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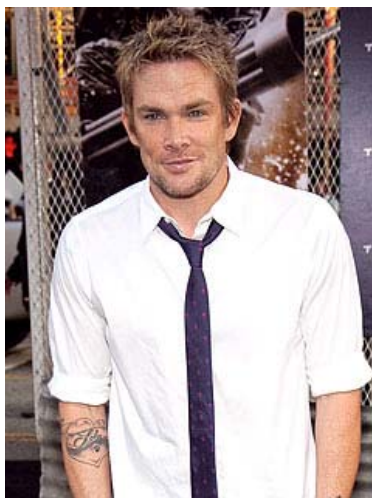
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MUSIC NEWS

Mark McGrath: *Real Housewives* Inspired Sugar Ray's New Album

By Jessica Herndon and Marisa Laudadio

Originally posted Monday August 03, 2009 08:35 AM EDT



Mark McGrath
Photo by: Brian To / Elevation

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Mark McGrath wants to make one thing clear: Sugar Ray isn't putting out a new album because they think they'll be selling out arenas. "It's purely for the love," says the 41-year-old singer.

"We're not blink-182 or No Doubt – they're playing arenas. We're playing House of Blues-sized venues and we're lucky and happy to be playing them," he adds.

Sugar Ray's first studio record in six years, the just-released *Music for Cougars*, finds them returning to their signature breezy rock – after trying to shift toward dance and R&B – and aiming for those fans who've grown up with them over their 21-year career.

"Our fans qualify as cougars," says McGrath. "There's no negative slant. It's a word of empowerment. Cougars are great!"

His favorite cougars? "**Halle Berry** – she's the hottest girl in the world. And I love *The Real Housewives of Orange County*, especially Vicki Gunvalson, the one who goes 'Woo-hoo!'" In fact, says McGrath, "We wrote a song called 'She's Got The (Woo-Hoo!)' after her."

Though McGrath says his four-year stint co-hosting *Extra* was, "radically different for me, but great," he always knew he'd return to music. "Hollywood is a vanity game," he says. "I got another bottom row of veneers just to be on *Extra*. It just wasn't my passion. Mario Lopez is doing a great job keeping it relevant. They did the right thing making a change."

Sugar Ray – which also includes guitarist Rodney Sheppard, bassist Murphy Karges, drummer Stan Frazier, and Craig "DJ Homicide" Bullock – is on **the road** through late September in support of their new album.

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