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MAGAZINE

MAY 2011

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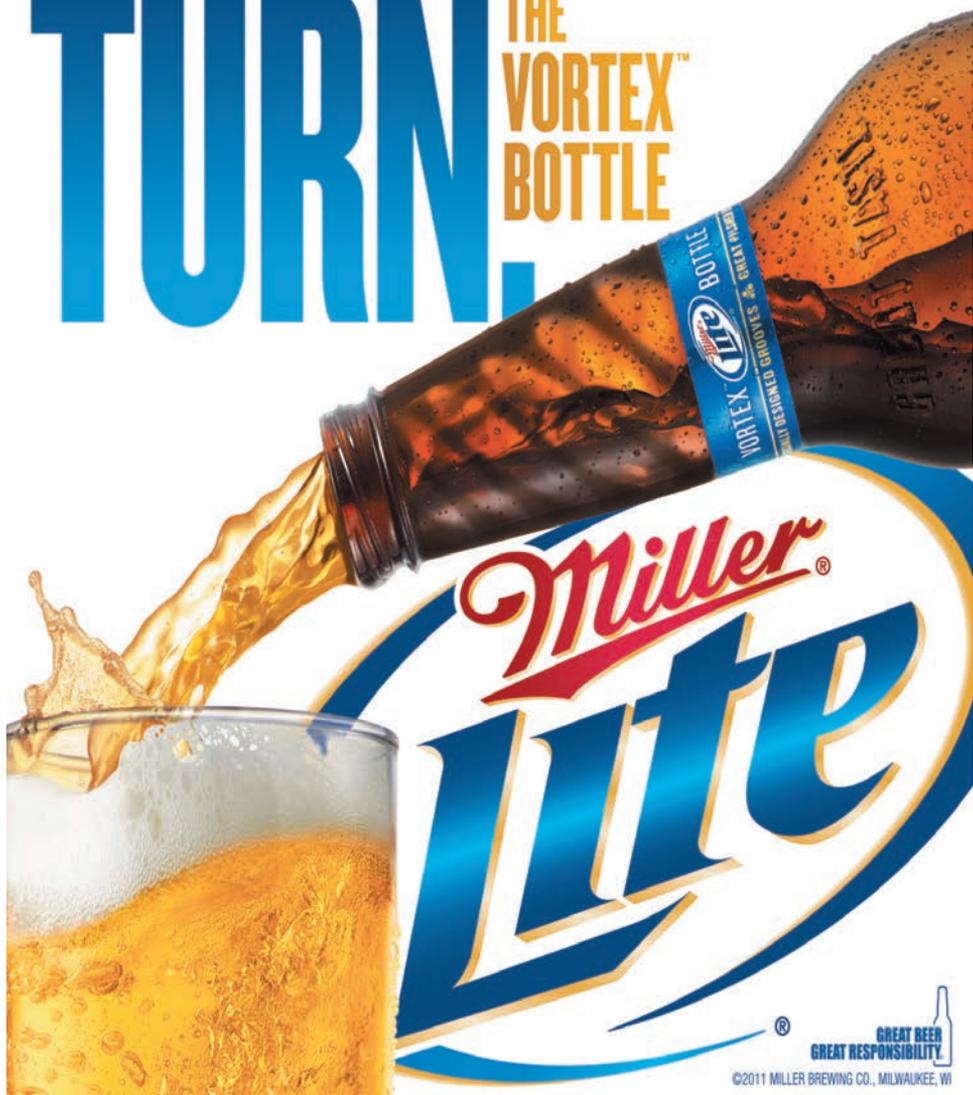
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MUSIC NEWS

Alice Cooper to Perform Entire Concert in Holographic Form



Rock 'n' Roll Hall of Famer Alice Cooper is set to reprise his role as a hologram, performing an entire ghostly gig in London while the man behind the curtain actually pulls the strings from Hollywood, California.

And his entire band is gonna join him.

Touted as the "U.K.'s first holographic 4D rock gig," this will actually be Cooper's second time breaking a record in holographic form -- in 1973, avant-garde artist Salvadore Dali turned Cooper's likeness into the world's first 3D holographic sculpture. If you're wondering, no, R2-D2 didn't do a similar thing with Princess Leia until four years later. And that one took place in a galaxy far, far away.

The concert, billed as the Jagermeister Ice Cold Event, is timed in conjunction with Cooper's new box set, 'Old School: 1964 - 1974,' and to celebrate, Cooper even put his old band back together. It'll be the first time that band appears -- in the flesh or otherwise -- live in the U.K. since 1972. The event takes place on May 11 at Battersea Power Station.

"We couldn't resist this," says Cooper in a statement appearing on his official website. "Working with Jagermeister to appear as holograms on the other side of the Atlantic is the ultimate experience, a cutting-edge conjuring trick that celebrates the future and our history. We can't wait to see the results."

We can only assumed that by "see," he's speaking metaphorically.

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McEntire, Shelton Will Play Oklahoma Tornado Benefit Show

Reba McEntire and Blake Shelton will host the Tornado Relief Concert in May 26 in their native Oklahoma to provide relief to those affected by the recent tornado in Atoka County.

McEntire was born just outside of Kiowa, which is approximately 30 miles away from the greatest devastation. Shelton was born in Ada and currently resides in Tishomingo, less than 50 miles from the Atoka County border.

The show will be done in partnership with the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma and Choctaw Casino Resort.

The storm destroyed many homes, schools and businesses. All proceeds will go towards Atoka County's ongoing relief efforts through the Tushka Disaster Relief Fund. Tickets will be available beginning May 6 at 10 a.m. and may be purchased by phone at 1-800-585-3737 or online at www.choctawcasinos.com.

"A lot of people lost a great deal in this disaster and it's particularly close to us because we both consider Oklahoma home," said McEntire. "We wanted to do something and let the people in Oklahoma know that we love them and we're praying for them during this difficult tragedy."

"Oklahoma defines who I am and seeing the effects this disaster has had on my neighbors, I knew I had to do something," said Shelton. "Reba and I have a lot of love for this state and we wanted to do what we can to help. This place is my home, and these people are family to us."

A special mobile fundraising campaign has been set up with The mGive Foundation to raise funds for relief efforts. Fans can text "OKGIVE" to 27722 to make a one-time \$10 donation, which will be added to their monthly cell phone bill. Funds will be donated to The mGive Foundation for the benefit of the Tushka Disaster Relief Fund. Checks can also be made out to the Tushka Disaster Relief Fund and mailed to: 101 SE 1st Street, Tushka, OK 74525.

Black Sabbath/Deep Purple/Iron Maiden/ Metallica Supergroup to Release Single in North America



WhoCares, the musical project that features current and former members of metal and hard rock gods Black Sabbath, Deep Purple, Metallica and Iron Maiden, will release

their debut single in North America this June. According to Black-Sabbath.com, "Out of My Mind"/"Holy Water" will be available in the States on CD single on June 27. Proceeds will be donated to help rebuild a music school in Gyumri, Armenia.

