



Forty-five years after it felt like the first time for Foreigner, the veteran rock troupe is planning to tour for the very last time, with loverboy, stopping at Jones Beach on Wed, Aug 2, 2023. tix: <http://FOREIGNER.jonesbeach.com>

"It's a very difficult decision to come to," founder Mick Jones

The band, formed during 1976 by British guitarist Mick Jones, will launch its Historic Farewell Tour next July 6 in Alpharetta, Ga., with 32 U.S dates running through Sept. 3 in Holmdel, N.J. Loverboy will be opening. More legs, both domestic and overseas, are on tap through the end of 2024.

"Foreigner is a completely revitalized band with a whole new energy that has won the hearts of our fans all over the world, and I want to go out while the band is still at the top of its game," Jones, 77, tells Billboard. "I had the idea that was to become Foreigner back in 1974, and I was 30 years old at the time. By the end of our farewell tour, over 50 years will have passed, and that's a long time to be on the road."

Kelly Hansen, Foreigner's frontman since 2005, says that he and Jones had been discussing the move for a while. "It's a very difficult decision to come to," he notes, adding that maintaining the caliber of the band's performance, and his is in particular, was a driving factor in the decision to pull the plug.

"This catalog of songs, it's extremely challenging for a rock tenor vocalist like myself to sing," explains Hansen, 61. "I never would have thought in a million years I'd be singing these songs in the keys at this age, and I don't know how much longer I can do that at the level I need do. You can drop keys and do this and do that, but I'm more of an old school person. If I'm not doing it for real then I shouldn't be doing it."

"We're at an era in life where a lot of bands from the '70s are right on the ragged edge of still being able to do shows. I see other musicians sometimes that I go, 'Wow, that was disappointing,' and I don't want to be someone that other people say that about. I want to do this band the way it's supposed to be, and when it's not like that I don't want to be doing it."

Since its formation, Foreigner has released nine studio albums — five of them multi-platinum, plus the 1982 hits set Records — and sold more than 50 million records worldwide. It's also notched nine top 10 singles on the Billboard Hot 100, including rock radio staples such as "Feels Like the First Time," "Hot Blooded," "Double Vision," "Urgent" and the chart-topping power ballad "I Want to Know What Love Is." More than two dozen members have been part of the roster over the years, and members of the first two lineups made a series of guest appearances with the current lineup during 2017 and 2018.

Jones, the last original member still active with Foreigner, has become something of a special guest at the band's concerts, not attending every show due to health reasons and playing during the latter portion of the set. "Mick does all the shows he can do with us as his health allows, and we're cognizant of that," Hansen says. "I can't say that doesn't have an effect" on the farewell tour decision, "but that's also a reality of life and time, so you take what you're given and you make your decisions based on that."

Foreigner has a number of concerts scheduled this month and also in the spring, prior to the farewell tour launch — including March and April residencies at the Venetian in Las Vegas. Hansen adds that while Foreigner is calling a halt to touring it may not go away entirely. “I’m sure there might be the odd or occasional things we do,” the frontman says. “You can never say never about things. But for me this (tour) is it. It’s not like one of these, like we’ve seen, ploys to get people out to shows.”

Both Hansen and Jeff Pilson, Foreigner’s bassist since 2004, say that Foreigner — whose last studio album, *Can’t Slow Down*, came out in 2009 — may release some new music in the near future, too. “There’s a whole bunch of stuff in different stages of completion, so that’s not outside the realm of possibility,” Hansen predicts. Pilson says that Jones has been writing material with Marti Frederiksen that he expects the band to work on at some point.

“There’s probably four I’m aware of that are close, and some other snippets,” Pilson says. “Chances are there won’t be a whole new (album). I can see some new songs being added to some kind of a package or some kind of a single. I definitely see some new material coming, hopefully within the next year. We don’t need new material, but it’s always nice to have.”