

NOW WE'RE TALKIN'

By Helen Marketti

A Chat with Foreigner lead singer, Kelly Hansen

Foreigner will be doing a show at The Hard Rock Rocksino on November 16. Lead singer, Kelly Hansen shares his thoughts on touring, current projects and playing with one of the best classic rock bands.

Foreigner's classic hits have stood the test of time for over thirty years. Songs such as *Urgent*, *Hot Blooded*, *Juke Box Hero*, *Cold As Ice*, *Waiting For A Girl Like You* and many more have lit up the airwaves since the early 80s and when fans hear those signature songs they are taken back to their own memories.

Kelly Hansen joined the band as its front man in 2005. Prior to joining Foreigner, Kelly had a full music career going with finding his footing as a lead singer. It was a career he came across by chance. He really did not know what he wanted to do with his life. "I didn't come from a family who had a music background," said Kelly. "I do remember that I knew many commercial jingles.

I guess I know a lot of useless musical trivia. (laughs) I was in choir by the time I was in fourth grade. Things really didn't start to change until my brother bought me a few record albums. He bought an album by Boston and another by Chicago, bands that were popular during that time. I remember always looking through his record albums because he had such a freaky collection such as Edgar Winter (They Only Come Out at Night), Deep Purple and others."

He continues, "We had a family friend who was a little older than me and he had a band. He played guitar. He and his band played at school dances and recreation centers. One day he asked me to sing a song, which I did and actually found that I liked singing. He asked me to join his band and eventually I became the lead singer. I was around 16 years old at the time and that's when I started thinking that maybe I could be a singer as a career."

During the 80s, Kelly was the lead singer for the band, Hurricane. "I had been playing for a few years in a cover band. We played in small nightclubs. One day I saw an ad that was placed by a drummer who was looking for a singer to complete their band. I met with him, the guitar player and the bass player. They stopped in at the club I was playing in Manhattan Beach (LA). We started writing together and that was the beginning of Hurricane. A short time later, the drummer left the band and that's when Jay Schellen joined. It really got going with the four of us." (Kelly, Jay, Robert Sarzo and Tony Cavazo)

Foreigner's longevity keeps fans returning show after show to hear the songs that made the band famous. "I think I am lucky to sing such great material," said Kelly. "I am very thankful to be able to get onstage and sing these great songs. I have been around the block a few times so I understand how fortunate I am. I think it's about enjoying what you do and enjoying every day. In addition to fans coming to the shows to hear fantastic music, they also know they are going to get a high energy and interactive show. We entertain; we are not just standing there and playing songs."

Kelly follows a similar routine before each show to get ready and in proper frame of mind. "I usually do a few warm up exercises and stretches. I visit the rest of the guys, see how everyone is doing and get a pulse for what is going on. When we travel, I try to rest my voice as much as possible and not talk very much. I know my limitations so I take care of myself. Quite frankly, if my voice isn't working then none of us are working."

Foreigner has not had a new album since 2009. "I co-wrote our last album which at that time had been the first one for the band in ten years. I would like to write more music but it is difficult to find the time. We are on the road more than 200 days out of the year," explains Kelly. "We are going to be releasing an album called *The Best of Foreigner 4* either later this year or early next year."

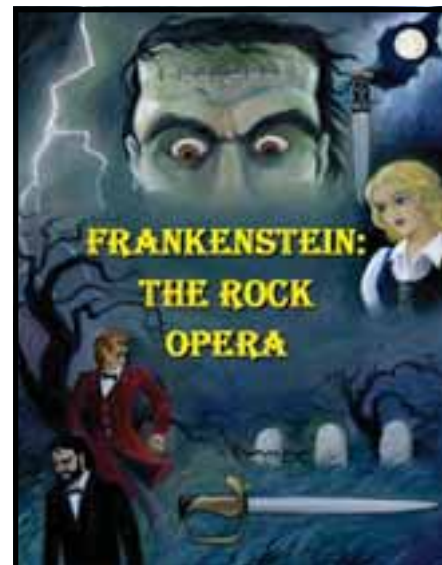
The band also participates with several projects. "We are involved with the Grammy Foundation where we provide an opportunity for local bands to come onstage. The bands sing a song with us and we donate proceeds from our CD sales to their music program. We are trying to raise awareness to the fact that when school budgets are cut, usually the Arts are the first thing to go. I look at the Arts as being just as important as any other subject. I think it helps create a well-rounded person who is accepting and open-minded. You need to experience things you



are not used to and step out of your own bubble, whether it is a play or period piece about somewhere else that you have never visited. Expanding your world helps you to have more of an open mind. We have been bringing awareness to this program for the past several years."

"We also keep busy with the Shriners," said Kelly. "We do as much as we can for our troops. We have visited Walter Reed Hospital. While we are on the road, we receive many opportunities and I think it's important to take advantage of as many as possible. You have to learn to live your life on the road instead of waiting until you get back home to start living. We are on the road a great deal of the year so you have to take advantage of being in a nice city, finding good restaurants and meeting great people. Doing the best you can is all that anyone can ask."

For more information: www.foreigneronline.com
Foreigner is on Facebook and Twitter.



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