"Out of My Mind" features a who's who of metal giants, including singer Ian Gillan (Deep Purple), guitarists Tony Iommi (Black Sabbath) and Mikko "Linde" Lindström (HIM), bassist Jason Newsted (Metallica, Voivod), drummer Nicko McBrain (Iron Maiden) and keyboardist Jon Lord (Deep Purple). As such, it is a reunion of sorts on multiple fronts. Gillan fronted Black Sabbath for the Born Again album in the early '80s. Gillan is also reunited with founding Deep Purple member Jon Lord, who retired from the band in 2002. "Holy Water" also features Gillan and Iommi, though with a different supporting cast.

As previously announced, the single will be released in Europe on May 24 and available for digital download on May 6.

Luke Bryan Shakes Up Digital Chart

Luke Bryan's latest song Country Girl (Shake It For Me) debuts as the number 1 country digital single, achieving a career-high for Bryan with 105,498 in U.S. digital single sales. The song broke into the Top 20 in 4 weeks and has become his fastest rising single to date.

Country Girl (Shake It For Me), co-written with Dallas Davidson, is the first single off an album due out later this summer and the follow up to his recent three back-to-back number one singles *Do I, Rain Is A Good Thing* and *Someone Else Calling You Baby*, all from his Gold-certified album "Doin' My Thing."

Jane Addiction's Gave Away "End to the Lies" Song on Website



Jane Addiction this week gave fans a chance to be among the first to hear music from *The Great Escape Artist*, their first new studio album in eight years. JA's singer Perry Farrell, guitarist Dave Navarro and drummer Stephen

Perkins are giving away a free download of the final mix of "End To The Lies" exclusively at their website. *The Great Escape Artist* will be released this August 11 on Capitol Records.

An early, unfinished version of "End To The Lies" leaked back on Wednesday (March 30) in Chile when Farrell made an appearance on the "La Ley D Rock" program on the Chilean radio station Radio Futuro, after which the song became an instant viral sensation. Jane's Addiction were in Chile as one of the headliners of the inaugural Lollapalooza Chile, which took place April 2-3, 2011 in Santiago's O'Higgins Park.

For *The Great Escape Artist*, Jane's Addiction worked with producer Rich Costey (Muse, Franz Ferdinand, Interpol) and TV on the Radio's Dave Sitek. Sitek, best known for his production work on TV on the Radio, Yeah Yeah Yeahs and the Foals, is writing, programming, and playing bass on the album. The band, with Chris Cheney on bass, will be touring throughout 2011.



Grand Ole Opry Remembers Nashville Flood Anniversary with Special Show

The Grand Ole Opry will mark the first anniversary of the flood that devastated much of Nashville and temporarily displaced the Opry from the Grand Ole Opry House with a star-packed show including Dierks Bentley and Brad Paisley.

The show, Play On, Nashville!, is set for Tuesday, May 3 at the Opry House. Also appearing are Luke Bryan and Charlie Daniels Band.

The Grand Ole Opry House was Nashville's most famous icon affected by the May 2010 flood. Four feet of water engulfed country music's most famous stage, and the show temporarily moved to several other Nashville venues throughout the summer before returning to the Opry House following an around-the-clock six-month recovery and restoration.

Nashville charitable organizations including Hands On Nashville, the American Red Cross, and United Way of Metropolitan Nashville will provide promotion codes to their supporters such that \$10 from every ticket purchased using the codes will be returned to the charity. Additionally, proceeds from Play On, Nashville! commemorative prints available exclusively at the Opry House that night will go to Hands On Nashville, the volunteer resource center responsible for connecting over 125,000 volunteers to flood-related projects.

"The May 2010 flood devastated homes, businesses, and lives, but it also showcased the unsinkable spirit of our city and its citizens in ways we are still learning about a year later," said Pete Fisher, Opry vice president and general manager. "We want to celebrate that the Opry's hometown is stronger than ever, the best way we know how, with a one-of-a-kind night of great music."

"It's hard to believe that it's been a year since the flood," said Opry member Dierks Bentley. "The city of Nashville, the Opry, and the country music community were so resilient and came together to rebuild so quickly after the devastation. I've never been more proud to be an Opry member, and I'm looking forward to celebrating that sense of community again on Tuesday."

Nashvillians can be a part of the night by submitting photos of their flood relief efforts to be shown in the Opry's signature barn backdrop during the show. The photos, which will also be used in the commemorative print from the night, should be submitted to oprymail@opry.com no later than Thursday, April 28.

Jo Dee Messina Releases Song for Fundraising Effort

Jo Dee Messina released a new song as part of a multi-million dollar fundraising effort for a school in Nashville. The "A Million Doors" campaign is trying to raise \$2.3 million for a non-profit school in Nashville, the Holy Trinity Montessori. Messina recorded Carry Me, available for \$1 at A Million Doors. The song will be available through July 15, with all funds going directly to the school for the construction of a new schoolhouse.

"If you contribute \$1, you can help make a dream come true," said Messina. "I tour around the country and spend a great deal of time listening to people's stories. Lately it seems that with all the sadness in the news, wars, politics, economy, etc., people need a little restoration of hope."

Messina released the song independently with the approval of her label, Curb. Christian songwriter Jared Anderson waived his publishing royalties, allowing all funds raised to go to the Holy Trinity school. Messina is also planning to raise funds for the school through a series of live concerts.

Messina and Holy Trinity Montessori school head Kate Riley are looking to raise \$2.3 million dollars to build the school for students up through third grade, and possibly up to fifth, offering them an affordable, hands-on education.

"This isn't about just a cause I believe in or the latest celebrity charity," said Messina. "I want this campaign to show that even in a time when people feel there is little hope, that there is hope and dreams still do come true. I chose it because we need people from all over to carry us with their support to make this dream come true."

