

The Health & Happiness Show Tonic The bio as told by James Mastro:

Health & Happiness started with me and Vinny sitting around his kitchen singing Hank Williams' songs and drinking beer. We'd both been in bands that over the course of years had record deals, were close to getting record deals, or one showcase away from getting a record deal. Needless to say, our view of the music biz was a bit sour. These "kitchen-table hootenannies" kind of reintroduced me to what playing music was supposed to be about.

Started getting together with other friends around their kitchen tables, and realized if I pushed all the tables together, had the makings of a band-a-band that wanted to play just to play-not to get a record deal. We booked a show (2 years ago), had a good time, and booked another.

Tony Shanahan joined the band when his best friend, Graham Maby, recommended he fill his spot while away touring.

Tony in turn suggested to his friend Kerry Tolhurst (multi-instrumentalist) to sit in with Health & Happiness at a show at Paddy Reilly's. Kerry, never hearing the songs before, played them better than the rest of the band. I asked him if he'd like to play with us again. He did - and does.

Todd Reynolds was friends with original H & H fiddler, Sean Grissom, and had joined the H & H show onstage a few times. When it became known Todd had a car, I asked him to join.

There were no auditions, ads in papers...everyone just kind of gravitated toward each other- for the music, and the idea of playing for the fu&k of it.

There's nothing like endless sucking up to the music biz corporate mothership to take the joy out of playing music. Endless showcasing, the dangled carrot of "liked the tape when are you playing out?" "It's good I'd like to hear more" or just simply "interesting".

Jim Mastro found himself in this situation in the late 80's. He was close so close..he had a developement deal..a publishing contract...a Best Unsigned band award from Musician and East Coast Rocker Battle of the Bands but he didn't have that deal. What he did have was hundreds of showcases at CBGB's ...in discust he broke up the band (Strange Cave) and focused on production. When he would reenter the arena in the 90's it was strictly for fun.

HISTORY

James Mastro - 17-19 years old, Bongos - 2 records for RCA, Strange Cave - RCA demo deal, produced lots of local bands, Health & Happiness Show.
Tony S - Johu Cale, Hearts & Minds, Slaves of New Brunswick

Vinny D - original Feelies drummer, Richard Hell
Kerryn - Australian band The Dingoes, wrote hits for Pat Benatar & Little
River Band
Todd - plays violin with Steve Reisch

SONGS

The Ghost of Love- About the Hopi Indians, how their land is being taken
from them to generate electric power for Los Angeles Woman of Gold- To
me, the line "stories, like blankets, for warmth," sums up songs on this
record. Some stories true, some possibly true, some hoping to come true.
The Man Who Married the Moon Title taken from an old Indian story (the
song has nothing to do with that fable.) About wanting what is always just
out of reach.

TONIC

Health & Happiness got its name from the old Hank Williams' radio show,
that was sponsored by Hadacol, a magic elixir that was 1/2 alcohol, and
quite popular in the dry counties down South. Our early get togethers, beer
and music, was our elixir, our Tonic. That's what these songs are to me -
tonic. We've played with everyone from Kirsty MacColl to Marty Balin, Bare
Naked Ladies, and somehow fit in with all those audiences.
