

## **Blues as original as Blues can be**

**Rick Derman, the American who's living in Berlin, played last Wednesday in „Ideenschmiede“.**

Pro musicians like Rick Derman could be taken as a good example for fathers, who want to show their sons that the understanding of real music doesn't start with the dull steam- stomp- rumble dumble of modern computers and effect devices. The American, who left his job as a computer adviser in his homeland, has now lived in Berlin for about a year. He uses the fact that he soaked up the blues feeling almost with his mother's milk (ie.heard the blues early on) to his own advantage.

„Here in Germany I can live from my music 100 percent“, the musician answered, who isn't only blessed with an expressive voice, but also with the gift of substantial guitar playing and a cheerful temperament. On the other side of the world, according to Derman, it's almost impossible to make a living by playing music, because of the massive competition in the folk and blues sector. Or to quote a German saying – „In your own country the work of the prophet means nothing.“

With a compact mixture of blues standards and his own compositions, Rick Derman, who frequently tours across Germany with his four headed band „The Cry“, gave a perfect example last Wednesday of the emotional strength that's needed to present the blues. It's simply not enough to play a few chords and to mumble a few English words in a strange accent, to do as good a job as the real big bluesers do. However, in his song interpretations Rick Derman showed that he knows about the special feeling, that's necessary to understand the blues, which is still alive, but nowadays seldom seen.

But in Derman's case, the stereotype of the always drunken, whisky consuming guitar player doesn't work at all. Between every song, Rick Derman sipped a little bit of mineral water, before he spoke a few nice words – in astonishingly fluid German. The big aim of the expat Berliner, who has a small but recognisable USA sticker in the rear window of his car, is to get a record contract. Beside his concert songs, which were 95% cover versions, he has numerous original songs in store, mostly mainstream rock, which he's eager to put on CD.

Unabashed, I dare to put Rick Derman in a row with such great musicians as David Olney, Ross Tolman and Townes van Zandt.

Report: Kay Aghte