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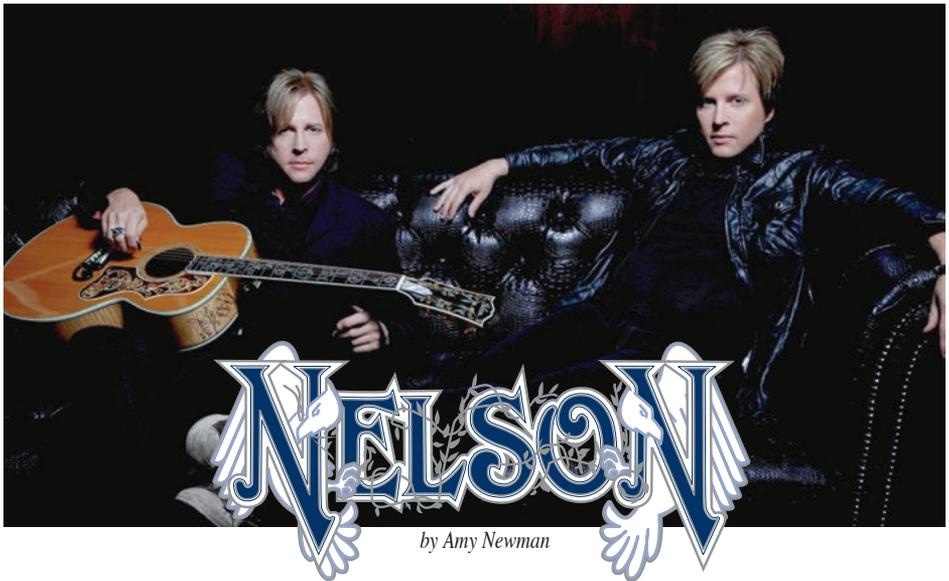
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When I think of Rock 'n Roll royalty, one of the bands that come to mind is Nelson. Yes, the twin brothers with the unbelievably killer long blonde hair that graced MTV and VH1 so much in the 1980s. I knew they were still very much performing, for I had brought them on stage a few years back at Ribfest, in St. Petersburg, Florida. They are older and still very handsome with shorter hair, and are still extremely talented musicians. They were born into an already very popular family of musicians and artists. The three generations of Nelson are, bandleader Ozzy Nelson, Rock legend Ricky Nelson, and twins Matthew and Gunnar Nelson. They are in the Guinness Book of World Records as the ONLY family in Entertainment with three successive generations of #1 hits. I was excited to be asked to interview Gunnar Nelson, and talk to him about their new project, "Lightning Strikes Twice", and what else they have been up to lately.

So Gunnar what's going on with Nelson?

Gunnar: We just released a record called "Lightning Strikes Twice", a follow up to our debut record "After the Rain", 20 years after the fact. We were approached by an Italian label, which happened to be really big fans of our first record, about doing a follow up album. They wanted to do a, what would have been follow up, if the whole grunge thing hadn't changed the direction of music. So we did it! A record we're very proud of that is unapologetically, and undeniably, eighties. It captures this particular band firing on all cylinders, doing what we do best, the melodies, the vocal harmonies, and the writing style.

The critics overseas love the new record. If people knew more about it here, we know it would be very well received, which is where you come in.

Have you been playing overseas?

Gunnar: Yes, we played a festival called Firefest, we headlined that show, which was the first time playing in the U.K. It was really fun. We've been to China, and we're also going back to Korea in about a month. We have gotten on some dates coming up here in the States, with Whitesnake and Loverboy. So look for more Nelson rock dates in the near future.

What are you guys up to now?

Gunnar: Well, mainly supporting our new record and an act called "Ricky Nelson Remembered," in tribute to our dad. We do about a hundred dates a year. So between the bands Nelson the arena rock band, and the tribute "Ricky Nelson Remembered" which is kind of Rockabilly, which we've always done, we're pretty busy. Our dad pioneered Rockabilly. He's in the Rock 'n Roll Hall of Fame for it, as well as Rock n Roll and Country.

Have you guys ever thought of doing Reality TV?

Gunnar: Well who knows, it may happen in the future, but we are mainly focusing on now and our music, and where we came from, and trying to hold a standard for ourselves. Don't get me wrong I'd love to do TV, but maintaining our integrity. The music we've always made I've felt is quality music, and the new album is especially the best yet. The positive feedback is overwhelming. The music is strong enough to knock down walls, no matter what you



thought of us in the past. We have a grass roots approach, playing lots of gigs.

Where can people go to purchase the record *Lightning Strikes Twice*?

Gunnar: Go on to Amazon.com and look for Nelson Lightning Strikes twice. They'll send it right to you. There is iTunes, another way of course, but I'm old school. I like the artwork and love to hold the actual product in my hand.

Do you feel stereo typed?

Gunnar: The image was so strong. We had four top 20 hits off our first record. We were all over MTV, VH1, and radio. We actually had a run there for two and a half years that was meteoric. I mean we were 21yrs old and playing for 65,000 people. It's seriously hard at that age to wrap your brain around it. We were so fortunate and grateful for that level of success. I'm really proud of that work, and I feel our new stuff is even better.

What is your favorite song on the album?

Gunnar: I like "Call Me," It's kind of the story of my life, typical of my high school years. It is sort of a variation of "Love and Affection". Each song though is like a child to me. I worked with Mark Slaughter on the track called "To Get Back to You," a ballad I love. This record is basically all us, that's me on guitar, no fill ins. We want to make a personal statement to show our true talent, and for us to show all the unbelievers what we've always been about.

I feel a return back to the 80's in Rock, do you?

Gunnar: Well with the economy doing what it's doing, the vast majority of people want an escape.

I think they are returning, by the fact that, the fans are coming out to the shows. People want that feel good time. A lot of people, thanks to Guitar Hero, are checking out their older sister's and brother's records now. I'm pretty encouraged by it.

What do you think of the direction of MTV?

Gunnar: It's not what it was. Back then the business aspect was genius. The bands and the record labels were falling all over themselves to spend hundreds of thousands, if not millions of dollars to promote their band on MTV for free programing. All Music, only music, 24 hours a day. It lasted two years and it was brilliant. It started out as the greatest radio station. We loved the V.J.'s. It was an awesome radio station to watch. Now, it's not revered by the music industry, but back in the day it was critical and necessary to have your band on MTV and VH1, to be a success. We were spending so much on a video.

Our new record we spent so much less, yet it looks great. I'm learning a lot. It's weird for me too. I wouldn't know how to tell a new artist how to break in the business. The standard now is Karaoke Idol. The artists don't pay their dues, and go through all the years of making true fans, and playing from small venues and working their way up. It's like fast food now, and I believe there is a big difference between being an act and an artist, and that is authenticity. I want to make money sure but mainly great art. I believe and hope our fans will agree, it's been worth the long wait.

If you would like to get more information on the Nelsons, visit RickyNelsonRemembered.com or NelsonKicksAss.com.





EXILE

GETTIN' BACK TO IT!

by Diane Nachman

In the 80's and 90's, Exile was a well-known country band. The group started out in the early 60's as a rock and roll group known as the Exiles. They had one major hit called "Kiss You All Over." In 1973, they shortened their name just to "Exile."

Early in the 80's, the group returned to the clubs of Kentucky and completely changed their sound. When Les Taylor joined the group, they became a country band with a strong Southern Rock flavor. Over the years, band members came and went (35 all together), and the group had a large streak of chart-topping hits. The group disbanded in 1993, playing a farewell concert in Lexington with numerous past members rejoining.

