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Barenaked truth

Barenaked Ladies' Ed Robertson opens up about changes in the band. By **Amanda Waas**

I have to tell you that I saw you play when I was eight years old at a record store in Buffalo. It's very strange for me to hear things like that.

You signed my cassette tape if that makes it stranger for you. [Laughs] It's strange when I go to awards shows and people who are in famous rock bands come up to me and say, "Hey, you guys were the first concert I ever saw!" And I'm like, Fuck, I am old.

You're playing at Radio City. Have you ever played there before? We've played there once before. It's just one of those legendary venues that you just become so preoccupied with the place you're playing that it just adds a whole extra layer of nerves.

You can't fuck this up; it's Radio City! [Laughs] Exactly! It's such an iconic venue that it forces you to pinch yourself, and you say, "Wow, I'm playing Radio City Music Hall!"

Do you guys have any rituals that you do together before you go onstage? We make sweet, sweet love to each other every time before we go onstage. [Laughs] No, we don't do a prayer ring or hug each other or anything. We're kind of macho about hitting the stage. We hit the stage like old school hockey players used to hit the ice.

Your new album, All In Good Time, is your first without Steven Page. Was it a difficult transition to record without him after 20 years together? We thought it would be, and we did a lot of discussing about how it was



Ed Robertson second from left

going to be, and ultimately, we just needed to start doing it because as soon as we did, it was really effortless and fun and challenging in all of the right ways. We had a total blast making this record. It's the same thing when we went out to play live. We said, How are we going to do this? How are people going to receive it? And we walked out onstage and it was awesome! I think we just did a little too much dancing about architecture when all we really needed to do was go do it.

When you play live, how do you tackle doing popular duets that you did with Steven, like "If I Had a Million Dollars?" Now Kevin [Hearn] sings the lines that Steve used to sing, and it feels totally normal. It's definitely different now, but we're all really enjoying it. It's not traumatic or sad or strange.

Do you feel like you've had a rebirth with this new album? Absolutely. It's been an injection of a totally new energy. We're more engaged, more supportive of each other, and we're just enjoying it more, and I think people will feel that

at the live shows and on the record.

When you have a band that that's been together for two decades, so many people see your history as their history. Have you experienced any flak for going on without Steven? Quite the opposite, actually. Fans have come up to me and said, "Thank you so much for continuing with this." I get that people are worried that it won't be that thing that they love anymore, and honestly, it's not. It's different, definitely, but it also still has the elements that people love about the band. We're still singing all of the songs that people love, so I just feel like this is a new chapter, but it's all part of the same story. So you can see for yourselves when we're at Radio City!

When you started the band in 1988, did you think you'd ever be saying that? No, in 1988, I thought I'd be a veterinarian.

Barenaked Ladies play Radio City Music Hall Aug 13. For more information, go to radiocity.com.