



Interview with Sam Holt 2/4/2013 by Brooks Elliott

1.) How did you come up with the title for your new album?

“Southern Angels just seemed to fit as title not only because it is a name of a song but there are songs about tragedy and people I have known and lost inside those songs. It is just seemed to lend itself to some of the situations lately in my life. People can interpret it anyway they want to but I just think it was the right thing to call the album.”

2.) Talk about when you and your band went into the recording process for Southern Angels?

“We had a show booked on June 1st at Cervantes Other Side in Denver Colorado and we rented the best microphones and pre-amps we can get our hands on in Denver and mic'd everything. We tried to get good isolation and make everything sound good as it could but we also wanted to have the vibe of the band playing live together and the excitement of that aspect. We ended up just leaving everything set up in the room just as it was after playing the show. We didn't touch a thing. The next day we came back into Cervantes and started running down these songs and did like three takes of each and just picked the best take and that is what we went with. The vocals were over-dubbed but everything else was live. The next phase was I took the raw tracks down to Atlanta to mix it with my good friend Eli Akins a sound engineer that is now working with the Zac Brown Band. He got us into the Crowes Nest a recording studio owned by Zack Brown. That took about one weeks' worth of work.”

3.) Tell us about the guests that are on your album?

*“John Bell from Widespread Panic added vocals on the title track Southern Angels. We had played that live with JB at a benefit for the Michael Houser Music Fund that Michael's widow Barbetta put on August 10th of last year at the Georgia Theatre for the 10th anniversary of his passing. We then asked him if he would sing on the studio version. He came in and did vocals on the second verse and choruses. Also a friend of mine Danny Hutchens from the band Bloodkin, a very prolific song writer and performer from Athens Georgia co-wrote **Fix It Up Man**. I asked him to come in a sing on that tune. I wrote the music and he wrote the lyrics. He also came into the studio in Atlanta and put down some background vocals on other tunes and added some other stuff.”*

4.) What was it like working with them?

“I've known both of them for over ten years now and it was just really cool working with them. They are just such artists, such professionals. It comes out of them naturally and they do not have to try or work too hard at it. They each did three takes and we grabbed the best one we thought would work for us. JB was familiar with the tune so he had a plan walking into the studio however it was cool giving him a little

direction on what I wanted. Really it was like hanging out with some buds and being excited about what was happening.”

5.) Where did the songwriting inspiration come from and did any of it come by the way of Michael Houser’s death?

“For me it is just a part of the way I have come up or developed. There is definitely an inspiration from Michael in the lyrics and the guitar playing on Southern Angels. I don’t sit and consciously think of ...what would he do here? It is just part of my growing up musically and being around him later on too. It was seeping into me and my music over time just being around him for all those years. I can relate it to someone who is a huge fan of something like the blues. They sit around and play it constantly learning all the notes. Their playing goes through them and their filters and hopefully it comes out sounding unique and not just like the person or style that inspired them to start with.”

6.) How do you plan on getting this album out to the public?

“We used a digital distribution for all the digital album stuff. It is up on our website, iTunes and Rhapsody and we are also using an independent distributor called the Homegrown Music Network to get it into the independent record stores around the country. We also sell it at all of our shows.”

7.) What are your plans to support the new release?

“We have been hitting Colorado pretty hard lately. We are set to head down through the South in March before heading back up to Colorado. We will do a little run through New Mexico and Texas after that. We are going to try to go out to some markets that this band has yet to hit like the Pacific Northwest, Utah, Idaho, etc. We are going to try to tour smarter and make every gig count.”

8.) What is next for you and your band?

*“Just keep doing what we do. Keep writing and keep playing. I read a great article with the late Frank Zappa once and they asked him the question... what advice would you give a musician? He said to... **keep going and don’t ever stop.** I know that is a blanket statement but it is true. Our plans are just the same.”*

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