In 2008, Sonny LeMaire asked the band members to get together for one show as a fundraiser for their tour manager who had been injured in an accident. Something clicked at this fundraising event, and the group then decided that they wanted to do more shows together. The current members of the group are J.P. Pennington, Les Taylor, Sonny LeMaire, Marlon Hargis, and Steve Goetzman.

In a recent interview with Marlon Hargis, I asked him how he got started in the business. He replied, "My parents made me take piano lessons at age five, which

I hated for years. At age 14, I discovered the Beatles. And actually some friends invited me to join in a band, and I was hooked. Throughout high school, I played in bands. I was a music major in college. I actually changed to another major because I didn't want to be a band director or study classical music. I was actually making a living playing rock and roll on weekends, so I changed my major to journalism. That was kind of useless to me because I've been playing music ever since basically."

He continued by saying, "My major influences were Johnny Cash and Merle Haggard. I was also influenced by the British invasion, primarily by the Beatles. Some of my other influences included early R&B, the Temptations and the Four Tops. I think you'll find that a lot in our music. And actually, even, gospel music."

In reply to why he decided to leave Exile originally, he stated, "I think basically we were tired of each other, and I was burned out. We all worked so hard for so many years. In retrospect, if I thought about it, things might have worked out differently. It was pretty much a mutual thing; I don't think anyone begged me to stay. In looking back 27 years later, things that were a problem then, you wouldn't even look at now. There was a lot of little stuff."

Since leaving Exile, he worked for Jerry Reed for a couple of years, out touring with him. He got married, had a daughter, and decided he didn't want to tour. He then moved to Nashville about a year after he left the band. He worked around Nashville for about ten years or so, played in Nashville with several local club groups, did session work, ran a music store, was a property manager for some condos, and worked in music management with Steve Goetzman. During this

time, he actually played music for all those years. He said, "There was virtually no contact between me and any of the other Exile band members. I ran into some of the members here and there, but until Sonny contacted us in 2008 about, what I thought was to be, a one-time reunion, we really didn't stay in touch."

Currently, Exile is on the road most weekends, staying in town for two-three days during the week. They are doing a lot of touring, 40 some dates this year so far, and may do up to 50-60. They have a website, and are selling merchandise on the website, including their new EP, which contains five new songs never previously released.

The types of venues where they have been touring range from casinos, smaller theaters, festivals, and a few outdoor shows, including an upcoming concert with Kenny Loggins. Most of the venues are generally between 400-500 seats. He enjoys the smaller venues more, because it is more intimate and they have a chance to interact with their fans. It amazes him how many fans remember the group and have remained loyal over the years.

I asked Marlon what types of activities he and the other band members enjoy doing when they are not on the road. He replied, "I enjoy working in the yard and doing landscaping, which is what I did today. I do some session work. My wife is a dog groomer and has her own business. She is very into dog rescue, and I enjoy helping her with that. We have some rescue dogs at home, two Siberian Huskies and a Chihuahua. Sonny does some writing. Steve does some work as our business manager. Les and J.P. still live in Lexington, Kentucky. They have their own projects, but I really don't know what they do. We keep in touch mostly by email to discuss band business."

Since they do not all live in the same town (Steve, Marlon and Sonny in Nashville, and J.P. and Les in Lexington), it makes it difficult to rehearse when they are not on the road. They get together at the beginning of the year for a couple of days to discuss what they will be doing during the year. Marlon said they basically have two hours worth of material to do at their various concerts, and they adjust it depending on how long a concert they will be doing.

When asked how Exile's music has evolved since the band was originally together, Marlon replied, "The recording technology has improved so much. I don't think there is a huge difference in the sound, just a little more updated. Our new stuff is a little more R&B oriented."

As far as the biggest challenge Exile has faced as a band, Marlon stated, "There have not been huge challenges. Logistics is certainly a challenge since we live in different areas, but overall we realize that we want to do this. The first year, we were not sure if there was enough interest by the public to get back into this, but we found there was. It is something we love to do, and Exile is the band's main focus. Our getting back together has been surprisingly smooth."

When asked about Exile's plans for the future, he replied, "At this time, we are just taking a year or two at a time. Interestingly enough, 2013 is the 50th anniversary of the band. We will probably do something to celebrate that. We want to keep touring, and we would like to get some radio play for our material. We would love to have a major label contract at some point, but that probably won't happen. Right now we are recording on our own label. We want to record more new material, which we will probably do this winter or the later part of this year. We want to keep our name out there and keep spreading the word. Everything changes so quickly, so we can't really have a five year plan."

When asked about Exile's plans for the future, he replied, "When replying to the question of whether he had any advice for people who want to form their own bands, he laughed and said, "Forget it! No, really, they should do it because they want to do it, not for any monetary gain. In all honesty, the odds are against you. Only about 5% of the bands have some success. It is important for them to find band members who play not only good music, but who get along with each other. You have to put the band ahead of your personal goals. You have to do what you love; you should be happy with that. You have to have a lot of patience. You have to be willing to sacrifice. You need to come up with a five year plan with your own goals. And above all, don't get discouraged."

When asked about Exile's plans for the future, for his ending comments, he said, "I am looking forward to coming back to Florida. We look forward to seeing the fans. We have a lot of new fans among the kids. Even my 27 year old daughter and her friends are fans. It's good to be appreciated and still around."

Exile will be touring in Florida in May. On Friday, May 13, they will be playing in Daytona Beach at the Peabody Auditorium. On Saturday, May 14, they will be playing at the Orange Blossom Opry in Weirsdale. If you are able to see them at one of these venues, it will be an evening well worth your while.

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Warrant's Robert Mason



Tim McGraw

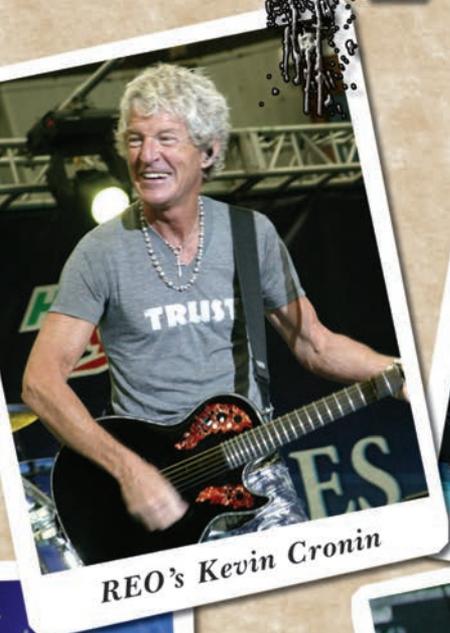


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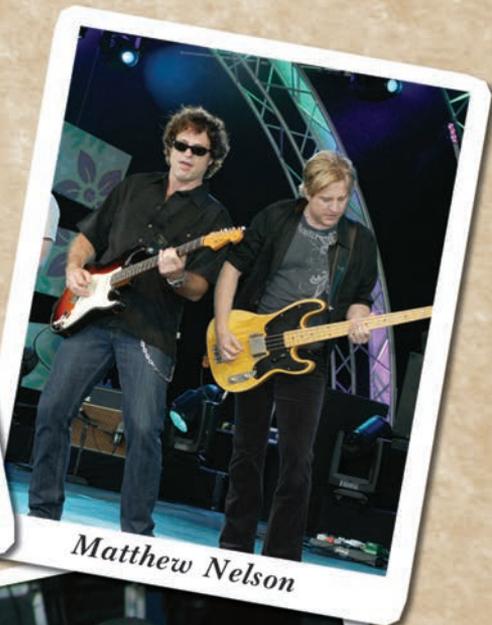


