

Big Rude Jake

and his Gentleman Players



Ultrasound Showbar • 265 Queen Street West
Saturday, April 25

Jezebel Parker



It is called by some the "New age of reason", by others, perhaps more privately, the "New age of boredom". As you ponder the daunting list of "forbidden (or soon to be forbidden) fruit" you wonder if there is no one out there with "Zero Tolerance" for boredom and an excess of control? There he stands on the stage, in a double-breasted suit, with a handpainted tie and a pork-pie hat. He looks like an old photograph of your dad, or maybe your dad's dad. But you decide to give him a chance, this traditional rebel in an era when ponytails and blue jeans have become an establishment uniform. You listen to the music, original, a synthesis of jazz-era blues and beat poetry and you realize that these were the era's when the term "hip" was first coined and then defined. The trumpet screams, the guitar cries and your brain sears as the rhythm section brands a pattern onto your psyche that reminds you how primal an upright bass and snare drum can be. Exhausted, but exhilarated, you ponder the lyrics, which both celebrate and bemoan the events of a life richly led. You have been touched by a kin-spirit, by one who believes, as you do, that a bloodless life is a slow suicide of the soul. Looking at Big Rude Jake out there on the stage, you kind of wonder about your dad.

In 1992-1993 I worked for Big Rude Jake and his Gentleman Players. At this time, no one on the local independent scene was doing any Swing/Jump Blues and it was necessary to contextualize the band. I created the character of Jezebel Parker to write a series of promotional pieces about Jake and the music. The style ranged from beat-poetry to potboiler. This campaign was extremely successful and the posters became collectibles.

Big Rude Jake and his Gentleman Players



The Rivoli • 332 Queen Street West
Wednesday, May 20

Jezebel Parker



It was a dark and stormy night. Lightning flicked across the sky like the angry slap of a woman scorned as Big Rude Jake pounded into the keyboard of his battered Underwood manual, the last words of a new song of loves betrayal.

Yes, he thought, this was it. This was the song that would bring the Big Rude message to the world. Already he had turned his mind to the music. To the smokey deep throated sound of the upright bass, to the sizzle and pop of the snare drum like bacon frying for breakfast late on a Sunday afternoon, to the honey sweet sound of jazz guitar and to the plaintive wail of the trumpet trying to make sense of the yawning pit of hunger left by loves loss.

Yes, this was it, this was the song and he and his band of Gentlemen would offer it up to the world at their next show.