

# GACTV

## Exile Out of Exile



Exile photo courtesy of Morris Public Relations.

Nov. 3, 2008 — No matter how much things change, they still remain the same. That old adage is playing out once more with the return of Exile, which has reassembled the most successful lineup in the group's career some 23 years after they last played together.

The band had notched a No. 1 pop single in 1978 with "Kiss You All Over," and when Exile shifted into country music 25 years ago, the group caught some flak for injecting a rock attitude into country music. Despite the criticisms, they won over plenty of fans, running up 10 No. 1 country singles, including "I Can't Get Close Enough," "Crazy For Your Love" and "She's A Miracle."

The group's peak commercial lineup — guitarists J.P. Pennington and Les Taylor, bass player Sonny Lemaire, drummer Steve Goetzman and keyboard player Marlon Hargis — have several dates on the books this week, and they come back at a time when there's still some criticism out there for rock and pop sounds in country, though it hasn't hurt such acts as Rascal Flatts, Big & Rich and Taylor Swift. One thing that is different than it was in the mid-1980s is the tone of the messages in country music. "Lyrically, things have changed quite a bit," J.P. told *The Tennessean*. "I think lyrics are more serious and more life-oriented now. It seems singers are more careful about what they say... and maybe artists are more careful because their plans are longer-range. I think people look at [writing] like a building block in a career as opposed to, 'We need a hit now.'"

J.P. and Sonny wrote most of the band's hits, and Sonny's continued to have success as a songwriter even after he left the band. He's authored Clay Walker's "Fall," Andy Griggs' "She Thinks She Needs Me" and Diamond Rio's "Beautiful Mess."

Exile has a Nashville homecoming concert on Wednesday at 3rd & Lindsley. Tuesday they play the Grand Ole Opry, along with Keith Anderson, Bill Anderson and Little Jimmy Dickens.