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**Cymande** *(sah-man-day)*. The most important black British group of their generation, a band so many people have heard, but yet not “heard of.”

In the early 1970’s in South London, a group of black musicians, who all emigrated to the UK from the Caribbean as children, formed the group. Led by Patrick Patterson (guitars, vocals) and Steve Scipio (bass, vocals) **Cymande** was so unique and ahead of its time that, notwithstanding the success in the States in the early ‘70s, it hasn’t been until recent years that the general public has truly begun to catch on.

Their first three albums: *Cymande* (1972), *Second Time Round* (1973) and *Promised Heights* (1974) combined jazz, funk, soul, and Caribbean grooves to create a unique sound of their own; music that was both political and spiritual. While they found success in the U.S. (referred to above) becoming the first British band to ever perform at New York’s legendary Apollo Theater and touring arenas and stadiums with **Al Green**, there was little enthusiasm from the British music industry to promote or patronize home grown black acts individually or as a collective scene.

“Total lack of interest,” Steve says bluntly. “Had we been a white rock band returning to the UK we wouldn’t have been ignored, and that impacted on our thinking at the time. How long should we put up with this? So… let’s take a break, get our heads together and revisit in a couple of years.”

That couple of years became almost forty.

However, their music lived on as new generations of artists discovered and reworked their pioneering sounds. Over and over again, several tracks from their albums were sampled by golden age hip-hop icons like **De La Soul**, **The Fugees**, **MC Solaar**, **Masta Ace**, **EPMD**, and **Gang Starr** just to name a few.

Now, in 2025 they return to finish what they started. The band’s forthcoming new album (via BMG) *Renascence* is ten shots of purest **Cymande**. A true return to form and jewel in the crown of their iconic discography, ***Renascence*** picks up where their 1974 album *Promised Heights* left off – a spiritual and sonic follow-up, bringing a fresh modern edge to their iconic sound.

Produced by Ben Baptie and recorded in London at RAK Studios, ***Renascence*** has everything both old fans and new would want from a Cymande album – spacious, haunting grooves that build over time, letting saxophones wail, drumbeats echo, and guitars trill, on tracks like “Coltrane,” and “How We Roll” which features **Jazzie B**.

“Our singer Ray has worked a lot with **Jazzie B** from **Soul II Soul**, so he got in touch with him and asked him if he’d like to consider collaborating,” Patrick says. “Lovely man. Big fan of **Cymande**, and he’s also in the documentary. The track talks about us and our brethren, our people, our community...”

The first single from the album “Chasing An Empty Dream,” features a thundering bass line opening by Steve.

“The original creation was Steve’s,” Patrick remarked. “Chasing An Empty Dream speaks to how Steve and I have worked over the years. We both tend to go back and look at what we have and think ‘is there a core idea that supports the record?’ I went back through his material and ‘Chasing’ stuck out to me. He’d put it away in his mind; I thought it merited consideration for the album.”

“The song is a reflection on what's happening in the world, with everyone's focus moving away from family to individuality, the materialism of this society,” Steve commented. “You can accumulate wealth, but without family it's an empty dream. Social media affecting children, being left to their own devices with uncontrolled access to negative influences.”

Elsewhere on ***Renascence*** are soulful ballads like “Road To Zion” and “Only One Way” which features **Celeste** on lead vocals.

“We got together with her in New York some time ago,” Patrick remarked. “Celeste approached it melodically and lyrically from a perspective we thought was great, we came back to the UK and perfected it. Her performance is *wonderful.* It deserved an orchestral arrangement, and we had an arranger, Chris Cameron, who could elevate it up to the firmament.”

Continuing to be led by its founding members Patrick Patterson (guitars, vocals) & Steve Scipio (bass, vocals), **Cymande** now also comprises long time members, Adrian Reid (keyboardist) and Raymond Simpson (vocalist), with the full complement of players being Richard Bailey (drums), Donald Gamble (percussion), Denys Baptiste (saxophone) Kevin Davy (trumpet) and Toni Kofi (saxophone).

The soul of the band has never been restricted to any individual player – **Cymande’s** guiding spirit is that inimitable mix of Caribbean sensibility and English experience. “There needs to be a connectedness,” says Steve. “A need to buy into what we try to do musically, the messages.”

“We represent a community,” Patrick says. “Our musicians tend to come out of that community, recommended by others who worked with us or know us.”

Earlier this year, Cymande’s unique story was told on the on big screen for the first time in the UK (via BFI) and in cinemas around the world (via Abramorama) with ***Getting It Back: The Story Of Cymande*** (directed by award winning director Tim Mackenzie-Smith).  This empowering and thought-provoking documentary shows the band’s depth of influence across decades and features interviews with **Mark Ronson**, **Laura Lee** and **Mark Speer** (**Khruangbin**), **DJ Maseo** (**De La Soul**), **Jazzie B** (**Soul II Soul**), **Cut Chemist**, **Jim James** (**My Morning Jacket**), **Louie Vega,** **Kool DJ Red Alert,** and so many others. The film debuted at SXSW in 2022 and has now travelled the world twice over. It continues to play in cinemas around the world globally.

Since **Cymande’s** reformation several years ago, they have been quite active touring. Recently they’ve played at We Out Here and All Points East to audiences packed with teens and 20-somethings. “And singing along with the songs!” marvels Steve, “They’re familiar with the material.”

“It’s the hip-hop community loving the music through crate digging,” confirms Patrick. “The response has been fantastic,” Steve continues. “Even far out places like Romania where we played earlier this year was one of the best receptions we had anywhere. Our first tour of Australia also happened this year and we were so surprised that we did ten shows in two weeks and every single one sold out. I don’t know if we could ask for any more than that expression of love.”

A headline European tour earlier in 2024 in Europe led to every single show selling out as well. The band will return to the road globally in 2025 to support ***Renascence***. Their success story continues to reach new heights and new audience’s decades into their career.

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