

When they were told that they were going to co-headline a Fall tour with gritty Australian rockers Jet, you would think that the California-bred band members of Papa Roach (guitarist Jerry Horton, singer Jacoby Shaddix, bassist Tobin Esperance, and drummer Tony Palermo) would feel some apprehension. Not at all. In fact, it's not the first time the foursome has been on a bill that music fans wouldn't expect.

The band has played with everyone from monsters of mainstream rock Nickelback (on this past summer's Dark Horse tour), to alt-rockers 311, rap giant Eminem, the Vans Warped Tour, Ozzfest... the list goes on. In other words, they're no stranger to having to face a crowd that might include a naysayer or two. Although they will be closing this co-headline tour (both Jet and Papa Roach have equal stage time), each night there are bound to be some audience members who came for Jet, but stick around out of curiosity to see them. But, according to guitarist Jerry Horton, they're not too worried. Roach's stage show is so good that on prior tours, fans that entered the arena skeptics, left as new fans. It also helps that Roach's song catalog is diverse enough they can cater to different types of crowds, even if they aren't avid MTV/Fuse viewers.

Joining up with unlikely bands is just one way to garner new followers. These days, Horton finds that online social networking (band message boards, Facebook, Twitter, MySpace) has also proven to be very successful in helping to keep the band's name out there. He says that while people are isolating themselves by sitting alone in their room on the computer, they're also reaching out to thousands of other people, and there is great value and importance in that. Besides providing people with a chance to interact and meet new people, he says, it's a modern day word-of-mouth system, which is considered the most valuable promotion.

Horton himself even checks in on Roach's fan forums, especially on Paparoach.com, where he can read what fans are saying about the band's latest musical offerings, videos, and concerts. Jerry says that while he is interested in fan feedback regarding shows for example, he doesn't pay too much attention to critic reviews because they don't offer constructive criticism. He finds that Roach fans mostly voice their opinion on song choices for the set list, wanting to hear one song over another currently played. He says the band does consider their requests, but the priority is to keep a flow between fan favorites and radio hits. As for his own favorites to play these days, he's partial to the soon-to-be single "Had Enough" off of this year's "Metamorphosis" CD, and "Infest"'s "Blood Brothers" because it brings back good memories for him.

When asked if he's had any particularly bad tours, Horton said there hasn't been any. But names the worst show experience as a snowboarding festival they had to play in the Italian Alps. They flew in a small prop plane, and due to high crosswinds, they had to land practically sideways. As if the travel trauma wasn't enough, the weather was a cool -13 degrees, warm shelter was non-existent, and for all that trouble, the crowd was only 100 people! He says he can laugh now, but at the time it definitely was not funny.

With all this touring behind him, one wonders how the band keeps the fire going after 10+ years of being in the business. Horton says that the band is always coming up with ideas, and constantly listening to music for inspiration. Plus, being on these various tours, they'll pick up new ideas to incorporate into their own production, such as Motley Crue's usage of pyro effects or Red Hot Chili Peppers style of changing things up with a musical interlude.

But Papa Roach isn't just a rock band that spends their free time studying new ways to bring the ruckus. They've begun to use their position of celebrity to help the less fortunate. The band's involvement with Northern California's local Loaves and Fishes organization inspired them to get involved with the national non-profit World Hunger Year. To help the organization, which fights hunger and poverty in the U.S. and around the world, the band will soon be auctioning off special fan experiences such as meet and greets, VIP sidestage show tickets, signed merch and more to benefit WHY. They also plan on visiting local food shelters and homeless organizations as much as possible while they're on the road. Info will soon be available on the band's official site.

If you find yourself not sure what to expect of the Jet/Papa Roach pairing, neither is Jerry. But he is sure of one thing: it's going to be one "kick ass rock show."