

Unedited Joe Birardi Interview

By

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Is balancing time between family and music a hard thing to do?

No not really I have a great family and a great family of close friends who were always in my corner and rooting for me ,I believe they find the progression of my music career as exciting as I do through experience I've learned navigate my time well.

How do you keep multiple bands going and why more than one?

Okay two part question

1. I keep multiple bands going by surrounding myself with competent honest people who share a similar musical vision as myself, i.e. you want to do a big show you have to do footwork for that, invest time to make each show a success. You want to make a CD so you can market your project and try to make money you have to invest money, without money there is no art!!! The people who understand that are professional and a pleasure to work with, those relationships are precious to me you don't find them often in a lifetime in any group you have givers and takers in everything, you will only find frustration and failure if there are only takers and that stands true for music too, I consider myself a giver but that's not for me to say I guess you need to ask people the around me that I believe the music business 60% business 40% music. The 60 is the work the 40 is the reward which is much more rewarding if you did the 60.
2. I guess there are more than then one project because as my old bass player Mark Shock Nisski from the Dirty Ratz " You are one proficient sob Ciid" I would write 2 to 3 songs a week by the end of the month I would have two or three really good songs so with all that music one band one project is not enough for me.

Tell me about your involvement and success with the Armed Forces?

I have tremendous respect for our Military. Liberty and Freedom and Capitalism which has made this country the greatest country in the world

and the only country that gives opportunity to the little guy. Our military is what protects those liberties and freedoms I believe too many people take that for granted. My father was a WW2 combat veteran he landed in Normandy on the fourth day which I have learned is called D-Day plus 4. And continued on through Europe fighting Nazi's for almost 4 years and ended up at Dachau Poland concentration camps at the end of the war in the signing of the Treaty of Versailles. My dad Sgt. Joseph John Birardi born in Jamesburg New Jersey went to war with 11 of his childhood friends from Jamesburg and only 3 came home. Also I have five uncles that were combat war veterans. So anytime I have an opportunity to help our military I always will. My projects I have done many shows in the past to raise money for Adopt-a-Soldier Platoon organization. I have sent guitars and amplifiers to recreation centers in Iraq for our troops. Currently all iTunes downloads of EOS music go to our troops. I am very humbled and honored by the fact but they have sent me flags that have been flown in the face of the enemy signed by the troops overseas.

Bands like Brick & Mortar or River City Extension have put a different spin on what the world thinks about New Jersey bands and music getting signed. What's your outlook on where NJ is as far as a brand for music?

I don't know who they are! I hope they are very good if they come from my state! I do know Gaslight Anthem and I think they're great! I'm always rooting for fellow New Jerseyans whether it is Frankie Edgar in UFC, Zakk Wylde going to audition for Ozzy, or Todd Frazier for the Reds, or actor Bruce Willis. in my opinion I believe Springsteen and Bon Jovi are two of the best song writers in the history of rock and roll personally I believe they are a bad representation of New Jersey when they spew their political views and pretend they're blue collar working class because we know they never swung a 28 oz framing hammer for a day. it's been my experience that the five major labels of today (meaning the people who have the ability to sign bands, market to a nation and invest a lot of money so they can make money, capitalists only when its advantageous to themselves) are musical Frankenstein's they have no clue of quality music or have any understanding of the roots of great music. I believe there more concerned with pop culture imagery, then sound, the people that hold the cards were put there for favoritism instead of merit. maybe these people are better running the fashion industry then the music industry let's face it the best song writers and the best musicians usually are not the ones that you see on TV or get regular rotation on Radio. I also believe the large majority of bands that get

signed to major label contracts are the same. Favoritism instead of merit, seems to be too many fraternity brother accountants with a 2.0 grade point average who are handed powerful music industry jobs because their family or friends of some media bigwig. I believe that is just destroying music!! As far as the music scene in New Jersey I find it very disturbing radio stations from New Jersey are so non supportive of the original music scene in their own state, they talk a good game about supporting the local acts but that's about it. Why is it to get national notoriety you have to go to California or Nashville? Maybe because those radio stations support their local music scene! if you go to Nashville or California there are constantly new acts on their major stations, and they will put them on rotation for a short time and see if they get good feedback that is what I call American opportunity naturally there are other factors but this is a big one. Here's a little food for thought. Maybe these major stations are run by the five major labels so they were only protect your investment interest by playing the bands that are on their labels oh but that can't be true because that would be a conflict of interest and something called Paola (just ask acts like Mariah Carey or Good Charlotte who get no radio airplay anymore because Sony was caught) and that's against the law! I believe also, that's called socialism/communism where favoritism supersedes credibility merit and experience. We're a small percentage of the very wealthy or "IN" crowd, control an entire industry. Kind of like Stalin in Hitler's propagandists, Vyacheslav Molotov and Joseph Goebbels who decided everything you see and hear. Those are situations that never work out well for the hard working! O shit I forgot we're talking about music right, so in ending my outlook on New Jersey is dismal as far as branding because lack of support. I believe New Jersey is filled with great, smart, diverse, strong, hard working people and I'm proud to say I'm from New Jersey! I believe there's still opportunity in music because this is still America the land of opportunity even if for liberty and opportunities are being trounced upon I believe opportunity is still here, but I believe it's within yourself to make opportunities for yourself! Most of us don't have that media bigwig handing us something we didn't earn. I believe you must seek out further than our little big state to be successful. Of course, again I'm talking about original music, songwriters, songwriting bands, producers, etc., and remember success is different for every individual success for one might be playing the local rock club on Saturday night, success for another maybe selling a million copies of their debut CD. Success of another may be singing in the church choir on Thursday in front of family and friends for another it may be teaching. Do it because it makes you smarter and makes you feel good. One of my old vocals instructors told me that over 30 years ago and I never forgot it. So whatever that success is for yourself never give up, because you are not immortal but your music may be.

