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Interview: Comedian Jim Florentine talks Glam Metal and rock star comedy

[Jim Florentine](#) is best known for his work on Comedy Central's "Crank Yankers", his numerous appearances on the Howard Stern Show, and now as a co-host of Vh-1 Classic's "[That Metal Show](#)." As a renowned metalhead and talented stand-up comedian, it was no surprise that he was picked to perform at Metallica's first-ever Orion Music And More Festival in June (for my festival wrap-up, click [here](#)). It was there that I sat down with Jim to discuss the horrorshow that is "Rock Of Ages", the disrespect Glam Metal receives and what makes Axl Rose so special.

You recently announced via Twitter that you were on your way out to see the movie "[Rock of Ages](#)" and that you were preparing to experience complete rage. Were you able to control your temper?

No. I knew it was going to be horrendous. I watched it thinking "This is actually so bad it's funny." I said it's the worst movie I've seen in 20 years, and I don't even remember the last worst movie I saw! That's how bad it was.

Were you actually into glam metal at all back in the day?

I liked some of the hair metal. This was just made by people who don't know that music and are just making fun of it. They're basically goofing on it.

That's what it looks like judging from the trailer I saw.

Well that's what it is. It's just silliness. There was a lot more to it than that; there were great musicians, songwriters, great guitar players, drummers...all of that stuff. It seemed like they thought "Oh look, we saw an old video with a guy wearing spandex and he's got a bandana on and he's wearing makeup! Let's just be silly like that!"

It always bothered me that the genre has been reduced to the nickname "Hair Metal." Back then, I always thought of it as "Glam Metal", since the predecessors to that era were cool artists like the New York Dolls, T. Rex and David Bowie. I think it got a bit more respect than it does now.

That's the thing. It wasn't just silliness. That music has stood the test of time. Some of it got watered down at the end, but there were some really good bands that came out of it that are still around. But a thing like "Rock of Ages" doesn't really know. They're just like "Hey! Look! We watched 'Spinal Tap' so let's just dress up like that and sing silly songs and be goofballs!" It's just corny. I'm not into that corny stuff and they make it look really cheesy, and it wasn't. I mean, yeah, that was the look back then, but it changes. We're gonna look back at Grunge sometime and say "You were wearing flannels!?"

Speaking of music that stood the test of time that emerged from that era, one of the greatest interviews you've done with

That Metal Show was with [Axl Rose](#) of [Guns N' Roses](#). What do you think sets him apart from other frontmen?

Well, he's his own person and he doesn't care. He's just like "Look, this is what I like doing and too bad if you don't like it, I'm sorry.

That's just the way I am." He was great. He showed a human side and that he's got a sense of humor. I mean, you know, he's misunderstood. He's said there's a million rumors about him, but I'm not gonna go out and confront every one. There was a thing in the paper in England that he runs over to his neighbor's dogs and kills them! He's like "What am I gonna do? People think I'm this monster. I'm not." I have total respect for the guy. He does his own thing. I mean, come on, a lot of lead singers are weirdos.

So being that you're such a huge music fan, have you ever tried to play music yourself?

Yeah I tried, but I couldn't. I didn't have the talent for it or the ear for it. I went for singing lessons...I was a lefty so nobody could teach me guitar because they were all righties. I knew I wanted to get up on stage somehow, so that's when I started to get into comedy.

Is there anything about the bands you loved that provided inspiration towards your approach to your comedy career?

The reason I got into it was because of Sam Kinison and Andrew "Dice" Clay. They were like rock stars and brought a "rock star" element to stand-up. That's what really attracted me to it. I wasn't into the guys wearing a sports jacket and telling monologue jokes like David Letterman does, because that didn't appeal to me. But then when I saw Kinison come out playing with a rock band and Dice with the leather jacket, I was like "That could work!" and that's

what got me into it.

You can follow Jim on Twitter at [@MrJimFlorentine](#) and me at [@ConcertExaminer](#)! Check Jim's [official site](#) for more info and where to see him live.