

# Matt Aakre To Play Friday Evening

Matt Aakre is an American singer-songwriter best known for his time as lead singer and guitar player for the country-rock group 32 Below.

He will be hitting the Potato Days stage on Friday evening, August 24, at 8:00 p.m.

Aakre, a small town Minnesota native, is currently writing and performing solo shows across the country. His energetic live shows are infused with intensity and laidback, middle-of-nowhere beats creating a very personal, yet high-energy experience for fans.

While Aakre's vocals cross most genres, his home is a rock infused classic country sound. Just like in one of his hit singles, "Kickin' Back," Aakre has created a unique experience that is still relatable to fans with his guy-next-door persona, but it's strictly passion and talent pouring through his vocals and guitar.



In 2001, Aakre officially started his music career when he and three friends, Nathan Stang, Jeb Reinhillier, and Derek Lien, created the band 32 Below. Together, they released their first self-titled album, "32 Below" and finalized the group by adding band member Ty Taylor in 2003.

The beginning years of 32 Below were spent playing gigs in and around the Fargo, ND area, building up a fan base, working on new music and developing their sound. In 2004, Aakre and 32 Below released their second album, "Don't Look Back," a product of five friends hanging out in a low rent apartment, writing and feeling inspired by possibility.

"There was no conversation about what this album needed to be," said Aakre. "It just happened and sounded like us."

After being prompted by its success and fellow musicians, Montgomery Gentry, along with Sony Label, the band decided to make the move to Nashville.

While in Nashville, Aakre and 32 Below often performed as the house band at the iconic Wild Horse Saloon, where they expanded their fan base and focused on writing new music. His move to Nashville created the opportunity to perform all over the United States, Canada, Mexico, US Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico.

Aakre became the group's breakout lead singer and guitarist who put the band on the map with his undeniable vocals that



delivered poetic lyrics perfectly capturing life in a small town, and those unforgettable coming-of-age-moments experienced through the rollercoaster of life.

2006 was a pivotal year for 32 Below as they released their third album, "This One's For The Fans (Live)."

"Our live album was recorded during a summer on the road," said Aakre. "We wanted to capture the energy we felt each night stepping on stage in front of such dynamic fans and share that with the world."

Aakre and the band began

working with Broken Bow Records, where they recorded tracks with Luke Wooten, a Nashville producer known for his production on CMA winner and Grammy-nominated country artist, Dierks Bentley. During that same time, they recorded songs for the release of Aakre and 32 Below's fourth album, "Stopping the Machine." Released in 2008, "Stopping the Machine" pushed the boundaries and allowed Aakre and the band to showcase more of their rock sound.

During the recording of "Stopping the Machine," Aakre

and fellow band members of 32 Below moved back to the Fargo, ND area, where they first began their journey as a group, to focus on their families and continue their love for making and performing music.

In 2012, 32 Below, along with Aakre, released their fifth album, "All Night Long," while continuing to perform all across the Midwest. It was then when Aakre decided to take a hiatus from performing to focus on family.

Now, revitalized after a three-year break from music, Aakre's solo shows are bringing a new energy to the Fargo, ND area where old fans still feel at home. In between his acoustic shows and writing new music, Aakre has performed for sell-out crowds with former members of 32 Below under the cover Matt Aakre and the Dirty Little Secret.

Aakre's unique sound brings elements of modern country, bluegrass and rock yet staying true to old school, classic country vocals. Growing up, he was inspired early by Garth Brooks – even smashing his first and only guitar at age nine after watching "This is Garth Brooks" on television. His musical influences then moved quickly to Angus Young of AC/DC and Stevie Ray Vaughan.

He continues to reinvent his sound by challenging himself both musically and stylistically which shows true by his broad fan base.

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