What drives you to pick up a guitar and make music?

Most musicians say that they learn to play music for the chicks that's not me! when I was four or five my large Italian family would have get togethers every 2 or 3 weeks or so my uncle Arty was an expert musician, my other uncles Rudy ,Tony, Louie, Jimmie, Rocco, and Andy, they were expert drinkers , (I say that in jest with the upmost respect they were all great hard working people) midway through the get togethers, before the fist fights and the end I love you goodbyes and I'm sorry' s let's do it again in 3 weeks. Arty would play every Dean Martin Jerry Vale or Vegas crooner song that was ever recorded on his accordion he could make his accordion sounds like it was an Orchestra very impressive!

As I got a little older my Brother Jimmy bought a turntable and a set of Panasonic thrusters' speakers they sounded great! I would work with my father plumbing so I could buy albums every week, starting with the Four Seasons, Motown, Beatles, CCR, and Beach Boys progressing to Bowie, Kinks, ELO, and Led Zeppelin. As time went on I collected a massive album catalog of bands from places I've never heard of I became analytical intense listener which led me wanting to learn how to do that myself at 6th grade I took my first guitar lesson then for years and years I tried to better myself by taking countless lessons with multiple instruments teaching myself through books and studying the theory of what makes great music great, whatever the genre a great written song can transpose into many genres I love to write songs which I always write for the listeners perspective first I love to play great songs live, and I love to listen to great music gives me a sense of great accomplishment when I do something that sounds really good> Kind of like when I was a kid and I pitched a no hitter or the time I jacked a double in the gap that drove in the winning run or bringing multiple medals home from district and regional wrestling championships. I find that similar to when I learned to start shredding through the modes or learned to master blues position one lick one and then being able to apply it to a song. Coming from a blue collar working class family, I feel as we get older all we do is work, and we have no other outlet of excitement with a hands-on feel, or to be part of building something like that of our youth, so I do what I do with music, cause I get the same feeling of accomplishment that I did back then. Everything is a baseball game or wrestling match to me. because the fundamentals are the same.win or lose, how you deal with them is who you are, and that goes for life work music that's why I will play music till I die guess I'm still that little kid.

You have some pretty personal views on politics; do they come out in your music?

No, I don't believe politics belong in music! first of all most musicians who shoot off their political mouths have no clue of domestic or international problems they're just repeating what they heard from somebody else who has no clue and that goes for actors too! Secondly in my opinion music is supposed to be good uplifting and positive, or a release for those more intense listeners metal heads rule dude! I believe music is leisure time for most people, whether it is a mosh pit or a jazz club to each his own. Politics can be very frustrating and create a bad atmosphere that is counterproductive to having a good time also I believe that speaking out politically to your fan base only decrease your ability to generate income because 50% of the people are not going to agree with your politics being right or wrong. Also the artists with large fan bases that have lots of influence on their listening public there uneducated political views could be damaging to our country. I would love to see politically loud musicians in a political debate they would get their clocks cleaned. It's very easy to influence people if there is no counter point of view if u want to be a politician run for office if you want to be musician write a song. Hey maybe politicians should start writing songs. That's my opinion.

What's been your favorite gig and why?

They are all very precious to me they are all imprints in time and soundtracks to so many lives.

I cannot compare the time the Dirty Ratz shared the stage with Zebra, Skid Row or Leslie West to the time Trench played with Thin Lizzie Meatloaf or Eddie Money to the time Blondsense opened for Cheap trick Smithereens or Bret Michael the time Heat rocked with Fuel or Foreigner at stadiums to the multiple times EOS or 9th Infantry headline the Stone Pony or the benefits that raise money for Toys for Tots, cancer, and our troops they are all precious.

You have a fan base that is known to assemble time after time. without the same issues that many other groups have , as far as getting repeat business of the friends what's the secret for getting them to come out every time?

