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Goo Goo Dolls' CD 'defines who we are'

Rockers bring hits to town for Embassy show

By James Grant of The News-Sentinel
 Thursday, September 30, 2010 - 12:01 am

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The Goo Goo Dolls — who hail from Buffalo, N.Y., and are fronted by lead singer and songwriter John Rzeznik — are one of the most popular bands of the last 15 years, with some of the most played hits on radio.

Radio staples such as “Name,” “Slide,” “Black Balloon,” “Broadway” and “Iris” enabled the group to sell millions of CDs and helped make Rzeznik the proud recipient of the Hal David Starlight Songwriter Award.

Rzeznik and bandmates bring their hits to town for a concert Tuesday at the Embassy Theatre.

The Goo Goo Dolls recently returned to retail shelves with their CD titled “Something for the Rest of Us,” made with the help of alternative rock producers Tim Palmer and Butch Vig. Palmer and Vig have produced music for David Bowie's group Tin Machine, the Smashing Pumpkins and Nirvana.

“It was a lot of hard work. We had a really great time; we learned a lot,” Rzeznik said in a telephone interview about working with Palmer and Vig. “Tim was more involved than Butch. Butch really only worked on one song on the album. ... Tim's a really creative guy. He helped me build a lot of the harmony parts.”

“I think people are really relating to them (the songs on the new album). I think everybody can kind of understand where we're all coming from right now, where I'm trying to come from, at least.

“I didn't want to talk about politics or social issues,” he said. “It's just like what happens to human beings, people when they're pushed to the edge. That's sort of what I was feeling when I was writing this. I think this album is defining who we are at this moment.”

Rzeznik says the Goo Goo Dolls, who are just beginning their new tour in support of the album, are looking forward to playing live again and presenting some of their new songs to concertgoers.

“It's going to be a lot of fun,” Rzeznik said. “It's a long show; we play about an hour and a half. I think people can walk away from the show feeling like they were part of it.

“I think we're going to do two or three more songs off the new album that we've never played live before. We're just trying to figure out which ones. You've got to play all of your hits because that's what people are paying for, so you have to do that, and then we want to introduce some of the newer material. We'll figure it out as we go.”

While this new tour will take the Goo Goo Dolls around the world in the next few months, they've spent the past couple of years in various recording studios, including their own in Buffalo, making the latest album. With all that time spent in recording studios, does Rzeznik prefer that to going on tour?

“They're completely different, and I enjoy them equally, I really do,” Rzeznik said. “But sometimes I get (cranky) on tour, and I'm like, ‘I'd rather be in the studio.’ Then I'll be in the studio getting cranky and rather be on the road, but generally I'm pretty happy wherever I am.”

With a career that includes composing what is probably the group's most well-known song “Iris” — which spent an astounding 18 weeks at No. 1 on the Billboard Hot 100 Airplay Chart in 1998 (it's now the Radio Songs chart) — Rzeznik says the most satisfying part of his career is that he's able to do what he loves.

“The fact that this got to be my day job, that's really amazing,” Rzeznik said. “To get to make a living doing something you love.”



More Information

Radio staples

What: The Goo Goo Dolls in concert

When: 7:30 p.m. Tuesday

Where: Embassy Theatre, 121 W. Jefferson Blvd.

Cost: \$35, \$45; tickets available at the Embassy box office, Ticketmaster outlets, www.ticketmaster.com and 1-800-745-3000. For more information, call 424-5665 or go to www.fwembassytheatre.org.

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