Trans-Siberian

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Scrapbook



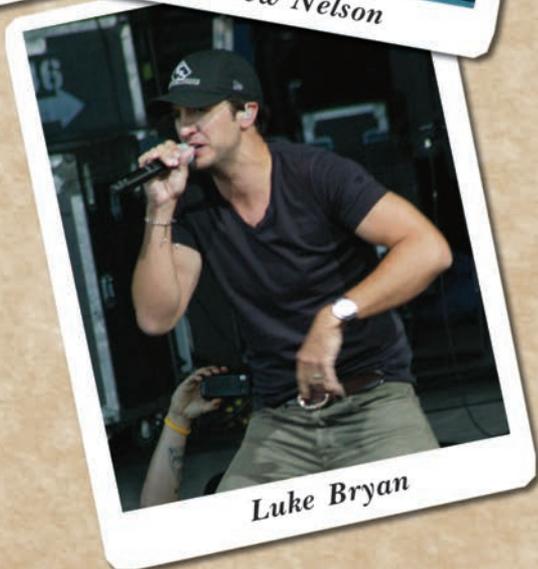
REO's Kevin Cronin



Matthew Nelson



Orchestra



Luke Bryan



Greg Billings Band

by Amy Newman

It's a beautiful day on this Wednesday when I meet up with one of the coolest front men I have ever witnessed on stage. A long time Florida rocker, with bands like Stranger, Damn the Torpedo's and now The Greg Billings Band (GBB). I finally get to sit down with Greg Billings himself. This incredible singer and entertainer, who has inspired many to grab a Budweiser and have a kick ass time no matter which band he was or is in. The Greg Billings Band is a longtime favorite among the local scenes in Central Florida, and especially in the Tampa Bay area, where the huge success of Stranger is still talked about today. So let's find out what's up with Greg, and GBB now!

Greg B: Well I was doing Damn the Torpedo's and I got a little burnt out on it, and wanted to get my own thing together, always wanted my own band, so I got my buddies together, a couple other players in the early days, but ended up with George Harris, Leroy, Tom and Myself. We were together for about two years then, Rob Stoney played with us opening up for Whitesnake at Ruth Eckerd Hall, and he never left. He did one gig, and he was in the band, and that was it. We decide to do a CD called *Do Overs*, which is a few new songs, 2 songs from Damn the Torpedos, and some Stranger songs, which I wanted to re-do, because I didn't like the way I sang 'em. I wanted to change some lyrics and get a little soulful, and sing them better. Rob started on that project, and we brought in Ronnie Dee too. He did some horn and harmony work on a couple

of songs, and I loved this guy. I had never worked with him before, there was a little bit of an age difference. He was playing with the Black Honkeys, and so I asked him if he ever wanted to sit in with us and play when he wasn't playing, that would be great. We talked, he played with us at The Bret Michaels show, and I said I had to have him. I asked him if he ever wanted to join the band if he wasn't in The Black Honkeys; we'd love to have him. Black honkeys were also friends of mine. So eventually he did join. Ronnie Dee had many commitments he had to fulfill before making it to GBB. It's been now about 2 years, and it's worked out great. He's really good on stage because he's also a front man, to actually play horn, sing, and jump around, also to sit back and watch me, while I sing, and do my thing, it must be tough for him. We learn from each other. We're all now writing tunes together. Leroy's writing tunes; all of us. I'm getting ready to record a new album about 6 songs in. The new record will probably end up with 10 songs. All new music and maybe an old Stranger song, but I can't tell ya which one. I forgot about it, heard it, and decided I want to re-do it. I'm also writing some tunes with Robin Zander now, from Cheap Trick. There's one I'm really excited about. He gave me a ton of ideas, and I run them by him when I put the GBB twist on it. I also did one of his songs on *Do Overs* called *Walking Shoes*, which he makes a guest vocal appearance on a verse. He is always welcome to sing on the new one too. Robin

gave me a song he always wanted to record, but Cheap Trick had not yet recorded. He's always liked it, and so I said I'll record it. I'll take it! It's gonna be a really cool song. Also Brian Johnson from AC/DC may get together with me on this, he gave me the thumbs up, we haven't yet done anything, but he is in my back hip pocket. He was also on *Do Overs*. These guys are really good friends who actually can come over to my house and I feel comfortable getting creative with. It's working out great. We are sponsored by Budweiser right now. We do all their gigs, Oldsmar, Dunedin, and Hooters, all size venues. The Leesburg Bikefest was an event that requested our band. I play now about 6 to 8 gigs a month. We play the Daquiri Deck on the last Wednesday of every month, and at the L.A. Hangout every 3rd Thursday. It keeps us fresh a bit. We have the kind of band that has many people come and sit in, like Kyle Ashley will be playing with us on an upcoming Wednesday at the Daquiri Deck. I'll be playing at Hooters for Cinco De Mayo on May 5th. It's different on the weekends, we do a lot of biker events. Sometimes we do 10 dates a month, but I try to keep it down. We're doing a fundraiser tonight at Ringside with Wendy and the Soulshakers. We do a lot of fund raisers. I always thought that at 54 yrs. old, I would be playing acoustic guitar at a Palm Pavilion. Not that there is anything wrong with that, but I wouldn't want to do that. It's incredible to me that the gigs keep coming; I actually have gigs all the way into next year. So I can actually say that I will have a gig when I'm 55, because I have a gig already booked. It's incredible to me. I'm still hitting the notes. I'm excited about what's ahead especially about the new record.

Who is your favorite singer?

Greg B: Paul Rogers of Bad Company. We don't do a lot of Bad Co. songs, but a few. We did open for them recently and saw them during sound-check. I would never say hey you're my favorite singer. My favorite chick singer is Bonnie Raitt. I froze when I met her, all this time I wanted to meet her, but I did make up for it and told her she looked really great. We talked for a little bit, small talk. That was the highlight of my life, I got to see her in the 10th row.

