat Boone or Elvis Presley. Consequently after the disappointing sales of *The Reality Of My Surroundings* Sony gave them another chance with *Give A Monkey A Brain and He'll Swear He's The Center Of The Universe* and then released them from their only contract with a major label. The problems with the industry were exacerbated by their inside wars that climaxed with kidnapping charges and various members leaving the fold. Attempts at democracy were difficult with six egos and competing creativities to manage. Angelo Moore's thermin-loving alter ego named Dr. Maddvibe became a violent annoyance to other members. Christopher Dowd felt underappreciated for his songwriting skills and everyone ultimately believed that his voice had no equal footing among the rest. History has taught music fans via The Beatles, The Temptations and so many more groups that any band worth its stay is replete with warfare.

[youtube]ChXk4R0mGNw[/youtube]

Commentary from peers like Vernon Reid adds perspective and more legitimacy to the narrative especially when Reid comments on the quandary of Fishbone recordings never being able to duplicate the live experience. Reid's status as a Black rocker who also experienced a brief but more accomplished bout with the industry is the kind of insight needed to illuminate Fishbone's story. Little Richard, who recorded with Fishbone, would have also been a great resource in addition to the other living Black granddaddies of rock and the industry's chosen token Lenny Kravitz.

Ice-T, who carries the unique double badge for being a credible rapper and rocker also opines on the absence of a neat mold and compartment to market the guys. Despite this never-ending conundrum Fishbone made it through the '90s by constantly touring and releasing the soulful thrashing of *Chim Chim's Badass Revenge* on Dallas Austin's Rowdy Records. The camera follows the group into the 2000s and we see the crestfallen release of *Still Stuck In Your Throat* from 2007 but there is no mention of 2000s *Fishbone and the Familyhood Nextperience Present: The Psychotic Friends Nuttwerx*. The album from 2000 put them on a cultural ascendance manifested in a Sly Stone cover with guest appearances from Gwen Stefani, Rick James and George Clinton and more musically and socially accomplished songs. Casual viewers will read the film as the story of a band that failed instead of an industry that holds the dominant narrative of rock captive and ignores those who fall outside of it. Other audiences will find a unique posse of artists making music that exposes several textures of Blackness purely on commission from the soul.

[Check for Fishbone screenings.](#)

Fishbone 25th Anniversary Video

[youtube]-RvBsN2ydg8[/youtube]

Fishbone have been at for 25 years only to watch lesser bands surpass them in commercial success. It's been a hard road for them as Black men doing a blend of rock, funk, ska and R&B. From '86 to '96 they had a deal with Columbia and produced some of the most wickedly good music around. But by the late '90's they lost their contract and went with Dallas Austin's Rowdy Records to record the intensely fierce *Chim Chim's Badass Revenge* which Austin also produced. They've continued to record marvelous albums and tour but they remain mostly unknown outside of the underground because they had the bad luck to have swarthy complexions. Even the so-called best rock critics have been too ignorant to understand the rhythmic Nettwerx that is Fishbone. Thankfully Lev Anderson and Chris Metzler have shot *Everyday Sunshine*, a new documentary about the band narrated by Laurence Fishburne. Make sure to check out the [website](#) to see if it's coming near you.