



The OutWest Scout, November 2010

Interview with Rob Wolfskill of The Tumbling Tumbleweeds

'BLAZE ACROSS THE WEST' CD RELEASE CELEBRATION AND PERFORMANCE!

The Tumbling Tumbleweeds perform LIVE at OutWest on Saturday, November 13, 8:00 p.m.

This is going to be a fun and memorable night!

[The Scout Reporter Gency Brown chats with Tumbleweed Rob Wolfskill of the award winning Western music group The Tumbling Tumbleweeds. They've been nominated by the Western Music Association for two awards this year, 2010 Outstanding Entertainer-Group of the Year and their fiddler, Jean Sudbury, is nominated for Outstanding Instrumentalist - Female. We are excited for them!](#)

Scout: Rob, I know you've been very busy receiving final shipment of The Tumbling Tumbleweeds' latest CD and preparing for the upcoming CD Release Celebration at OutWest. Thanks for taking time to let us get to know the group a little better.

Rob: Thanks for asking. I thought this sounded like fun!

Scout: How did the group meet?

Rob: I met Cade and Chris doing theater in Los Angeles. I'd been wanting to put a cowboy harmony group together as a tribute to the Sons of the Pioneers for many years but finding the guys who had the range and diversity to perform these songs was tricky because I knew they had to be 'entertainers' as well as singers. I knew when I met Cade and Chris that they had what I was looking for. R.J. I met at a Starbucks in Monrovia. We were looking for a guitar player to add to the group and he was sitting there by himself playing along to my conversation with my friend. We started talking to him and he wound up making funny musical references to what my friend and I were talking about. That's when I told my friend...THAT'S HIM!

Scout: What a great story! Sounds like you guys have been having fun since the beginning. How did you decide on the title for your new CD collection?

Rob: 'Blaze Across The West' is actually a lyric from one of our original songs, the first track on the album, 'The Mighty Santa Fe.' We'd been writing songs for a couple years although most folks associated us with the classics. Not many people knew we had written originals of our own so we wanted to be sure to get them on this album. The title had to be from one of our originals and 'Blaze Across The West' seemed to have the energy we wanted to portray throughout the album. Plus, the songs are mostly about traveling Westward from Oklahoma to California...'Blaze Across The West' seemed to fit.

Scout: And energy it has! The album includes some great original material. Tell us a little about the creative process.

Rob: Our original songs are truly a collaborative effort between Cade, Chris, R.J. and myself. Usually, I come up with an idea for a song and write the lyrics and a basic idea for a melody, then I take my ideas to R.J. and we come up with chords and a skeleton for the song. At that point we'll get together with Cade and Chris and the songs really start to take shape. Cade is a master at augmenting a melody and Chris is great with coming up with gimmicky bits to make the song more colorful. Sometimes the order of all this happens slightly differently but either way, we have a great time writing together! 'Sleepin' On a Mountain' is unusual in that I had the idea for the song and came up with a basic melody but then R.J. took it and wrote completely new lyrics for it.

Scout: It's said the group is a tribute to western harmonies of vintage groups such as the Sons of the Pioneers. Are there other musical interests and influences among the members?

Rob: Absolutely! I'm a film fanatic so movie music is a big influence for me. Chris has a degree in Music and Theater so he knows the American Musical genre really well. The first thing R.J. learned to play on the guitar was the Beatles White album and he's big on classic rock and folk. Cade loves jazz. We've all been involved with vocal harmony groups while we were growing up, from choirs to barbershop, so that is our common denominator.

Scout: Makes for a fun and lively jam session. Your live act is so active and theatrical, from where does the energy originate?

Rob: I guess we all share the philosophy that when we step on stage we have a responsibility to 'entertain' with everything we've got. Something we've learned from being in the theater. For us that means bringing together as many elements as possible and since we've learned to move as well as sing, we wanted to be sure to add that to our show. The Sons of the Pioneers were actors too, like us, so bringing some schtick into the mix seemed like a no-brainer.

Scout: Well, I can assure you it makes it really fun for the audience. For those who don't know you all personally, it may come as a surprise that the members of such a tight and polished group actually reside all over Southern California. Share with those who may be considering forming a musical group the challenges your group faces living so far apart and how you manage rehearsal and creative time together.

Rob: Well, since our sound is predominantly about our vocal harmonies, Cade, Chris and I rehearse together regularly. When we have what we need 'together' then we bring in the instrumentalists and add them to the songs. We usually record R.J.'s guitar tracks to rehearse to so we can really take our time getting the vocal arrangements where we want them. The digital age has been very useful for us!

Scout: Everyone's favorite question. If you could have only five songs on your Ipod, what would they be?

Rob: Oh Geeeeeeesh! Ok, well this answer could be completely different tomorrow but today I'll say (in no particular order) 1. 'Lucky One' by Allison Kraus and Union Station 2. 'Listen to the Music' by the Doobie Brothers 3. 'Dawson' by Joyce Woodsen 4. Blue Prairie by Sons of the Pioneers 5. 'O'Bambino' by the New Christy Minstrels (Gotta have at least ONE Christmas song in there!)

Scout: Wonderful selections! And finally, Rob, as award winners and nominees, can you convey to our readers what groups like the Western Music Association (WMA) and the Academy of Western Artists (AWA) mean to you and the Western music genre in general?

Rob: The AWA and the WMA mean a lot to us! We felt totally alone doing Western music here in the metropolis of Los Angeles so finding the WMA and AWA was like finding a good stream of fresh water after trudging the desert for miles alone. They are also an important standard to strive and work toward and we are more grateful to have been recognized by each of them than we can even try to put into words! As for the genre of Western music, aside from the fact that it is just flat out "feel good music" it is also becoming increasingly more 'important' as Americans, and people everywhere, begin to search for an innocence within themselves that our modern day lifestyle of 'instant gratification' seems to constantly steer us away from. I think it reminds us of all the good things that being an American really is! I'm proud to be an American. I'm proud to be a Westerner! Aren't you?!

Scout: Rob, this has been really fun and informative! Thanks for sharing so much with your OutWest fans and we just can't wait to see and hear the whole group at the CD Release Celebration for 'Blaze Across The West' on November 13 at OutWest!