I'm so fortunate to have gotten together with these talented guys in my band now. So far we haven't had a fight. It has taken a long time to actually get this group together. It didn't just happen overnight.

We do our recording at Panda Records, and we call our label *St. Road 84 Records*, that's Alligator Alley. I get lots of orders all over the world for our music. I never give up hope that a rock or country artist would want to record one of our songs. That would be great! You can purchase our *Do Overs* CD at digstation.com. Right now, we're just going to continue writing, and playing. It's a good place to be in.

Who's the most favorite band you ever played with?

Greg B: Cheap Trick at Ribfest was really great!!! I love his voice. You know when we write songs together and for Robin to be there in front of me singing, it's like Wow!!! It would be great to open for AC/DC. I'd like that too.

Thank you Greg, thanks so much anything else you want your fans to know?

Greg B: I just want to stress this band didn't happen overnight. This is a real close relationship, and we all really care about each other, and everyone's family. I love the gigs when everyone brings their family and friends. Now it's more about the music, and my family. I'm a front man, a singer. The others are five great musicians. We are all now in a good place.



Greg Billings Performs at the Leesburg Bikefest.

ALBUM REVIEWS



Foo Fighters

Wasting Light

Roswell

★★★★☆

Dave Grohl didn't make it easy for himself. Not long after

Nirvana dissolved in April 1994, following Kurt Cobain's suicide, Grohl was offered the opportunity to back Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers. For him, a Petty fan, that was a dream job. Though he would drum with them during a "Saturday Night Live" performance later that year, Grohl ultimately declined, to start over from scratch and do what he's still doing today: front a band.

At the time, that decision was probably daunting. Grohl had already spent some time in a Seattle studio recording a humble demo tape that would become Foo Fighters' debut, one for whose release rights major labels were already grappling. But the sizable shadow cast by Cobain and the weight of his legacy and death was immense. This week, coupled with *Wasting Light*, their seventh full-length, Foo Fighters have been screening their new, somewhat revisionist, sometimes 3-D retrospective documentary, *Back and Forth*. There's some great footage early on during what was Grohl's very first tour (opening for Mike Watt) with his brand new band. There, despite having never heard any of the yet-to-be-released Foo Fighters songs, young Nirvana fans were showing up early and in numbers. "Marigold!" they'd scream out between songs, in hopes of hearing the one Grohl-penned Nirvana tune there was. He never played it.

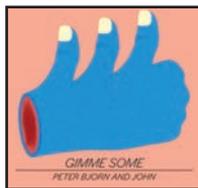
The idea of Grohl opening for anyone now seems just as ridiculous as him having to field requests for anything but one of the two dozen modern rock hits he's released since. But in *Wasting Light*, Grohl is attempting to come full circle. The plan was to go back to basics, in a few ways: 1) record the album to tape in Grohl's San Fernando Valley garage, 2) hire famed Nevermind producer Butch Vig to man the boards, 3) bring former Germs, Nirvana, and Foo Fighters guitarist Pat Smear back into the mix, 4) have founding Nirvana member and bassist Krist Novoselic down from Seattle to guest on some of the recordings. As Grohl says during *Back and Forth*, before recording began in earnest, "I love that we're going to make an album at home. It's going to sound like it was recorded in a house. I know it will."

It doesn't. In fact, said garage was built with the arena in mind, and as a result *Wasting Light* sounds just as mammoth and capable of knocking out teeth as anything Foo Fighters

have recorded since the late 90s. That's more a product of force than hooks. As evidenced by the opening roar of "Bridge Burning" and "Rope" or metallic uppercuts of "White Limo", the new, three-guitar attack in place provides a wallop that wasn't there before. Vig is renowned for sugaring up recordings, but here, the aim seems solely about knocking down walls. Front to back, *Wasting Light* meets that cause with lean, workmanlike aplomb. Grohl's screams haven't registered this dangerously, gleefully shredded in years-- if he was hoping to exorcise some demons, it sounds as though he made that happen.

But Foo Fighters' long-standing foundation has been built on fist-pumpers. While *Wasting Light* features a host of worthy set-openers, few prove to be as sticky or memorable as any number of their previous singles. There just isn't a melody or hook to really amplify. Those songs here that hold tightly to Grohl's long perfected, quiet-LOUD formula and crescendos-- see: alt-rock lullabies "Arlandria" and "These Days", or the pop-punk door-to-ass closer "Walk"-- come closest to matching the energy of his best work. In theory, as a form of therapy, it still works. Former Hüsker Dü frontman and fellow 80s punker Bob Mould guests semi-audibly on the Zeppelin-like crunch of "Dear Rosemary" and then of course, there's Novoselic's turn on "I Should Have Known", where the latter's bass sounds as round and bowling ball-heavy as it did on Nirvana's "Sliver".

There's a scene not long into *Back and Forth*, when Grohl remembers, "People really resented me for starting this band, for making music they thought 'sounded just like Nirvana.' What? You mean loud rock guitars? Melodies? Cymbals crashing? Big-ass drums? Well, that's what I do." It's true. He always did. It's just that, this time out, it's his melodies that are missed most.



Peter Bjorn and John

Gimme Some

Columbia

★★★★☆

— Kathleen Sedita

Swedish indie punk-pop band, Peter Bjorn and John, released their new album *Gimme Some* last month. With this album, they returned to the roots of their first widely successful release by bringing the energy back to their music that they had lost in their previous record, *Living Thing*. In *Gimme Some*, they drifted away from the heavier content of *Living Thing*, replacing the monotony with buoyant lyrics and catchy beats.

PB&J's story is a common one. Many bands break into the limelight with a catchy single and great album like these guys did with the song Young Folks on their record *Writer's Block*. Then, trying to avoid the pressure of recreating the greatness that was their prior album, they decided to go a different direction with the next one. That direction: boring. This happens all too often. Then, after seeing the disappointing results of that new direction, the band comes to the brilliant conclusion that maybe with their next album they might benefit from going back to the style that made them famous in the first place. Genius! What a surprising twist that would be! For Peter Bjorn and John, *Gimme Some* is that "unexpected" back-to-basics comeback album.

Though the situation these Swedish rockers found themselves in is commonplace and predictable, they defeated the odds and actually made a pretty decent comeback with *Gimme Some*. The first track on the album, *Tomorrow Has To Wait*, provided a strong opening for the record. The song employs call and response, which normally fails miserably, but works remarkably well here. The prominent percussion mixed with the simple, yet catchy lyrics and melody ensures that this song will be stuck in your head for some time. Or at least until the next track begins.

