

MUSIC

'Home sweet home' for John 5

Christina Fuoco-Karasinski Special to The Detroit News

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Guitarist John 5 has toured the world with Marilyn Manson, Rob Zombie, Rob Halford and Motley Crue.

For the Grosse Pointe native, born John Lowery, nothing is like “home sweet home.” John 5 returns home to play a Sunday, headlining show at Westland’s Token Lounge as part of his “Strung Out” jaunt.

“It’s very special to me,” John 5 said about hometown gigs. “I get to see friends and family. It’s just a very comforting feeling, if you will. I really enjoy it. Sometimes there’s a lot of pressure because I can’t say hi to everyone. But I really, really enjoy coming back and seeing everybody.”

The “Strung Out” run’s set list is a melange of new songs like “A Hollywood Story” and covers. His previous choices were Pantera’s “Walk” and Eurythmics’ “Sweet Dreams (Are Made of This).”

“I try to be as diverse as possible,” John 5 said. “People are enjoying the instrumental songs like ‘Strung Out,’ ‘The Ghost’ and ‘A Hollywood Story.’ Because people enjoy them, I keep doing them. I’m going to do this Motley medley at the end of the set, so people get to sing along. I’m playing a nice homage to the songs and keeping them true.”

John 5’s musical roots are in Grosse Pointe and Detroit. He picked up a guitar at age 7, absorbing his family’s love of country music and Detroit’s rich music history. Unlike some children, John 5 thrived during his guitar lessons and encourages young guitarists to do the same.

“They’re super important to do and super educational,” he said. “I took lessons for such a long time — decades, and decades, and decades. It sounds corny, but knowledge is power. What I was trying to do was get as much knowledge as possible with the guitar.”

He called his alma mater, Grosse Pointe South, a “beautiful, beautiful school.”

“I was very, very fortunate to go to that school. There was band and I always took band, music classes and theory. That was my whole life. It’s never changed. Music engulfed me my whole life.”

In October 2022, the platinum-haired, goateed axman added “Motley Crue guitarist” to his resume. He replaced founding member Mick Mars, who fell ill.

“It’s been wonderful,” he said. “I’ve known the guys for so long. It’s just like playing in a really big band with all of your friends. We laugh. We giggle. We have a blast on and off stage.

“It’s very strange, on the other hand, getting up on stage playing songs I’ve loved for most of my life. It’s a real treat to get up on stage and play these songs. The crowd now and with Motley are very accepting and they’re having a lot of fun.

His life’s musical journey is chronicled in his new song “A Hollywood Story,” sharing everything from playing guitar in his bedroom, to sold-out summer sheds, like Pine Knob Music Theater, with Rob Zombie.

“‘A Hollywood Story’ is about my career, starting with Grosse Pointe and then with everyone I’ve played with. It’s a trip back in time and to the future. I haven’t done a video like that in forever. It’s really neat.”

John 5 finds inspiration in each of his band partnerships.

“I wouldn’t do them if they weren’t inspiring,” he said. “I don’t take it for granted. Anything I’m doing I give it my all. I hopefully inspire some people along the way as

well. We need people who are going to pick up a guitar and change the world with a song. We need that so bad. Hopefully, it will happen very soon.”

John 5 w/Strutter and Turning Jane

6:30 p.m. Sunday

Token Lounge, 28949 Joy Road, Westland

Tickets start at \$28

tokenlounge.com