



THE SOUL OF SAMMY

Sammy Hagar is on top of the world — even without Van Halen

By ELIZABETH G. HOWARD
Free-lance Writer

It has been nearly a year since Sammy Hagar and Van Halen parted ways. But the Red Rocker still has plenty to say about it.

"I still don't know what happened exactly. (Ray Danniels) came in as manager and it just got so corrupt. They pushed me out. They made decisions without me. They got real greedy; it was ridiculous. The last thing they needed was money.

"And they went behind my back while I was at home changing my new baby's diapers and got (David Lee) Roth in the studio.

"If our story were a movie, that was one of the greatest movies I have ever seen, but the ending was horrible. I love those guys. I loved everything we did, but that last year was miserable."

Hagar chuckles at this, but you only have to hear "Little White Lies," the first cut off of the newly released "Marching to Mars" (Track Factory/MCA Records) to understand his passion about the breakup. His first post-Van Halen solo work will also teach Hagar and Van Halen fans alike about how 11 years can change a man and his music.

"One of the coolest things was that (creating the record) wasn't real intentional. I didn't go into it thinking I'd do something, I just did it without thinking."

Without thinking, Hagar, who headlines

today's RockFest '97 at the Liberty Memorial, has created a compilation of new songs that will surprise anyone familiar with his music. The singer's unmistakable howl is still at the heart of the music, but a softer, more gentle quality is also present.

"I am so proud of ("Marching to Mars")

If someone wants to know who Sammy Hagar is — who he is today — there it is. If they want to know how I feel about my newborn baby, about leaving Van Halen, there it is.

After facing off with Howard Stern and old pal David Letterman this past week, Hagar kicked off a four-city, radio station sponsored tour. His next stop is the House of Blues in Chicago. He will hit the road officially June 18.

As for his stage show, Hagar says fans can expect something a bit different from what they got with Van Halen, but they won't be disappointed.

"This show ... is not built around individual solos or musical acrobat-

ics. It is built around heart and soul and is about having a party on stage, one that goes everywhere.

"It's about forgetting your troubles, the problems you are having in life. When I come on stage, we get the big eraser out and we start feeling things.

"We will make you laugh, cry, jump up and down, and we'll make you think. I can do all that, because that is what I am about."

The RockFest roll call

Here's the performance schedule for RockFest '97 today at Liberty Memorial Park, Pershing Road and Main Street.

- 10 a.m.: Gates open
- 11 a.m.: Skunk Anansie
- Noon: Outhouse
- 1 p.m.: Stir
- 2:10 p.m.: Rollins Band
- 3:20 p.m.: Local H
- 5:15 p.m.: Sammy Hagar

Tickets cost \$15 at Texaco Starmarts, or at the gate. RockFest '97 is sponsored by KQRC-FM.

"If our story were a movie, that was one of the greatest movies I have ever seen, but the ending was horrible." — **Sammy Hagar** on the breakup of Van Halen