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Stemm to play March 12 in downtown Huntington

Carolyn Harmon
reporter

CULLODEN - For those fans who want to hear a band play exclusively for them, Stemm is on their way.

"Finally we said, screw this," Stemm's lead vocalist and guitarist Joe Cafarella said. "We're going to capitalize on our fans and fan base the way we want to instead of making the industry people happy - you're never going to make them happy."

Cafarella explained that Stemm was working hard trying to follow the trend through the will of the industry, which made them unhappy as writers. He said that Stemm realized when looking back at bands, such as Pantera, Metallica, and Lamb of God, that they all stayed true to their roots, which is why they lasted so long.

"Some bands are on MTV one day and washing your car the next," Cafarella said. "That's not going to be us."

Cafarella started the band in 1998 with members that were in cover bands and were looking for a new experience musically. Finding their way took some time and by 2002/2003, they became more serious, he said. Since 2002, Stemm began working with the Ultimate Fighting Championship and Stemm's song "Face the Pain" became the theme song for the UFC.

"Back then nobody knew who the UFC was," Cafarella said. "And a few years down the road the UFC was one of the biggest sports in modern day times. We're very lucky to be involved with them."

Along with their sound, the band members have changed over the years, including original member Alex Scouten on guitar, Cafarella, Steve Crowl on bass, and Dan Nelligan on drums.

"When we emerged with the new lineup we lost a lot of fans and had to work hard to gain new fans and win the old fans back," Cafarella said. "But not a day goes by where I don't think it was the right decision and everyone over all is happy for six years strong now."

Their latest release, "Blood Scent," on their own label, Catch 22 Records, is something that the group is very proud of as it was made without pressure from the industry. Cafarella explained that the group has always been heavy metal at heart but wanted to diversify. While listening to bands like Slipknot with their subliminal messages, heavy music, and softer stuff, it was like a roller coaster of sound, he said.



"We just tried to focus on that. Let's be true to whatever we've been doing - keep it heavy - but let's push the envelope with our songwriting abilities," Cafarella said.

When writing music, the group focuses on where they came from, he explained.

Stemm is based between Niagara Falls and Buffalo.

"I respect and fear the falls," Cafarella. "I would never go down them in a barrel."

Now, armed with a national distribution deal, Stemm is stoked, but they like keeping it real.

"We're not rock stars," Cafarella said. "When we perform, we hang out in the crowd. We're a ground level type band on the same platform as the fans - no one higher, no one lower. Hope to see you there."

Stemm will play in the Monkey Bar, now called Tequila Rocks, March 12. For more information, log onto www.stemm.net.

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