

## Q&A: Kenny James

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*Matt Hinshaw/The Daily Courier*  
 Although Kenny James plays almost 125 shows per year, his main stage is the patio at Coyote Joe's in Prescott.



By **STEVE STOCKMAR**  
 The Daily Courier

**Kenny James goes 1-on-1 for seven questions. He talks Internet music, setlists, and the song he has played on stage the most.**

### How do you pick your setlist?

"On the spot. I do not have a setlist. It's just in my noggin. I have songs that I play for my first set and songs that I save for the end. But generally speaking I don't have a setlist for my original shows and for my acoustic shows. I just kind of hit the stage. Generally 10 minutes before I go on I'll think about what I'm gonna open with. ...I like to work with the crowd and be able to improvise."

### What song would you say you have performed live the most?

"That would probably have to be 'Blackbird.' Because that was one of the first songs I learned. It comes and goes, but I'm amazed I think I do (still get a charge out of playing it). I did a show down in Scottsdale a month ago and I started 'Blackbird' and a bunch of people clapped like they were happy to hear it. I think it's one of those McCartney songs that everybody knows or likes to hear on the acoustic guitar."

### Who first taught you to play guitar?

"My first formal teacher was Dean ... boy, I can't think of his last name. Dean ... .. He taught me music. I was very, very young. I was 5. But Dean was my first teacher."

### You play with The CheekTones, with Filabusta and on your own. How is your approach to show time different with each?

"My acoustic gigs I'm usually not nervous at all. I have no nerves at all, it's just kind of like go up there and play and I look forward to it and totally enjoy it. It's a very rewarding kind of one-on-one experience. Playing with the band with Filabusta, there's always a little bit of nerves. Not stage fright nerves but nerves of now you've got two other musicians that you have to communicate with, and in that band I'm the front guy so there's more pressure on me to win over the crowd as the front man and make the night a success. And I don't really play with the CheekTones that much anymore, just occasionally. I played with them pretty much nonstop for about a year and a half, and once Filabusta started picking up more and more gigs and Brian (Moss, of Spafford) emerged, that was a really nice transition because Brian's an awesome player and a very positive guy and a really good fit in the CheekTones. And that allowed me more time to concentrate on Filabusta."

### You're allowed three albums on a desert island. What's coming with you?

"Well definitely Marvin Gaye's 'What's Going On.' Jerry Garcia Band 'How Sweet It Is'. Aaaaand ... (after a long pause), I mean 'Sgt. Pepper' is the gold standard. It's the crowning achievement of rock. Whether you like it or not, it is what it is. I have to name that album but I'm not sure I would take it and listen to it. I'd probably rather listen to 'Revolver' or 'Rubber Soul.' But I'd have to have a Beatles album."

### The Internet brings all musicians within reach. Is it great that so much music is out there and available, or is it overload that clogs the senses?

"I like it. And I think the people that don't like it are the people that want to stick with the old vinyl records or the people that wanted to stick with the 78s. I think time marches forward. So it's not a question of liking it or disliking it. To use a completely worn out 'oughts'-phrase, 'It is what it is.' It marches forward and it's either get in line or get on board or forget about it. And I like it. But I like that stuff. I like putting my stuff on YouTube and having people hit it and say 'that's cool.' So I

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understand the negative aspect it to it, but there was a negative aspect to vinyl or CDs. There's always something negative but there's a lot of positive in that you can reach a lot of people in a very short amount of time."

**Any upcoming New Year's resolutions?**

"Um ... I just wanna rock."



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