The first three tracks on the album make for a good introduction. *Dig A Little Deeper* has a reggae feel throughout, which the guys emphasize by adding an onslaught of bongos at the end. Following the island flair comes the single from the album, *Second Chance*. This song has recently been popping up on my iPod quite often lately, and I find myself jamming every time. It's an all around catchy song, with it's woo oows and simple, pop chorus. PB&J use the cowbell in this song—a lot. But, it works. More cowbell! (I couldn't resist).

Although the remainder of *Gimme Some* isn't filled with anything too memorable, it is all good stuff. Peter Bjorn and John kept the upbeat theme going throughout, aside from a couple songs such as *May Seem Macabre* and *Down Like Me*. With *Cool Off*, they bring a more 80s feel into the mix, and it works. *Black Book* delivers that old school garage punk sound PB&J fans love. The last song of the album, *I Know You Don't Love Me*, made for a strong finish; however some people may have checked out by the time the song picks up around 1:45. With simple lyrics and a steady march toward crescendo, the song ends at its very climax.

Peter Bjorn and John made a good album with *Gimme Some*. Their tactic? They told *Spin Magazine* that the days of writing and recording were fueled by alcohol, and lots of it. Sounds like a good method to me. The CD begs to be popped in on a bright summer day. None of the songs will be going down in history as anything spectacular, but there's nothing really wrong with them either. *Gimme Some* surely won back the fans they lost with *Living Thing*, and it's safe

to say PB&J won some new fans with it as well. Will *Gimme Some* be on my playlist this summer? You better believe it.



Hadden Sayers

Hard Dollar

RadioReady

★★★★☆

While previous albums give the impression of an artist in search of the sound that will define his career, his upcoming release *Hard Dollar* showcases a blues front man sure of himself and the direction of his music. Since Sayers first picked up a guitar, some form of the blues has come out, but on *Hard Dollar*, the 43-year old Texan unapologetically retreats to more traditional, recognizable blues formulas.

A portion of the album is dedicated to numbers resembling a Stevie Ray Vaughn impression. "Inside Out Boogie", "Crush on You", and "Burnin' Up" all brandish a Texas roadhouse style of the blues that has made the 12 bar sound recognizable to anyone with two functional ears.

"Sweet Texas Girls" is steeped in country flavors, but other efforts on this disc show Sayers ability to compose with grace. His remake of "Flat Black Automobile", formerly a forty-one second jingle on his 2001 album titled *Supersonic*, laces country slide guitar overtones into a laid back yet up tempo beat as Sayers finger picks an acoustic guitar. Lyrically it's one of the more light hearted and enjoyable efforts on the album, particularly when Sayers completes a bridge by wailing "I don't get mad, I don't get sad, I just go for a ride in a flat black automobile."

The culmination of the disc comes on "Room 155", a seven minute crescendo with lamentations of life on the road and a guitar solo that has all the makings of a Gary Moore classic. What makes the track highlight worthy however, is that it's one of the few occasions in which the performance of the band is as vital as the sound of its front man. An ensemble of crashing symbols and Dave DeWitt's work on the B3 organ create a monstrous aura that envelopes the listener and captures a portion of their soul, all be it momentarily.

Overall, *Hard Dollar* (which releases on June 21) isn't going to stun fans of Sayers' previous work but it will keep them entertained and unsure of what the next song will sound like. It has enough offerings of traditional blues songs to please aficionados of the genre looking to herald Sayers as finally arriving on the national blues scene, but enough tracks that come close to stepping outside of the box that he avoids being boring or cliché. A music industry journeyman, Sayers could easily have slipped into obscurity after his career fell on hard times. Instead, he delivers a full hearted attempt at returning to his days as a band leader with this album.

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CONCERT REVIEWS

IRON MAIDEN

The Final Frontier Tour, stops in Tampa, Florida – *Jeanine M. Gentile*



April 17, 2011—Heavy metal’s royal family, returns to St. Pete Times forum. After a twenty year plus absence.

Fans included James Root, Lead guitarist of Slipknot. Lady GaGa, whom also, had a show the night before at the Forum.

Black Tide, a quartet from Miami; opened. A Maiden influenced group. They had a no frills set, not even a backdrop/ banner on stage. If you didn’t do your homework, you wouldn’t know who they were. Supporting their latest release, “Bury me.” Packs a high energy punch. Closing their thirty minute set with “Warriors of Time” 2008 release. Hard to believe they are all under the age of 21! These kids are having the time of their lives. Well on their way to greatness. They present themselves very well on stage. As well in their video’s. “Warriors of time,” has a cool animation presentation; Check it out!

In my personal opinion, I think their sound was a little drowned in the vastness of the forum. They just need to remember who their audience is. Singing songs about “being yourself” at a Maiden concert. When the majority, comprised of forty plus year olds. Regardless, I would love to see this band again in a smaller venue. Every song that I hear from them is absolutely phenomenal! I recommend them to any metal fan. Black Tide performed the two Florida dates with Iron Maiden.

The stage went dark as the right and left jumbo-trons had a video intro, of Bruce singing

“Doctor Doctor; “ UFO cover song. A video mixed with C.G.I images of Eddie. You could feel the excitement charging the atmosphere! THE WAIT WAS OVER.

A starlit stage took you to Satellite 15. A space station themed stage. Purple & blue lighting lit the enormous stage. In typical Maiden style.

Exploding on the stage:

Bruce in his camouflage pants, Black “psycho yard” sleeveless shirt and ball cap. The founder Steve Harris on bass, looked right at home in Florida. Black tank top, (black) knee length jean shorts, with black socks. Dave Murray, in blue jeans with his signature head band; sleeveless vest also in black. Janick Gers also in black jeans sported a latest, sleeveless Iron Maiden tee. Adrian Smith in Blue jean jacket and jeans also with a latest Maiden tee shirt. Nicko McBain, was hidden behind; where else? His drum set. In a niche made just for his enormous and beautiful drum set. Complete with a massive gong with a sunburst design.

Back Drops ranged from:

The final frontier Eddie, with skulls in broken glass orbs. Eddie as the grim reaper. The classic TROOPER. A huge face shot of Eddie.

The Songs for the night were as follows Satellite 15... The Final Frontier (Premiere: First time ever), El Dorado, 2 Minutes to Midnight (Always a crowd favorite), Coming Home, which was wrote on the road. About seeing the sights of home, from Ed force one, Per Bruce, (Premiere: First time ever), and Dance of Death.

Bruce disappeared, only to emerge in his red “Trooper” jacket. As Bruce sang “The Trooper,” he led diehard fans into a frenzy, with the Union Jack



flag in hand! The Wicker Man, Bruce took a slight break here to recount about when he/they were flying into Japan, at the time devastating earthquake happened. Having a big following there. Bruce told of how easily they are recognized, in Japan. Some of the Tee shirt proceeds went to the Red cross relief efforts. Bruce stating: "If you're an Iron Maiden fan, your apart of the Iron Maiden family." Leading into the song, Blood Brothers!

