

Platinum Blonde returns to Ribfest this Saturday

By Brock Weir

It's never a wasted day if Mark Holmes is writing.

The co-founder and current frontman of the popular, multi-platinum band Platinum Blonde can't help it. He's an artist and, in his view, that's just what artists do.

"If I am working on music, no matter what is going on in the world, no matter how many Trumps there are, I can always put a smile on my face and have a sense of accomplishment," the hitmaker tells *The Auroran*. "I think an artist that no longer creates is just an artist that is in suspended animation waiting to become irrelevant."

Holmes and Platinum Blonde are set to bring the classics and some new material to the stage this Saturday, August 25, when the band headlines Ribfest once again.

Platinum Blonde was formed in 1984 by Holmes, Joey Ciotti and Ray Bailey with a new wave sound. But, in the opinion of Holmes, Platinum Blonde was always an indie rock band at heart.

"Platinum Blonde was always an indie rock band, really," says Holmes. "When we recorded our first album, we did it independently. It just so happened we made it really big. We've always maintained that independent spirit."

That's perfect for their new music, he says, as the pendulum of popularity has swung back to indie rock.

"In late 2006 or 2007, I was doing a bunch of remixes and I noticed the new audience was really embracing that sound," he says. After a long hiatus, Platinum Blonde was back on the road in the 2010s, releasing their latest record, "Now or Never" in 2012. It was their first album of new material in almost a quarter-century.

"The climate was right," says Holmes of hitting the studio. "The [album] reflects our beginnings and also reflects a lot of what is going on right now. Art is a reflection of the current. You can talk about the future, you can talk about the past, but it is usually a reflection of current events. The most important stuff is the new stuff; it is always the most important. It is living."

Platinum Blonde headlines the Ribfest's Saturday evening. The day's musical showcase begins at 11 a.m. with Lou Moore and Friends, followed at 1.15 p.m. by the Top 20 semi-finalists in the annual Hoedown Showdown competition to find Canada's next country artist. Once the Top 10 are announced, Wendy Laurier & the Renaissance Band takes the stage before Platinum Blonde at 9 p.m.

Ribfest takes place at Machell Park. Admission is free, but age of majority will be enforced after 8 p.m.

For more information, visit www.aurora.ca/ribfest.