

'Rescue Me' actor brings band Apache Stone to Hartford

By MIKE CHAIKEN
EDITIONS EDITOR

Flip on the FX drama on cable about New York firefighters, "Rescue Me," you'll see Waterbury-native Michael Lombardi trade lines each week with actor Denis Leary.

But if you go to Black Eyed Sally's in Hartford Friday, July 24, you'll see Lombardi is more than an actor. He's a talented musician fronting the band Apache Stone, which takes the stage at the Asylum Street club.

Actors fronting bands are not an anomaly. Oftentimes, however, the actors are usually taking a busman's holiday. The music is a lark to offer them a distraction from their regular gigs on the big or little screen.

However, Lombardi, calling from New York City where Apache Stone was rehearsing, explained music was his first passion.

A drummer, Lombardi said from the age of 18 to age 20 he would travel into New York City to study the drums. "I was very serious," said Lombardi, who said he has played in a lot of bands over the years.

While Lombardi was waiting for the music gig to pay off big time, he said he began to take acting classes. That's where he discovered he had a passion for



Apache Stone, featuring Connecticut native Michael Lombardi.

acting as well as music.

Soon, the acting gig, however, began generating more paying gigs. So, he decided to follow that path. But, music was always on Lombardi mind.

When he was cast on the series "Rescue Me," Lombardi said he found himself in a little family that showed support for his off-the-set endeavors. They would come to his performances with Apache Stone (which also includes Hank Woods, guitar; David Leatherwood, bass and

background vocals; Mark Greenberg, drums, and Nick Bacon, guitar). Soon, Lombardi found the creators had written a band into the storyline of his character on FX. And Apache Stone's music was included on the series soundtrack.

"I couldn't be more thrilled to reach so many people (with my music, thanks to the show)," said Lombardi.

Lombardi grew up in Waterbury with his family. The family stayed in the

city until he was in seventh grade. But a break-in at the house led his father to retreat to Litchfield County.

That move to Litchfield County made a difference in the young Lombardi's life.

"It opened my eyes to the arts," Lombardi said.

Where he lived, Lombardi said he had access to lots of actors and musicians. The parents of his friends were directors

and actors. He found himself going into New York City to see plays and performances that he might not been exposed to if he stayed in the family's old life.

When Apache Stone plays Hartford's Black Eyed Sally's, the band will be promoting its debut, self-titled album.

When the band went into the studio to record the album, Lombardi knew there would be a huge stigma around the band because he was better known as an actor.

So, when he went into the studio with the rest of the band, Lombardi said he knew he wanted to create a piece of art that stood on its own, without the benefit of his TV credentials. He wanted to create music with an organic rock and roll vibe. "We didn't want to create cookie-cutter music."

The album definitely has a 1990s-hard rock feel that harkens back to groups like Soundgarden, Audioslave, and Staind. If you're a fan of bands like Daughtry, Hinder, or Saving Abel, Apache Stone deserves a slot on your Mp3 player.

The 1990s style of hard rock, Lombardi said, has "always inspired me, moti-

vated me, got me jazzed up." But he said he didn't want Apache Stone to sound like just an homage to that era. He wanted the sound to have an edgy, modern rock feel with a touch of classic rock.

"I'm pretty happy with how things came out," said Lombardi.

Live, Lombardi said that it doesn't matter whether Apache Stone plays to 2 people or 3,000, fans can expect a "heartfelt performance... You'll feel the vibe of the band." He also said people will be touched by his lyrics.

"We have a blast (playing live)," Lombardi said.

Lombardi returned to Connecticut with Apache Stone a couple of months where he played Foxwoods. Now, he will be playing Hartford.

"It's so cool," said Lombardi about playing with Apache Stone in his home state of Connecticut. He said it's especially cool to play in places he went to when he was younger.

"It's been amazing," said Lombardi of performing in Connecticut. "I love coming back."

For more information, go to www.myspace.com/apachestonemusic or BlackEyedSallys.com.

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