



INTERVIEW WITH TIM MAHONEY

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Spending 28 years doing anything may sound tiresome to many, but for Tim Mahoney, it just propels him to do more. As the guitarist of the eclectic alternative rock band 311, Mahoney is responsible for helping create a sound that's allowed his band to amass a loyal fanbase and tour the world dozens of times.

The band is no stranger to Vegas, either: Mahoney says 311 plans an annual trek to the desert once a year. After spending its annual 311 day celebration at Park Theatre, the band returns with The Offspring and Gym Class Heroes July 28 at Downtown Las Vegas Events Center. Read about what they plan for this time below.

SMASH MAGAZINE: 311 recently celebrated its 28th anniversary as a band. What did you do to celebrate?

Tim Mahoney: Nothing crazy, actually! I actually didn't even see anyone from that band that day. We just sort of gave each other high fives via email. We're weirdos like that. [Laughs.]

We talk about these accolades a lot when we're together. When that day comes close, we're all usually like "Holy shit!" because it's trippy to think about what has transpired all of those years. The fact that we're able to get together and play music together is something special, and I can speak for the entire band when I say that we're fortunate and grateful to be able to continue. Had we been on the road when anniversary day hit, I'm sure we would've shared a really nice dinner with some drinks. But we have this week off, so everybody just kicked back at their homes. We're all pretty close by, so there are

opportunities to hang. Our studio in North Hollywood is like our clubhouse, and it's a great place to connect with everyone there.

SM: You're set to invade the Downtown Las Vegas Events Center July 28 with The Offspring and Gym Class Heroes. How did this lineup come to be?

TM: We've toured with them before, maybe two years ago. They're really nice dudes, and we get along really well. Even when we first met them, we all said to ourselves "These guys are our style."

We shared the stage with [The Offspring] at several festivals a few years ago, and that just lit a spark in our minds. The entire band thought it would be fun to travel with them. Plus, they have a new record that's coming out soon. The timing just worked for us. There's nothing like a late Summer tour!

As for Gym Class Heroes, we're all pretty excited to play with them. It's a bit different from what we're used to, but change is good! We're just excited to play outside and in front of people. It's always fun.

SM: What's going on with album lucky number 13?

TM: We're working on it! We were super productive the past couple of months and cranked out a bunch of material for it, but releasing it before the summer just became impossible. We realized there wasn't enough time to give the songs some room to breathe. And we had to take a breather ourselves for tirelessly working

on it! We've been writing and putting together songs—a lot of good ones—for a while now.

311 has amassed a such big crop of material, it will take some time to put everything together. We plan to hit it really hard as soon as we come home from tour. I can tell you one thing: We want to record an Offspring cover. Those guys covered "Down," and it was pretty fucking good! We're gonna try to cover one of their songs. That's the first order of business.

SM: How is it sounding?

TM: It's always hard for me to explain that. To me, it's just classic riff rock. It's just as if we took all the elements that form the 311 sound, and modernized it. It's a fresh take. A lot of the songs we've worked on thus far took a lot of development from members, and it took a lot of hard work and time.

We're drawing from the same influences we've always drawn from this time around, from reggae to hard rock. It's fun chipping away at ideas that have been floating in our head for a while and seeing what sticks. I think it sounds good, though. I wish I could find the right adjectives to describe it. [Laughs.]

SM: You've said your favorite guitarists are Bob Marley and Jerry Garcia. Who is inspiring you this time around?

TM: People always think it's funny when I say that I think Marley is one of the best guitarists. The way he sings and plays offbeats is magical; he's got a great flow beneath it all. I have so many guys that I like to listen to all the time, but I'm really excited for the new TOOL record. I've followed those guys their entire career, and I'm excited to see what they have up their sleeves.

I saw [Widespread Panic guitarist] Jimmy Herring play with John McLaughlin awhile back, and that was such a great experience. They're both virtuosos in their own light. I always like to bring up those guys during interviews because man, they put on great shows. Their style of playing just tugs on certain heartstrings. It was epic. I felt like I gained a newfound appreciation for music after seeing those two perform live. It was an unbelievable show.

SM: What's next for Tim Mahoney?

TM: Honestly, I'd just like to spend more time with my family. [Laughs.]

When I'm not traveling and playing music on the road, I'm writing music at home. Some of it gets used, a lot of it doesn't. A lot of the material is spaced-out, ambient jams that I'll record for future reference. I'll eventually release a collection of songs that didn't make the 311 cut, but I always try to channel rock riffs for someone to sing over. I've got plenty of good starts for potential songs; I've been writing and trying to stay productive. That's great because 311 is an amalgamation of each members' own ideas.

SM: What can we expect at the show?

TM: When we were there for 311 Day a few months ago. We performed at [Park Theater] in Monte Carlo. The production we had for those shows was so big and elaborate. Our good friend Bobby Grey helped us out with lighting, visuals and other content. He worked tirelessly to make sure it was the best that it could be. We're carrying some of that stuff with us on this show—the video wall, the content, and more—and it's been nice to step it up on the visual side of things.

When to the setlist, we always try to include a variety of songs. We always refer to the setlists we create the last time we played each city, and create a new setlist that doesn't duplicate the older ones. That way, diehard fans will get something different. Since this tour features The Offspring and Gym Class Heroes, though, we'll include the hits: The "Down"s and the "Ambers."

SM: You're no stranger to Vegas. Care to share any great stories?

TM: Oh man, when we were young, we used to go out all night. Now, we just want some good food, but we still have fun no matter what we do. There's a lot of wild, fucked up events that I've experienced that might not be fit to print, so I'll hold off. [Laughs.]

The city has changed so much over the years, but one thing's for sure: I always have fun. Vegas has come a long way from just casinos and booze; it's a destination now. It's definitely not the bar town 311 played the first time we stopped by. I look forward to coming back there every summer.

See 311 perform at 8:30 p.m. July 28 at Downtown Las Vegas Events Center with The Offspring and Gym Class Heroes.