



HEY JOE!

Legendary **Aerosmith** guitarist **Joe Perry** isn't in the mood to talk all that often, so when he decides he wants to chat, we at *Rock Candy Mag* are all ears. *Andrew Daly* gets together with Perry to talk about all aspects of his amazingly long career and whether the 'Smith really are going to stop performing live when the disrupted 'Peace Out' farewell tour finally comes to an end early next year...

GROWING UP IN THE '60s in Hopedale, a small town about 30 miles southwest of Boston, the prospects for Joseph Anthony Pereira to change the face of rock music seemed pretty limited. His first love was the ocean, and he harboured dreams of becoming a marine biologist. That was easier said than done, though, given that young Joseph struggled at school and was later diagnosed with ADHD. Fortunately, though, he'd seen The Beatles on TV on *The Ed Sullivan Show* in February 1964, and was immediately drawn to improving his abilities with the guitar that he'd first started tinkering with three years earlier at just 10 years old.

In his late teens Joe, who'd stylised his surname to Perry, came across aspiring drummer and vocalist Steven Tallarico while on a family holiday up in New Hampshire. Tallarico eventually hooked up with a band Perry had formed in Boston alongside bassist Tom Hamilton called The Jam Band, and Aerosmith was eventually born in 1971 with a line-up of Tallarico (now Tyler), Perry, Hamilton, guitarist Brad Whitford, and drummer Joey Kramer.

AFTER A slow start with a 1973 debut album, 'Aerosmith', on Columbia that didn't really catch fire, the band's third album, 1975's 'Toys In The Attic', blew the roof off. Suddenly everybody was toasting Aerosmith's bluesy hard rock as America's answer to the Rolling Stones, in no small part thanks to the fact that Tyler and Perry looked like an amped-up Jagger and Richards, having seemingly taken on board the notion that everything was bigger in the States. Jagger had big lips? Tyler's were bigger. Richards could carve out bluesy rock riffs? Perry could do it, only harder and wilder. The Stones could do drugs? Aerosmith did more of them and more often. Aerosmith derived its success from an unashamed diet of excess.

Photo: Zack Whitford

Nevertheless, the music could most definitely do the talking. Aerosmith gave us classic song after classic song. Numbers such as 'Dream On', 'Walk This Way', 'Sweet Emotion', and 'Draw The Line' allowed the band to own America's airwaves in the '70s, and albums like 1976's 'Rocks' and 1977's 'Draw The Line' cemented Aerosmith's reputation as a band that could always deliver the goods, no matter how f*cked up the band members were.

That proved to be an illusion, though. As the '70s drew to a close, the drink and the drugs began to take their toll, not only on Aerosmith's music but also on inter-band relationships. While they were working on 1979's 'Night In The Ruts' album, things came to a head. Perry quit the band with the intention of starting The Joe Perry Project. By 1981, Brad Whitford had also bailed to form Whitford St. Holmes with Ted Nugent's erstwhile singer and guitarist Derek St. Holmes. With guitarists Rick Dufay and Jimmy Crespo on board, Aerosmith soldiered on with 1982's 'Rock In A Hard Place', a decent effort to keep the band's flag flying. But somehow you could hear that it wasn't the real Aerosmith.

Perry tried to drive The Joe Perry Project forward while at the same time looking to sober up. By his own admission, both were something of an uneven enterprise, so by 1984 Perry had found his way back to the Aerosmith mothership. Whitford made it home too, and after first firing a blank with 1985's 'Done With Mirrors', Aerosmith sobered up, straightened up, and flew right into the most commercially successful period of their career. Who could have imagined it?

THE 'PERMANENT Vacation' album from 1987, its follow-up 'Pump' in 1989, and 1993's 'Get A Grip' helped cement Aerosmith as rock legends, quite a feat