

# ROCKIN' ON HEAVEN'S DOOR

AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH JACK OSBOURNE PRODUCER OF GOD BLESS OZZY OSBOURNE

BY STEPHEN SPAZ SCHNEE



## Ozzy Osbourne GOD BLESS OZZY OSBOURNE

Blu-ray™...#801213339792  
DVD.....#801213037896

Available: November 15, 2011

Running Time: 135 mins approx

© 2011 Jack Osbourne, Inc. exclusively licensed to Eagle Rock Entertainment Ltd. All Rights Reserved. An Eagle Rock Release. Eagle Voice is a division of Eagle Rock Entertainment Ltd.

Over the years, Ozzy Osbourne has been called many things: a Heavy Metal pioneer, a Rock 'n' Roll wildman, an icon, a reality TV star, a television pitchman, an inspiration and a survivor. He's also been called things that are far too risqué to print! Through it all, he has remained as relevant as ever. From the pre-teen to the octogenarian, Ozzy Osbourne has managed to become a name that every generation seems to be familiar with, even if they've never heard a note of his groundbreaking work with Black Sabbath or his solo output. Not bad for a working class kid from Birmingham, England!

But do we know the real Ozzy Osbourne? Is he the dove-chomping Rock maniac that we've read about all of these years or is he the bumbling yet lovable dad from the reality series *The Osbournes*? Is there a chance that he could be both of these things... and more? Even with all the information we receive on a daily basis via the internet, could there be another side of Ozzy that we don't know?

Three years ago, Ozzy's son Jack decided that it was time to introduce the real Ozzy Osbourne to the world. With directors Mike Piscitelli and Mike Fleiss on board, he set about creating *God Bless Ozzy Osbourne*, a documentary told from the point of view of Ozzy's family and friends. And what we learn in this stunning film is that what we already know about Ozzy

only touches the surface of this complicated yet simple man who changed the course of Rock music.

Beginning with his humble upbringings in Birmingham as John Osbourne, *God Bless Ozzy Osbourne* focuses on his rise to stardom with Black Sabbath, his temporary fall from the top of the Rock heap and his rebirth in the '80s as one of the most successful solo rockers in the world. The film digs deeper than the headlines and concentrates on the effects that success had on him and those that were closest to him: his family. While we are treated to interviews with a variety of famous people (Tommy Lee, Henry Rollins, members of Black Sabbath and Sir Paul McCartney), we learn of a different side of Ozzy through comments from his siblings and children from his first marriage. And for the first time, we get a chance to look beyond Ozzy and see John, a man who still struggles with his immense fame and fortune.

After viewing *God Bless Ozzy Osbourne* a few times, Stephen Spaz Schnee was able to have a chat with producer Jack Osbourne, who discussed the origins of the film about his father and so much more...

**SPAZ:** *God Bless Ozzy Osbourne* is just about ready to drop on DVD. How are you feeling about the project and the reaction you've received so far?  
**JACK OSBOURNE:** It's a bit of a double-edged sword. We worked on the film for so long... three and a half years... and in a weird way, I'm glad it's over. It was a constant uphill struggle with getting it made. The edit wasn't right, this didn't work, that didn't work... it wasn't an easy film to finish. In a way, I'm glad when this DVD comes out, the ship will officially set sail. The response was definitely not what I expected. It was way more positive than I would ever have imagined. There's always the naysayers out there and I thought we were going to get slightly slammed, but apart from one or two reviews, everyone loved it.

**SPAZ:** Was the film your idea or did someone approach you about doing it?  
**JACK:** It came from a conversation I had in London with a colleague of mine. I was saying how I was getting really tired of doing on-camera stuff

and I really wanted to get more into producing and directing. And he said "Why don't you do a documentary about your dad?" And my response was "Oh, yeah, 'cause nobody's heard that story before!" (laughs) And then I thought, actually, that no one's ever heard it from our perspective. Everything that's been done has been about his career and not so much about his life. So, that's what I thought I'd set out to do.

**SPAZ:** How much convincing did it take to get Ozzy on board with the film? I'm sure he has probably had enough of cameras following him around...

**JACK:** Verbally, he was totally on board. He was totally cool and had no problem with it. But then physically, getting to get used to it took awhile. Mike Piscitelli, one of the directors, who was kind of attached to my dad for the most part, he did really an amazing job. He became friends with my dad. My dad and he had this relationship where my dad was really open with him, but that took a long time to happen. If we would have only spent four months shooting this film, my dad wouldn't have opened up as much. Considering we had no time constraints on it, it worked out for the best.

