



Foreigner plans to make this year's 40th anniversary summer tour "a family affair" according to group founder Mick Jones -- including the other acts on the bill and the return of some prodigal sons... The group kicks things off in July with a stop at Jones Beach on Thur, July 20th with longtime pals Cheap Trick and former drummer Jason Bonham and his band. And Mick Jones tells Billboard that original Foreigner members Lou Gramm, Ian McDonald and Al Greenwood will be appearing on select dates. "They're not on the whole tour, but there will be some appearances," Jones says. "It's the right time to do this. I'm looking forward to that and we'll see how it goes, and I'm sure it'll go down well." <http://FOREIGNER.jonesbeach.com>

The reunions will certainly be a highlight during a busy anniversary year for Foreigner. The group will be touring extensively; In addition to the summer dates -- 37 dates running through Sept. 9 in Auburn, Wash.-- the group is also playing U.S. dates starting Jan. 30, with a European tour beginning May 20 in Switzerland. A two-disc, 40-track anniversary compilation with some brand new material is planned, while Jones will be publishing his memoir, *A Foreigner's Tale*, due out this spring.

"I could never have dreamed this would happen or that we would still have some kind of relevance 40 years later. It's unbelievable, really," says Jones, who formed Foreigner during

1976 in New York, releasing its first album a year later. "I think it's fitting at this point that we do this. I'm very proud of everything we've done and what we've achieved, and of how the new band [lineup] has fought back for me and for the heritage of Foreigner. It's kind of the way I always dreamed that Foreigner would appear, as a very exciting live band and everything that goes along with it. It's really been very inspiring for me."

Looking at the summer tour, Jones refers to Cheap Trick as longtime friends who date back to Foreigner's first headlining tour circa 1978. Bonham, meanwhile, played drums for Foreigner from 2004-2008. "I couldn't be a better mix for me," Jones says. "It's almost like a family tour, with some healthy competition from everybody, I'm sure. Cheap Trick's not an easy band to go on after." Jones expects some collaboration as well once the three acts are on the road together. "I'm sure everybody's gonna get on like a house on fire, so it couldn't be better as far as I'm concerned," he says.

The compilation album, meanwhile, will precede the tour, adding a new recording of "The Flame Still Burns," a song Jones wrote for the 1998 film *Still Crazy* (the group has already released a video for the song), along with "a few others in the offing, another [new] song that we're working on right now, and then all the greatest hits and more." The lavishly designed *A Foreigner's Tale*, meanwhile, will offer Jones' insider account of the band's history as well as the rest of his life and music career. "It's a personal history of mine and the evolution of the band and a lot of stories and stories and bunch of photos," he says. "It's a really beautiful presentation. It's more like a coffee table book." Don't expect a lot of tawdry backstage details, however. "It's not going to be a sensationalist book," Jones says. "There might be a few tidbits here and there, but nothing about penis size or anything like that."

As he prepares for the year, Jones does acknowledge a bit of vindication in Foreigner's longevity. The group has never been a critic's darling (quite the opposite), but it's connected with an audience, scoring 14 Top 20 Hot 100 hits -- with "I Want To Know What Love Is" hitting No. 1 in 1984 -- and six consecutive multi-platinum albums between 1977-84. "[The criticism] did affect me a little bit," Jones says. "We came out at a difficult time -- the dawn of punk and the height of disco mania, and we were just a simple, straight-ahead rock band with some cool songs. So I learned to sort of ignore that kind of wanton dismissal by the critics. I've discovered since that many of the naysayers at the time, including people like Johnny Rotten and Lester Bangs, were all Foreigner air guitar players. I'd hear things like that and get a little chuckle." Jones, who's overcome some health issues in recent years, calls looking ahead towards Foreigner's 50th anniversary "a bit of a stretch." But he still thinks there's life left in his creation. "There's a real desire to continue as long as I can -- safely," he says. "I look at it as an ongoing thing. I'm realistic; I can't do this forever. It's had a marvelous run and at some point it will be time to hang it up. But it's not what I'm thinking of right now. I'm just very excited for what's ahead this year."

