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Matchbox Twenty hitting new heights with latest album

The band will perform Tuesday night at the Embassy Theatre

By James Grant of The News-Sentinel
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Good things come to those who wait.

Sixteen years after releasing their debut album, the group Matchbox Twenty reached the top of the Billboard Hot 200 album chart for the first time this past September with their latest CD entitled "North." The band will appear live in concert next Tuesday at the Embassy Theatre with 2012 "American Idol" winner Phillip Phillips.

Matchbox Twenty first hit the music scene in 1996 with the release of their album "Yourself or Someone Like You," which featured such well known songs as "3 A.M.," "Real World" and "Push."

Other hits followed, including the No. 1 song "Bent," "If You're Gone," "Unwell," "Disease" and "Bright Lights."

In 2004, despite a very successful career together, Matchbox Twenty members went on hiatus to pursue solo projects.

Rob Thomas, the group's lead singer created such hits as the No. 1 smash "Smooth" (a collaboration with Santana) and "Lonely No More" and "This is How a Heart Breaks" (both from his No. 1 album "... Something to Be").

Paul Doucette, guitarist and drummer for Matchbox Twenty, also took time away from the group to write and record music for films and to create music with group he created called The Break and Repair Method.

Matchbox Twenty stayed away from recording together — except for a brief reunion in 2007 to record some new songs for their greatest hits album entitled "Exile on Mainstream" — until they reunited to record their album "North" in 2010.

Despite the long time apart and various solo projects and lineup changes, Doucette said members of Matchbox Twenty still have a close personal bond that keeps them together.

"I've known Kyle (Cook) and Rob (Thomas) for most of my adult life," Doucette said recently in a telephone interview. "There are few people musically that I trust more than those two.

"Especially Rob. I mean, Rob's an immensely great songwriter, so to be able, when you're writing something, to be able have him right there ..., it's a good thing to have in your pocket."

After not recording a full album together for 10 years and then coming back together to make "North," Doucette said the group dynamic in Matchbox Twenty changed.

"The dynamic changed a lot because the writing process changed a lot," Doucette explained.

"We were all writing together, which is something that we really never did a lot of," he said. "It took time to kind of get to learn that language of me, Kyle and Rob, sort of starting off writing songs together.

"When the three of us — Kyle, Rob and I — come up with something we really like, and then to see that through and to kind of listen to it at the end and to be able to clearly hear Kyle's influence, my influence and Rob's influence in the song and how they all work together, I like that moment. ... Finishing those particular songs is maybe a little bit more satisfying to me."

Doucette said the group put a lot of work into creating their current tour, which began in late 2012 in Australia, making sure the sound of the show as well as the song selection is something both the group and their fans will enjoy.

Fans can expect to hear all the major hits and familiar songs along with a few hidden gems the band hasn't played recently.

"There's a song on the first record called "Girl Like That" that we haven't played in many years," Doucette said of this tour. "We brought that back out when we were in Australia. ... We didn't remember how much fun it was to play.



More Information

In concert

What: Matchbox Twenty with opening act Phillip Phillips.
When: 7:30 p.m. Tuesday
Where: Embassy Theatre, 121 West Jefferson Blvd.
Cost: \$42, \$68, \$78. Tickets can be purchased at the Embassy box office, Ticketmaster outlets, www.ticketmaster.com and at 1-800-745-3000.

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An audio interview with Paul Doucette of Matchbox Twenty:



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10:15

21

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"'So Sad, So Lonely,' which is a hidden track from (the album) 'More Than You Think You Are,' is one of the most fun songs we have to play," Doucette added. "We love playing that song.

"We love playing 'Bright Lights,' too. 'Bright Lights' has become our kind of quintessential Matchbox Twenty live song."

While the group has gotten back together to record and tour, Doucette said what the group does next is not something they've discussed or planned.

"We sort of know what we're doing this year," Doucette said of the group's future. "And then we kind of really haven't sat down and figured out what we're going to do after that. But, I mean, we're always going to be doing this in some form or another."

"Not a lot of people get to do what we get to do, that's never lost on us," Doucette said, reflecting on Matchbox Twenty's career. "The fact that we've been able to do it this long. We're coming up on 20 years. ... The thought that people still care what we're doing is pretty up there."