

NOW WE'RE TOLKIN'

By Helen Marketti

JONAH KOSLEN "Stage Pass Now"

Jonah will be performing the Michael Stanley Band album, Stage Pass, at Akron Civic Theatre on Saturday, January 18, 2014.

Jonah Koslen has a long music history with Cleveland fans. He was in the Michael Stanley Band and wrote many fan favorite songs during that time. He had his own band, Breathless and from there ventured out to many other projects where his talents and creativity could be utilized in different ways.

"When The Beatles were on the Ed Sullivan Show, it was my twelfth birthday," remembers Jonah. "I had received their album 'Meet The Beatles' as a present and then they were on television that same night. Seeing them changed the course of my life. They were a big influence on me. I also liked the Rolling Stones, Chubby Checker, Bobby Vee, Gene Pitney and those early folks, too."

"My dad was a saxophone player and played in big bands so we always had horns and woodwind instruments around the house. I started with playing a trumpet but I was terrible at it. I then switched to a six-string guitar and that was much better. (laughs) During high school, I was in different bands, as most musicians are, and I started playing twelve-string electric guitar. I loved The Byrds at the time and was into folk rock. Right after I got my electric guitar, Jimi



Hendrix came on the scene and Cream with Eric Clapton so then I wanted to learn that kind of guitar. That's when I got my first Stratocaster. The first song I ever played was "Like a Rolling Stone" by Bob Dylan."

Jonah discusses his inspirations for songwriting, "People have often asked me if I write songs when I am depressed. No, I don't. Things that inspire me to write material could be music that someone else has done, an opportunity in life or something that gets my energy going, something positive. If something has a strong emotional content, it will inspire me but usually after the fact because it's too overwhelming in the moment. I like to take time to reflect because that brings a lot of insight."

After nearly forty years in the music industry, Jonah has worked hard to get to where he is now whether it's writing, producing or creating. "Everything I have done in my career is all pieces of a puzzle. What I love doing the most is being creative and working on big projects. I like to think of different ways of doing things. Anything that I have ever worked on or been involved with usually sparked my interest for what I did next. Formula for me equates craft. When you know your craft, then you follow certain guidelines. I do leave things open for inspiration and a willingness to try a different way if it will work."

In addition to his music, Jonah is also working on writing a fictional novel. "I work on the book all the time. It is a different take on a fairly common theme. It isn't about the music business, it isn't about my life, and that's all I will say for now. I don't need to write a book about what I already lived. (laughs) I don't find rock autobiographies that interesting, someone

got high, laid, drunk, married, went to rehab and so forth. Well many other people have, too. My book is going to be totally different."

Jonah and his band, Stage Pass Now will be performing the Michael Stanley Band album, Stage Pass in which Jonah wrote most of the songs. "I was the first member of the Michael Stanley Band

before we became a band. I stayed for the first three albums then left to pursue other interests and start my own band, Breathless. The Michael Stanley Band (MSB) got a lot of support from Cleveland radio, from the management company, Belkin Productions and record labels at the time. It became the sound track for people's lives. They have a lot of associations with that music and they like to relive it."

"We are going to perform the entire album. I love the record and I know many other people do, too. We haven't done it since back in the day so it's going to be fun to do. We will do the songs in the same order as they are listed on the album plus some songs that didn't end up on the record like Ladies Choice and Among My Friends Again. I will also include a few songs from the Breathless days as well. There will be three opening acts and they are very talented artists, Scott Stiert, Max Clarke and Angie Haze. Each one of them will play one of my songs with the band and we will do one of their songs with them as well. When MSB did the Stage Pass album, we were a young, struggling band and people gave us a chance to play so I would like to return the favor. I am looking forward to being onstage with these folks. I'm looking forward to playing with my band and doing this album."

For ticket information: www.akroncivic.com

For more information on Jonah: www.jonah.com.com



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