

FORT COLLINS NOW

The blues, no nostalgia

Jason Ricci and his band take genre and make it their own

Kurt Brighton
1:05 a.m. MT Dec 21, 2007

Woe unto the musician who tries to play his own style of music based on a traditional form. Despite critics' never-ending cries of "unoriginal" and "derivative" whenever a new band comes out, they still have a tendency to get their panties in a bunch when a band takes an old genre and tries to do something new with it.

Welcome to the world of the "jazz snob." For these people, anything that's jazzy—but which isn't a carbon copy of what Miles Davis was doing in 1950—is something to be frowned upon. Jason Ricci has uncovered another creature of this ilk, when it comes to the blues-based music he plays

"First there was the Jazz Snob," he said prior to a sound check in Seattle. "Now it's the 'Blues Nazi.'"

Granted, playing a style of music that leans heavily on Ricci's outstanding blues harp but also touches on jam-band sensibilities along with rock, funk, Eastern music and—gulp—jazz is certain to raise

some eyebrows among those who have an affection for traditional blues.

But it's not 1950 anymore, is it?

"That's a hyper-sensitive issue in the blues world and when we play blues clubs,"

Ricci said. "And that's an issue with the writers. They more or less like only the retro stuff. They use the retro equipment, they talk in the lingo—they're basically trying to recreate a world that doesn't exist anymore."



For Jason Ricci and New Blood—made up of Ricci, guitarist Shawn Starski, bassist Todd Edmunds, and new addition Ron Sutton on drums—playing music is about speaking honestly from the heart while still

honoring those who have come before. And you can't do that if you take the lively, organic music that the original blues musicians carved out of their sweat and blood, music which came screaming out of their souls unbidden, and keep it in a hermetically-sealed plastic box.