

 **DINNER AND A MOVIE**
CLICK HERE AND ENTER TO WIN
2 MEAL&MOVIE DEALS AT CITYWALK **ONLY \$19.95**

ORLANDO WEEKLY

[news](#) | [music](#) | [calendar](#) | [movies](#) | [dining](#) | [arts and culture](#)

[books](#) | [culture to go](#) | [selections](#) | [dog playing poker](#) |
[happytown](#)

[blister](#) | [bad sport](#) | [savage love](#) | [slug](#) | [horoscopes](#)

[comics](#) | [news of the weird](#) | [classifieds](#) | [notable noise](#) | [local links](#)

[message boards](#) | [best of orlando](#) | [letters](#) | [home](#)

MUSIC: FEATURE

The Immortal Lee County Killers



[upcoming shows](#)



Pickin' and kickin': Immortal Lee County Killers rock out and dig deep

Alabama death squad

By [Omar Perez](#)

Published 4/17/2003

The Immortal Lee County Killers' distinct weave of punk and Delta blues is a purist's nightmare. But that doesn't bother ILCK singer/guitarist Chet Weise, since the term "purist" doesn't sit well with him in the first place. "To me, a purist is a synonym for obtuseness, closed-mindedness," he says. "Blues purists are some of the most racist people I've ever met."

Despite the fact that ILCK tramples on the blues pastures that these same folks try to maintain to age-old standards, it was an affinity for the form that jump-started the Auburn, Alabama duo (Weise and drummer J.R.R. Tokien ... no, there's not an "I" missing). Their raunchy sophomore offering, "Love Is a Charm of Powerful Trouble" equally fuses gritty rhythms, slide guitars and Weise's barely discernible yells with hyper drumming and low-fi garage production. The duo goes way south on the blues scale with tracks like "Truth Through Sound," while unleashing uptempo hooks on the title track and "Robert Johnson," whose name is dragged through a musical mud of traditional blues and stoner-rock crunch.

Growing up in Memphis, Weise moved to Alabama, to attend Auburn University, earning a master's degree in economics and later teaching at his alma mater. Unbelievably, Weise finds a few common elements between the classroom and dive-bar stages. "As a teacher, I try to turn people on to new things. J.R. and I like doing the same thing," Weise says, adding that music, in some way, boosted his teaching confidence when he first started: "I had played so horribly in front of hundreds of people before. ... I made an ass of myself so many times that it didn't really bother me anymore."

Outside of university life, Weise fronted Southern punk band Quadrajets (in which Tokien played drums at one point) during the mid- to late '90s. The 'Jets kept busy on the road and in the studio, recording five albums before going on hiatus in 2000. "When I quit the Quadrajets I thought I had gone civilian and that was going to be it," Weise remembers. But the music bug bit, and Weise and drummer Doug Sherrard (who has since left the Killers) started jamming in a condemned building, naming themselves after a combination of their hometown, Jerry Lee Lewis (whom the band calls "the original killer") and a yearning for eternal life.

"When we first started the duo, it was supposed to be a mix between my blues stuff and Doug's country stuff, and it just got louder and louder," Weise says. Through Estrus Records (the Quadrajets' home) the duo released 2001's "The Essential Fucked Up Blues," which critics compared to the frenzied style of The Jon Spencer Blues Explosion. Sherrard, who grew tired of tour life, bowed out of the band to spend more time with his family, and Tokien took over the drum kit.

So far Weise is content with keeping the Killers' lineup stupidly simple. "Two-piece bands are getting a lot of scrutiny these days, but they've been around since the beginning of whatever kind of music," Weise says. "It's a positive thing but there's people that are going, 'Oh, they're *another* two piece."

After supporting this year's "Love Is a Charm" on the road, ILCK will get back to songwriting duties and hope to release a full-length album consisting of half studio tracks and half live recordings toward year's end. As their touring schedule indicates, there are still purists to piss off and curious spectators to convert.

"We've grown from an unknown microorganism to the rock & roll, blues-and-soul juggernaut," says Weise. "There's no rest for the Killers."