

[THE PSYCHEDELIC FURS, "LOVE MY WAY"]

THE PSYCHEDELIC FURS: (SINGING) There's an army on the dance floor

NINA MOINI: If you've spent much time on a dance floor in Minneapolis over the past couple decades, chances are you've heard about the weekly dance night known as Transmission. Through its blend of new wave, indie rock, and alternative classics, it's built a loyal following across generations. And this year marks 25 years of Transmission, which takes place every Wednesday night at the Uptown VFW. They're celebrating with a big party this Saturday night at First Avenue.

The DJ who started it all is Jake Rudh. He hosts a show on The Current with the same name *Transmission*. Thank you very much for being with us today, Jake. Congratulations on 25 years.

JAKE RUDH: Thank you so much for having me, Nina. It's an honor to be here.

NINA MOINI: It's an honor to talk with you again. Take us back to the beginning, if you would, 25 years. What was the dancing scene like back then in Minneapolis 2001? I feel like people don't get out as much anymore. [LAUGHS]

JAKE RUDH: Yeah. I think that the old pandemic we all lived through threw a wrench in things. But we're starting to see more and more people come out now, and it's starting to hit the ground running like it once was pre-pandemic, which is great, again. Transmission has been around since '01, but I was DJing long before that, just under different names. The nucleus where it all started was actually a little coffee shop downtown called Jitters, in the back room on a Sunday night--

NINA MOINI: Aw.

JAKE RUDH: --named after a Duran Duran B-side, "Room 7609." And it was just service industry people and musicians that would come down and wanted to hear anything outside of the mainstream. And it's really kind of grown since then and in 2001, and tacked on the name Transmission, and it hasn't stopped since.

NINA MOINI: The Transmission is still going. So the song you asked us to play there a moment ago was called "Love My Way" by The Psychedelic Furs.

JAKE RUDH: That sure is.

NINA MOINI: I understand it's one of the most popular songs that you play. Tell me why you chose that. Why do you think that resonates so much with people?

JAKE RUDH: Yeah, it's probably, if there comes down to one song that I've heard the most from the 1980s, it's either going to be "Everybody Wants to Rule the World" by Tears for Fears or that one, Psychedelic Furs, "Love My Way." I got to give a plug into the show. They're coming to play First Avenue on May 12. And I'm honored to bring them to the stage that night.

NINA MOINI: Nice.

JAKE RUDH: They're amazing live. But the first time I heard that song, I specifically remember where I was and what I was doing. It had that kind of impact. It was watching the classic cult movie *Valley Girl* with Nicolas Cage and Deborah Foreman. And there's a scene in a bathroom where they come together, and that song is playing in the background. And I literally had to stop the movie and rewind it, because I was watching it on VHS, and went to the video store on my BMX bike and rented the movie.

And yeah, it was innocent times, but that's the power of music. You remember when something hits you like that. You remember where you're at. And that song has never left me. And so I'm always such-- so energized to play that because it still brings a vibe to the dance floor.

NINA MOINI: There is nostalgia there. And I do wonder, when we talk about 25 years and multiple generations, do you see people coming out and connecting with younger folks, older folks? Do you see families coming out together?

JAKE RUDH: Well, it's funny you say that because last night was Wednesday, and that's the night I host Transmission at the VFW in Uptown. And there was a birthday being celebrated. Her name was Ivy. And her entire family was there. Ivy was there--

NINA MOINI: Aw.

JAKE RUDH: --with her sisters, her mom, and her dad. And her mom and her dad are longtime regulars. And now all the kids are. So--

NINA MOINI: Aw.

JAKE RUDH: --we've got folks in their 20s, 30s, 40s, 50s, 60, and dare I even say, Nina, early 70s sometimes.

NINA MOINI: Awesome.

JAKE RUDH: We have a 50-year span of people that just want to hear good music.

NINA MOINI: Yeah, and so you're known for spinning this sort of mix of new wave, post-punk, and indie rock. What do you think it is about that kind of music that just makes people want to get out on the dance floor?

JAKE RUDH: Well, it's got energy. And I think a lot of it is just timeless, and it's authentic. It was made with sweat and blood and passion. And it comes through, through the music. But timeless is where I really think it sticks, because you're playing artists like David Bowie and Blondie and Talking Heads. And those are artists that cross the generations and just never go away for good reason.

NINA MOINI: Well, let's listen to another song, then, speaking of. This is from the group INXS. It's called "Don't Change."