**SPAZ:** Was it difficult to decide what went into the film and what didn't? Did you leave that up to the directors or were there moments that you felt were too personal to remain in the film?

**JACK:** It was really tough. The film focuses on the late '60s to the mid '80s; that's the main focus on it. As far as the storytelling goes, we kept it at a time where people don't really know that much. If we went into the '90s and '00s, we'd get into Ozzfest and The Osbournes... and people kind of know that story. I just thought we'd be repeating the same story. I wanted to focus on the lesser known story.

**SPAZ:** To be honest, I would have loved for the film to be twice, maybe three times longer than it actually is...

**JACK:** It's something that we really struggled with. The original cut of this film is two and a half hours.

**SPAZ:** Wow! Any chance of a director's cut edition in the future?

**JACK:** I think so. There's a definite possibility... maybe even a Part 2. We left out so much.

**SPAZ:** The public has differing opinions, misconceptions and views on Ozzy; there's the Heavy Metal groundbreaker, the Wild Man of '80s Rock, the reality TV star, and some that aren't so flattering. *God Bless Ozzy Osbourne* manages to address all these opinions and present him as a grounded, normal human being without taking away any of the magic or mystery. Was this your goal in making the film?

**JACK:** Kind of. We wanted people to see Ozzy and to see John. John's the guy who, when he's not on stage, he's the guy who sat at home painting. Ozzy's the guy who gets crazy when he has to. I think that's one of the more unique characteristics of my dad: he's essentially two people! (laughs)

**SPAZ:** The death of Randy Rhodes is such an emotional part of the film and is felt in practically every frame afterwards. Was it difficult to deal with such a sensitive issue?

**JACK:** It was. My one regret with the film is that we didn't have my dad talking present day about Randy's death. We used archival footage of him talking about it. We added it in the DVD extras of my dad kind of talking

## Interview EXCLUSIVE

about the whole experience, but in a way, I wanted my dad to still have something to a degree. He's given up so much doing the reality show and living his life in the limelight. And I thought, it's OK to not give everyone everything all the time.

**SPAZ:** In the film, you get a sense that Ozzy is humble and still trying to make sense of his fame, wealth and ongoing popularity. Would you say that this still the case?

**JACK:** Absolutely. He comes from a working class background and mentality. In England, success is encouraged and yet frowned upon. It's so strange in England the way everyone is brought up. Everyone's encouraged to go out there and do big things, but when you do big things, everyone turns around and says "Why have you done big things?" It's weird. My dad struggles with the fact that people admire, love and respect him... As he says in the film, he hates it when people come up to him and ask him for his autograph, but he hates when people don't come up to him and ask him for his autograph.



**SPAZ:** On the bonus features, there's one segment where Ozzy starts getting frustrated and angry with director Mike's questions. Were there a lot more of these moments, or was Ozzy fairly patient and accommodating through the whole filming process?

**JACK:** That was a rare time. My dad and Mike have a great deal of respect for each other. My dad is not one of those guys that just blows up out of nowhere; you can feel it coming. And Mike was always very cognizant of that. In the same respect, my dad never really wanted to hurt Mike's feelings. My dad has the ability to go absolutely apeshit and he didn't. Out of respect, they never cared to push each other to a point where it got ugly.

**SPAZ:** It's nice to see Sir Paul interviewed in the film since The Beatles were the band that inspired Ozzy to become a musician in the first place. Was it difficult to pin him down to do the interview or have they been friends for awhile?

**JACK:** They haven't been friends for a very long time... I guess for about 10 years. We asked him through a mutual friend and he agreed, so we were very lucky to have him on board.

**SPAZ:** What would you like the viewer to walk away with after watching the film?

**JACK:** I want the viewer to walk away with a more comprehensive understanding of

who Ozzy is. To understand the father that he is... the musician... the artist.

**SPAZ:** What's next for Jack Osbourne?

**JACK:** I have my production company now and I'm working on developing some reality shows. Hopefully, we're going to be doing the Black Sabbath horror movie. There's a bunch of things brewing...

**SPAZ:** What do you currently have spinning in your CD and DVD players?

**JACK:** I just got the *Lord Of The Rings* Blu-Rays and I've been listening to the new *My Morning Jacket* album quite a bit.

THANKS TO JACK OSBOURNE  
SPECIAL THANKS TO LAUREN WATT, MARY FLYNN, FRED KELLY AND ROBERT GILL