

Former local Eagle left out of reunion concerts

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Staff Reporter

STUDIO CITY, Calif. — Die-hard Eagles fans who see the band perform this week in Denver will notice that this summer's reunion is missing one of its voices — Randy Meisner.

Meisner, a Scottsbluff native, was not invited to tour with the country rock band he helped found in 1970.



**RANDY
MEISNER**

"I don't know what's going on, to be truthful. I don't know much more than you do," Meisner said in a phone interview from his home in Studio City, Calif.

"I thought it would have been fun to get back together and

have everybody play again, but apparently they didn't want me there," he said.

Meisner's trademark high voice and bass playing appeared on six of the Eagle's seven original albums and was best heard in his hit "Take It To The Limit."

"I thought once the tour started I could

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ignore the whole thing," he said. "But they make it sound like I wasn't even in the band.

"You'd think that you would be mentioned if you helped with six of the albums, but they act as though I never even played with them. It's hard to take."

The 45-city reunion tour will stop for three concerts at the Fiddler's Green Amphitheatre in Denver tonight through Thursday.

The tour only features two of the four founding band members — Glenn Frey and Don Henley. Bernie Leadon, the band's original acoustic guitarist, was also left out.

Other reunion members include Don

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Felder, who joined as an additional guitarist in 1974; Joe Walsh, who replaced Leadon in 1975; and Timothy B. Schmidt, who replaced Meisner when he left the band in 1977 for a solo career.

EAGLES HISTORY

1971 — Meisner leaves Rick Nelson's Stone Canyon Band to join Glenn Frey and Don Henley in Linda Ronstadt's back-up band.

1971 — Meisner, Frey, Henley and Bernie Leadon of The Flying Burrito Brothers band form the Eagles.

1972 — Debut album, "Eagles," produced by Rolling Stones producer Glyn Johns in London, is released and includes the songs "Take It Easy," "Witchy Woman," and "Peaceful, Easy Feeling."

1973 — "Desperado" is released and includes "Tequila Sunrise," "Outlaw Man" and the title hit.

1974 — "On The Border" is released and includes "Already Gone," "James Dean" and their first million-selling single and No. 1 hit, "The Best of My Love."

Don Felder joins as additional guitarist.

1975 — "One of These Nights" is released, tops the charts and includes the Grammy-award winning "Lyin' Eyes," Meisner's "Take It To The Limit" and the No. 1 title hit.

Bernie Leadon leaves the group.

1976 — "Their Greatest Hits 1971-1975" tops the charts.

Joe Walsh replaces Leadon at guitar.

1977 — "Hotel California" is released, tops the charts and includes the million-selling single and No. 1 hit "New Kid In Town," "Life In The Fast Lane" and the title hit.

Randy Meisner leaves the group for a solo career.

1978 — The album "Hotel California" and the single "New Kid In Town" both win Grammy awards.

The million-selling soundtrack to the film "FM" features tracks from the Eagles, and by Walsh and Meisner as solo acts.

Timothy B. Schmidt replaces Meisner on bass.

1979 — "The Long Run" is released, tops the charts and includes the Grammy-award-winning, million-selling single and No. 1 "Heartache Tonight," "I Can't Tell You Why," and the title hit.

1980 — The "Eagles Live" double album is released and includes the single "Seven Bridges Road."

1981 — The Eagles break up.

Meisner said the reason for his and Leadon's early departures were because once the band became successful, Henley and Frey didn't allow anyone else in on the songwriting or singing.

"Don and Glenn were a team, and they didn't want others in on that," he said. "I just wanted to be able to do more singing and some of my own stuff."

"I just didn't feel like a part of the group anymore. I felt like I was hired. I was getting pushed around, and I wasn't going to take it."

"I haven't had much contact with them since leaving," he said. "I think they were kind of upset."

Roger Frank of Scottsbluff, a friend of Meisner, toured briefly with the group for the "Hotel California" album and said he doesn't blame Meisner for leaving when he did.

"I didn't take long for me to figure what Randy was putting up with," he said. "Because Don and Glenn's mission is more ego and money than what Randy is in it for."

"Where those guys liked the showiness of it all and wanted to be out there in the limelight with the groupies, Randy always wanted to go back to his room, write some more songs or play his guitar."

Since leaving the Eagles, Meisner has released three solo albums, has reunited with Poco for an album and tour and worked with Richard Marx. He is performing with the group Meisner, Rich & Swan.

Meisner and Leadon have made some efforts to find out why they weren't told about the Eagles reunion.

Leadon tried to contact Frey by mail but got no reply, while Meisner called the band's manager, Irving Azoff of Giant Records.

"We talked for a little bit and he asked how I was doing," Meisner said. "But as soon as I brought up the reunion he put me on hold."

"He came back on, and all he said was that he'd say hi to everyone for me and hung up."

Azoff was not available for comment, but the tour's publicist Larry Solters did provide some explanation for why Meisner and Leadon were not invited.

"The most natural progression for the group is to have all the members who were there when the group ended," Solters said. The Eagles disbanded in 1981.

Solters denies that some promoters, including Fey Concerts of Denver, have billed the tour as the reunion of the original members.

"It's not the 'history of the Eagles' tour, it's just the Eagles," he said. "It's not the former members, it's who the Eagles are now."

Solters explained that logistically it would be hard to have all the members who have been part of the group on the stage at one time.

Meisner said if invited, he wouldn't want to be on stage for the songs he had nothing to do with, including the Henley or

Frey solo hits.

"I'm sure the concerts will be great," he said. "And if they invite me to play on a few songs, I'd be more than happy to."

"But for now, I guess I can just sit at home and collect royalties instead of working my butt off for

six months," Meisner joked.

The tour is expected to make \$25 million per member, of which Meisner will get a share. Tickets have been priced up to \$115, with the Denver prices set at \$43 for general admission and \$73 for reserved seats.

Also, the reunited members have completed an album expected to make millions more, but its release is pending on solo contract disputes involving Henley and Frey and their former record companies.