[INXS, "DON'T CHANGE"]

INXS: (SINGING) I'm standing here on the ground

The sky above won't fall down

NINA MOINI: Why'd you pull this song for us, Jake?

JAKE RUDH: I just love the energy. This song, if you listen to it from the beginning, it has a real nice build-up and energy, and then it explodes. And that's kind of the way I like to manage my dance floor, is build it up, feel that energy, and then let the crowd go wild. And yeah, you're going to hear both of these songs this Saturday at First Avenue. But when "Don't Change" comes on, it's electrifying.

NINA MOINI: Aw.

JAKE RUDH: I mean, to have 500-plus people screaming out the refrain brings you to another place mentally.

NINA MOINI: OK, I want to talk about the moves, the dance moves that you've experienced and seen over the past quarter century or so.

JAKE RUDH: You know it.

NINA MOINI: Do you think that that's changed, just how people are out on the dance floor, interacting with one another?

JAKE RUDH: Yeah, sure. Well, there is no right way to dance.

NINA MOINI: Totally.

JAKE RUDH: And that's what I love. You can just come out and literally pogo, like you're pogo-ing to a Ramones tune. Or you can do the Belinda Carlisle or Simon Le Bon side-to-side kind of stance. It's--

NINA MOINI: Anything, the sprinkler.

JAKE RUDH: That's right. You can do whatever you want. People are in their own little worlds, and they're not being judged.

NINA MOINI: Aw.

JAKE RUDH: And that's what I really like to see on the Transmission dance floor.

NINA MOINI: I'm going to tell you, I'm not a dancer, but you're really selling-- like, I want to come out to one of these because it just sounds like-- it's just like a reprieve, right? It's just like a break from everything. But as you're looking to the future now, what are your hopes for the next chapter of Transmission? Maybe the next 25 years, maybe you're in your 70s out there, dancing.

JAKE RUDH: Oh, man. Haven't thought that far ahead yet. But I guess as long as people still care, as long as people still tune in, as long as people still come through those doors to shake it, I don't see any signs of stopping. And I'm so honored to be the guide that connects the people to some of their favorite music out there. It's a joy and a pure privilege.

NINA MOINI: Do you prepare in any way to go out there? Like, are there nights that you're like, I don't know if I want to do a dance party tonight? Or--

JAKE RUDH: Of course, yeah.

NINA MOINI: --what's kind of your getting in the game like?

JAKE RUDH: Life gets in the way. And but one thing is that once you go through those doors, even me as a DJ, once you let the music get into you, and you feel it, it changes your mood. And that's what I see happen each and every week. People want to come and escape the realities of this world and decompress and let loose and sweat. And then they leave in a different mood, a different vibe and atmosphere. And that's same as the DJ. I walk out of there, feeling better than I did when I walked in.

NINA MOINI: Yeah, that's amazing. So you mentioned, but I want to make sure that we get all the information out to folks. So you're doing your extra special party called Transmission 25 happening this weekend. Tell us about it and how people can take part.

JAKE RUDH: Yeah, it's going to be happening at the iconic First Avenue downtown.

NINA MOINI: So cool.

JAKE RUDH: Yeah, I mean, to play in the house that I used to go to teen dance nights, Sunday night dance parties, and look up into the DJ booth and dream, and decades later, be the one that is going to be playing the music--

NINA MOINI: Nice.

JAKE RUDH: --it's a dream come true. And doors are going to be at 9 o'clock this Saturday. It's 18-plus. You're going to see a lot of multi-generations of folks coming through those First Avenue doors. And yes, we're going to play a special elongated set for the one and only Prince as well--

NINA MOINI: Amazing.

JAKE RUDH: --because of yesterday, we, of course, lost Prince.

NINA MOINI: The 10-year mark, yeah.

JAKE RUDH: Yeah, 10 years ago. And I was one of the DJs that was in the room that night, providing the music, and it was one of the most special gigs I've ever done. I don't think I'll ever feel anything quite like that night.

NINA MOINI: I'm so happy for you and so grateful for all of your work. Thank you so much, Jake.

JAKE RUDH: Thank you, Nina.

NINA MOINI: That was Jake Rudh, DJ and host of Transmission, The Current show and the weekly dance party celebrating 25 years of weekly dance nights at the Uptown VFW in Minneapolis. You can find information about this Saturday's party at our website, mprnews.org. Thanks for listening.

[MUSIC PLAYING]