



G. Love & Special Sauce stay steady in their niche

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The band has a new album due out this summer.

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One band existing in two worlds is not the greatest place to be.

Just ask Philadelphia-based outfit G. Love & Special Sauce, which emerged in the early '90s as an alternative-labeled act with an obvious hip-hop influence. Years before rap'n'rock would take over the hard-rock scene, the group was often mislabeled as a novelty group at best. Nearly 15 years later, G. Love (aka Garrett Dutton) is getting the last laugh.

“Certainly early on I’d say we were more alternative than hip-hop, and definitely the press or record stores always had a little bit of a problem classifying us, but I think now after we’ve been around, you can kind of say G. Love & Special Sauce is a rock ’n’ roll band,” said G. Love, during a phone call to his Philadelphia home. “I wouldn’t say it’s alternative rock. I’d say it’s more like garage band rock or even classic rock, but live it’s also like a hip-hop thing, too.

“That’s been kind of a blessing and a curse for us because we haven’t fit easily into a category. We’ve been able to fit into our own little niche, and also because we haven’t been able to fit easily into a category, we never really fit into a certain scene. Like we were kind of on the edge of the jam band scene, the edge of a lot of different scenes, but we’re kind of our own entity.”

Interestingly, G. Love & Special Sauce hasn’t changed much since its 1994 self-titled debut, which yielded minor MTV hit “Cold Beverage.” In fact, give a listen to the group’s latest album “Lemonade,” which was released in 2006, and it’s apparent the musical climate is more accepting of the group’s unique melding style of rock, blues, soul and hip-hop.

G. Love said he’s seen the results firsthand as the group’s fan base has increased to the point it’s now playing larger venues.

“I think it’s a lot of hard work and just perseverance on the band’s part,” G. Love said. “It’s putting a lot of time in a tour bus so that we’re on the road and continuing to put ourselves out there.

“But I guess a real grass-roots live thing takes time to build up. It’s just we’ve been putting in our time for many years now, playing small clubs and then the medium-size clubs and now we’re moving into the larger sheds. It’s cool.”

Up next for G. Love & Special Sauce is a new album due out this summer. Fans attending the band’s Cleveland show Saturday at the Agora can expect to hear the hip-hop blues “Wiggle Worm” and the acoustic “Super Hero Brother,” along with a cover of Snoop Dogg’s “Gin and Juice.”

“After 13 years, we’re just always amazed that the people keep showing up,” G. Love said. “And we give the music 150 percent on stage each night, that’s something we pride ourselves on. We love it.

“We love being on stage and hope that it shows and plan on rocking Cleveland like we always do.”

By [John Benson](#)