When the Wild Wind Blows (Premiere: First time ever), The Evil That Men Do, The Talisman (Premiere: First time ever), Fear of the Dark, Iron Maiden. A sea of hands, clapping along to the rhythms. Could be seen sporadically all night.

Encore:

The Number of the Beast (Another classic!), Hallowed Be Thy Name, Running Free (Eddie shows up!), Always Look on the Bright Side of Life. House lights up! (a Monty Python song).

As always, there was an appearance by the bands mascot EDDIE! Whom now has "Predator" alien type look. EDDIE playfully fought with Janick

Gers, and Adrian Smith. Giving the audience an "Ed's" eye view of the stage. Also, having his very own guitar.



Over all, the Maiden boys still lead the way in metal. Exuding enough energy as if, they still were in the eighties. Bruce threw his beanie hat into the crowd. Assuring that he had not lost his hair. Janick Gers whipped his guitar in the air, upon leaving the stage. Letting it drop on the stage floor. Nicko Mc Bain threw drum heads, sticks into the crowd. As Nicko left, he picked up Gers guitar. Then returning to the microphone, he told the crowd, "This is going into my restaurant."

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EVENT CALENDAR

MAY

- 1 Toad The Wet Sprocket**
The Ritz, Ybor City
- 1 Diddy-Dirty Money**
House of Blues, Orlando
- 1 Kansas & Little River Band**
Coachman Park, Clearwater
- 3 Earth, Wind & Fire**
Hard Rock Live, Orlando
- 6 Sister Hazel**
Jannus Live, St. Petersburg
- 7 Jeff Beck**
Ruth Eckerd Hall, Clearwater
- 7 The Smithereens**
Lakeland Center, Lakeland
- 8 Rodney Atkins, Kellie Pickler,
Chuck Wicks, Craig Campbell,
JaneDear Girls, Frankie Ballard**
Coachman Park, Clearwater
- 8 Kylie Minogue**
Hard Rock Live, Orlando
- 9 Avenged Sevenfold, Three Days
Grace & Bullet For My Valentine**
UCF Arena, Orlando
- 9 Danzig & Devildriver**
Hard Rock Live, Orlando
- 13 Exile**
Peabody Auditorium, Daytona Beach
- 14 Darius Rucker**
Tropicana Field, St. Petersburg
- 14 Super Bob**
Gasoline Alley, Largo
- 14 Exile**
Orange Blossom Opry, Wiersdale
- 14 Michael W. Smith**
Busch Gardens, Tampa
- 14 Jeff Bates & Alex Hayes**
Zellwood Corn Festival, Zellwood
- 15 Suzy Bogguss, Rhett Akins**
Zellwood Corn Festival, Zellwood
- 15 Bon Jovi**
Amway Center, Orlando
- 18 Girl Talk**
Jannus Live, St. Petersburg
- 20 Cross Eyed Larry**
Gasoline Alley, Largo
- 20 Chris Isaak & Josh Turner**
Vinoy Waterfront Park, St. Petersburg
- 20 Thompson Square**
Joyland, Bradenton
- 21 Faster Pussycat**
Garage Bar at Route 46, Sanford
- 21 Bonnie Raitt, Buddy Guy &
Jon Cleary**
Vinoy Waterfront Park, St. Petersburg
- 22 Third Eye Blind, Colbie Caillat
Allison Iraheta & Adam 812**
Vinoy Waterfront Park, St. Petersburg
- 24 Deftones**
Jannus Live, St. Petersburg
- 25 Jackson Browne**
Ruth Eckerd Hall, Clearwater
- 26 James Taylor**
Bob Carr Performing Arts, Orlando
- 26 Seven Mary Three**
Seminole Hard Rock Cafe, Tampa
- 27 Atlanta Rhythm Section**
Downtown Clearwater, Clearwater
- 28 Taproot**
State Theatre, St. Petersburg
- 29 Face To Face**
State Theatre, St. Petersburg
- 31 Al Pacino**
Ruth Eckerd Hall, Clearwater

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JUNE

- 3 **John Waite**
Capitol Theatre, Clearwater
- 4 **The Monkees**
Ruth Eckerd Hall, Clearwater
- 4 **Taylor Swift**
Amway Center, Orlando
- 7 **ZZ Top**
Hard Rock Live, Orlando
- 7 **Primus**
Ruth Eckerd Hall, Clearwater
- 9 **Nashville Pussy**
State Theater, St. Petersburg
- 10 **Katy Perry**
St. Pete Times Forum, Tampa
- 11 **Go-Go's**
Universal Studios, Orlando
- 17 **Def Leppard and Heart**
1-800-Ask-Gary Amphitheatre, Tampa
- 18 **Keith Urban and Jake Owen**
St. Pete Times Forum, Tampa
- 19 **John Lee Hooker Jr.**
Skipper's Smokehouse, Tampa
- 24 **Good Charlotte**
Jannus Live, St. Petersburg
- 24 **Mother's Finest**
The Ritz, Ybor City

JULY

- 2 **Psychedelic Furs**
Capitol Theatre, Clearwater
- 3 **The Wiggles**
Tropicana Field, St. Petersburg
- 4 **Eddie Money**
Palmetto Festival Grounds, Palmetto
- 6 **Motley Crue, Poison and NY Dolls**
St. Pete Times Forum, Tampa

- 14 **Natasha Bedingfield**
The Ritz, Ybor City
- 15 **Jason Aldean**
1-800-Ask-Gary Amphitheatre, Tampa
- 17 **Sade & John Legend**
Amway Center, Orlando
- 20 **Britney Spears**
Amway Center, Orlando
- 22 **New Kids on the Block & Backstreet Boys**
Amway Center, Orlando
- 30 **Selena Gomez**
Ruth Eckerd Hall, Clearwater
- 30 **Cinderella**
House of Blues, Orlando
- 31 **Vans Warped Tour**
Vinoy Waterfront Park, St. Petersburg

AUGUST

- 2 **Kings of Leon**
1-800-Ask-Gary Amphitheatre, Tampa
- 6 **Goo Goo Dolls**
Tropicana Field, St. Petersburg
- 9 **Brian Adams**
Plaza Theatre, Orlando
- 11 **Disturbed, Godsmack, Megadeth, Machine Head, In Flames, Trivium**
1-800-Ask-Gary Amphitheatre, Tampa
- 19 **Rascal Flatts, Sara Evans & Easton Corbin**
1-800-Ask-Gary Amphitheatre, Tampa
- 21 **Alison Krauss & Union Station**
Ruth Eckerd Hall, Clearwater
- 25 **Spin Doctors**
Hard Rock Hotel, Orlando
- 27 **Dave Mason, Mark Farner & Rick Derringer**
Ruth Eckerd Hall, Clearwater

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