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Foreigner ready to rock Foellinger Outdoor Theatre

By James Grant of The News-Sentinel
Thursday, July 10, 2014 - 12:01 am

If you want to experience some of the most enduring rock songs of the past 37 years, look no further than the rock group Foreigner, who will be appearing live in concert Saturday at Foellinger Outdoor Theatre in Franke Park.

Formed in 1976 by Mick Jones, Foreigner became one of the most popular rock groups of the '70s with the release of their 1977 debut album, which was titled simply "Foreigner." The album spawned such rock radio classics as "Feels Like the First Time," "Cold as Ice" and "Long, Long Way from Home" while managing to become the first of 10 multiplatinum-selling albums for the group.

A string of hits followed over the next decade or so, including such ever-popular radio staples as "Hot Blooded," "Double Vision," "Urgent," "Juke Box Hero," "Say You Will" and "I Don't Want to Live Without You." Their two biggest hits were the ballads "I Want to Know What Love Is" (a No. 1 smash from 1984) and "Waiting for a Girl Like You."

Although original lead singer Lou Gramm left the group permanently in 2003, Foreigner continues to be a popular concert attraction and earlier this year was awarded six gold and platinum RIAA awards for digital sales of six songs from their timeless catalog.

Tom Gimbel, who joined Foreigner in 1995, said the group will play all of their well-known classics while managing to steal the spotlight for individual members on occasion throughout the show.

"We play Foreigner stuff, all the songs that people want to hear," Gimbel said in a telephone interview. "Cold as Ice," "Double Vision," "Head Games," "Hot Blooded" — I mean the list of Foreigner hits is long.

"That's going to keep us busy most of the night playing all those hit songs," Gimbel said. "We'll be doing some jamming along the way."

"We've got a great keyboard bit from our keyboard player, Michael Bluestein, and our drummer, Chris Frazier, does a tremendous solo most nights.

"We do an acoustic version of 'Say You Will,' which is a cool song and the arrangement is done by our bass player, Jeff Pilson," Gimbel added. "He did a great vocal arrangement. It's kind of an acoustic, stripped-down version. I get to play a little bit of flute on there."

The group will also be joined onstage by the choir from Northrop High School, who will lend their voices to the song "I Want to Know What Love Is."

Gimbel said Foreigner began adding local school choirs to their show once they partnered with The Grammy Foundation to help keep music education in high schools throughout North America.

"It was something that our management team felt very strongly about," Gimbel said of working with The Grammy Foundation.

"And once they asked us, we automatically without thinking agreed," he said. "You know, any chance to do something for schools that are having their music programs taken away. ... Music is such a great part of so many kids' lives.

"Especially musicians like us," he added. "Almost every one of us have probably played some kind of musical instrument in school along the way."

When they perform with a high school choir, "we make a donation to their school and they help us out selling CDs," Gimbel said. "It's a lot of fun for everyone. Just to see the look on the kids' faces when they get up on stage and sing. It's pure exhilaration. We get a real kick out of it, and, hopefully, we can help out a little bit."

While Gimbel also worked as a touring member of Aerosmith, another legendary rock group, he says that his work with Foreigner is a dream come true, as it focuses more on his training on guitar and saxophone.

"It's a different situation," Gimbel said of working with Aerosmith. "With Aerosmith, I was playing keyboards, a lot of sax solos and a lot of singing ... it was just



More Information

Rock night

WHAT: Foreigner live in concert
WHEN: 8 p.m. Saturday
WHERE: Foellinger Outdoor Theatre, 3411 Sherman Blvd. in Franke Park
COST: The concert was sold out, but extra \$60 seats were added; call 427-6000.

Listen in

An audio interview with Foreigner's Tom Gimbel:



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absolute rock music at its finest.

“When I came over to Foreigner, it was rhythm guitar and sax,” he said, “so that was a wonderful feeling of being set free.”

“Mick Jones and Lou Gramm (of Foreigner), in the early days, they really welcomed me and also they would just say, you know, you're part of our family now,” Gimbel recalled.

As a part of Foreigner, Gimbel said he is most satisfied by being able to add his touch to the parts he plays every night on stage with the group.

“Just being able to nail the solo in 'Urgent' on the saxophone,” is what gives Gimbel the most satisfaction in his career right now.

“You know, to hit those high notes, not just at the beginning of it but at the end,” he explained. “All throughout the whole song when I did it just right, it's just the way I want it. That's a very, very satisfying feeling for me.”