Written by Walt Reis
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On Monday, September 14, John "JoJo" Hermann, heralded keyboardist for national jamband favorites Widespread Panic, will appear at Blowing Rock's Canyons to kick off a short six-city tour of his new side project Missing Cats. While the evening is sure to include the Panic standard "Tall Boy," as well as material from Hermann's previous side work, he and guitarist Sherman Ewing formed the new duo primarily as an outlet for their deep-rooted affection for raucous and rollicking boogie-woogie and funk.

Hermann has long been a fan of the eclectic mix of jazz, blues, soul and gospel engrained in the stylings of New Orleans' favorite barroom masters Professor Longhair and Dr. John. Having displayed that affection in numerous Panic tunes, he has collaborated with Ewing to incorporate a similar gumbo-flavored format on several new songs to be debuted at Canyons.

While in no hurry, Hermann explains, "It's gonna be a little while before we actually release our first album. Right now we are kind of barnstorming and woodshedding, just hitting the road and getting it together, and having a good time at it."

Lately, he's also been enjoying a good time with the Allman Brothers Band. The Canyons date comes during a month-long break in a 17-show tour co-headlined by Widespread Panic and the Allmans. In August, Hermann explained, "Yeah, it's going to be a lot of music, let me tell you. I'm very excited about it. Right in front of me, ten feet in front of me, I am sure there will be times where it'll be Derek Trucks, Jimmy Herring and Warren Haynes all standing there together playing. So I feel pretty fortunate about that."

Canyons is located in Blowing Rock at 8960 Highway 321. The September 14 Missing Cats show will start at 9:00 and it will be open to all persons 18 and over. A very limited number of $15 advance tickets are available at the venue and by phone at 828-295-7661. Should any tickets remain on the day of the show, they can be purchased at the door.

(Photo courtesy of www.pgamusic.com)

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