

The Doobie Brothers Listen To The Music...

By Helen Marketti



The Doobie Brothers are a band that immediately comes to mind when thinking of music classics of the 70s. They had a timeless list of hits that have included Listen To The Music, Long Train Running, Black Water, China Grove, Jesus Is Just Alright, What A Fool Believes, Takin' It To The Streets and many more. The Doobie Brothers are going to be in Toledo, Ohio on May 19 at The Stranahan Theatre. It is a rockin' gig that you will not want to miss. They put on an incredible show! Original member and co-founder of The Doobie Brothers, Tom Johnston took some time to talk about his career and the lasting legacy of the band.

"The guitar was my rebellion instrument," said Tom. "I was playing the clarinet under protest. Then I chose the guitar because it was something I wanted to do. It was the complete and total opposite with its sound and image. I was a fan of Little Richard, James Brown and Bo Diddley. I give him credit (Bo Diddley) for some of my rhythm styles."

So how did the band get its name? "When we got together we didn't have a name for the band yet. We were playing gigs and still didn't have a name so one of my housemates at the time said, "Why don't you call yourselves, The Doobie Brothers!" Of course, "doobie" was a very "in" term at the time," laughs

Tom. "The name ended up sticking and with a lot of luck and hard work, we're still here."

Tom is the genius music mind who penned the song, Listen To The Music in 1972. There was a reason, inspiration and meaning behind this classic tune. "Back then I had this vision and to some degree I still feel this way only I was more naïve back then. I had a belief that all of the world leaders from all the different countries should get together, sit down in a large, open grassy area and listen to a concert, probably stoned (laughs) although I didn't put that in the song. Anyway, they could be together, enjoy the music, have a great time and feel better. At the time, I wrote Listen To The Music, Vietnam was still going on. To me, music transcends everything. Music is the great translator, the best way to divide and conquer. It doesn't matter what your political views are or your origin, music has the ability to be a healing force."

Tom continues, "I've had people come up to me after shows and say that a certain song of ours helped them through a period of their lives. It's a very gratifying feeling to know that even though we didn't set out to do that intentionally, the music helped to be a sound track in someone's life. You can say the same things about books or movies. But to me, for music...you can listen to a song over and over. You can't read a book or watch a movie over and over. Maybe it's because the song doesn't last that long and it can transport you to a better place faster."

Tom is always working on writing new material. "I write a lot. I enjoy writing songs. It's a great way to express

yourself, get your thoughts out and communicate. Whatever I need to write will come out of the ether spirit. It never works when you sit down and try to write something specific. The best songs write themselves."

The Doobie Brothers are in the process of finishing up a new album, which is due for release in the near future. "We went in a new direction with this album," said Tom. "We didn't want to keep rubber stamping what we've done in the past. I got a chance to do things that I've never done before. That's what makes you want to keep doing this. I wrote seven brand new songs and three of them I wrote using the keyboard which is different for me."

Tom's thoughts on how and why The Doobie Brothers still draw crowds, "Our music is real with real musicianship. We put on a great live show. What you see is what you get. I love playing



Photos are courtesy of Doobie Brothers Promoters.

live. I love to get the crowd going. We can reach across the decades and see different ages at our shows. It's really gratifying to see a whole new generation discovering the music."

For more information on The Doobie Brothers: www.doobiebros.com
Ticket information for May 19th: www.stranahantheatre.com



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