

Talking With The Guess Who's Garry Peterson

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Classic rock band, The Guess Who, will be performing this Sat., April 14, with Styx at The Good Life Festival at Encanterra. We got a chance to catch up with longtime band member and drummer, Garry Peterson, for a quick update on what they've been involved with since last year's show and what they have planned for this weekend's music festival.

AFM: What do you have planned for this weekend's show at Encanterra?

GP: It's not going to be the same as last year. We've done some recording since I talked to you last. We're going to play songs called "Lucille" by Little Richard and "Playing On The Radio." I'm really excited to be playing with Styx. They're a great, great, great band.

AFM: Have you played with Styx before? What do you look forward most about the opportunity?

GP: This is actually the first time we've been fortunate to play with them. Bands are sometimes quickly in and quickly out, but it will be nice to hopefully meet them and be able to tell them, speaking for myself, how much I enjoy and admire their music.

AFM: You made your way to the Valley last year. How did that gig turn out?

GP: I think it was terrific. My brother, Randy Peterson, who is also a drummer, lives at Encanterra. He has told us that the feedback from the people that live there was that we were probably the best band of the last year there.

AFM: Is there anything special about traveling and performing in Arizona?

GP: The most unique thing is that the people are from everywhere else. People tend to go there to retire and because we're a band from the late 60's and early 70's, there are a lot of people of our age retiring to a place like Arizona, and they're going to remember the band from way-back when—wherever they grew up. It's kind of nice to play there. I personally love the southwestern arts, and I have a large collection of Native crafts and southwestern jewelry. A lot of people look at the desert areas as bleak and barren but I really believe that it has its own beauty if you really look at it. My wife and I are going to stay at one of the homes at Encanterra to get a feel of what it's like there and then we're going to go over into Scottsdale. We've never seen the Grand Canyon, and I want to go to Sedona and show my wife a little bit of what a diverse place it is. It's kind of a cool place.

AFM: Are there any projects that The Guess Who has been working on in the past few years?

GP: We live in three different cities (North Carolina, just outside of Toronto, and Winnipeg) so it's a little bit difficult with our private lives and private families to get together. We've been trying to work on videos of our new songs, more or less live performances. With those projects, touring and as I said, spending time with your family and dogs at home, it takes up pretty much all of the time that we have now.

AFM: What you have planned for the future?

GP: You can preview and download our new songs online like "A Long Day," "Running Blind," "Playing On The Radio," and "Lucille." We are going to add another couple songs, record them and put out an EP. After that, we just want to record more songs. We've been very excited because we haven't recorded for a long, long, long time. We feel that we have a very great talent in the band as far as the writer is concerned and there are other guys in the band who will have an opportunity to contribute. The songs I've heard from Derek have actually got me excited about recording again. I think that's where we're going to focus our efforts. We aren't just interested in playing old songs; we want to create new music from this band. If it wasn't possible, we wouldn't be doing it. It's going to happen.

AFM: Is there anything else you'd like to tell us?

GP: I just want to say thank you to all the people that have bought our records over the years because for any kind of entertainer, success is really a partnership between the band and the people in the audience. Without the audience, there's no point in going on stage. We understand the special connection with people and it's always great to see them come out and react. We're only as good as the audience is. I heard last week that when we played, the people said, 'You know, we've seen you several times and it's hard to believe that you get better every time.'