



Special Interview with James LeBlanc

The Yucaipa Performing Arts Center (YPAC) continues to bring recognizable and world-renowned artists to the Inland Empire. James LeBlanc, singer-songwriter of some of Country music's most famous songs, took the time to give us a special interview before his show at the YPAC Indoor Theater Feb. 8. LeBlanc has written songs on records which have sold more than **25 million copies world-wide**, and now, he is touring with The Winchesters.

What it is like to write your own songs and perform them live?

It is a privilege and a pleasure. It's not always easy puttin' yourself out there. I'm a very autobiographical writer. Somebody told me a long time ago, "Write what you know." Some of what I know is dark. It has taken a lifetime of practicing the craft of songwriting to get the right blend of craftsmanship, heart and soul. Ultimately, it's a beautiful thing to be able to write songs and perform them live.

What is it like playing with The Winchesters?

It's like playing with family because it pretty much is. My wife is in the band and is an integral part of my music life. My best friend of 38 years now is my producer and bass player. They love me for who I am -- flaws and all -- as I do, them. The audience may find it special to hear a stripped down, bare-bones telling of life as we know it. The good, the bad and the ugly. An authentic blend of country-soul and a little bit of rock-n-roll.

What are your thoughts about playing a small town where "everybody knows everybody?"

Well, that's my kind of town. I'm a small-town kinda guy, so it suits me to a tee to play for small towns. I prefer it. I'm not a complicated guy at all. My life revolves around work and family, much like rural America, and that's about it. What else is there?

Are there any frustrating aspects to the music business?

There are frustrating aspects to the music business as I'm sure there are in any business. It's easy to become bitter and resentful when the chips don't fall the way you would like them to. I've had my share of those frustrations, but I've been undergoing what I guess you could call a major attitude adjustment for the past seven years or so. These days I'm pretty grateful just to

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be alive, much less be able to continue doing what I love for a living, with the people that are nearest and dearest to me. I love my life and my work. Whether I'm singin' my own songs or someone else is, I'm just glad to still be in the game.

What is your advice to any aspiring musicians/artists?

Buckle up, and strap in for the long haul. Everything in this life involves time, energy and money. Early bird gets the worm; squeaky wheel gets the grease. I've been wakin' up every day for the past 25 years tryin' to figure out how to become a better writer, picker, singer, and overall better person.

Whether you think you can or can't, you are correct. Go out there and make your own luck. No one is waitin' to roll out the red carpet for you. You have to go out there and carve out a place for yourself. And good luck.

James LeBlanc & The Winchesters perform at YPAC's Indoor Theater on FEB 8, 8PM.

Purchase tickets at yucaipaperformingarts.org, call 909.500.7714, or visit TUES - SAT 12 - 6PM.

