

## **A STEVE DUFFY INTERVIEW**

### **5 Questions for Billy Bob Thornton and J.D. Andrew of the Boxmasters**

Since forming The Boxmasters, several long-time friends have contributed to the sound of the band, but the core of The Boxmasters has always been Andrew and Thornton. As primary songwriter, the sound of the Boxmasters has been an evolution as the duo constantly strives to find new inspiration, new sounds, and new ways of expressing what is in their hearts and on their minds. But at the core, there is a backbeat, a lyric with meaning, and music played with emotion.

**SD: Can you first tell us just how the band came together?**

JA: It wasn't something that started as intentional. We were working on Billy's fourth solo record called *Beautiful Door*, and I believe we were about done with it, but we still had a few overdubs to do. One day, he came to the studio and said, "Hey, I've seen you playing guitar. How about you learn this song, and we'll record it tonight?" I just got asked to record *Lost Highway* for a Canadian TV show. I thought it sounded pretty neat, and I was super proud that I got to record a song with Billy Bob Thornton, and it snowballed from there. Now, after 18 years together, we can't stop recording. We keep getting inspired and love touring. We are not trying to make hits. We are making songs that are meaningful to us.

**SD: How would you describe your sound?**

BBT: We're a rock and roll band that does original music. Our songs are inspired by the musicians we were influenced by in the sixties and seventies - Beatles, Beach Boys, the Animals, and the Kinks. If you're a fan of them, you should probably like us. Our lyrics are deeper than what the songs sound like in terms of music. We play sixties-influenced rock and roll and pop. For example, the song *Hanky Panky* by Tommy James and the Shondells was pretty simple. We don't write stuff like that. Our songs have pretty heavy lyrical content, but we sound like a rock and roll band. We're a loud band. We have to tell people because sometimes they assume that we're an Americana band or a country-influenced band, and we're not.

**SD: What can you tell us about your current tour, the Love and Hate Tour?**

BBT: It's very packed with very few days off. I think we're doing 55 shows in 63 days, something like that. One year, we did 67 shows in 73 days. We like to work. We like to play every night. When we come out this time, we will perform four songs off the new record *Love & Hate*. The idea behind the title *Love & Hate in Desperate Places* is that love and hate are very close in intensity. You can love as intensely as you can hate, and there's a very thin line between the two. My daughter, Bella, did the cover art for us. I wanted something abstract-looking that reflected the record, and she put this weird-looking man-beast on his knees, squeezing a heart with blood drops coming out of it. Blood drops can come out of a heart from hate or love. These are songs about the human condition, which we generally write about. Sometimes, you're desperate, but love and hate can end up in a desperate place, and that's what that title means.

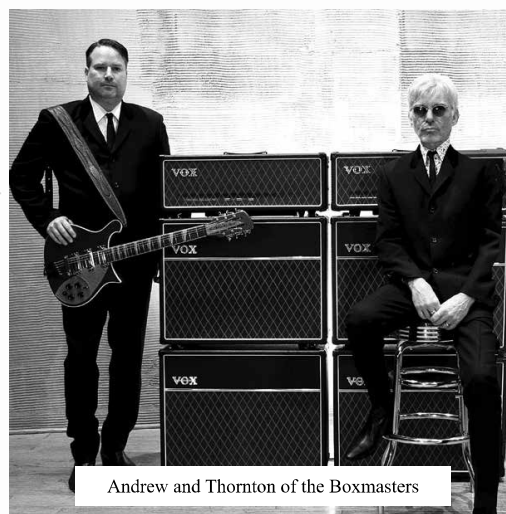
**SD: Tell us something about touring that you love and hate.**

BBT: I love the people and the energy of the crowd. I love being with the guys in the band and the crew. I love hanging out with J.D. and doing our thing. I hate being away from my family. I've got kids and a wife, and so does J.D. Oh wait, we're supposed to keep that a secret because he's the sex symbol of a band. What I hate about it is that you feel relieved that it's over, but then you don't want to stop.

JA: People always ask us, "Don't you hate the tour bus and being cramped together?" The answer is, "No, we love it." When we are on the road, Billy and I sleep on the bus, even though we have hotel rooms. The bunk is tiny, and I'm a giant fat guy, but I love it. What I hate about it is that it's hard to work on our music. The other things I hate are those we can't control - Did anybody promote the show? We are not good at using social media, which means we're not very good at promoting ourselves. And that's something you have to do.

**SD: What can fans expect when the Boxmasters roll into Boston?**

BBT: Well, first of all, they can expect that they might see us roaming around town because I love Boston and all the history and what can be expected from the show - we're a rock & roll band which plays original music. We will perform for them with everything we have. We put everything we have into it. We don't care if we're playing in a place with only 100 or 5,000 people; we play the same show. We love connecting with the audience. I played in Boston years ago, but this is the first time that the Boxmasters will perform there. We are very excited.



Andrew and Thornton of the Boxmasters

For more information about The Boxmasters, visit <https://theboxmasters.com/>, and to purchase tickets to their October 13<sup>th</sup> show at the Boston City Winery, visit <https://citywinery.com/boston>

# **Network**

## **The Stage Adaption**

Review by John Joseph Fahey

Many may remember the controversial satirical film released in 1976 titled *Network*. The story revolved around newscaster Howard Beale, perceived to be a modern-day prophet admonishing his viewers against the corporate greed of international business conglomerates with the profit margin as its only objective.

Although close to half a century since this well received Paddy Chayefsky story made an impact with moviegoers, the stage play, adapted by Lee Hall, is also positioned to make an impression - as it certainly did during press night at The Umbrella Stage Company performance on September 27<sup>th</sup> at its location in Concord.

Directed by Ashley Kelly Tata, *Network*, the stage play is true to the original motion picture's dialogue. One will not be disappointed with the stage version - it is as stirring and thought provoking today as it was during the nation's bicentennial. However, with this stage version, the audience will be treated to a first-rate production which unfolds largely in the confines of the UBS Network's struggling news division.

Protagonist Howard Beale, convincingly played by Bill Mootos, believes he has been imbued by supernatural forces to caution his viewership against the wanton ways of the world; this unorthodox approach to convey the news undeniably causes panic to the Network - that is until the effects Beale's rage results in increased viewers. Of course, this propitious situation has a negative - and lethal outcome as well.

A strong cast (including Barlow Adamson as Max Schumacher; Amy Barker as Louise; Steven Barkhimer as Hackett; Jennifer Bubriski as Sheila; and Blythe de Oliveira Foster as Diana Christensen; strong direction; good pacing; a striking set design by David Allen Prescott and Lighting & Projections Design by SeifAllah Salotto Cristobal all blend together in presenting an excellent production.

Network will be performed until November 3<sup>rd</sup>.

For further information contact the company for tickets and upcoming events at the Umbrella Arts Center, 40 Stow Street, Concord, MA, or via telephone at (978) 371-0820 or online at: [info@theumbrellaarts.org](mailto:info@theumbrellaarts.org).

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