

# INTERVIEW/PREVIEW

By Helen Marketti

## Dirty Honey, California Dreamin' Tour

Dirty Honey will be performing at the House of Blues in Cleveland on Friday, September 16 as part of their California Dreamin' Tour. Lead singer Marc LaBelle shares some insight on the band's influence, originality, and what music fans can look forward to experiencing.

Los Angeles based band Dirty Honey has more than created and solidified their footing in the rock

music genre. The band has opened for Guns N' Roses, Slash, The Who, KISS, and The Black Crowes. As the music scene evolves, changes, and reinvents itself, Dirty Honey is a band that has returned to good ole fashioned, rock 'n roll roots. It's refreshing and yet familiar. Listening to their recordings of "California Dreamin'," "Rolling 7s," "The Wire," and "When I'm Gone" will transport the listener back to an era reminiscent of what rock and roll used to be, when powerful bands with lead singers who had firepower carved out their signature sounds with hits we know and love. You will hear the influence of Led Zeppelin, Aerosmith, and Gun N' Roses to name a few. Dirty Honey is the band that will take you back to the good ole days but with their own sound, music, and individuality.

Their single "When I'm Gone" made it to the number one slot in Billboard Magazine for the Mainstream Rock category and yet the band was unsigned - an impressive accomplishment for a band that has worked hard and made it happen.

"As a kid, I remember meeting Aerosmith before one of their shows in Saratoga, New York," said Marc. "They were just leaving a radio station and were getting ready to get into their limo. They were greeting fans, signing autographs, posing for pictures, and looking awesome. I saw them in concert that same night. It was the first rock concert I ever attended. At that moment, I decided it was a fun way to spend your life. I loved the excitement of seeing them interacting with the fans and how they carried themselves. There was something mysterious about them that added to the excitement. They were the first band I



really got into. As I got older, I started listening to Led Zeppelin and The Rolling Stones."

"My dad played bass guitar and the trombone. He bought me my first real guitar when I was older. It was a Les Paul copy of a Vantage Sunburst," remembers Marc. "The artist that really made me want to pick up the guitar was Stevie Ray Vaughan. It blew my mind when I heard "Empty Arms." His playing made me want to do solos."

He continues: "When I moved to LA, one of my best friends was studying jazz at the USC Jazz School. He was able to help me connect with other musicians so I could start playing gigs in the city. Before I moved to LA, I was hosting open mic nights in Florence, Italy, where I would play guitar and sing."

A tried and tired question usually pops up but I have to ask how the band got its name. "The guys would text me different names of possible ideas and I would put them into a data base on my phone. I had actually thought of Dirty Honey and added it to the list. Prior to that, we seemed to have a different name for our band on a weekly basis and decided we needed to have one name and stick with it. So, Dirty Honey was the winner and it works for us."

Their music definitely has its own sound. "I would describe our music as high energy, blues-based rock and roll. We are not a hard rock band. We are not a heavy metal band. We are a rock and roll band and that means blues-based with a lot of fun!"

Referring to their single "When I'm Gone" that charted in Billboard Magazine he says: "That song went through a lot of evolution. It had

different choruses and riffs. We finally found this swag, a marriage of the riffs and verses. It came together pretty quickly. I like to keep the mystic of what it's actually about to myself. I want people to listen to it and have their own connection and translation," said Marc.

"California Dreamin'" was a signature hit for the 60s band, The Mamas & The Papas. It was an anthem for people following their dreams and heading to California. However, Dirty Honey's spin is a different version. "I love the song but I wanted to put a different twist to it. People come out here and are often disappointed as they end up doing the opposite of what they intended. Our version shows the darker side to California, it's pitfalls and disappointments. The song is a completely different vibe than the original version."

When listening to Marc's lead vocals, there is a noticeable and recognizable sound familiar to fans of Axl Rose, Steven Tyler or Robert Plant. It's the nature of Marc's singing. "I don't think I sound like any specific artist in particular but they are all in the mix which has helped me to create my own sound. I think Steven Tyler has a James Brown and Janis Joplin influence in his voice. Mick Jagger sounds like a straight up Blues guy from Chicago. All the great singers are an amalgamation of who and what they love, then make it their own. That is what I hope to achieve as it takes time to find yourself and your voice."

Touring with some of the big names in rock, as mentioned at the start of this article, and being able to open shows for them is not only an exciting opportunity but also one that offers learning experiences about life and career.

"I have learned that if you want to have longevity in this business and as an artist, you really need to love what you are doing," said Marc. "That is the constant with all of these artists. They love what they do. They couldn't live without it. It's like breathing air. Whenever I see Slash playing guitar, I see the passion. I see what he loves. You can see it. You can feel it. It's self-fulfilling. I have learned that you need to have that passion or you're not going to last very long."

What can music fans expect from Dirty Honey at the House of Blues on September 16? "I want people to come away with a feeling that they saw something very special. After we played the El Rey Theatre in LA, a fan sent us a video and said, 'I feel like I just saw Guns N' Roses in their heyday.' That's the effect we want to have on people. He enjoyed the show, it triggered something positive. Plus, it's an escape from the day for a couple of hours. You can forget your problems for a while."

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