I believe there are a few things that encompass success in live shows I also know that our fan base is growing. We're beyond just our friends coming to see the live projects that I produce. The never give up, stick with it attitude it's starting to pay off. It shows in ticket sales although anyone who shows up at my shows I am grateful for and I consider them friends even if I don't personally know them.

- 1) If nobody knows there's a show no one will come. Make phone calls and follow up phone calls the people that you know make sure you give tickets in hand weeks before the show the ticket is a guaranteed marketing tool every time they open their wallets they will ask other people. Hey going to see my friend's band want to go? Its consistent reminder, Market, Market, Market Social network! Its FREE big label bands like Metallica hate the competition. Pool some money from the band mates set up a budget for whatever you can afford. everyone in the band is a business partner of each other, if someone don't have cash sweat equity is time, and time is money, there's lots of free things that can be done to get your name out there, but it takes time and work, There's nothing more disrespectful than one or two band members handling all the chores and the other two or three sitting on their ass doing nothing just reaping the benefits of whatever success might come along which usually leads to animosity and the demise of the business, I.e. the band. Remember you and your band mates are responsible for what you do, no one else is, unless you have a giant record deal with a massive marketing department behind you, or you have a viable project that can generate income and you can pay a marketing department to do for you which I believe is the blueprint for today. And always remember the venue you play for that night also is your business partner. The honest ones usually appreciate very much the fact that you were trying to bring people in and are much more willing to book you again. They have a giant financial burden every day they open their doors!! Without them you have no place to play, you're not doing them a favor unless you sell out your show; they are doing you a favor by taking a chance on you. So ask yourself are you selling out your shows? Stupid musicians consistently forget that. Don't be a stupid musician we already have too many of them! Also a great musician that is lazy is useless cut them loose your only prolonging the inevitable.

2) This is giant PLAY GREAT Songs that the audience wants to hear! You will please yourself much more by making the audience happy, the sum of parts i.e. the song, is much more important than an individual instrument. Nothing more boring than long dragged out songs where everybody solos every song trust me you're not that good! Unless your Bach Mozart or Charlie Parker whatever your playing has been done a million times before. The good news is you only have to be a GOOD musician to play a great song great or to write a great song! Billie Joe Armstrong good musician writes great songs, Pink average musician co writes great songs. Kurt Cobain bad musician wrote a couple great songs Dave Matthews Band very good musicians writes really bad songs omg what did I just say? Don't believe me? Try to listen to a complete album. Beck, bad musician band songs, I just don't get it. Oh that's right he's really good at marketing! With the help of his label he succeeded in my 60 percent 40 percent rule. Oh and few more things while I'm on a rant (1 if you push a button to make a sound you're not a musician.) (2 DJs are the enemy 3 rap and hip-hop is not music yes they may be an art form but closer to poetry than music!) Don't believe me? Ask any of the three aforementioned what the 3rd degree of the B flat major is.

3) Know your sound and lighting engineers they are alternate members of your band sometimes they can make or break you. Tread lightly with them! They get tortured by dysfunctional and unprofessional musicians every night. Try to speak with them in their downtime, let them know how you envision your sound and lights sometimes it's a good thing to give them a small tip remember they are there working. They're not there to see your band and they don't work for you they work for the venue. This doesn't pertain to you if have your own sound and lighting team. Remember you need to sound and look great if you want people to come back to the next show.

4) Overexposure will kill you. If you play every week in the same area eventually no one will come to see you. I could easily write a book on the subject on what to do for live shows. Above are a few things that go through my mind to try to make all of my live shows a success. Naturally my opinions pertain to original music projects rather than cover bands although most of my opinions probably fit them too.

When it comes to guitars, do you think just one will do?

Absolutely not I need more guitars!! I need more guitars! Oh yeah I need more keyboards too! I almost forgot I need a Manley Slam and that Waves

phase linear EQ for my Pro Tools system. Those things are fun they are the rewards for my hard work

Tell me what you have on the horizon for Joe Birardi?

Well next week the record label 2BTBmusic has been accepted to submit music to the Grammy Awards we will be submitting EOS for the new EP Florence Martus trilogy for composition and arrangement and best new artist. Heat and 9th Infantry will be submitting songs in the rock and alternative rock categories. Currently I'm in the studio working on the new Carsin project with Joe Sinopoli , Denny Carmella which we are doing remakes of Temptations, Carpenters, Badfinger type stuff. Recently I've been speaking with Russell Acarra from Edgar Cayce and Profit we're collaborating on a new project no name yet well keep you posted. Next month I will be releasing the best of Blondsense and the best of Trench CDs. Also I'm putting the final touches on the new Heat CD which I have not named yet but is a concept CD on Vampires. Anyone can check progress or upcoming shows for all the projects at 2BTBmusic.com