

FIRE TIGER

The 80s...a decade with some of the best music, movies, and TV shows. But I won't necessarily say some of the best fashion. Who still has a pair of acid washed jeans? And ladies, do you still have some leg warmers? For me, the music out of the 80s is some of the best...the hair bands, Michael Jackson, New Wave music...all left a mark, not only in the 80s, but today. And of course, MTV launched in 1981 and changed how we consumed music.

The California band Fire Tiger takes the listener back to that time with their music. Listening to their music, I could not help but reminisce about my high school and college days during the 80s. The band has released three albums and is working on a fourth. Tiffany Alkouri, the lead singer of Fire Tiger, was kind enough to do this interview via email.

Tim Board: How did the band get started?

Fire Tiger's Tiffany Alkouri: We shared a house together in the Hollywood Hills, originally with me (Tiffany Alkouri), James Ramsey, Adrian Ost on drums, Jordan Stricklen, then Chris Cuomo (not from CNN) on guitar, and Todd Rosenberg on bass. We ended up moving different places, so the only original members are me and James now. Jordan Lucas joined us on guitar a few years ago, followed by Tyler Renga on bass, and Lorenzo Meynardi on drums.

TB: How did the band decide on the name 'Fire Tiger?' What other names were considered?

TA: At the time, we were looking for a double name (one that rhymes) and liked the word 'fire.' Another name we considered was 'Dino Rhino.'

TB: In the group's bio, you state that you 'aim to capture the nostalgic musical quality attributed to the 80s and late 70s and bring it back to the mainstream.' What is about that period and sound that attracts you?

TA: To us, the 80s and 70s was the best time for music. It had timeless, complex yet universally relatable songwriting, paired with the best singers and musicians. It was also the best time for style. I don't know where to start, I could write a whole book on what I love about those decades! The 60s were great, too. My favorite, of course though, is the 80s.

TB: Do you think the 80's sound does not get enough respect?

TA: From regular folks, it does. From music industry gatekeepers whose tastes seem to differ from what listeners really want, it doesn't. People of all ages love classic rock (which was pop), all over the world. The most popular radio shows and even the biggest selling albums still are classic rock. If you go to a bar and hear a band playing covers, those songs will probably be 80s...not 90s, 2000s, 2010s, or 2020s. Although there is still hope for a roaring 20s, if a big change happens.

TB: What is the band's song writing process?

Music by Fire Tiger
"So Many Fishes"



FIRE TIGER



Photo credit: Brett Snyder

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TA: I usually start a song humming a melody with the main chorus lyric. I come up with several songs a week, and sometimes James hears one he feels sounds like a hit and we go from there. Both lyrics and melody, we write 50/50, sometimes it's more James, sometimes it's more me. We also collaborated with our friend Barry Goldberg on our last album 'All the Time' for 2 songs, 'Way to My Heart' and 'Side of You.' Our guitarist Jordan also wrote 'Getaway Song' on that album. All songs on all 3 of our albums so far are originals.

TB: Your debut album 'Energy' was released in 2014, followed by 'Suddenly Heavenly' in 2018 and 'All The Time' in 2020. How has the group grown over the three albums?

TA: Having to record and mix our songs ourselves, we've learned a lot, production-wise. But we love our albums equally, they are our children! We have basically 2 more albums already written as well. But it's a lot of time, effort, and focus to record them on our own with no budget from a label. We'll hopefully finish the 4th one later this year.

TB: I read in a 2018 LA Weekly article that you were going to try to crack the UK market stating. 'The U.K. seems to understand our music style a lot more than the industry here...I feel like the industry in the U.K. will be more open to the classic rock style that we have.' Have you been able find more success in the UK market compared to the U.S.?

TA: We love the UK and seem to have an enthusiastic response from there. We have, however, recently found more success licensing our music in the U.S. to a number of indie films and one in Mexico. We're excited about all of those!

TB: The video 'Energy' is celebrating 10 years since its release. When look you back over the last ten years, what have been some highlights for the band?

TA: When we first threw 'Energy' up on YouTube, we didn't know what to expect or how to promote ourselves. We had very few views at first, but over the years, it kept growing. And now we have thousands of positive reactions and we are very proud of that. I think the main highlight since we started has been our fanbase, which is indie-sized, but dedicated, and consistently growing. I just wish we could have a chance to be heard by more people and maybe re-release some of our best songs, which over 7 billion people have yet to hear.

TB: If you could redo the band's past 10 years, what are some things you would have done differently?

TA: We signed a major production deal in 2015 and nothing happened for 3 years. Luckily, we got our publishing back, but I would probably have fought harder to get them to finish a song with us and put something out there at that time. We never even got a chance to fail. Shelving happens a lot in the music industry. You just never think it will happen to you.

TB: As an indie band what is the most difficult part of your career?

TA: It's a challenge to compete with major corporations who have gigantic advertising budgets. They are also in charge of commercial radio programming. It didn't used to be like that. A DJ would play a record because he liked it, not because of a corporate format. In 1996, the Telecommunications Act allowed 50 media companies to merge into 6. Now everything you see and hear is controlled by 6 multimedia conglomerates. Also, social media and streaming platforms have been giving corporate sponsored content a boost, while suppressing indie content creators. So, it's not exactly an even playing field, but we do our best.

TB: What is up next for Fire Tiger?

TA: Working on a couple more music videos, then album #4, and hopefully, a tour. Please follow @Fire-TigerBand for updates.

I cannot wait to hear their fourth album and once again go "Back To The Future" of the 80s. If you are a child of the 80s or just enjoy the 80's sound, check out Fire Tiger. You can follow them on social media and find their videos on YouTube.